



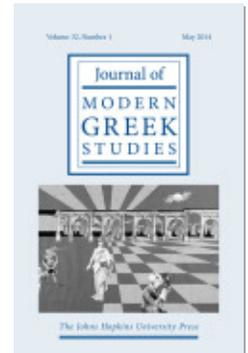
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Flexicurity, Informality, and Immigration: The Insufficiency of the Southern EU Framework, as Illustrated through the Case of Preveza, Greece¹

Stelios Gialis, Andrew Herod, and Myron Myridis

Abstract

The concept of “flexicurity” (encouraging flexible work arrangements while also ensuring various social protections for workers) has been much lauded in recent years within the European Union. This paper examines how practices of flexicurity are working for immigrant workers living in Preveza, a prefecture located within the Greek region of Epirus on the border with Albania. In doing so, it highlights possible interconnections between immigrants, whether documented or not, and atypical and informal employment in peripheral urban and rural localities. The paper draws upon data collected during 2008 as part of research conducted for Preveza’s local government as well as a follow-up study on flexicurity and immigrants conducted in 2011. Other data sources, such as the list of migrants holding official residence and work permits and the national census, are also used. All of these sources offer valuable insights into the precarious employment status of immigrants in contemporary Greece, highlighting the extensive presence of flexible employment with few security provisions and informal employment. Finally, the paper concludes with some remarks on policy relating to the European Union’s flexicurity agenda and migration in Southern Europe.

Introduction

Greece has recently experienced a major socio-economic transition, turning from a nation of net emigration into one of net immigration. Immigration has reached the point where 8.4% of Greece’s official population are now foreigners (nearly 912,000 people, according to the 2011 national census [HelStat 2011]), of whom it is estimated that more than 250,000 are undocumented (Triantafyllidou 2013). Although the past ten years or so have seen growing numbers

of immigrants from Africa and Southeast Asia, the majority (72.2%) of the foreigners living in Greece are immigrants from the former state-socialist countries, especially Albania (Nicholson 2004; Carletto et al. 2006). Indeed, according to the 2011 census, more than half of all immigrants—or some 480,000 people—in the country are Albanians (HelStat 2011). This influx of people from neighboring Balkan countries to both urban and rural areas is having several notable consequences, especially for labor markets and how they function (Psimmenos 2007; Kasimis 2008; Psimmenos and Skamnakis 2008; Labrianidis and Sykas 2011).

Among explanations of this recent transition in Greece's demographic history, it is clear that geographical proximity is certainly one central factor that has facilitated the massive in-migration from the former state-socialist Balkan countries (Fakiolas and King 1998; Mai et al. 2005; King and Mai 2008). However, the easy and inexpensive access to the country for immigrants has, in turn, been connected to other important pull factors, mainly the relatively low costs of living (at least as compared with some other parts of the European Union [EU]) and the availability in the receiving localities (at least before the 2009 economic recession) of employment that is mostly atypical (i.e., temporary, part-time, seasonal, hourly-waged, and self-employment) and/or informal (i.e., either full- or part-time unofficial working agreements that are not institutionalized and that often allow workers and employers to evade paying income and social security taxes) (Carletto et al. 2006; Psimmenos and Kassimati 2006; HMPI 2008).

Many important aspects of the Albanian migratory phenomenon have been widely discussed by a variety of scholars in the disciplines of Migration Studies and Geography (Mai et al. 2005; Iosifides et al. 2007; Vullnetari 2007; Mai 2011). One issue that remains relatively under-studied, though, is that of the expansion of flexicurity policies within the EU generally—and Greece specifically—and the possible relevance of this expansion for immigrants living in Southern European localities.²

For its part, flexicurity is a neologism that has emerged out of the Nordic experience but that has now been officially adopted by the EU as something to promote in the fight against labor market rigidities which supposedly make European employers less competitive globally and which, therefore, contribute to problems of unemployment. Flexicurity policy seeks theoretically to combine and practically to advance labor flexibility and “employability” (i.e., continuous but not necessarily stable, open-ended, and full-time employment) with income and social security (Wilthagen and Tros 2004; European Commission 2008).³ According to the European Commission, in order to enhance flexicurity all Southern European countries will have to reduce their level of labor market regulation (European Commission 2008 and 2009). Likewise, annual reports from all Southern European Ministries of Employment

consider the “limited availability” of atypical employment and the “excessive” protection against dismissals as important factors leading to labor market rigidity and persistent unemployment in their countries. While these reports promote atypical employment as a strategy for absorbing unemployment, they also treat informal employment as a marginal phenomenon that should be either regulated or diminished. However, given that atypical employment—one of the basic elements of flexicurity on which this paper focuses—is normally considered less secure than more standard employment, while also offering fewer career prospects and training opportunities and often disqualifying workers from social benefits (Kleinknecht 2006) an important question arises: what are the economic, institutional, and geographical prerequisites for the successful integration of atypical forms of work into a flexicurity-enhancing framework, if such a framework is what EU labor markets “need”?

Although the expansion of atypical employment is an outcome of recent changes in productive and regulatory patterns, there are numerous misunderstood parameters of the phenomenon in post-industrial localities of Southern European countries and of the EU as a whole. In particular, questions persist regarding the causes, rates, and socio-economic dimensions of the expansion in these types of jobs, their contribution to the restructuring of contemporary local labor markets, and the relationship between “modern” atypical forms of work (e.g., work in temporary employment agencies) and “traditional” forms of atypical or informal employment (e.g., seasonal contracts or undocumented jobs, respectively) which have a rich history in countries such as Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. Answering these questions is not easy, given both the lack of reliable statistics for all productive activities, especially the informal ones, and the diversity of views regarding the origins of recent changes in the structure of the EU’s economy (e.g., the rise of a so-called post-Fordist “new” economy) (Jandl 2004; Kleinknecht et al. 2006; Coe et al. 2007; Pijpers 2009).

What is significant in all of this, for the purposes of this paper, is that immigrants, along with local women, youth, and the unemployed, increasingly find themselves at the forefront of the “flexicurity” debate on account of their considerable presence in non-standard employment. In this regard, understanding what is happening in Southern European labor markets and peripheral regions is of particular importance, for these countries are the main entry points to the EU for thousands of foreign workers who often become geographically trapped there, despite wishing to continue their migration towards the more prosperous areas of northern Europe. Furthermore, the expanding presence of immigrants (at least until recently) and their controversial position in local life has been related to several episodes of social tension in Southern Europe generally, and in Greece specifically (Pijpers 2009; Maroukis et al. 2011). Such episodes are related to the growth of racist and xenophobic ideas and far-right political movements, especially since 2009 (Triantafyllidou 2013).

