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## Gendered patterns of migration to Greece

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## GENDERED PATTERNS OF MIGRATION TO GREECE

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### ABSTRACT

*The salience of gender for understanding migration phenomena has come to the forefront over the last decade. Various dimensions of gender relations such as the division of labour between paid and unpaid work, the occupational division of labour, and power relations within the family are integral parts of the structural forces that lead to migration. New data on migration to Greece indicate precisely this importance of gender for understanding migration and the migrant experience. The highly skewed gender composition of various nationalities present in Greece as well as data on the location of the spouses and children of migrants demonstrate that migration patterns are gendered.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Until recently, women were largely absent from the literature on migration. It seems to have been commonly presumed, first, that most migrants were male and, second, that most of the women who did migrate were doing so because they were accompanying men who were on the move.

The actual extent of participation of women in migration flows was difficult to ascertain because much of the statistical information on migration was not available by gender. Only recently have data been compiled which allow assessment of women's role in international migration over the last decades. Contrary to prevalent beliefs, these United Nations data show that women have for a long time accounted for an important share of international flows. Specifically, in 1960 they constituted 47% of all migrants, in 1990 48% and in 2000 nearly 49% (Zlotnik, 2003).

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Just as women's role in migrant flows went unrecognised in the past, so too they were largely ignored in migration research. When mentioned, it was often in relation to their roles as wives and mothers (Grieco and Boyd, 1998). Women's migration was commonly presumed to depend on that of men; women were migrating because they were accompanying male migrants.

From the 1970's, women became increasingly visible in the migration literature. Surveys of migrants included women as well as men, gender became one of the variables in analyses of the migrant experience, while some research projects focused exclusively on women migrants. Much of the new research emphasized the independent agency of women in migration flows, contrary to the passivity implicit in previous portrayals of female migrants as moving in response to the migration of their menfolk.

However, the inclusion of women in the migration literature is a different matter from the recognition of gender as factor and process that shapes migration and the migrant experience. As has been noted, the problem is not simply to «add» women to the picture or to ask the same questions of immigrant women that were asked of immigrant men but rather «to begin with an examination of how gender relations facilitate or constrain both women's and men's immigration and settlement» (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994, p. 3). In and of itself, the inclusion of women in migration research in the 1970's and 1980's «did not cause a dramatic shift in thinking about who migrated, how immigration was explained, or the likely consequences» (Boyd and Grieco, 2003:1).

For example, the inclusion of women in work on migration did not trigger a rethinking of research concerning the causes of international migration, which were still perceived as gender-neutral. When gender however was accorded a central place in research strategies, it became increasingly apparent how conditions in sending and receiving countries intertwine with gender in ways such that gender must be perceived as a constituent element of the social and economic processes that lead to international migration (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). Due to the gender division of labour between unpaid work in the home and paid work outside, to the occupational division of labour by gender, as well as to gender relations and hierarchies within families, the impact of economic factors and changes is mediated by gender in ways which produce specific migration outcomes. For instance, in sending countries economic recession or restructuring may impinge on the genders disproportionately, thereby promoting or constraining the respective flows of men and women. In receiving countries, due to the gender division of occupations, the demand

for migrant labour may be gender-specific, thereby affecting the size and gender composition of flows. Moreover, changes in the relative earnings opportunities of the two genders outside the home may alter power balances between husbands and wives and thereby affect their propensity to migrate.

The importance of gender for an understanding of migration is highlighted in two new data sets concerning recent migration to Greece. The first set derives from Greece's first programme of regularization of immigrants and reveals the highly skewed gender compositions of various nationalities present in Greece. The second set derives from a field study of regularized migrants in Athens and reveals that much more often than men, women leave behind spouse and children in country of origin.<sup>1</sup> These data illustrate not only the independent movement of women but also that migration patterns are gendered. The observed patterns of migration point to the importance of gender for an understanding of migration flows to Greece. Before these data are examined, a brief overview of migration to Greece is in order.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF MIGRATION TO GREECE

A traditional country of emigration, Greece acquired a positive migratory balance in the mid-1970's. The change in balance was largely due to the return of Greek migrants from Germany and other northern European countries. However, at the same time, noteworthy inflows to Greece had commenced from countries such as Pakistan, Egypt, and the Philippines (Fakiolas and King, 1996).

