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# *The Greek dilemma in tertiary education : free market policies for studies abroad and state monopoly at home<sup>1</sup>*

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Nine out of ten of the 2million. pupils, students and trainees in Greece (population 10.4 million) attend tuition-free state schools, have their textbooks gratis and about 3%-4% have full board free of charge in student hostels or receive scholarships. Despite successive increases, total expenditure on education is between 6.2%-6.8% of GNP<sup>2</sup> and between 3.8%-4.2% of the public budget, lower than in most other EU countries (Min. of Educ 1995:3). Starting from very low levels forty five years ago, the Greek economy advanced rapidly in 1950-1979 (about 6.2% annually on the average) but has virtually stagnated since then (1.3% annually), while the public debt exceeds now the value of the Gross Domestic Product (Nat. Stat. Service of Greece).

Slow economic growth has caused a rise of registered unemployment to 10.5% of the labor force (420,000 persons at the end of 1995). Yet the country hosts 300,000 to 450,000 economic immigrants (nine out of ten without work-permits), and still faces scarcities for unskilled labor, because local

people avoid strenuous, seasonal, irregular and low social prestige jobs, even at wages equal to those for university graduates.

Against a stagnated and in recent years reduced demand for graduate labor, the supply is still growing. The result is that Greece has now nearly twice as many fully qualified medical doctors (1 in 320 inhabitants) and lawyers as other EE countries, 30 or more graduates apply for every new tenured job in the public sector and there is also a high pressure of supply for employment in the private sector. Yet expert services of all kinds and levels are in short skilled supply in both the private and the public sector but this message is slow to school-leavers who plan their job careers. Nevertheless, there are indications that an increasing number of high-school leavers, students and young graduates have started to calculate seriously the costs and benefits from studies, at home or abroad.

This article analyses the main factors which cause a large number of Greek to study abroad, and examines the structure of student migration by country and level of education, as well as the views of students about the host countries. It also tries to evaluate both tangible and intangible costs and benefits of the student migration at the individual and the national level.

Part of the information used comes from official statistics and relevant academic research. Most of it however derives from 65 interviews : 50 with returnees who studied abroad in the last four decades, and 15 in-depth interviews, 5 with students preparing to go abroad and 10 with recent returnees from Western and (former) Socialist countries.

## 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN GREECE

**Expansion and structural weaknesses** : The multi-fold increase in the number of the AEI<sup>3</sup> students, from about 15,000 in the early 1950s to about 215,000 in the 1990s (about half of them females), reflects the rapid expansion of the educational system at all its levels. Since the mid-1980s however the increase has been marginal in the older 5-6 AEIs and in the last five years completely halted in practically all the 19 AEIs, all a state monopoly and tuition-free<sup>4</sup>.

**The strict numerous clausus in all faculties** : About 170,000 candidates compete in June every year in the state general entrance examinations for about 22,000 available places (plus about 1,400 for the military, police and fire brigade schools, and since 1994 58 for the University of Cyprus). About 18,000 of those with a less satisfactory performance qualify for registration in the TEIs<sup>5</sup>. Preparation for those examinations is mostly done in private tutorial colleges, costs US \$ 2,000-5,000 per pupil and lasts 1-2 years. Emigrants holding Greek passports take separate (and more lenient) examinations in September. Non-Greek citizens are chosen on the basis of formal qualifications, recommendation letters and interviews, but both Greek and foreign candidates must have at least 12 years schooling.

**Related concern for post-graduate studies** : Post-graduate degrees are still rare since the majority of these 2 to 3 year post-graduate programs only began in 1992<sup>6</sup> (See Tables 1 and 2 in Annex). Post-graduate courses used to be tuition-free but at present about a third of them charge annual fees of Drs. 300,000 (about US \$ 1,200). The prere-

quisite that, among others, all students have a fair command of a foreign language, the sharp increase in the number of courses and the fees charged in some of them have reduced the number of candidates. Until a couple of years ago, about half of the post-graduate degrees were Ph.Ds, granted mainly to the medical students who have a direct professional interest in showing their titles on their visiting cards.

**Comparable with other EU countries institutional arrangements** : Most AEI courses last 8 semesters, in medicine 12. In engineering it is 10, the last one for a diploma dissertation. For medical doctors a two-year practice is required for specialization. Graduates in law must have at least 18 months practice in a law firm and pass the examinations held by the Barrister's Association before they are allowed to practice. To teach at any primary or secondary school graduates must attend a course in pedagogical subjects (1-2 years), while graduates in engineering acquire their professional license after examinations at the Technical Chamber of Greece (65,000 members).

Only after additional subjects or examinations taken at the Greek Universities are degrees from the three-year engineering courses in Britain or the four-year ones in other countries recognized as equivalent to the Greek ones. Graduates from some other foreign universities are also required to take additional subjects.

The teacher/student ratio for the "regular" students is about 1 to 12 (9,345 teachers in 1993/4) and is close to the EU average. Although with a considerable time-lag, the subjects offered have increased about three-fold in the last four decades and the pace has accelerated since the mid-1980s<sup>7</sup>.

**Continuing centralization of studies :**

Over 80% of all students study in Athens and Thessaloniki and 55% of them at the University of Athens and that of Thessaloniki, about 34,000 in each (Table 3). Having had the monopoly until 1925, Athens shares now universities with about twenty more cities all over the country, although it still teaches nearly half of all students in its 7 AEIs. About 35% of the inhabitants of Greece (about 3.6m) live in Athens, capital of a highly centralized state, a strong point of attraction for both Greeks and foreigners in the last 150 years. About an equal percentage of the industrial and overall economic activity also derives from the Athens area. In its 2 AEIs Thessaloniki teaches nearly one third of all students.