This paper examines the atypical and informal work of immigrants living in the municipalities of the prefecture of Preveza, together with the relevance of the flexicurity debate for such workers. To do so, it draws upon material collected in 2008 as part of a census financed by the prefecture and data provided by the Greek Immigration Directorate. It also uses data collected in 2011 as part of a follow-up study on flexicurity and immigrants and some in-depth interviews with key informants. The paper discusses the existence of a fluid relationship between informality and flexicurity (with few security provisions) for immigrant workers in Greek peripheral labor markets and highlights the differences between urban and rural labor markets for such workers. It concludes with some remarks on policy in the flexicurity debate as well as contemporary migration policies.

Flexicurity and immigrants in Southern EU regions

Preveza is a prefecture in northwestern Greece made up of nine municipalities (Preveza, Fanari, Zalongo, Parga, Filippiada, Anogeio, Thesprotiko, Louros, and Kranea). Along with the prefectures of Ioannina, Arta, and Thesprotia, it forms the region of Epirus, which borders Albania and which in 2011 had a total population of approximately 337,000. All four prefectures have long been among the most important entry points into Greece for immigrants coming from other Balkan states. More recently, they have also seen growing numbers of immigrants from Africa use them as entry points to Greece and thus to the broader EU.⁴ The influx of these immigrants has unavoidably transformed the region and important new socio-economic patterns have emerged therein (Gialis 2011). Although Epirus has historically hosted many ethnic groups, such as Tsamides and Arvanites, two important “old” ethnic groups that originate from the Albanian territories of the Ottoman Empire (Hart 1999), given its proximity to Albania today almost 80% of the area’s immigrants are Albanians. This makes Epirus the second-most homogeneous region in Greece in terms of the composition of its immigrant population. The region is also rather poor, with a regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of about €4,900 million (2010). This is less than 2.5% of Greece’s GDP; only three of the country’s thirteen regions contribute a smaller proportion to its overall national GDP than does Epirus. The region also fares poorly on a per capita basis; in 2010 its GDP per capita was €13,700, as compared to €19,600 for the whole country and €24,500 for the EU-27 (Gialis 2012).

According to the national census, in 2011 the prefecture of Preveza had a permanent population of 57,491 individuals, of whom 3,812 were immigrants from non-EU countries. Despite the poor state of the transportation network, which does not allow for easy access, the city of Preveza is geographically quite close to Albania, being located approximately 90 kilometers from the

Greek-Albanian border. The city, which serves as the prefecture's administrative center, had a population of 20,795 individuals (about 36% of the prefecture's inhabitants). Non-EU immigrants constituted a greater proportion of the prefecture's population (at 6.6%) than they did of the Epirus region as a whole (5.0%). With 22.7% of all of Epirus's immigrants, Preveza is home to more immigrants than any other prefecture in the region.

In terms of its economic structure, Preveza has a greater presence of primary (e.g., agricultural) activities than the national Greek average, although it also has quite a large tertiary (e.g., services and commercial) sector. Thus, primary sector activities contributed 11.2% of the prefecture's Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2010 as compared to 3.2% for Greece as a whole, while tertiary activities contributed 72.4% of the GVA as compared to 79.8% for the country overall. The figures for the Epirus region overall are similar.

The severe crisis that has dramatically affected Greece since 2008 (Gialis 2014) is very evident across the Epirus region. The Hellenic Statistical Authority (HelStat) reports that unemployment increased significantly all across the country. This was undoubtedly also the case in the Preveza prefecture, although it is impossible to determine the specific rate in each of Epirus's individual prefectures because data are provided only on a national and regional level. Nevertheless, for the country as a whole between 2008 and 2012 the total number of unemployed increased by 218.5% while for Epirus the increase was 137.6%. In terms of broader economic issues, however, it is significant that despite the reduction in Preveza prefecture's GDP between 2008 and 2010, the fall in its output (-1.4%) was not as severe as the decline in the national GDP (-5.8%). Thus, at some negative €5,400, the gap between the national GDP per capita and Preveza prefecture's GDP per capita—a gap that had steadily increased after 2000—was actually about €1,000 lower in 2010 than it had been in 2008. These characteristics, and the prefecture's location as an entry point to Greece and the EU, we feel, make it an interesting and valuable case to examine.

To gain a better picture of who constitutes non-EU immigrants in this region we have used data from the 2001 and 2011 national censuses, together with data drawn from three other important sources. The first of these is an immigration census conducted by a private statistical company under the auspices and funding of the government of the prefecture (Prefecture of Preveza 2008). This census was carried out during 2008 and aimed at locating and analyzing the total population of immigrants, together with some of their socio-economic characteristics (especially the specific employment forms under which immigrants work). This task required researchers to develop relations of trust with immigrant respondents. Starting with the capital city, the first and most significant agglomeration, the researchers examined the work and residency permit registries of the municipal authorities. They also relied on immigrants to put them in contact with new arrivals who were not

yet registered with the authorities. The second data set is the list of immigrants holding official residence and work permits in January 2008, as provided by the Immigration Directorate. Finally, the third set is a follow-up study conducted by Gialis between October and December of 2011. For this, a representative sample of the immigrants studied in 2008 was questioned regarding their current employment status, with emphasis placed upon the (changing) forms of employment in which immigrants were engaged.⁵ Eight interviews were also conducted during 2011 with key representatives from the prefectural government, the local Commercial-Industrial Chamber, and immigrant employees; these provided valuable documentation of the changing employment relationships for immigrants across Preveza.

Overall, the combination of these different sources of data offers good insights regarding the quantitative aspects of flexible and informal employment as well as unemployment for the migrants in the study area. In particular, they cover the significant gap arising from the lack of government statistics at this (sub-regional) geographical scale of analysis. They also document certain qualitative perceptions of the key informants. However, due to space limitations, this paper will mainly focus upon the quantitative aspects of the material collected. The most important qualitative findings regarding employment forms and immigrants in Preveza prefecture are presented in the next section, which focuses on the relevance of flexicurity for immigrant workers. A more thorough analysis of the qualitative material involving certain perceptions and attitudes held by the key local informants interviewed, however, is left for a forthcoming paper.

The non-EU immigrant population of the Preveza prefecture is divided into two main groups: one consisting of those of “Greek origin” and another consisting of all other “non-Greek” immigrants.⁶ The first group is widely known as “Omogeneis” (“foreigners of Greek origin”), as they claim to have a Greek identity and background. They are further sub-divided into “Voriopeirotas,” who come from Albanian villages close to the Greek-Albanian border, and “Rosopontioi,” who come from the former socialist Republic of Georgia (see Hionidou 2012).⁷ The second group—those who do not claim Greek origin—is by far the larger and mainly consists of Albanians who have settled in the area since 1990. In 2008, there were 3,826 immigrants in the prefecture, of whom 3,067 were immigrants of non-Greek origin and 759 were Omogeneis (see Table 1, columns 7–9). Overall, 96.3% of non-EU immigrants were from Albania (Table 1, column 14).