From the mid-1980's the migration landscape of Greece began transfiguration due to changes in the socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe that were to culminate in the collapse of socialist regimes in the region, setting the stage for large-scale immigration to Greece. In the first phase, inflows from socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe commenced largely as a result of the new policies of liberalization that were implemented in some of these. Poland was the most important source country among these. In the second phase, beginning in 1989-1990, inflows took on massive dimensions after the collapse of the Soviet Union and allied socialist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe. It was Albania however,

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1. I gratefully acknowledge the valuable assistance of George Alexias, who performed the statistical analysis of data from the field study and prepared the tables presented within.

the socialist loner of Europe, whose collapse soon followed, that emerged as Greece's main source country of migration. It should be noted that with respect to the impact of the collapse of socialist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe on migration phenomena, the experience of Greece departs radically from that of other countries of Southern Europe which were also transformed at approximately the same time from countries of emigration to countries of immigration (Cavounidis, 2002a).

A significant proportion of the immigrants arriving in Greece from former socialist countries was of Greek descent. Some were from the former Soviet Union (most of whom were Pontians)<sup>2</sup> and others from Albania. These immigrants of Greek descent were subject to special provisions concerning residence and work permits.

However, most of the immigrants arriving in Greece from the late 1980's from Central and Eastern Europe were not of Greek descent. Many had either entered illegally or overstayed their visas or permits, as had numerous immigrants from other parts of the world. The swelling ranks of the unauthorized immigrant population created great concern and alarm. Shortly after its adoption in 1991, it became apparent that the hastily prepared new immigration law had failed to stem illegal immigration. Ensuing policy discussions eventually led to the policy of regularization.

It is only with the inauguration in 1998 of Greece's first programme for regularization of unauthorized immigrants that the main characteristics of the immigrant population have come into clear focus. On the basis of the application forms submitted in the programme, information became available on nationality, gender, location, age, marital status, and level of education (Cavounidis, 2002b). Obviously, the data set does not cover the total unauthorized immigrant population present in Greece at that time but only those who participated in the programme.

The regularization process was organized in two stages. In the first, «white card» stage, applications were submitted by 371,641 migrants, making it the largest programme carried out in Southern Europe up to that time (Cavounidis 2002a). In the second, «green card» stage applicants were required to present evidence of legal employment and payment of social security contributions. Applications in the second stage dwindled to 212,860, or 57% of those participating in the first stage. The most important cause of the steep decline in participation in the second stage was no doubt the

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2. See Kasimati (1992) with respect to these migrants.

prerequisite of proof of legal employment and payment of social security contributions<sup>3</sup> but other factors also appear to have played a role.<sup>4</sup> It what follows, it is data from the «white card» applications that are utilized.

According to the data from the first<sup>5</sup> regularization programme, migration to Greece is dominated by a single source country, Albania. Specifically, Albanian nationals filed 65% of all applications for the «white card». Bulgaria appeared as the second most important source country, but with 7% of the total it remains a great distance from Albania in terms of importance. Rumania appeared third, with 5% of the total, thereby bringing the share of these three Balkan countries to 77%. Other major source countries, with at least 3000 applicants, were Pakistan, the Ukraine, Poland, Georgia, India, Egypt, the Philippines, Moldova, Syria and Russia (Table 1).

### 3. THE GENDER-SKEWED COMPOSITION OF NATIONALITIES

The data from the regularization programme present exceptional interest with respect to the gender dimension. Women constituted 26% of the total «white card» population but an examination of the gender composition by nationality reveals immense variation. In some nationalities, women are nearly non-existent while in others women form the overwhelming majority.

The nationalities in which women are nearly absent are the Pakistani, with 99,5% men, the Bangladeshi with 99,1% men, the Indian, with 98,3% men, the Syrian with 95,2% men, and the Egyptian with 94,3% men (Table 1). Two groups can be distinguished among these nationalities. The first is composed of countries of the Indian subcontinent, in other words, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The second, containing Egypt and Syria, is characterized by dominant Arab and Islamic cultures. For these two groups of countries, migration to Greece is almost exclusively a male experience. It should be noted that men also dominate the foremost nationality of migration to Greece, the Albanian: 83% of the Albanian applicants for the «white card» were men.

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3. See Cavounidis (forthcoming) for the difficulties faced by migrants in finding legal employment. Many employers wishing to hire migrants refuse to formalise their work relations.

4. See Cavounidis (2002b) for a discussion of other factors contributing to the «dropout» phenomenon.

5. A second regularization programme commenced in 2001, but at the time of writing analogous data from the second programme were not yet available.