**Low percentage of alien students :** In 1990/1 6,575 non-Greek citizens, (5.3% "regular" students) were registered in the Greek universities, about 5,500 in the universities of Athens, Thrace and Thessaloniki. The majority were however Greek Cypriots (2,245) and other ethnic Greeks (2,924), 50% females. Those of non-Greek origins were less than 1% of the regular students (1,124) (data from Min. of Educ. 1995).

Intensive courses are organized for foreign students invited by the American Union and some other educational associations, while a recent regulation of the Ministry of Education (Press release on March 12, 1995) specifies that intensive summer courses in Archeology, Ancient Greek History and similar subjects taught mainly to foreigners will be organized in Greek AEIs. An open university will also be established as for 1996 (Min. of Educ. 1995).

**Low social prestige of the TEI studies :** Established in the early 1970s, the TEIs teach now about 92% of non-

university students (78,000 in 1993\4, nearly half females, see Karmas K. 1995). The overwhelming majority had aspired to secure an AEI place in the common state entrance examinations and still aim at an AEI degree.

**Non-state institutions in tertiary education :**

In a dozen fee-charging three and four-year colleges associated with fully accredited universities abroad, humanities and social sciences are taught in English in Athens and Thessaloniki to over 10,000 students, who also qualify for deferment in the compulsory military service. Although highly appreciated in the private sector of the economy, the degrees granted and the post-graduate ones acquired abroad on this basis are not recognized by the Greek. In fact courses and degrees in new subjects (from mathematical economics to sociology, psychology and business administration) were been offered by these colleges 5 to 15 years before being introduced in the state schools. If it was not for these colleges more students would have studied abroad.

## **2. GREEK STUDENTS ABROAD**

**Migration movements from and to Greece :**

Like other Mediterranean countries, Greece had a long tradition of sizable emigration until the early 1970s, succeeded by a large number of economic immigrants (a stock of 300,000-450,000 since the late 1980s, nine in ten illegal). (Fakiolas R.1994, Fakiolas/King 1996 and Table 4).

**Studies abroad :** In the last 20 years about 45,000 to 50,000 students<sup>8</sup> per year have studied abroad, making up between 20% and 40% of those studying at home. About one quarter do not resort to the Bank of Greece for

their foreign exchange and therefore have been unregistered (scholars of foreign governments, children of Greek emigrants, of seamen or travel agents et al.). Greece is perhaps the only country with such a high percentage of students abroad (Karmas K. 1985, Lambiri-Dimaki J. 1994, and Tables 1, 5 and 6).

In recent years some students go abroad for a semester or two through the EU programs ERASMUS and COMET. Demand for those places is not very high because few students have the required language proficiency and others cannot afford the supplementary maintenance costs (the COMET program covers fares and offers students about US \$300 monthly). Tedious formalities also play a role. For language reasons relatively few can go now to France (a top priority country when French was taught in almost all secondary schools), to Germany (in which many more Greeks used to study, do research and teach) and to Italy. All these changes have been to the benefit of Britain (Table 5).

**Level of education** : Only about 1 in 5.3 of the registered students in 1993 did post-graduate work (about 1 in 3 in most of the developed countries, 1 in 40 in Italy and 1 in 10 to 1 in 200 in the former socialist countries (Table 7). Most of the rest take under-graduate subjects in a variety of disciplines, which are also now taught in Greece by qualified teachers.

**Changing student numbers in the Western host countries** : In 1982 1 in 3 students abroad were in Italy (14,264), over 30 times more than in the early 1970s. Even Greek consulates in mainland university towns like Perugia were established to deal with the necessary formalities. However in the following decade there was a sharp decline to 5,954 students in 1993 (Tables 5 and 7). The

number of students in France (from 5,443 to 1,965) and Germany (from 3,309 to 1,563) decreased at the same rate. For a number of reasons student numbers in Britain rose from 6,800 in 1982 to 9,168 in 1993. EC regulations Britain, which has a shorter time of studies, abolished in the early 1980s tuition-fees for EEC undergraduates, reduced those for post-graduate studies to about 1,500 pounds sterling annually (2,350 in 1995 but still about half of those in USA). It has also developed active policies to attract Greek students (advertisements, nomination of local foreign language schools as GCE examination centers). Some universities have lowered their entrance requirements and/or tend to keep students longer in the register, while in the early 1990s many polytechnics were upgraded to university level. Additional reasons include the spread in the use of English language, the good reputation traditionally held by many British universities and the relatively low Athens-London air fares.

**Changing student numbers in the (former) socialist countries** : The considerable increase in the number of both registered and unregistered students in the socialist countries owes much to the socialists who have been for over twelve years in government since 1981. Most unregistered students, coming mainly from low income families were on foreign government scholarships, granted through trade unions and left-wing political parties in Greece. Although the number of those scholarships has been reduced sharply in recent years, many students were still attracted to those countries because of the low-cost of studies. Strange as it may sound, studies may cost less in them than in Greece, where, in comparison, living costs for students away from the family are high in all cities and towns with an AEI or TEI.

Traveling costs from Northern Greece to the neighbouring socialist countries can also be lower than those to the middle and southern part of Greece.

**Rumania** : The large number of the Greek students is due to many factors : i) Studies cost only about US \$ 5000 annually : \$ 200-300 monthly for fees, health insurance and full board in rooms for two or three students ; currency exchange in the "free" (albeit illegal !) market at rates 5-10 times higher than the official ones (the difference has been reduced sharply in recent years) ; low charges for food parcels from Greece ; low air fares ; frequent bus services with cheap fares ; traveling in private cars by groups of students. ii) Some high academic standard courses like chemistry, chemical engineering, and oil prospecting, extraction, transportation and refining are of special interest to many Greek students. iii) Close trade relations with Greece, due to extensive economic complementarities, and close demographic and linguistic links (a sizable Greek minority had lived in Rumania until the inter-war period and an equally large number of the population in Northern Greece still use a Rumanian dialect). iv) Active Rumanian policies to attract bi-lingual Greeks : scholarships, exemption from tuition-fees, other incentives (all of which have been sharply reduced in recent years).