A comparison of the above data with the 2001 census data reveals an increase of 356 non-EU immigrants (+10.3%) between 2001 and 2008 (see Table 1, columns 3 and 7). However, not all of the prefecture’s municipalities experienced a growth in their immigrant population and the pattern of in-migration was geographically quite varied. For instance, between 2001 and 2008 there was

an increase of more than 30% in the number of immigrants in Preveza and Kranea; an increase close to the average rate in Fanari; stability or a slight decrease in Parga, Thesprotiko, Louros, and Zalongo; and a substantial decrease in the remaining two municipalities, Filippiada and Anogeio (see Table 1, columns 12 and 13). Perhaps unsurprisingly, these trends largely held between 2008 and 2011. This is because they are related in part to the existing uneven distribution of immigrants across the local sub-economies of the prefecture—this distribution shapes subsequent migration as incomers use kinship and other networks to guide their own journeys and destinations. Thus, about half of all immigrants were found in the city of Preveza and a significant percentage (more than 25%) were located in the municipalities of Filippiada, Fanari, and Parga (a famous tourist destination) in both 2001 and 2008 (see Table 1, columns 5 and 10). The cities of Preveza and Parga are the only two municipalities with an important concentration of immigrants within their geographical boundaries, as reflected by a Location Quotient that exceeds 1.4 (see Table 1, columns 6 and 11).⁸ Immigrants, then, are mainly concentrated in urbanized areas and areas characterized by prosperous seasonal activities where better employment opportunities are found (see Table 1, columns 4, 5, and 10).

These trends were verified by the 2011 follow-up study. The vast majority of the registered immigrants in the Preveza prefecture at this time came from Albania; for instance, almost all of the immigrants living in the municipality of Preveza were either “Omogeneis” or Albanians (immigrants of a non-Greek origin from the neighboring country). The rest of the immigrants came mostly from other countries of the Balkan Peninsula (mainly Bulgaria and Romania, which became members of the EU in 2007), other former-socialist countries (e.g., Ukraine and Armenia), and countries in the Global South, such as India, Egypt and, to a lesser extent, Pakistan. According to the 2008 data, 60.8% of the immigrants in the Preveza prefecture were men and 39.2% were women. These rates are almost the same across all the municipalities, with the exception of the rural community of Kranea, where almost 90% of the few immigrants were men. Again, the vast majority of female immigrants were from Albania. As far as age groups are concerned, 72.1% of the immigrants were over 18 years of age. However, in the city of Preveza and other large municipalities the rate of children and adolescents living with their parents was higher than the average for Preveza prefecture as a whole, though it was lower than the average in the rural areas and smaller towns. Finally, in terms of educational level, 45.6% of immigrants had a primary education, 51.8% a secondary education, and 2.6% a tertiary education. The highest rate of people with tertiary education was found in Filippiada and the city of Preveza, while the highest rate of people with only a primary education was found in rural Kranea and Zalongo.

An important finding of the 2011 follow-up study was that a significant number of immigrants (13.7%) in the Preveza prefecture were undocumented,

Table 1: Dispersion of immigrants in the municipalities of Preveza, 2001, 2008, & 2011

National Census, 2001		Survey of the Administration of Preveza, 2008					
Municipality	(1) Population	(2) % of overall prefecture population	(3) Total # of immigrants	(4) Immigrants as a % of total population	(5) % of all immigrants found in each municipality	(6) Immigrants' LQ	(7) Total # of immigrants
Preveza	19,984	34.4%	1,628	8.1%	46.9%	1.4	2,151
Anogio	1,291	2.2%	70	5.4%	2.0%	0.9	28
Zalongo	4,893	8.4%	274	5.6%	7.9%	0.9	257
Thesprotiko	4,944	8.5%	138	2.8%	4.0%	0.5	135
Louros	5,260	9.0%	213	4.0%	6.1%	0.7	191
Parga	3,846	6.6%	353	9.2%	10.2%	1.5	337
Fanari	8,751	15.1%	382	4.4%	11.0%	0.7	429
Filippiada	8,165	14.0%	399	4.9%	11.5%	0.8	255
Kranea (community)	1,010	1.7%	13	1.3%	0.4%	0.2	43
Total Preveza Prefecture	58,144	100%	3,470	6.0%	100%	1.0	3,826

Source: HELSTAT, Immigration Directorate of the Greek Ministry of Internal Affairs, Prefecture of Preveza, 2008.

Note: Columns may not total 100% due to rounding.

Table 1, continued.

		Directorate of the Greek Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2008										Gialis 2011 Survey
(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)			
Non-Greeks	Greek- Albanians	% of all immigrants found in each municipality	Immigrants' LQ	Change in total # of immigrants, 2001–2008	% change in # of immigrants, 2001–2008	Albanian im- migrants as % of immigrant population	# of immi- grants holding residence and work permit	% of immi- grants holding a residence and work permit	% of immigrants holding residence and holding permit			
1,561	590	56.2%	1.6	+523	32.1	96.4%	1,137	40.2%			86.6%	
23	5	0.7%	0.3	-42	-60.0	96.4%	20	0.7%			82.6%	
248	9	6.7%	0.8	-17	-6.2	94.9%	375	13.3%			93.1%	
127	8	3.5%	0.4	-3	-2.2	96.3%	166	5.9%			89.0%	
168	23	5.0%	0.6	-22	-10.3	98.4%	215	7.6%			100%	
258	79	8.8%	1.3	-16	-4.5	97.3%	285	10.1%			96.5%	
390	39	11.2%	0.7	+47	12.3	97.2%	387	13.7%			91.2%	
249	6	6.7%	0.5	-144	-36.1	91.4%	214	7.6%			89.2%	
43	0	1.1%	0.6	+30	230.1	100%	29	1.0%			46.5%	
3,067	759	100%	1.0	+356	10.3	96.3%	2,828	100%			86.3%	

holding no valid residence or work permits (see Table 1, column 17). This was also more or less the case for the other municipalities, with the exception of Louros (where all immigrants in the survey were documented). In the small rural community of Kranea, on the other hand, almost half of the immigrants held no residence or work permits. Overall, though, the total number of immigrants holding valid permits was close to the figure provided by the official data from the Immigration Directorate of the Greek Ministry of Internal Affairs (Table 1, column 15). According to these data, 2,828 immigrants in the area held legal residence and work permits. The largest concentration of non-EU immigrants with legal residence and work permits was found in the municipality of Preveza (40.2% of all such immigrants), followed by Fanari (13.7%), Zalongo (13.3%), Parga (10.1%), and other, smaller municipalities (Table 1, column 16). However, key informants with knowledge of immigration patterns who were interviewed believe that immigrants in the study area are far more concentrated in the capital city than either the 2001 national census or the 2008 Immigration Directorate data suggest. This has to do, in part, with the fact that, during the research period, many immigrants who were registered in smaller municipalities were actually living in the city of Preveza or other large municipalities. Many of these people were undocumented immigrants, employed as seasonal workers, who held expired residence and work permits that had been issued originally by a neighboring municipal authority.

