IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN A NEW HOST-REGION:
DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES ACROSS SOUTHERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Author for correspondence:
Alexandra Tragaki
Harokopion University of Athens, Department of Geography
e-mail: atragaki@hua.gr
Address:
El. Venizelou Str. 70
Athens, 17671
Greece
phone: +30 210 9549168
fax: +30 210 9514759

Antonis Rovolis
Harokopion University of Athens, Department of Geography
e-mail: rovolis@hua.gr

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ABSTRACT

Recent political and economic changes have radically affected population movement leading to the redrawing of the European migration map. During the last decades a traditionally emigration part of Europe has turned into a new destination area where foreigners represent a continually growing share of the total population.

Since the 80s, Southern European countries, form a new destination region for migratory flows mainly originating from North Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. Spain, Italy and Greece, countries that had for long registered negative net migration, have been transformed into receivers of increasing inflows of immigrants. The restrictive migratory policies, followed by almost all traditional immigration countries, contributed to turn this part of Europe into an appealing destination for flows originating from new emigration countries.

This sudden and almost simultaneous reverse of migratory balance offered the framework for the development of the so-called "Southern European model of migration" (King, 2000). The large agriculture and tourist sector, the great proportion of small (mostly family) enterprises and the high share of informal economy are some

of the common characteristics used as explanatory factors of this phenomenon. The traditionally evoked "pull-factors" in migration theory are strengthened by major developments in the economic and social background. Economic and structural reforms improved infrastructures and narrowed discrepancies in living standards between Northern and Southern Europe, further increasing the attractiveness of the latter. Meanwhile, profound social changes have created a new context: higher education levels led to the natives' aversion towards low-skilled and ill-paid jobs while female participation in the labor market increased the demand for domestic workers. This demand for low-status jobs was easily satisfied by immigrant labor offer.

This paper presents and analyses the foreign presence in three Southern European countries: Greece, Italy and Spain. The analysis is based on regional data at NUTS III level. It can generally be argued that during the last three decades, migratory flows into Southern Europe have been continuously increasing. Globalisation and differentiation of flows -involving persons from an increasing number of countries migrating for different reasons (i.e family reunification, temporary workers or students)- are common features applied to the Southern European case (Ribas-Mateos, 2004; OECD, 2003).

Especially for Greece and Italy, the beginning of immigration coincides with the border-opening in Eastern Europe and the adoption of restrictive policies in the traditional destination countries of Western Europe. Political trends, economic and social developments as well as demography and geography have contributed to this major and unexpected change of status. Gradually, as Greece, Italy and Spain were turning into net receivers, a migration issue emerged.

According to the latest data available, there are 762,191 non-nationals living in Greece (2001); 1,647,011 in Spain (2003); and 1,990,159 in Italy (2004). The foreign share of the total population varies from 3.4% in Italy to 3.9% in Spain and goes up to 7.3% in Greece. Though Italy and Spain are steadily found at the bottom of the list of EU15 countries, Greece has climbed up to the 6th place, beyond traditional host countries, like France and Netherlands.

Gender asymmetry is common to all Southern European countries (Solé, 2004). The predominance of men is significant in Greece (120 men to 100 women) and Spain (123 men to 100 women) but not in Italy where sexes are equally represented within the immigrant population. On the other hand, the female population prevails among Americans, especially North Americans: the men-to-women ratio is limited to 8:10 in Greece and Spain and only 5:10 in Italy. Migrant populations from Central and Eastern Europe are mostly female as well, especially in Greece and Italy. The foreign population is generally characterized by a young age structure. Nevertheless, the age structure of foreign populations is not identical in all the countries examined. In Greece, half of the non-nationals are between 20 and 40 years of age, while approximately 64% are less than 35 years of age. Age structure of foreigners in Spain is similar to that of Greece. Immigrant population in Italy has a slightly elder age structure: out of ten immigrants, 5 are less than 35, 4 are between 35 and 55 years of age, while 1 is over 55.

Job seeking is by far the first reason for installation in any Southern European country, especially among men. More than 6 out of 10 Asians and Africans immigrate for pure economic reasons. Despite being terribly important, work, however, is not the only reason of entry into a country. The second most important reason for migration,

principally affecting women, is family reunification. High shares of persons entering the region for family reasons are met among Americans and Europeans.