**Bulgaria** : The increase in the number of students to nearly 2,000 since 1985 is mainly due to the low cost of studies, the help offered by the universities to the new-comers to learn the Bulgarian language and the low requirements for registration in most universities. Five years ago a private English speaking university with low fees was established in Sofia, returnees have sta-

ted that in subjects not related to politics academic standards have been satisfactory.

**Yugoslavia** : As in Bulgaria this country shares extensive land borders with Greece, making for low traveling costs. In addition it had applied liberal policies long before the recent political reforms, while graduates from inexpensive and relatively "easy" three-year courses were qualified in the 1980s to teach in Greek primary schools. The total number of students must have been considerably higher than that of the registered ones (alone the university of Pristina, South Yugoslavia, taught for many years about 1,200 Greek students). Extensive bribery to employees and teachers has been reported by returnees.

**Hungary** : Returnees appear satisfied with academic standards, facilities and practices, asserting that they face no difficulties in being admitted to post-graduate studies in Western universities. In recent years most foreigners have been taught in English. About the same answers were given by returnees from the former Czechoslovakia.

**USSR** : Statements by returnees and the personal experiences of the author who has lived in Russia since July 1995 confirm that the actual number of students in the USSR was 30, 50, or even 100 times above that of the registered ones. Returnees appear quite satisfied with teachers, students and other local people, as well as with subjects not related to politics. Academic standards however have dropped sharply in all the new independent states formed after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Corruption, including bribery is now quite common, extending far beyond the small and more expensive gifts accep-

ted in the past by employees and many teachers.

### 3. PUSH, PULL AND NETWORK FACTORS FOR STUDENT MIGRATION

In the geographical mobility of students cause and effect, as well as the push, pull and net-work factors inter-mingle more than in the migration for economic, religious or political reasons, as the following three examples indicate:

a) A major cause has been the strict numerous clauses in all faculties of the tertiary education in Greece. The trend for studies abroad has more over been strengthened by the gradual development of a strong pull factor. Many foreign universities and governments have taken special measures to attract Greek students (lenient entrance requirements to give them a chance, preparatory language and other courses, examinations in Greece for those who want to qualify for a place in them). In addition the large pool of the returnees and their numerous alumni associations have created strong net-work factors by providing useful information to prospective students about university requirements and costs involved, and assistance in overcoming settlement difficulties on arrival in the host country.

b) The new subjects introduced by foreign universities have been a strong pull factor for studies abroad. The returnees have strengthened the demand for new specializations in Greece and through their examples developed push factor for more students to study abroad. Returnees with degrees in new subjects in the 1950s and 1960s had difficulties in convincing prospective employers of their usefulness. As years went by, however, demand for specialized

knowledge and experience multiplied and the few who could provide them made good carriers, setting an example for the orientation of the younger ones. Degree courses were offered in a number of these subjects in Greece in 1970's and 80's, but there was a high demand for all specialized graduates until mid 1980's.

The process continues with new degree course being continually introduced into the universities (theatrical and musical studies, journalism, education, economics of health, nursing and many others in the last five years). These enhance the respect employers give them and create a new demand for the related services and facilities for teaching, research, assistantship and technical support. "Supply creates its own demand", according to the familiar law of the French economist Jean Baptiste Say. The country however is catching up gradually with the main developments abroad and the time-lag in introducing new courses becomes shorter.<sup>9</sup>

c) Because studies abroad are costly and require both proficiency in a foreign language and strong motivation, the overwhelming majority of the students come from middle or high income families (the exceptions include students with scholarships and those having preparatory language courses offered mostly by countries in Eastern Europe). Study abroad are considered by many as indispensable for professional advancement, life time earnings and social status. Returnees aspire for their children to have at least a short study-period abroad. In this way studies abroad tend to reproduce differences in income and school attainments among the various social groups and to strengthen the unequal opportunities for higher education which cause social inequality.

They have also weakened the posi-

ve effects of the educational and social policies applied by successive Greek governments since the end of the 1945-49 civil war (expansion of the tuition-free technical and vocational education, establishment of AElS and TEI in more than 35 cities and towns, heavy subsidies to social insurance). Despite them the majority of the students abroad belong to the same social groups as their predecessors in the early post World War II period. About ten departees and recent returnees indicated that they were under "social pressure" to study abroad: "I wanted to become part of that circle because so many in my social environment study abroad or are returnees".

#### **4. INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES, TRAJECTORIES AND EXPERIENCES OF MIGRANT STUDENTS**

It should be emphasized that, being well versed in a foreign language which alone used to be a significant vocational qualification, most of the returnees have had an advantage over the graduates from the Greek AElS. The most successful returnees are those who i) studied new subjects, ii) had a clear academic orientation, iii) before returning home they worked abroad in universities, research institutes, businesses or international organizations.

##### **4.1 SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDENTS ABROAD**

**The low income groups:** The low social groups in terms of family income and educational attainments comprised over 80% of the total population in the 1950s and 1960s and about two thirds of it later on. Yet less than one quarter of the 65 returnees and departees interviewed stated that they come

from those groups and in their overwhelming majority they had studied or intended to study in the (former) socialist countries. They are of various categories : Some belong to or are children of the about 65,000 political refugees who settled in them during or after the 1946-1949 Greek civil war. Many more have been invited by those countries or sent at various times to them by left-wing political parties and trade unions in Greece. Others have been on Greek government scholarships or gone on their own because costs are low, preparatory courses are offered and entrance requirements are not very strict. The few returnees from or departees to Western countries have been those who have managed or hope to earn some income while studying there, children of economic emigrants. Others have been on scholarships, mainly from Western Germany (as a result of its favorable policy to the Nazi victims).