Employment data, comparison between 2008 and 2011. According to the 2008 survey, the vast majority of non-EU immigrants (98.3%) were salaried laborers, although a marginal share of self-employed individuals (1.7%) can be identified. Among employed immigrant workers, atypical employment was widespread (50.8% of immigrant workers), as was informal employment (24.1%). The proportion of immigrants employed in atypical or informal work exceeded the proportion having permanent typical employment (23.5%). In fact, typical waged employment was almost entirely absent from all places except for the city of Preveza, where many immigrants were able to find a stable contract, mostly in small manufacturing and certain commercial activities. Atypical employment was certainly common in the city, but it was even more common in smaller municipalities, with the exception of the community of Kranea. Finally, informal employment was relatively uncommon in the capital city but more common in less urbanized and rural entities, since most immigrants in the agricultural sector were informal workers (see Table 2).

In the rural parts of Kranea, Louros, and Thesprotiko, the local economy is heavily dependent upon the agricultural sector, which in turn draws upon many informally employed immigrant workers who are engaged on a periodic basis. In the case of the tourist spot of Parga, employment was largely a combination of atypical (mostly seasonal and hourly-paid) employment in the service

Table 2: Atypical and informal employment amongst immigrants working in the municipalities of Preveza, 2008

Municipality	(1) Total immigrant population	(2) Number economically active	(3) Proportion unemployed	(4) Number employed	(5) Employed in typical work	(6) Employed in atypical work	(7) Self- employed	(8) Employed in informal work
Preveza	2,151	1,468	15.4%	1,242	42.5%	47.4%	1.9%	8.1%
Anogeto	28	16	0.0%	16	0.0%	68.8%	0.0%	31.3%
Zalongo	257	168	0.0%	168	1.2%	50.0%	0.0%	48.8%
Thesprotiko	135	104	1.0%	103	2.9%	46.6%	0.0%	50.5%
Louros	191	83	0.0%	83	2.4%	39.8%	0.0%	57.8%
Parga	337	222	0.5%	221	1.8%	56.6%	1.8%	39.8%
Fanari	429	282	0.4%	281	0.4%	52.0%	2.5%	45.2%
Filippiada	255	145	0.7%	144	0.0%	90.3%	2.1%	7.6%
Kranea (community)	43	39	0.0%	39	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
Total Preveza Prefecture	3,826	2,527	9.1%	2,297	23.5%	50.8%	1.7%	24.1%

Source: Prefecture of Preveza, 2008.

sector and informal work arrangements in the primary sector. Finally, in the capital city, a minority of immigrants were employed in informal hourly-paid and seasonal work. Most, however, were employed atypically, mainly as fixed-term and hourly-paid and seasonal workers who were engaged in commerce, small industries, and construction.

During the 2011 follow-up survey, the total number of immigrants who were still located in the study area was 3,429. That means that by 2011, 397 out of the 3,826 immigrants (10.4%) who lived and worked in Preveza's municipalities in 2008 had moved into another area of Greece, moved into another host country, returned to Albania, died, or simply disappeared from the statistics. Providing more data on the reasons for this reduction is beyond the scope of this study, which focuses on issues of (changing) employment forms among immigrants still residing in the area. Nevertheless, it can be roughly estimated, according to the key informants interviewed, that more than half of the immigrants who left between 2008 and 2011 had returned to Albania while the rest had moved either into neighboring Greek cities or to Italy. According to those interviewed, the main reason for this movement was the recession in the Greek economy.

The follow-up survey revealed that the vast majority of immigrants who continued to live in the area in 2011 (97.2%) were still employed as salaried laborers and that the share of self-employed (2.8%) remained very low (although it had increased slightly). The unemployment rate among immigrants had dramatically increased in the prefecture between 2008 and 2011 (from 9.1% to 14.1%) and the capital city was hardest hit (seeing an increase from 15.4% to 21.5%). These trends align with the high increases in unemployment across all cities and regions of Greece.

Among employed immigrant workers, atypical employment remained widespread (47% of immigrant workers), as did informal employment (33.1%), though the former had slightly decreased and the latter—importantly—had increased. The proportion of immigrants employed in atypical or informal work had further expanded when compared to the proportion with permanent typical employment (17.5%). This latter reduction almost exclusively reflects the fall of typical waged employment in the city of Preveza, where many immigrants have lost their jobs since 2008 and are currently unemployed or informally employed. Atypical employment remained common in the city but it was even more common in smaller municipalities, with the exception of the community of Kranea. Finally, informal employment remained relatively uncommon in the capital city (though it was more than three times more common than it used to be) and in Filippiada but was more common in less urbanized and rural entities, since most immigrants in the agricultural sector were informal workers (see Table 3). Nonetheless, the rate of informal employees had increased in seven out of the nine municipalities examined.

Table 3: Atypical and informal employment amongst immigrants working in the municipalities of Preveza, 2011

Municipality	(1) Total immigrant population	(2) Number economically active	(3) Proportion unemployed	(4) Number employed	(5) Employed in typical work	(6) Employed in atypical work	(7) Self- employed	(8) Employed in informal work
Preveza	2,002	1,378	21.5%	1,082	30.5%	40.7%	2.8%	26.0%
Anogeto	28	13	7.7%	12	0.0%	58.3%	0.0%	41.7%
Zalongo	219	145	1.4%	143	2.1%	48.3%	0.0%	49.6%
Thesprotiko	106	84	2.4%	82	2.9%	46.6%	0.0%	50.5%
Louros	156	69	4.3%	66	0.0%	36.6%	3.0%	60.4%
Parga	329	200	4.5%	191	2.1%	51.9%	2.1%	43.9%
Fanari	347	231	0.9%	229	0.9%	62.0%	3.5%	33.6%
Filippiada	213	126	4.0%	121	0.0%	80.6%	2.5%	16.9%
Kranea (community)	29	29	0.0%	29	0.0%	3.4%	0.0%	96.6%
Total Preveza Prefecture	3,429	2,275	14.1%	1,955	17.5%	47.0%	2.4%	33.1%

Source: Author's survey, 2011.

When these findings are compared with available Labor Force Survey data for 2011 regarding employment forms for the entire population of Preveza prefecture (i.e., natives and immigrants), some interesting differences emerge that are related to the quite unequal and socially stratified ways in which immigrants have been incorporated into the labor market. The three most striking of these differences are those found in the rates of typical/permanent employment (close to 50% for the whole population, while only 17.5% for immigrants), self-employment (more than 16% for the whole population, as compared to 2.4% for the immigrants), and informal employment (roughly estimated to be less than 20%, as compared to 33.1% for the immigrants).