**TABLE 1**  
*Applicants for «White Card»: Nationality and Gender*

Country of nationality	Number	As % of applicants	Men	Women	Men as % of total
Albania	241,561	65.0	195,262	41,025	82.6
Bulgaria	25,168	6.8	10,494	14,108	42.7
Romania	16,594	4.6	11,444	5,137	69.0
Pakistan	10,933	2.9	10,432	51	99.5
Ukraine	9,821	2.6	1,882	7,721	19.6
Poland	8,631	2.3	4,764	3,718	56.2
Georgia	7,548	2.0	2,741	4,655	37.1
India	6,405	1.7	6,068	103	98.3
Egypt	6,231	1.7	5,704	347	94.3
Philippines	5,383	1.4	904	4,361	17.2
Moldova	4,396	1.2	1,138	3,160	26.5
Syria	3,434	0.9	3,148	158	95.2
Russia	3,139	0.8	757	2,301	24.8
Bangladesh	3,024	0.8	2,890	25	99.1
Iraq	2,833	0.8	2,365	416	85.0
Armenia	2,734	0.7	1,354	1,304	50.9
Fed. Rep. of Yugoslavia	2,335	0.6	1,282	1,007	56.0
Nigeria	1,746	0.5	1,357	350	79.5
Ethiopia	931	0.2	261	636	29.1
Sri Lanka	820	0.2	283	515	35.5
Other	7,614	2.0	4,545	2,733	62.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>371,641</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>269,075</b>	<b>93,831</b>	<b>74.1</b>

▮ The total of men and women does not equal total of migrants because information on gender was lacking for many migrants. Figures in last column for men as % of total are based on total of men and women, not total migrants.

▮ Source: Cavounidis, J. *Characteristics of Migrants: The Greek Regularisation Programme of 1998*, (in Greek), Athens: National Labour Institute and Sakkoulas Publishers.

For other nationalities, migration to Greece is mainly a female experience, although none is marked by the extreme degree of asymmetry in gender composition ascertained in some nationalities dominated by men. Among the major source countries of migration to Greece, a gender composition highly skewed towards women is observed for the Philippines, the Ukraine, and Moldova. Specifically, 83% of the Philippine nationals were women, as were 80% of the Ukrainians, and 74% of the Moldovans. Other countries from which the majority of the population is female (although the proportion of

women in the total white card population is 26%) are Russia with 75% women, Ethiopia with 71% women, Sri Lanka with 64% women, Georgia with 63% women and Bulgaria with 57% women.

Among these source countries, two groups can be discerned. The first is comprised of former socialist countries in Europe. It is remarkable that the migrants from all the major source countries that correspond to the former Soviet Union are mainly women and not men. In order of their importance as source countries, the Ukraine is first among these with 2.6% of the immigrant population and 80% women, Georgia comes second with 2% of the total and 63% women, third is Moldova with 1.2% of the total and 74% women and Russia fourth with 0.8% of the total and 75% women. Armenia, with 0.7% of the population, «disrupts» the pattern in that women do not compose the majority, but they do constitute 49% of the migrants of this nationality. A pattern of female dominance is observed for all the remaining countries of the former Soviet Union with migrant populations in Greece, in other words for Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Belarus, Lithuania, and Latvia (Cavounidis, 2002b).

The other group of countries whose immigrant populations in Greece are dominated by women are those which were senders of domestic labourers to Greece prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union and other socialist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe. The most important of these source countries is the Philippines, whose nationals form 1.4% of the total «white card» population and 83% are female. Other countries in this group are Sri Lanka and Ethiopia.

Thus, gendered patterns of migration are clearly visible. From some communities, it is women who migrate to Greece while from others it is men. Furthermore, on the basis of these figures on the gender composition of various nationalities, it is evident that many women are migrating independently of men. It should be noted with respect to the possible effect of administrative practices on the gender composition exhibited in the application data, that in the first or «white card» stage of the procedure, from which the data presented here derive, the incidence of inclusion of a spouse on one's card was exceptionally limited. In the second or «green card» stage, it was a rather frequent practice until abandoned in February 2001.<sup>6</sup> In any case, it seems that when a spouse was indeed included on the

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6. See Cavounidis (2002b), p. 81-82, concerning the administrative confusion surrounding this practice as well as its possible implications for the «dropout» phenomenon between the two stages. The practice was not foreseen in the relevant legislation but was implemented first in a few and then more and more offices until it was halted in February 2001 by administrative order.

other's card, it was much more often wives rather than husbands who were included.<sup>7</sup>

#### 4. THE «FAMILY COMPOSITION» OF MIGRATION

Not only are women migrating to Greece independently of men, as suggested by the gender-skewed composition of various nationalities observed in the regularization data, but as demonstrated in a recent field study, women much more often than men leave behind spouse and children in the country of origin. The field study data highlight the very different family contexts of migration experienced by women and men of various nationalities.