##### **Middle and higher income groups :**

Motivation, command of a foreign language, knowledge about existing opportunities, and the ability to prepare for and finance the costs involved are the main factors which account for the fact that about three out of four returnees or departees come from middle and upper income groups.

Irrespective of their income, the parents of most of those students have had above average for the country educational attainments. Aspiring as everywhere and at all times, for their children to have at least the same and often better opportunities in life than they themselves had, most of them set university education as a goal for their children, even if this involves emigration and high financial costs. If, therefore they cannot have tertiary education in Greece, the children are urged to go abroad. Finally the children of those fa-



millies are more likely to be informed of the new specializations and receive assistance to acquiring the necessary prerequisites to be trained in them.

Although foreign languages has been obligatory in all secondary and tertiary schools (and since 1993 in the last two years of the primary ones), hardly any school-leaver has acquired a working knowledge without paying for supplementary lessons. Motivation to extra language lessons comes primarily from the social environment and from parents who are in a position to convince their children of the usefulness of a foreign language.

The interviews with the returnees and departees clearly indicated this. Few working class persons study abroad on their own because their families cannot afford it. Neither can these persons benefit from the scholarships of the Greek state or those offered by foreign governments, institutions and associations : they know little about them, they do not have the motivation to learn, and when it comes to proficiency in a foreign language they are at a serious disadvantage.

#### 4.2 SCHOLARSHIPS

About 20% of those studying abroad receive scholarships granted by Greek and foreign state-controlled and private institutions, and by international organizations. Although most scholarships are granted on the basis of a rough means test, the selection has always been among well-informed candidates who also speak a foreign language. More effective has been the stipulation that after finishing their studies recipients should return and spend some years in Greece. Scholarships or other kinds of assistance are also offered by foreign universities and Greek associations abroad, private institutions in

Greece and international organizations with no obligation of the recipients to return to Greece.

**Greek scholarships :** Hundreds are granted annually by IKY (State Scholarship Foundation) which in recent years administers also EU funds ( ERASMUS, COMET et al.). Many more come from public corporations and private institutions (statistics are not available).

**Foreign scholarships:** Bi-lateral exchange agreements for students, academics, artists and others have been signed with many countries, and many scholarships are granted by state and private sources: The British Council grants about 15 (4 to 12 month) scholarships annually for post-graduate work or practical experience. Both the German Democratic and the Federal Republic were quite generous in helping students and the same applies to the united Germany in recent years, mainly through the Goethe and Humbolt Institutes, and the Friedrich Ebert, Friedrich Nauman and Conrald Adenauer Foundations. France and Italy also offer many scholarships (mainly through L'Institut Français and Casa d'Italia respectively), while the USA scholarships and study tours are mainly through the Universities and the Fulbright and Ford Foundations. As already indicated, hundreds of scholarships were granted every year by the former socialist countries. Among the international organizations NATO grants around 5 scholarships every year, mainly in Strategic Studies, but dozens of military personnel and civil employees are also sent abroad every year for retraining.

### 4.3 STUDENT EXPERIENCES IN THE HOST COUNTRIES

Familiarity with life and study in the host country before departure, educational background and personal attitudes to life shape student experiences abroad. The more successful tend to speak highly of the host country and its educational system. Those who fail tend to be critical, talking mainly about discrimination.

#### **Familiarity of departing students :**

The "unknown" and even some "apprehension" about conditions abroad 20-30 years ago has changed into considerable familiarity, which increases further with the EU COMET programs for student exchanges. Three out of four departees and recent returnees had at least one "reconnaissance" visit to the host country before they settled in and all could be informed about it from many sources : Hundreds of Greek and alien foreign language schools and dozens of others tutoring young persons to acquire the prerequisites for registering in a foreign university ; more than a dozen high schools which prepare systematically their pupils for studies abroad by teaching some of the lessons in a foreign language and familiarizing their students with life and study abroad<sup>10</sup> ; more than a dozen three or four-year colleges associated with foreign universities which help their students to further their studies abroad (all use a foreign language, mainly English, for instruction) ; adequately staffed cultural institutes in the large cities which, besides offering language courses, organizing lectures and showing films, they dispose of libraries well equipped with university prospectuses ; practically all university teachers and senior civil servants and many secondary school teachers and business executives who

are now returnees ; consulates or special departments in all foreign embassies which dispose of the necessary information about studies in their respective countries ; half a dozen alumni associations for foreign universities which are active in the country and offer detailed information about their respective universities.

Getting however to know better the host country while studying in it depends on various factors. As a rule "beginners" face language difficulties and are at a disadvantage in comparison to their more fluent colleagues. Those who are not scholars of a foreign government have limited opportunities to associate with local people, specially in the larger cities and busy capitals, where most of the Greek students abroad study.

**Post-graduate students :** Being scrutinized by both Greek and foreign institutions, most post-graduate students abroad are adequately motivated and well-prepared academically. They can thus be more objective in criticizing what they consider as weak points, but also appreciate good academic standards. Those with scholarships from foreign governments and institutions are usually helped to know better the host country.

Most of the returnees have stated that they were on parity with their counterparts from the host country in academic standards, professional orientation, traveling and overall experiences. Greek university teachers also agree that even in its lowest points of performance the educational system in Greece has been quite "efficient" for the (minority of the) well motivated students.