In summary, in the prefecture as a whole, atypical contracts were found across all the different sectors of the local economy and all the different municipalities of the prefecture. The main trends brought to the fore for immigrants by the ongoing recession, though, were the high increase in unemployment and informal employment combined with a decrease in typical employment. The rate of atypical employment had also fallen, but atypical forms of employment were still undertaken by four out of every ten immigrants who were either officially or unofficially involved in the labor market. Moreover, a clear distinction existed between those forms of atypical contracts prevalent in the crisis-hit construction sector (mainly fixed-term and seasonal employment) and other forms that operated in the service sector (such as part-time and hourly-paid agreements). In the latter case, a divide existed between the most urbanized municipalities (where forms such as part-time employment and fixed-term contracts flourished) and the rural communities (where seasonal employment was heavily utilized) (see Tables 2 and 3). Informal arrangements were also found across the different sectors of the local economy and in the different municipalities. Here, however, there is a major difference between urban and rural areas: while the agricultural sector can usually absorb the vast majority of those who are informally engaged, the urban areas in this study, which are less able to absorb informal workers, actually had quite high rates of immigrants involved in informal work, except for the cases of the capital city and Filippiada, where the rate of informal work was below 10%.

Flexicurity's relevance for immigrant workers

To contextualize the above data within the Southern EU socio-political framework and show the relevance of flexicurity for immigrant workers, we need to stress that the implementation of flexicurity policies has been an inherently geographical project, one originating in the core of the EU's political economy and then spreading across various different spatial scales (i.e., from the local and regional to the international level) (Overbeek 2003; Wilthagen and Tros 2004; Schmidt 2005). The interconnection between flexicurity and immigrants can be

revealed by tracing the history of flexicurity back to the formation of the political and social agenda of the EU. In this light, the policy of flexicurity appears as a redesign of the European social model, involving the transformation of national labor markets and employment protection rules. Its origin can be found in the European Employment Strategy (EES), itself a set of guidelines derived from the priorities that were included in the 1991 Treaty on European Union (informally known as the Maastricht Treaty), the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997), and the 2000 Lisbon Strategy. Throughout the past two decades or so of neoliberal-inspired reform of the European Community, employment policy has gradually been subordinated to the macroeconomic stability and inflation-restrictive goals institutionalized by the Treaties and the Strategy. As a result, as Likic-Brboric indicates (2010:108), the EES encompasses several contradictory measures as it tries to tie competitiveness, pro-profit policies, and de/re-regulation of existing social and economic norms to the creation of more and better jobs, social inclusion, and the promotion of ethnic and gender equality.

This attempt has proven to be illusionary, however, as the gap between what is needed to generate profits for European capital and what is needed to secure the protection of employees' rights, especially those of vulnerable employees such as immigrants, has continuously widened throughout these years (Schmidt 2005). Hence, as many authors have highlighted (e.g., Likic-Brboric 2010 and Overbeek 2003), the European Commission has strengthened its role in making decisions and implementing policies at different spatial scales while, at the same time, welfare provisions and labor markets have suffered from expenditure savings and extensive flexibilization. This may potentially be attributed to the fact that the globalized patterns of competition and exchange, in which the EU actively participates, are in need of a global labor market. Yet for an EU country or region to be competitive within this global labor market, an unprecedented casualization of labor laws and everyday practices would be needed. This is so because the benchmark standards regarding labor cost and protection are now set by countries like India and China, countries which are both among the EU's basic competitors but also, at the same time, its partners in the global arena. The three basic pillars of the EU's strategy, then—as with other transnational institutions—are privatizing activities that were formerly under state control and ownership; integrating new markets, countries, and regions under the new accumulation imperative; and continuously seeking out cheaper labor, often by systematically undermining laborers' agency (Herod 2001; McGrath-Champ et al. 2010).

In this strategy, immigrant populations are intensively drawn upon as a pool of cheap labor. As depicted above, in the case of Preveza prefecture and its economic and productive priorities, one-third of working immigrants (one-quarter when the recession began) are informally engaged, and thus deprived of any social security provisions, while another 40% are atypically

employed and receive insufficient security provisions. In other words, the already large group of foreign workers facing atypical and risky working conditions, many of whom are excluded from basic social security provisions, such as unemployment benefits, has greatly expanded since the crisis started. Significantly, such a high share of informal and precarious immigrant workers undermines the potential positive outcomes expected from the regularization initiatives that have been implemented by the Greek parliament over the past fifteen years, as immigrants cannot retain their “documented” status when informally employed (King 2005; HMPI 2006; Carletto et al. 2006; Cavounidis 2006; Iosifides et al. 2007; Kasimis 2008).⁹

Previous studies have stressed that the majority of non-EU immigrants seem to have been attracted to urban areas that offer relatively advanced standards of living, at least in terms of services and facilities provided there, and diversified labor markets, despite the higher unemployment and risky conditions found in such areas (Romaniszyn 1996; Psimmenos and Skamnakis 2008). This profile contrasts with small municipalities and rural areas, which offer more employment opportunities and where unemployment is low and the cost of living is sufficiently cheap that immigrants could save and remit back home on a more frequent basis (Labrianidis and Sykas 2011; Gavalas et al. 2012). Our study confirms that such a pattern of uneven dispersion of the immigrant population, which in fact reflects the uneven division of labor between urban and rural societies, can be found within Preveza prefecture as well. Yet in the capital city, which seems relatively prosperous in comparison to the rural areas and which is the most-favored destination for immigrants, prospects for getting a permanent full-time job have appreciably diminished since 2008. Hence, as outlined above, unemployment has substantially increased, even among those immigrants who have traditionally enjoyed lower unemployment rates in Greece than have Greek citizens. On the other hand, the urban labor structures, which are typically segmented between a primary and a secondary sector, still offer some permanent jobs for the immigrants, while primary labor markets and permanent jobs are almost absent from small-scale farms and the rural areas studied.¹⁰

These remarks, though, must be further contextualized within the framework of the productive priorities of the Greek economy and the diversified regional specializations therein. In fact, at least until recently, during the past two decades a great need has arisen for temporary semi-skilled workers in various regions of the country. These laborers have been assigned to a number of activities, from small rural occupations in distant villages to peripheral cities like Preveza to working on Olympic Games infrastructure in Athens and Attica. Their cheap labor was an important factor contributing to the Greek state’s achievement of the European Monetary Union’s objectives. It also bolstered both the profit rates of middle-sized capital and the overall

accumulation process in the country, at least until the 2009 economic crisis surfaced (Romaniszyn 1996; Fakiolas and King 1998; HMPI 2006).

The established, though not officially declared, policy towards Albanian and other immigrants—i.e., seeing them as a means whereby Greece could meet its EMU objectives, and thus turning a blind eye to their plight—has been central, then, in their treatment by Greek employers as cheap and easily exploitable laborers. As a result, the institutional framework for regulating immigration in a manner that protects immigrants from abuse and yet allows Greece to gain the benefits of their toil still continues to be insufficient, and the necessary mechanisms to improve it are corrupted. Despite periodic efforts at the forced repatriation of immigrants designed to retain an “appropriate” number of foreign workers in the country, continued loose border controls and geographical proximity facilitate relatively easy access into Greece and simply encourage new waves of undocumented workers who are ripe for exploitation. Through such a policy a sufficient mechanism for keeping immigrants’ labor cost at a low level has been developed by various Greek governments (Levinson 2005; Cavounidis 2006; HMPI 2008). Similar measures by the government have also recently been brought to bear on immigrants who have arrived from African and Asian countries (Triantafyllidou and Maroukis 2009; Triantafyllidou 2013).