In the field study, interviews were carried out with a sample of migrants who had applied for the «green card» in Greece's first regularization programme. In order to ensure that the sample was representative of the green card population as a whole, the method of quota sampling was employed. On the basis of the regularization data, quotas were set by gender for the ten most numerous nationalities.<sup>8</sup> Interviews took place with 1074 migrants in the Athens area in the summer of 2000 at local offices of the Labour Force Employment Organization that administered the regularization procedure as well as the procedure of renewal of the permits granted the regularized migrants.

Of the interviewees, 58% were Albanian. The other nationalities for which quotas were set by gender were Bulgarian, Pakistani, Rumanian, Ukrainian, Polish, Egyptian, Indian, Georgian and Filipino. As the «green card» population at large, 74% of the interviewees were men.

As ascertained for the total population during analysis of the data from the regularization programme (Cavounidis, 2002b), so too in the field study population, women were older than men. Specifically, 31% of the women but 45% of the men were under 30 years of age while 22% of the women but only 8% of the men were age 45 and above.

As for the green card population at large, so too for the interviewees of the field study, noteworthy differences in marital status were observed

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7. This is indicated by the greater dropout rate of women as compared to men between the two stages (Cavounidis 2002b, p. 89-92) and by data concerning the manner in which migrants arranged social security coverage (Cavounidis forthcoming).

8. See Cavounidis (forthcoming) for details of the methodology.

between the two genders. Women much more often than men had been married. Only 20% of the women were single compared to 39% of the men. The big gap between the sexes in the «single» category is not counter-balanced, as might be expected, by a gap in the proportions who were married at the time of the study: 58% of the men and 55% of the women were of this marital status. On the contrary, the gap in the proportions of men and women who were single is "compensated" for by the gap between the genders with respect to proportions divorced and widowed. Specifically, 16.5% of the women were divorced compared to only 0.8% of the men. Likewise, women were more often widowed than the men: 3.7% of the women compared to 0.4% of the men (Table 2).

**TABLE 2**  
*Marital Status by Gender*

Marital status	Men		Women		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Single	308	39.0	56	20.5	364	34.3
Married	456	57.8	151	55.3	607	57.2
Living with partner	14	1.8	7	2.6	21	2.0
Separated	2	0.3	4	1.5	6	0.6
Divorced	6	0.8	45	16.5	51	4.8
Widowed	3	0.4	10	3.7	13	1.2

Source: Cavounidis J. (forthcoming), *Study for the Economic and Social Integration of Migrants* (in Greek), Athens, Employment Observatory.

Marital status exhibits great variation not only by gender but also by nationality. Large proportions of Albanian and Filipino women are married: 77% and 71%, respectively. It is observed that in some nationalities, more than a quarter of the women are divorced. Thus is true of the Bulgarian women (30% divorced), the Ukrainian women (29%) the Polish women (27%) and the Georgian women (26%). All are nationalities that correspond to former socialist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe. It should be noted that Albania, also a former socialist country but with very different cultural and religious traditions, presents a much smaller percentage of divorced women than other former socialist countries (Table 3).

Among men, on the contrary, there is much less variation in marital status according to nationality. The largest percentages of single men are to be found among non-European men and specifically the Egyptians,

**TABLE 3**  
*Women: Marital Status by Nationality*

Country of nationality	Single		Married		Living with partner		Separated		Divorced		Widowed	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Albania	14	16.1	67	77.0	-	-	-	-	5	5.7	1	1.1
Egypt	-	-	2	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bulgaria	11	22.0	15	30.0	4	8.0	2	4.0	15	30.0	3	6.0
Georgia	5	26.3	5	26.3	-	-	-	-	5	26.3	4	21.1
India	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ukraine	1	4.2	13	54.2	2	8.3	-	-	7	29.2	1	4.2
Pakistan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	3	20.0	6	40.0	-	-	1	6.7	4	26.7	1	6.7
Romania	4	26.7	8	53.3	1	6.7	-	-	2	13.3	-	-
Philippines	7	25.0	20	71.4	-	-	1	3.6	-	-	-	-
Other	11	33.3	15	45.5	-	-	-	-	7	21.2	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>55.3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3.7</b>

Source: Cavounidis J. (forthcoming), *Study for the Economic and Social Integration of Migrants* (in Greek), Athens, Employment Observatory.