**Undergraduates :** They have no experience of the Greek universities, most

come from "protective" families, few if any studying in the Western countries have scholarships or other financial assistance from Greek or foreign institutions and the majority are embittered for failing to register in a Greek AEL. If in addition they do not try hard and fail in their studies, they are prone to severe criticism about the host country.

Exceptions are the high-school-leavers (over one thousand every year) who acquire in Greece the prerequisites for registration (GCEs, Die Abitur, Le Baccalaureat, etc.). They are quite familiar with conditions in the host country which they have visited at least once through organized school excursions and after return they maintain close links with it (reading papers, attending activities organized by foreign institutes and alumni associations, etc.). A proficiency in the local language gives them also more opportunities to earn an income while studying.

**Britain** : Returnees have expressed quite opposing views. The majority found the British "unapproachable". Others stated that once they became friendly with them they established good and long lasting relations. The initial seemingly cool attitude was quickly turned into a warm relationship which included invitations to participate in social and family gatherings.

**France** : As a rule returnees speak highly of its institutions, the high in comparison to Greece organization of work and life, and the good way democracy works in politics, at the workplace, in school and the family. Most however had studied in Parisian universities and even those on two or more year courses stated that they had limited opportunities to associate with the locals. Some have characterized the Parisians unfriendly, conceited, arrogant and not

even polite. They also said that many of them were "anachronistically class conscious" either because of their ancestry (the extreme cases are those with a nobility word in their names), or because of the income, the wealth or the profession of their parents. The returnees however added that those people had the same attitude towards the French students coming from the "province". It is interesting to note that Greek television viewers heard recently that "non-Athenian" Greek students living in university boarding places in Athens felt lonely and hardly had any contact with their fellow "Athenian" students.

A DEA sociologist from Lyon (married to a French woman after finishing his studies) who returned in 1989 after 7 years of working and at the same time studying, first French and later multi-racial relations, divided the 150 Greeks and ethnic Greeks at his university into two categories : i) The majority adjusted quickly to the system, obeyed its rules and succeeded in doing the best of it. They were treated fairly and not infrequently teachers and administrative personnel went out of their way to help them out in their linguistic difficulties, in finding jobs, etc. Some have stayed abroad on good jobs. Those who returned to Greece are also doing well, after overcoming difficulties of adjustment in their own country. ii) A sizable minority did badly in France and have done no better since their return. They were only interested in having a degree, not infrequently through cheating, and they were continuously lagging behind university developments. Many of their stories about xenophobia, racism, discrimination and unfair treatment at the university are gross exaggerations and in many cases completely false. They simply reproduce party-political prejudice which hardly exists in the French academia.

**Germany** : Many students associate closely with the 250,000-450,000 economic Greek immigrants in that country in the last thirty years, visit Greece frequently and more than in any other place abroad both students and economic immigrants have been very active in Greek politics. They have poor knowledge of the German social and cultural life and tend to emphasize and generalize the behavior of some Germans with strong nationalistic attitudes. The usual expressions used in the interviews were "one feels strongly the difference between Germans and non-Germans" and "whatever you do in that country you remain an outsider".

A number of returnees consider "Ordnung" in all aspects of study, work and life quite exaggerated, and point out that many other societies have been as efficient as the German one without that strict "military" kind of discipline. Others however emphasize that not only are legal and ethical rights respected but also one knows what is expected of him/her. Although strict, teachers are fair to all students, local and foreigners. Das Vordiplom, acquired after strict examinations during the 5th semester and being a prerequisite for the continuation of the study course, makes foreigners fully aware of the "standard university requirements".

The permit granted for part-time work (19 hours a week) has been quite helpful to foreigners in need to earn some income and many have used it to wholly finance their studies. Foreigners however are helped to work more hours at university jobs, which is also legal.

Due to the high academic standards in Germany and the close economic contacts between it and Greece, most returnees have been quite happy with their employment oppor-

tunities, although increasing difficulties have been faced in recent years.

**Italy** : It attracts many undergraduates, some also from low income groups but, unlike the socialist countries, without scholarships. Relatively low living costs in the smaller cities and rather lenient registration requirements in many universities account for that. Geographical proximity and close cultural affinity of the people in Western Greece with Italy also play a role. The Ionian islands were from the 13th to the 18th century and the Cyclades in the Aegean sea for about three centuries under the rule of the Italian cities, mainly that of Venice.

The sharp difference between North and South in Italy reflects in the answers of the returnees. Students in Rome and further South "feel quite at home". The usual remarks were : "una faccia una razza" ("we look alike, we belong to the same race") ; "Administrative efficiency is not much better than that in Greece". "Teachers are not always punctual in their appointments". "Too many students for the existing infrastructure in labs and other facilities". "Oral examinations which are the rule give the impression of arbitrary judgments". "One feels lost in universities with dozen and even hundreds of thousands of students, like for example that of Naples". But the few students in the North face difficulties in adjustment because "northern Italians are quite different from the Greeks, as they are from those in the South".

A considerable number of the students (coming mainly from middle and high income group families) study in the well reputed faculties of medicine, architecture and history of arts. They had failed to register in a Greek AEI but, as stated by two returnees, "although easily accepted, we all had to work very

hard for our degrees”.

**Socialist countries** : Returnees expressed no complaints about teachers, local fellow-students and non-university people. Equally unanimous however were they in their negative opinion about work and life in those countries. Most of them said that without their personal experiences they could never have believed the stories they had heard. Given that, as mentioned above, most of the students in them belonged to the low income groups and the majority were also scholars of left-wing political parties or trade unions, their answers reflect the many negative aspects of the economic and social organization in those countries.