One additional factor facilitating the high degree of atypical and informal employment among immigrants is the frequent back-and-forth movement between hosting and sending economies in which such immigrants engage. As many researchers have shown, immigrants’ remittances, in both material and social form (i.e., social and technical capabilities developed by immigrants in Greece and transferred through various means back to their homeland), combined with other direct inflows to their homelands, can dramatically improve their families’ lives in their countries of origin (Nicholson 2004; Vullnetari 2007; ACIT 2012). Consequently, many Albanians oscillate between Albania and Greece, transferring money and skills from the latter to the former. Other researchers have pointed to an interplay among circular migration, integration in the hosting economy, and reintegration in Albania (Triantafyllidou and Maroukis 2009; Mai 2011). Hence, most Albanians are quite spatially mobile across different localities of the hosting economy, or between the hosting and the sending economy (Gialis 2012). This spatial flexibility is intertwined with their employment flexibility, as the present study demonstrates. However, as the crisis escalates in Greece and other destination regions develop as possibilities, immigrants’ incomes and employment arrangements are jeopardized. They are therefore obliged to continue, and in some cases to intensify, their back-and-forth movements in order to renegotiate the emerging economic, social, and institutional difficulties of being in Greece while fulfilling old and new obligations in their home countries (family duties, house building, and so

forth). At the same time, opportunities in immigrants' home countries' labor markets are insufficient and offer little hope for immigrants' immediate and permanent return, as a recent study reveals (ACIT 2012). All these movements often blur the line between legal and undocumented status, as in the case of previously regularized immigrants who visit Greek regions frequently even though they are not in a position to renew their residence and work permits (Vullnetari 2007).

As the evidence presented above indicates, many of the immigrants who used to live and work in Preveza prior to 2008 have now left and a significant number of them have returned to Albania, as was verified by key informants during the 2011 empirical research. Although further research is needed on the return waves to Albania being generated by the Greek crisis (see ACIT 2012), our data indicate that the most likely to return are those who have very atypical or poorly-paid informal jobs, as well as those who are undocumented or are close to retirement age. Only the latter (i.e., those at a relatively older age) would return voluntarily, while the other two groups might get involved in circular migration or future ongoing migration (Kasimis 2012). For example, in the tourist town of Parga, where seasonal employment prevails, the time spent by Albanians in their places of origin has increased since the 2009 recession, signaling that many immigrants tend to temporarily return home during periods of unemployment and/or when their other duties allow them to do so.

For those immigrants who do not return home, evidence shows that high unemployment rates lead many who have recently lost their jobs and therefore cannot renew their work permits to turn to informal work instead. Thus, many of those who were hosted in Preveza prefecture's other municipalities have now moved towards the city, where living as an undocumented person is relatively easy. Indeed, frequent movement between various forms of atypical employment and different types of informal work is a common daily reality in many sectors of Greek local labor markets. One typical example of this kind of movement can be found in the construction sector, where immigrants may be employed as seasonal workers long enough to obtain the minimum required contributions to social security funds but who then, though officially fired at the end of the season, nevertheless continue to work as undocumented laborers so that their employers can avoid the cost of contributions to social security funds (Vullnetari 2007). However, although the construction industry has historically been something of a sponge for immigrant workers caught in such a situation, since the crisis began construction activity has been reduced by almost 40% across Greece and in Preveza. This building recession has dramatically affected the employment of immigrants in the sector.

In other cases, such as in the tourist industry or other tertiary activities, immigrant workers are officially employed on a part-time basis, even though many are actually working full-time. Similarly, such workers may be

subject to unofficial—and in many cases unpaid—overtime, as much in secondary as in tertiary sector jobs. There are, then, numerous and widely-known informal practices being implemented across the Greek space-economy that help keep labor costs low. Through such means, a fluid employment situation has emerged in Greek labor markets, one that periodically turns immigrants from flexicure employees (even if with few security provisions) to informal, non-secured workers and back again (Vullnetari 2007; Gialis 2011). Moreover, the ongoing recession has contributed to the expansion of the relative share of those informally engaged relative to the total number of employed immigrants.

Overall, efforts to diffuse flexicurity across member states (i.e., efforts to couple flexibility with security) have not realized the EU's and national governments' promises made concerning how this would bring better working and living conditions. Flexibility, the promotion of atypical employment, and the loosening of firing restrictions and other protective measures have tended to work against the enhancement of security provisions. This has been the case especially in rural communities characterized by tourist and commercial activities, as well as in urban communities with secondary and tertiary sector activities. This failure to achieve increased security for workers has been particularly evident in vulnerable socio-economic groups like immigrants and in crisis-hit Southern European localities, such as Preveza. Consequently, as far as many immigrants (and others) are concerned, EU policy since the 1990s seems to have been designed not so much to create flexicurity but, rather, to promote greater internal labor mobility for EU citizens through the Schengen agreements. At the same time, member states have tried to implement restrictive measures against increasing migratory waves from outside the EU through, for example, the Dublin Convention (2003), which has regulated asylum seekers on a pan-European level and helped contribute to the construction of what some have called "Fortress Europe" (Triantafyllidou and Maroukis 2009; Kasimis 2012).

Measures taken towards de-regulation and flexibilization, then, appear to be working counter to other provisions of the EES that claim to seek to reduce discrimination, racism, and social exclusion (Likic-Brboric 2010). Moreover, by commonly neglecting the phenomenon of informal employment, flexicurity policies reproduce the methodological and analytical weakness of mainstream economists and regional development theorists, who tend to theorize informal work and production as an anomaly found in peripheral regions, one that should sooner or later disappear following the greater penetration and expansion of capitalist production in such regions. Yet, as Hudson (2012:3) observes, the formal and the informal are continuously locked "into a systematic symbiotic relationship." Crisis thus reproduces informal employment by putting pressure on formal employment. In the case of Preveza, for example, many of the small- to medium-sized firms that face declining productivity and

profitability have “no other option” but to relegate some of their immigrant workers to informal status.

The contradictory character of such measures, at least as far as their consequences for immigrants in the EU are concerned, is revealed by recent economic restructurings. Increasingly, the need for cheaper labor is being met either through the devaluation of domestic labor, a process that is intensifying in contemporary Greece due to the crisis, or through globalizing the patterns of labor migration—seeking cheap labor not just from the Balkans but also from much wider afield (Overbeek 2003; Likic-Brboric 2010; Gialis 2014). The decline of traditional industrial activities, the insufficient employment prospects found in the booming new technology industries, and the expansion of a tertiary sector in need of low-skilled employees are just a few of the fundamental factors that have promoted the employment of cheap immigrant labor across the EU. This is especially true for Southern countries, which have been traditionally characterized by weak socio-productive and welfare structures that support typical waged employment (Leontidou 1993; Psimmenos 2007).