A specific feature of immigration to Southern Europe is the large number of the countries of origin, many of which are distant, with no political or cultural links with the region. This is particularly the case for Italy and Greece and to a lesser extent for Spain.

The Southern-European case confirms the argument that in urbanized economies, large urban centers have a high degree of attractiveness for the population and even more so for the immigrants. Attika and Central Macedonia attract more than 6 out of 10 immigrants in Greece, Lombardia and Veneto count for 24% and 12% of the immigrant population in Italy, while Catalonia (25.3%) and Madrid (23.4%) attract half of all foreigners in Spain. The islands constitute a second important pole of attraction for immigrants, especially in Greece and Spain.

Non-nationals follow different settlement patterns in each of the countries examined. In broad outline, immigrants in Greece are to their vast majority concentrated in Central Greece (63%), mainly Attika, and in the islands (13%). In Italy, 6 out of 10 immigrants are found in the North of the country (35.6% in the North-west and 27.4% in the North-east). In Spain, greater concentration of foreigners is registered in the Mediterranean coast provinces, the archipelagos and the centre of the peninsula.

This analysis is accompanied by the use of spatial statistics. The simpler approach is to map the data for migrants at regional (NUTS III) level. However, simple maps do not always reveal patterns in space. It is for this reason that a more complex type of analysis is begged for, such as spatial autocorrelation analysis. The initial step in this method is to construct a spatial weights matrix (Anselin 1992). Several different schemes are employed, such as the *rook first contiguity*, the *3-nearest neighbors*, and the *threshold distance* spatial weights.
The most common, probably, spatial statistical measure, which is also estimated here, is Moran's I (Moran 1950); this is a simple indicator which shows the degree of inequality in the spatial distribution of migrants in the regions of the three south European countries. Moran's I is considered as a "global spatial autocorrelation" indicator. There are, nevertheless, measures of the "local spatial autocorrelation". There is a local alternative of Moran's statistic, which is usually called Local Indicator of Spatial Association. This indicator essentially shows spatial clusters of similar values around specific observations. With the values of this indicator maps for each country were constructed; these maps show the patterns of clusters.
Finally, regression analysis is employed. The set of explanatory variables in our analysis (all at NUTS III level) includes a proxy of tourism activity, a proxy of the economic activity at the agricultural sector, a proxy of the economic activity at the construction sector, and the population density. The initial calibrations also included some other variables, namely the unemployment rate, and a proxy for industrial activity, but both were statistically insignificant.

One (major) potential problem that emanates from the spatial dimension of a cross-section dataset is the lack of independence among observations (for which are used the terms spatial dependence or spatial autocorrelation), in itself caused by the existence of spatial externalities and spill-over effects, by problems of spatial aggregation, by arbitrary delineation of the spatial units, etc. (for an extensive presentation of these problems, see for instance, Anselin 1988). Another, equally important problem, is the potential existence of spatial heterogeneity, that is "the lack

of stability over space of the behavioral or other relationships under study" (Anselin 1988, p. 9).

There are several tests available by which the presence of spatial autocorrelation or spatial heterogeneity can been detected (see Anselin 1988, Anselin et al 1996, Anselin et al 1997). For this reason, several of these diagnostic test are presented. Moran's I is the Moran's I test adapted to estimated residuals. LMERR is the Lagrange multiplier test for residual spatial autocorrelation, and R-LMERR is its robust version. Similarly, LMLAG is the Lagrange multiplier test for spatially lagged endogenous variable, and R-LMLAG is its robust version. It has to be kept in mind that the probability levels presented in regression tables of these Lagrange multiplier tests (all one-directional in this paper) are based on χ^2 statistics. In most cases, the Moran's I tests have shown that the spatial regression must be "preferred" in comparison to the OLS results.

There is a simple decision rule between the two spatial models, the spatial autocorrelation one, and the one with the spatially lagged endogenous variable, proposed by Anselin and Florax (1995). If the LMERR is more significant than LMLAG, and at the same time R-LMERR is significant, but R-LMLAG is not, then the preferred calibration is that with spatially dependent error terms (if the results of these Lagrange multiplier tests were reverse, then the preferred specification would be the spatial autoregressive model).