## 5. DECLINING TREND IN STUDIES ABROAD

From about 44,300 in 1982 and 1983, the number of registered students has declined to around 30,000 (Tables 5 and 7), partly because of currency liberalization which allows more students not to resort to the Bank of Greece for their foreign exchange. It appears however that there has also been some decline in real numbers, caused by one or more of the following factors : the expansion of the Greek AELs ; the 1268/1982 Law which allows students to transfer to Greek AELs for “serious” health or family reasons (and has led to many abuses and court trials) ; the ad hoc decisions of the Greek government to accept student transfers from the socialist countries (mainly Rumania and Yugoslavia) in the last five years on safety grounds ; the reduction of scholarships offered by the main western and (former) socialist host countries ; the increasing objective difficulties for the students to find jobs during their studies (mainly in France

and Germany) ; the slow down in the growth of the disposable income in Greece since 1979 and the repeated austerity policies applied since the mid-1980s ; the higher requirements set by foreign universities for accepting Greek students, following EU recommendations ; the stricter requirements for recognizing the equivalence with the Greek ones of degrees from some foreign universities and especially from the three-year pedagogical colleges in Yugoslavia ; the declining market value of all university degrees and especially of those from foreign universities, following the rapid increase of the number of graduates.

The last point requires some explanation. Although increasingly important for very many jobs, a considerable number of Greeks speak now a foreign language, so that its relative scarcity has been declining : German is spoken by student returnees from German-speaking countries and in various degrees of proficiency by over 300,000 repatriated economic immigrants in that country ; Russian by returnees, repatriated political refugees and over 80,000 ethnic Greeks from the former Soviet Union, the Pontians, who have settled in Greece since the late 1980s ; Italian by the large number of graduate returnees from that country. In addition more persons from all income groups and geographical areas learn a foreign language, as evidenced by the fact that language schools run by Greeks and foreign institutions have been established in practically all small towns and low income group districts in the cities. For an increasing number of jobs a foreign language is still a necessary qualification. Yet English is by far the main language on demand, followed by French and German.

**The future of studies abroad :** The difficulties graduates have in finding satisfactory jobs and the recent sharp rise in the number of post-graduate courses in the Greek AELs will ease up the demand for studies abroad and encourage the declining trend for Greek studies abroad. At the same time however more students are likely to spend one or two semesters of undergraduate or graduate training abroad, as a complement to their training at home. Continued improvements in the Greek educational system may also lead to more foreign students in the Greek schools, especially in subjects in which Greece has a comparative advantage like archeology, Greek language, divinity and history.

## 6. NATIONAL COSTS AND BENEFITS FROM STUDENT MIGRATION

**Specialization in the educational system :** University education is one of the largest industries in the world to-day but specialization is necessary because of the large number of disciplines and the thousands of separate research topics. Even large and developed countries cannot afford to run efficiently university courses in all branches of medicine, archaeology, foreign languages etc. ; neither can they carry out research on thousands of different topics. They are compelled therefore to use the many forms of the international trade in educational and research facilities. (see Fakiolas R. 1995 : 213-4).

**The cost of large student migration :** Although small and less developed countries should make extensive use of the educational and research facilities abroad, Greece has gone too far in this direction (see for example the size and the characteristics of the student emi-

gration from the Magreb countries to Europe in Borgogno V., Vollenweider-Andersen L. 1995). The cost for Greece of the large student migration includes about half a billion US dollars annually in foreign exchange, heavy dependence on foreign countries for post-graduate training, reduced opportunities in recent years to better utilize adequately qualified Greeks in university teaching and research, and a considerable brain drain. Finding satisfactory employment opportunities in the host countries, many graduates have not returned home, as evidenced by the large number of Greek university teachers, researchers, artists, businessmen and politically active in various countries the world over, with the result that Greece often purchases from host countries services supplied by its own nationals.

**The benefits :** For every measurable cost there has been a benefit, while intangible costs and benefits have changed over time. Through student migration for study Greece has acquired useful skills which could be difficult, very costly or impossible to have in the early post-war period. The expansion of the "home" market for experts and the considerable technology transfer to Greece could not have been achieved without the large flow of expert returnees. Also to consider is the fact that in the frequent cases of limited employment opportunities for certain specializations at home, the cost of staying abroad has been low and "de-skilling" from unemployment in conditions of rapid technological development has been avoided. Furthermore most graduate emigrants maintain close contacts with Greece. They contribute in shaping its academic, business and political life, and remit home part of their income. With the national affinities being kept strong, the stock of the qua-

lified nationals or ethnic Greeks abroad has created a pool of precious skill and experience, from which Greece has drawn in order to implement its educational and economic policies. Gradually, this "one-way traffic" has been changing into a mutual exchange of qualified persons .

## 7. POLICY OPTIONS

Whatever the reasons for its application, the strict numerous clausus policy has been one of the main causes for the large student emigration ; and it has not prevented the flow of graduates from Greek and foreign universities into the Greek labor market and high unemployment among them. Educational policy should help more young Greeks who wish and are capable to study at home, so that more high-school leavers are given a chance to register at an AEI or TEI. Teachers would then need to undertake the difficult job of scrutinizing the students and passing on the message that without adequate effort from their part, graduation should not be taken for granted. Certificates given after successful performance in the first and/or second year examinations and pre-diplomas granted after the second or third year would help many students who are not capable or inclined to further their university studies, to opt out of the AEIs and TEIs.