Although the basic notion behind the promotion of atypical employment—which is by now the norm for immigrants in peripheral cities and regions like Preveza—is that firms would hire more part-time or temporary workers instead of firing or cutting wages, in actuality atypical employment is in many cases being used to undermine the rights and earnings of workers in typical waged employment. As a general rule, undocumented workers, whose numbers are increasing in the post-crisis period, were and still are used as a means to diminish the wages and to de/re-regulate the contracts of both atypical and typical workers. Consequently, having a basic level of employment security in the labor market would normally require some form of intervention (e.g., sufficient labor inspectorates to check for prohibited informal employment of undocumented immigrants). However, such intervention contradicts efforts to develop ideally-functioning free labor markets based upon free agreements and minimal state interference. Indeed, the tolerance of informal employment by state authorities, and their passivity with regard to labor law violations for atypical employees, is a common reality in Southern European localities, as well as in many other European countries, one easily seen in both the data collected here as well as in the stories told by thousands of Balkan, African, and Asian workers who have recently arrived and have already been informally employed in shops and everyday activities (Maroukis et al. 2011; Triantafyllidou 2013; Ioannides et al. 2014).¹¹

Taken as a whole, then, the growth in the numbers of atypically and informally employed immigrants can be attributed to the contradictory character of the current socio-political and migratory policies of EU nations. These nations seek out cheap labor and try to de-regulate and re-regulate their labor markets to encourage flexibilization, all the while implementing strict border controls.

At the same time, they actively participate in a globalized division of labor that enhances emigration pressures on less developed (local/regional) economies.

Tentative conclusions and some policy remarks

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the empirical data above. First, immigrants very much serve as what Samers (1998) has termed a “spatial vent” for the Greek economy. They migrate to Greece when times are good but when times are not so good many—particularly those who can only find atypical or poorly paid informal jobs and those who are undocumented, too old to work, or who have pressing family matters to face in their home communities—often return to their countries of origin, especially those who originate from neighboring countries (such as Albania). The Greek state has been complicit in the creation of this spatial vent as the economy increasingly came to rely upon immigrants during the early 2000s. However, its complicity has been marked by contradictions. Hence, as the crisis has unfolded, the government has conducted numerous “sweeps” to deport more than half a million undocumented immigrants. At the same time, however, the dependence of the Greek economy upon these workers means that not much effort has been made to close the border with Albania with any degree of efficiency and border controls generally remain relatively loose. This raises the question of whether the periodic sweeps of immigrants are anything more than efforts to satisfy domestic concerns on the part of the xenophobic political right about immigrants flooding into Greece.¹²

Second, as the crisis has unfolded, the structure of immigrant employment in Greece has changed. In particular, while atypical employment has declined, the number of immigrants found in informal employment has increased, in direct contradiction to the design of flexicurity policies in the EU.

Third, the data raise questions about the relationship between immigration and the availability of different types of work. Do immigrants come to Greece and other Southern European countries because of the availability of atypical and informal work, or does their presence encourage more employers to turn to this type of employment relationship? Or, as is perhaps more likely, are these two phenomena—more immigrants and more non-typical employment arrangements—symbiotically related, such that each fuels the growth of the other? If that is the case, then what is the historical geography of this relationship? Are there some places where immigration is a response to the growth of non-typical employment and others where immigration is the cause of this growth? How do these processes play out over time and across space? Answers to such questions are important to find if the policy of furthering flexicurity is to be successful.

These conceptual points concerning the spatial vent and the ways in which the crisis has shaped patterns of immigrant employment in ways contrary to the hopes of EU policy makers lead us to some remarks on policy that might offer broader lessons to migration experts and those charged with making flexicurity work. For instance, regularization programs have often been seen as the main pathways for helping undocumented immigrants escape irregular status and become citizens of a host country. This has certainly been the case in Greece. Nevertheless, a significant number of immigrants remain undocumented or will soon become undocumented due to their insufficient employment status, as the story of Preveza tells us. This situation challenges the very premises of efforts to extend flexicure labor markets.

Combining flexibility with security has long been seen as a rather difficult task to undertake, especially in the context of the EU's ongoing fiscal and economic crisis. This has unquestionably been shown to be the case in the region examined in our research, as security has certainly not been achieved among informally employed and undocumented citizens in Preveza prefecture. This failure reinforces the view that undocumented immigrants must be regularized for ideally-functioning flexicure labor markets to be brought about, although whether this can happen without a significant tightening of border controls and the elimination of much of the undocumented labor upon which Greece—and, by extension, the EU—relies is open to debate. Similarly, although under the EU's flexicurity policy atypical employees should be protected against systematic labor law violations that leave them flexible yet insecure, it is obvious that flexicurity policies have to be customized for specific migratory populations. In particular, they have to be diversified according to the different needs and realities of the two distinct migratory groups found in Southern EU regions, namely, the Albanians and other populations migrating from the post-socialist countries of Eastern Europe, and the newer immigrants coming from African and Asian countries.

Eliminating trends towards irregularity requires the appropriate regulation of certain inherent problems in the Greek institutional framework. One of these problems is the interval of time—often at least a year—between when an immigrant is invited to work in a region (a process called *μετάκληση* [*metaklisi*]) and when the paperwork that will allow this to occur is successfully routed through the Greek bureaucracy. This is because, under the Greek Law on Immigration (2910/2001), as amended by Law 3386/2005, non-EU nationals must be invited by a Greek employer to take up employment in Greece in a specific position and in a specific place of work. This invitation has to be pre-approved by the appropriate authorities and, once it is approved, the employer must post the job description with the Greek Unemployment Fund. After three months, assuming there is no qualified Greek applicant for the position, the Fund issues the relevant certificate, which must then be submitted to the

Labor Inspectorate. The Inspectorate will then approve or reject the invitation. These work permits are granted for anywhere between one month and one year, depending on the position advertized, but they usually last between six and twelve months, with the possibility of renewal (Georgeopoulos and Issaias 2008:195). Unfortunately, the longer it takes for approval, the less likely immigrants—many of whom are economically desperate—can wait for the process to be completed and thus the more likely are they to take up irregular work conducted beyond the watchful eye of the Greek state.

Another major problem is the fact that, in many cases, residence and work permits cannot be renewed owing to the difficulty of meeting minimum requirements. The requirements for family reunification likewise often cannot be met, as immigrants must prove that they earn a minimum annual wage and pay social contributions equivalent to 150 full-time working days. This, too, encourages immigrants to undertake irregular employment. All of these phenomena suggest that, rather than a unified and functioning regime of flexicurity, a regime of disadvantageous atypical employment characterized by informality and insecurity is likely to be a widespread reality for immigrant laborers in Greek regional labor markets in the years to come.