Pakistanis and Indians while the nationality with the smallest percentage of single men is the Polish. In the case of men, as opposed to women, in no nationality, whether European or non-European, is there a notable percentage of divorced men (Table 4).

Approximately half of the migrants interviewed stated that they had children. More women than men, however, were parents: 68% of the women compared to 46% of the men. This was to be expected, given that women were older and that more women had been married at some point in time.

The examination of the location of spouses and children of the migrants interviewed in the field study reveals great variation in the «family regime» of migration according to gender as well as to nationality. For some groups of women and men, migration is almost always a family affair that includes spouse and children while for others it is often an experience of separation from spouse and/or children.

With respect to the location of the spouse, it is observed first that more married women than married men leave a spouse behind. Specifically, 26.4%

**TABLE 4**  
*Men: Marital Status by Nationality*

Country of nationality	Single		Married		Living with partner		Separated		Divorced		Widowed	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Albania	209	39.4	314	59.2	4	0.8	1	0.2	2	0.4	-	-
Egypt	15	48.4	11	35.5	2	6.5	1	3.2	1	3.2	1	3.2
Bulgaria	10	34.5	17	58.6	1	3.4	-	-	1	3.4	-	-
Georgia	2	25.0	5	62.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	12.5
India	13	43.3	17	56.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ukraine	2	33.3	4	66.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pakistan	21	45.7	24	52.2	1	2.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	3	16.7	13	72.2	1	5.6	-	-	1	5.6	-	-
Romania	11	39.3	14	50.0	3	10.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Philippines	-	-	3	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	22	36.7	34	56.7	2	3.3	-	-	1	1.7	1	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>39.0</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>57.8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.4</b>

Source: Cavounidis J. (forthcoming), *Study for the Economic and Social Integration of Migrants* (in Greek), Athens, Employment Observatory.

of the married women as compared to 19.6% of the married men were in Greece without the spouse.

However, differences between men and women are greater when location of spouse is examined by nationality as well; it is within nationalities that gendered patterns of migration become more evident. Different patterns of migration by gender are exhibited particularly among the nationals of Bulgaria, Georgia and the Ukraine. While married women from these countries frequently migrate without their husbands, married men from these countries are more often to be found in Greece together with the spouse (Tables 5 and 6). As seen previously (Table 1), Bulgaria, Georgia and the Ukraine are all source countries with gender-skewed populations in Greece.

It should be noted that on the contrary, among the Albanians, the foremost nationality of migration to Greece, there is no variation by gender. The two genders share a common prototype: both married men and married women are almost always in Greece together with the spouse. Specifically, the spouse of 93% of the married Albanian men and of 94% of the married

**TABLE 5**  
*Married Men: Residence in Greece with or without Spouse by Nationality*

Country of nationality	With spouse		Without spouse	
	N	%	N	%
Albania	288	92.9	22	7.1
Egypt	5	45.5	6	54.5
Bulgaria	13	81.3	3	18.8
Georgia	5	100.0	-	-
India	-	-	17	100.0
Ukraine	3	100.0	-	-
Pakistan	5	21.7	18	78.3
Poland	13	100.0	-	-
Romania	9	64.3	5	35.7
Philippines	2	66.7	1	33.3
Other	17	51.5	16	48.5
<b>Total</b>	<i>360</i>	<i>80.4</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>19.6</i>

Source: Cavounidis J. (forthcoming), *Study for the Economic and Social Integration of Migrants* (in Greek), Athens, Employment Observatory.

**TABLE 6**  
*Married Women: Residence in Greece with or without Spouse by Nationality*

Country of nationality	With spouse		Without spouse	
	N	%	N	%
Albania	64	97.0	2	3.0
Egypt	2	100.0	-	-
Bulgaria	5	33.3	10	66.7
Georgia	3	60.0	2	40.0
India	-	-	-	-
Ukraine	4	30.8	9	69.2
Pakistan	-	-	-	-
Poland	4	66.7	2	33.3
Romania	6	75.0	2	25.0
Philippines	9	56.3	7	43.8
Other	9	69.2	4	30.8
<b>Total</b>	<i>106</i>	<i>73.6</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>26.4</i>

Source: Cavounidis J. (forthcoming), *Study for the Economic and Social Integration of Migrants* (in Greek), Athens, Employment Observatory.