Educational policy could increase the supply of places in tertiary education in two ways :

a) To accept more students in state schools at an additional cost to the state budget, the rectors of the state universities maintain that with a relatively small additional funding they could increase considerably the number of students in their institutions. A large part of this cost could be recovered by char-

ging fees for post-graduate studies, for special university and extra-mural courses and for repeated examinations taken by students who fail twice to pass them. According to a recent OECD Report "...some parental contribution to fees and other expenses does not seem unthinkable...One possibility would be to secure more places by allowing local authorities to find the extra money needed. The prospect of additional local taxes might be preferable to the heavy burdens carried by parents whose children go abroad to study, sometimes in poor quality universities. Universities might actively seek funds from wealthy Greeks living abroad, and seek funding for endowed chairs" (Min. of Educ.1995 : 4).

The insignificant student reactions to the recent introduction of fees for post-graduate studies mentioned above indicates that the time has come to charge more fees which would have multiple effects : they would increase university revenues and at the same time strengthen academic discipline. According to the official calculations quoted above only about half of the students are categorized as "regular" and only a part of the regulars frequent the class-rooms. The introduction of fees and more academic discipline would also contribute to restrict the demand for places in tertiary education and reduce sharply the existing large number of the "non-regular" students. At the same time, however, it should encourage graduates to rely more on the actual and less on the formal qualifications for a job. The public sector of the economy is overloaded with graduates and already a large number of the (few) new appointments are based both on written examinations and a strict scrutiny of the degrees and the academic record of the candidates. The new policy would also help students to understand

a poor school performance even if it leads to a first degree at home or abroad would make it more difficult for them to make a career in a loose labor market for most new graduates.

b) An additional way to increase the number of places in tertiary education would be to recognize non-state fee-charging educational institutions as equivalent to the state ones, under a strict system of accreditation. As already mentioned, about a dozen four-year colleges associated with fully accredited foreign universities function in Greece and the degrees from most of them are recognized abroad as equivalent to university level degrees. Greece is violating EU rules by refusing to recognize those degrees, it also has a bad record of granting equivalence to degrees from foreign universities with loose academic discipline. Instead, Greece could become a model European country in which non-state fee-charging universities would co-exist on equal terms with the state ones, under strict rules of performance, which would be set and observed by all concerned. Competition among them in teaching, research, foreign students would attract young Greeks from abroad, make the best use of available resources, and have all-round beneficial effects for the country.

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- have been on the registers for over 10 years have completed the required registrations but have not passed all the necessary examinations. Only about 25% of the regular students attend lectures. Low student attendance is often "welcome" because, despite rapid construction, classrooms and some laboratories are still in short supply. A 1992 regulation of the MNERA (Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs) to deprive non-regulars of some of their prerogatives (student identity card, free text books, etc.) met with protests from militant students and all but for the identity card clauses were made invalid.
- An OECD report on June 30th 1995 recommends : i) Students failing to advance to the third year (fifth semester) should pay fees; ii) The status of the private three and four-year colleges recognized now only as tutorial colleges should be re-examined. These proposals are now under consideration as is the need to introduce radical reforms in Greek higher education.
- The proportions of the total and the regular students to the population are about 2.1% and 1.2% respectively. Flows of graduates from both the Greek and the foreign universities are comparable to other EU countries, although the stock of graduates is still considerably lower.
- <sup>5</sup> Non-university Technological Educational Institutions, also tuition-free and a state monopoly.
- <sup>6</sup> Min. of Educ. Circular of 10/2/1995.
- <sup>7</sup> Min. of Educ., various booklets and other publications.
- <sup>8</sup> 15%-20% females, very few married.
- <sup>9</sup> OECD 1994, and Fakiolas R. 1995, as well as other articles in STUDI EMIGRAZIONE, Skilled Migrations, March 1995, N.117, Rome.
- <sup>10</sup> Athens College, American Community Schools, Deree Pierce College, Leontios School, die deutsche Schule and others.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Usful comments on an earlier draft of this article were made by my colleagues at the National Technical University in Athens Professors Konstantin Laskaridis and George Pantelidis.

<sup>2</sup> Gross National Product

<sup>3</sup> Uninersity Level Education Institution.

<sup>4</sup> In 1993/4 about 109,000 students were "regular". The "non-regulars", many of whom

## STATISTICAL ANNEX

Table 1. "Regular" university students in Greece and degrees granted (1950/1-1991/2, in thousands)

Year	Students		First Degrees		First Post.Gr.D.		Ph.Ds.	
	Tot.	Fem.	Tot.	Fem.	Tot.	Fem.	Tot.	Fem.
1950/1	15							
1970/1	76		9.9		0.005		0.267	3.48
1975/6	100	38.4	15.5	5.8	0.107	???	0.39	0.56
1984/5	111	53	15	7.1	0.160	0.07	0.41	0.13
1985/6	111	53	15	7.6	0.24	0.1	0.44	0.13
1986/7	111	53	15.4	7.6	0.24	0.1	0.44	0.13
1989/90			20.3	10.9	0.33	0.15	0.51	0.18
1990/1	118	63.2	18.9	10.0	0.32	0.13	0.71	0.20
1991/2	117	63.3	17.4	9.6	0.28	0.11	0.59	0.19
1993/4	109							

Source : MNERA (Min. of National. Educ. & Religious Affairs) and NSSG (Nat. Stat. Serv. of Greece) Stat. Yearbooks

Note: The declining number since 1990/1 is mainly due to the fact that some older students have been struck off the university registers as regular students.