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NOTES

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²In fact, flexicurity and changes in Greek labor markets is an issue that should be intensively explored, as a vast number of both Greek and immigrant employees have become engaged in flexible and atypical employment forms since the economic crisis began (Gialis 2014).

³Flexicurity is seen by many policy makers within the EU as a means whereby European labor markets can respond to growing calls for flexibility yet also retain social and economic security for workers. In 2007, the European Commission launched a public initiative—“Mission for Flexicurity”—whose mandate was to assist member states, in cooperation with social partners, in promoting the Common Principles of flexicurity at the national and sub-national level and to consider ways to facilitate the integration of flexicurity in the processes and tools of the 2008–2010 cycle of the Lisbon Strategy and European Employment Strategy, particularly with regard to its Integrated Guidelines (European Commission 2008; European Commission 2009). The Lisbon Strategy, adopted in 2000 by the European Council, was intended to make the EU the most competitive world economy by 2010 by redressing low productivity and stagnation of economic growth. Its main fields of intervention were innovation and economic, social, and environmental renewal and sustainability. The European Employment Strategy aims at the formation of a common framework for EU member countries to discuss and coordinate their employment policies. In this framework, national and EU authorities are obliged to produce annual official policy documents (such as the Employment Guidelines and National Reform Programs) while, for its part, the European Commission produces the Joint Employment Report and the Country Specific Recommendations.

⁴An increasing influx of immigrants entering Greece across the Ionian Sea and the border of northwestern Greece—specifically Epirus—has been recorded since the deployment of “Frontex” (the EU’s agency for the monitoring and integrated management of borders) over the past three years or so. It has intensified since the construction of a fence in the northeastern part of the border, at the Evros River crossing to Turkey, which has obviously encouraged incoming immigrants to seek alternate routes (Kasimis 2012).

⁵The follow-up study was carried out in 2011 to evaluate whether or not there have been significant changes in the total number and the employment situation of the immigrants since the initial 2008 study. It was based upon the registries of the 2008 study. The sample studied was representative and selected based upon a randomly stratified selection process. Owing to the fact that the immigrants’ density varies greatly across Preveza prefecture, stratified sampling was used to make sure that estimates were reflective of the size of the various immigrant populations in the different municipalities of the region and that comparisons between municipalities were statistically allowed. To avoid very thin strata, some small municipalities were merged and the population was divided into five strata (Preveza, Zalongo and Louros, Parga and Fanari, Thesprotiko and Kranea, and Filippiada and Anogeio). With a population of 3,826 non-EU immigrants in 2008, and a confidence level of 95%, the size of the sample that needed to be studied was 249 immigrants in total. Immigrants were contacted and re-questioned based upon their known addresses. Once again, help provided from immigrants’ friends and relatives was invaluable.

⁶Those of Greek origin are largely Greeks who remained on the other side of the new borders formed after the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 or are members of Greek-speaking populations that historically lived in countries of the former USSR, such as Georgia, and in the Pontus region of Turkey (Hionidou 2013).

⁷“Voriopeirotos” (“Northern Epirotos”) are ethnic Greeks who come from Southern Albania. They are viewed under Greek immigration policy as “temporary visitors” and the state did not seek to facilitate their permanent settlement, at least during the 1990s. This was mainly because of the fact that the Greek state wanted Northern Epirotos to stay in their villages, which are considered by many Greek nationalists to constitute part of Greece’s “lost territories.” Through such practices Northern Epirotos were treated as a counterbalance to the historical claims of Albanian nationalists regarding the presence of Tsamides in Epirus and Greece. On the other

hand, “Rosopontioi” (“Pontians from Russia”) are ethnic Greeks who were given the “right to return” to Greece after the collapse of state-socialism in the USSR and Eastern Europe. Those who took advantage of this policy were called “palinnostoúntes” (“repatriates”) and were supported through a series of paternalistic practices designed to encourage their integration into Greece. Hence, soon after they arrived in the country they gained the status of documented immigrants and had residence and work permits, while special programs were designed and financed for their education, health, and familial reproduction. Additionally, special housing units were built for them and their geographical dispersion within the country was politically regulated in order to enhance the “Greekness” of several peripheral localities, such as Preveza. Such a discriminatory practice, during a time when hundreds of thousands of other immigrants were treated as invaders, was a conscious policy of the Greek political elites to control and manipulate the votes of the “palinnostoúntes.”

⁸ Location Quotient (LQ) is a widely used economic base analysis indicator that compares the local or regional characteristics of a phenomenon to those of the regional or national economy as a whole in an attempt to identify local or regional concentrations of specific characteristics. When the LQ value is (much) higher than 1.0, an important concentration of the phenomenon under study is identified.

⁹ Two laws that have sought to regularize undocumented immigrants have been adopted in Greece since the early 1990s, one in 1998 and the other in 2001. They were designed to deal with the escalating waves of non-authorized immigrants entering the country. For a brief analysis see Levinson (2005).

¹⁰ According to Kasimis (2008), flexible atypical work by immigrants across rural localities of Greece is in one way or another related to a new rurality pattern. This new pattern is, in turn, an outcome of a significant reduction in the indigenous population, difficult working conditions in the agricultural sector, and changing socio-cultural patterns that tend to close the gap between rural and urban ways of life. The latter transformation, currently under threat because of the crisis and its differential impact on rural and urban societies, has been referred to as the de-agriculturalization and relative urbanization of Greek rural society (Kasimis 2008).

¹¹ Indicative is the case of immigrant agricultural workers engaged in the strawberry fields of Nea Manolada, in the region of Peloponnesus, located about 250 kilometers from Preveza (Kathimerini 2013). In April 2013, these immigrant workers were shot at by foremen after demanding back pay. The supervisors opened fire on a crowd of about 200 mostly Bangladeshi who were demanding wages that had not been paid. As a result of the immediate reactions of unionists and the association of Bangladeshi workers (during the past decade or so there has been a slow, if increasing, trend towards the formation of associations amongst immigrants living in Greece), the Greek Minister of Employment promised that the immigrants would not face deportation, despite their “illegal” status. According to unionists who supported the immigrants and the reports of Labor Inspectors, many of the immigrants feel trapped and with no other choice but to carry on working there. In other words, the EU (anti)immigration policies and the crisis in Greece are contributing to the reproduction of informal employment in the Southern EU.

¹² These are called *σκούπα* (*skoupa*)—a word that literally means a broom but is used in the sense of sweep-ups. In 2008, almost 40,000 immigrants were subject to forced repatriation across the Greek-Albanian border. In addition, according to the Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs and the Greek police, between 2008 and 2012 more than 550,000 undocumented immigrants were arrested in Greece (data provided in late-February 2013). This number equals the total number of legal immigrants residing in the country.

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