Albanian women is present in Greece (Tables 5 and 6). Of course, as previously noted, many of the male Albanian migrants present in Greece are unmarried, but of those who are married, in nearly all cases the spouse too is in Greece.

With respect to the location of children, it was ascertained that many more women than men have left children behind in the country of origin. Only half of the women but nearly three-quarters of the men have all of their children with them in Greece (Table 7).

**TABLE 7**  
*Location of Children by Gender*

Location	Men		Women		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
All are in Greece	269	73.9	94	50.0	363	65.8
Some are in Greece and some are outside Greece	12	3.3	13	6.9	25	4.5
All are outside Greece	83	22.8	81	43.1	164	29.7

Source: Cavounidis J. (forthcoming), *Study for the Economic and Social Integration of Migrants* (in Greek), Athens, Employment Observatory.

When location of children is examined by gender and nationality, it is observed first of all that once again the experience of Albanians contrasts with that of other nationalities. Almost all Albanian women (92%) as well as men (86%) are in Greece with all of their children. Only 3% of the Albanian women are in Greece without any of their children (Tables 8 and 9). The figures on location of spouses and on location of children thereby set off the Albanian experience as one of family migration, to an extent unparalleled by any other nationality.

The data on location of children by gender and nationality further indicate that certain nationalities are particularly likely to have migrated without their children. It is noted first that in the nationalities that are composed mainly of men, most of the parents are in Greece without their children. All of the Indians and Pakistanis in the study were men; 87% of the former and 77% of the latter had left all their children behind in the source country. The other Asian nationality of the study, the Filipino, dominated by women, also displayed a high percentage of migrants who had left children behind. Of the Filipino women, 67% had left all their children behind, while the two Filipino men of the study were in Greece with their children.

**TABLE 8**  
*Men: Location of Children by Nationality*

Country of nationality	All are in Greece		Some are in Greece and some are outside Greece		All are outside Greece	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Albania	222	86.0	9	3.5	27	10.5
Egypt	6	54.5	-	-	5	45.5
Bulgaria	4	33.3	-	-	8	66.7
Georgia	1	16.7	1	16.7	4	66.7
India	1	12.5	-	-	7	87.5
Ukraine	-	-	-	-	3	100.0
Pakistan	3	17.6	1	5.9	13	76.5
Poland	11	100.0	-	-	-	-
Romania	7	70.0	-	-	3	30.0
Philippines	2	100.0	-	-	-	-
Other	12	46.2	1	3.8	13	50.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>73.9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>22.8</b>

Source: Cavounidis J. (forthcoming), *Study for the Economic and Social Integration of Migrants* (in Greek), Athens, Employment Observatory.

**TABLE 9**  
*Women: Location of Children by Nationality*

Country of nationality	All are in Greece		Some are in Greece and some are outside Greece		All are outside Greece	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Albania	54	91.5	3	5.1	2	3.4
Egypt	-	-	-	-	1	100.0
Bulgaria	5	14.3	4	11.4	26	74.3
Georgia	5	45.5	-	-	6	54.5
India	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ukraine	8	36.4	1	4.5	13	59.1
Pakistan	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	3	30.0	1	10.0	6	60.0
Romania	2	25.0	1	12.5	5	62.5
Philippines	7	33.3	-	-	14	66.7
Other	10	47.6	3	14.3	8	38.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>43.1</b>

Source: Cavounidis J. (forthcoming), *Study for the Economic and Social Integration of Migrants* (in Greek), Athens, Employment Observatory.

However, it is not only Asian nationalities that displayed high rates of migration without the accompaniment of children. Nationalities of Central and Eastern Europe also exhibited notable frequency of migration without children. Specifically, only 19% of Bulgarian parents had all their children with them in Greece while the corresponding figure for the Ukrainians was 32% and for the Georgians 35%. Thus, for those who have created families, the experience of migration varies greatly by gender and nationality. For some, it is a «family affair» in which spouses and children migrate together. The Albanian nationality is unique in terms of the prevalence of this prototype, both among women and men. For others, migration is an experience of separation in which spouse and children are left behind in country of origin. For women more often than men, it is an experience of separation from spouse and/or children rather than a joint, family experience.