Table 2. Post-Graduate courses offered by the Greek Universities (February 1995)

Athens	27	Thessaloniki	20	Patras	16
Crete	16	Ioannina	6	Economics	5
Tech.Uni. of Crete	4	Macedonia	3	Thrace	3
Pireas	2	Pantion	2	Nat.Techn.	2
TOTAL	106				

Source: MNERA

Table 3. Year of establishment &amp; regular students by university (1990-1992)

Universities	Established	1990/1991		1991/1992	
		Total	Females	Total	Females
Athens	1837	34,163	21,202	34,340	21,005
Nat.Techn.	1887	8,118	2,149	7,544	2,249
Thessaloniki	1925	34,220	17,880	34,298	17,696
Economic	1920	3,584	1,804	3,509	1,733
Agriculture	1920	3,584	566	1,600	544
Fine Arts	1937	404	230	426	236
Pantion	1937	4,377	2,701	4,402	2,773
Pireas	1958	3,784	1,884	3,899	1,930
Macedonia	1948	2,701	1,377	2,721	1,401
Patras	1964	7,731	3,120	7,653	3,126
Ioannina	1970	5,854	3,862	5,901	4,004
Thrace	1973	4,971	2,336	5,021	2,328
Crete	1973	4,090	2,536	4,001	2,479
Tech.U. of Crete	1977	489	124	501	130
Aegean	1984	1,330	832	1,317	818
Ionian	1984	409	316	464	358
Thessaly	1984	510	327	739	462
TOTAL		118,381	63,246	117,336	63,282

Source: MNERA

Note: There are two more institutions at university level: The Cadet Schools and the recently upgraded School of Home Economics

Table 4. Migration from and to Greece (1945-1994, in thousands)

	Years	Numbers
Net emigration of Greeks	1945-1973	1,000
Net repatriation of Greeks	1974-1986	400
Net emigration of Greeks	1988-1995	90
Repatriation or settlement of Greeks from Turkey, Egypt, Zaire	1955-1975	150
Settlement of ethnic Greeks (the Pontians) from the former USSR	1988-1995	80
Entry of foreign economic immigrants	1985-1995	1,500
Deportations-expulsions of illegal immigrants (Ministry of Public Order data)	1991-1995	900
Econ. immigrants employed with work permits (Min. of Labor data)	1970-1996	24-34
Economic immigrants employed without work permits (estimates)	1991-1996	300-400
Population of Greece (Census data)	1951	7,633
	1961	8,389
	1971	8,769
	1981	9,740
	1991	10,264

Sources: NSSG Stat. Yearbooks, Ministry of Public Order, Ministry of Labor, SOPEMI, and various estimates

Note: Since 1977 no official statistics on the migration of Greeks are available.

N.B. The Bank of Greece data on Tables 5, 6 and 7 below cover only part of the students abroad. Besides these are not statistics on student emigration; they are only data on foreign exchange given to those who present a document indicating registration at a foreign school. The data for the years 1991, 1993 and 1994 on Table 5 refer to students who were receiving foreign exchange at the end of the respective years (31 of December), and therefore they may be somewhat different from other data referring to the same years.

Table 5. Registered Greeks studying abroad (1982-1994)

Year	Belgium	France	German y	Holland	Italy	Switzerland	UK	Rumania
1982	545	5,443	3,309	78	14,264	851	6,800	2,966
1983	572	5,362	3,417	58	13,642	869	6,566	
1985	353	5,176	3,215		11,589	832	6,048	3,933
1986	317	3,196	2,245		10,006	614	4,569	2,602
1988	236	3,063	2,380		8,502	313	4,072	2,113
1989	200	3,115	2,364		8,646	334	4,964	2,234
1991	505	2,263	1,908	139	5,505	90	7,476	2,471
1993	550	1,889	1,428	136	5,744	173	8,838	2,074
1994	155	1,926	1,337	130	5,924	131	10,636	2,084

Source: Bank of Greece

Note: Among other countries with smaller numbers of Greek students in 1993 were Denmark (26), Japan (2), Ireland (37), Spain (72) and Israel (72),

Table 6. Registered Greek Students in the (former) Socialist Countries (1985-1994)

Country/Year	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1993	1994
(F)Czechoslovakia		3	3	6	4	6	25	252	296
(F)USSR	1	1	1	2	4	3	24	37	27
(F)Yugoslavia	201	570	1,252	724	1,170	1,502	616	87	17
Bulgaria	360	893	1,266	783	1,614	1,861	2,567	1,981	1496
China	1	2	2	-	4	3	1	2	-
Hungary	22	17	27	37	48	64	667	880	936
Poland	2	40	37	24	16	18	19	16	16
Rumania	3,933	2,602	2,113	2,234		984	2,471	2,084	1739

Source: Bank of Greece

Table 7. Structure of registered Greek students abroad by level of education (1993)

Country	Postgr	Undergr	Non-Uni	Secondary	Other	Lang	Prep	Total
Australia	2	17	1	-	2	-	-	22
Austria	29	168	7	1	9	6	1	221
Belgium	137	386	6	1	21	15	-	566
Bulgaria	8	1,924	2	-	4	11	32	1,981
Canada	71	262	7	-	2	14	-	356
Cyprus	2	31	37	1	5	-	-	76
France	647	1,151	13	4	78	72	-	1,965
German	278	1,093	23	14	27	121	7	1,563
Holland	35	77	10	1	13	2	1	139
Hungary	11	857	6	-	-	2	4	880
Italy	143	5,495	56	36	43	174	7	5,954
Poland	-	15	-	-	-	1	-	16
Rumania	27	2,027	1	1	4	9	15	2,084
Russia	3	31	-	-	-	1	1	36
Slovakia	-	43	-	-	-	-	-	43
Sweden	13	81	2	1	5	9	1	112
Switzerl	17	107	47	1	2	18	-	192
Tsechia	2	204	-	-	-	1	2	203
UK	3,016	5,272	186	30	232	300	132	9,168
USA	885	1,791	38	7	66	37	4	2,828
TOTAL	5,381	21,229	448	99	522	810	207	28,696

Source: Bank of Greece