## 5. DISCUSSION

In the past, it was widely presumed in the international migration literature that women were migrating mainly because they were accompanying men who were on the move. Women's role in the migration process was largely seen as passive, since women's migration was considered to be dependent on that of men. With respect to present migration to Greece, the data examined indicate the invalidity of such assumptions. In the regularization data, the predominance of women in various nationalities demonstrates their independent labour migration while the data from the field study reveal that not only are women moving independently of men in the sense that they are not accompanying men, a common presumption concerning women's migration in the past, but that with the act of migration, in many cases they are leaving behind spouses and children.

At the same time, the two sets of data illustrate that patterns of migration to Greece are gendered. The highly skewed gender composition of some nationalities shows that from certain communities of origin it is mainly women who migrate to Greece while from others it is mainly men. The field study data on the location of spouses and children indicate that whether family members migrate together or not depends on gender as well as on nationality.

The gendered patterns of migration observed in the Greek data give rise to interesting questions about precisely how social and economic processes in sending countries interact with social and economic processes in receiving

countries, gender being a constituent element of processes at both ends, to create the observed patterns of gendered migration. Relevant inquiries would seek to understand why from certain communities it is mainly women who migrate while from others it is mainly men, and more specifically, why it is women and men of certain ages, family situations, and at certain stages of the family life cycle who tend to migrate to Greece. They would also seek to explain why women are more likely than men to leave behind spouses and children. The migration of women without their spouses and children is of course particularly suited to Greek demand for female migrant labour, much of this demand being for live-in domestic labour. However, this alone cannot account for the patterns of migration observed.

Research into gendered patterns of migration appears particularly exciting in the case of migration to Greece. Not only is Greece a newcomer on the list of major receiving countries, but also its source countries are of special interest as they correspond to collapsed socialist regimes in the process of transition to market economies and are all new to the experience of large-scale international migration beyond the former socialist world. Of the 371,641 migrants who filed applications in the first "white card" stage of the 1998 Greek regularization programme, a remarkable 86% originated from formerly socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Cavounidis, 2002a).

Due to the relative newness of migration from these areas, little is known about the ways in which marketisation and the new social structures and processes emerging in the wake of socialist economies are interacting with gender roles and relations to shape specific migration flows. From some of these areas, specifically Albania and Romania, it is mainly men who migrate while from others, specifically Bulgaria and countries of the former Soviet Union, it is mainly women. From some, such as Albania, married men and women almost invariably migrate with spouse and children while from others the migrants frequently leave spouse and children behind.

Various hypotheses could be formulated as to the gender composition of migration from these areas, taking into consideration, apart from cultural factors, the process of economic restructuring and its impact on employment, on social welfare systems, and on the ways in which domestic work and the care of dependent family members are performed and combined with employment. In light of the high proportions of women migrants from some of these source countries who leave spouses and children behind, an understanding of migration processes would also entail an examination of the gender and generational divisions of labour with

respect to domestic work and carework as well as how these divisions facilitate or hinder movement and how they change either to accommodate migration or in response to migration. Divisions of labour among family members and the redistribution of work would of course have to be studied in relation to the local economic context as well as employment opportunities in the receiving country. The intergenerational redistribution of carework in which grandparents, and particularly grandmothers, take on the care of children left behind, is but one of the various modes of redistribution of carework that have been observed at different times and places. It should be noted that with respect to the recent migration of women from former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, another type of accommodation of paid and unpaid work has been discerned: that of "rotational migration", in which individuals in the sending community take turns migrating, sometimes sharing a specific job in the receiving country (Kofman, 2003).

The gendered patterns of migration observed for Greece undoubtedly have implications for migrant outcomes with respect to long-term settlement and integration. It is likely that male and female migrants who have left behind spouses and children in the country of origin have attached a short time horizon to their stay in Greece, while those who are present in Greece with their spouses and children may find it difficult to leave Greece, whatever their initial plans. On the other hand, it is possible that some of the migrants who have left spouse and children behind in country of origin will be able to utilize the provisions for family migration set out in the new Greek migration law 2910 of 2001 in order to bring spouse and children to Greece. Given the high proportion of migrant women in Greece who have left behind spouses and children, it is indeed possible that women may prove the main initiators of migration for family reunification, contrary to what has commonly been observed in other receiving countries in times past.

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