



The vicious circle of irregular migration from Pakistan to Greece and back to Pakistan

Kleopatra Yousef

Deliverable 2.1.

Background Report: Migratory System 3 (Pakistan)



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1. Introduction

1.1. Summary of Research Project

Migration in Pakistan is intertwined with the country's history and development. The internal and external mobility of people, which is based on a migratory culture that is both private and collective, has contributed to substantially altering the cultural constitution of the worldwide Pakistani population. Currently, four million Pakistanis who live and work outside the country, half of which in Europe and the United Kingdom in particular, constitute the largest community of the Pakistani diaspora. To put in somewhat general terms, Pakistan constitutes a paradigmatic case of a model of contemporary migration, which shows two distinct phases, one legal (at first) the other illegal (at a later stage), as a result of the varying conditions concerning migration in the Middle East and in Europe.

Among the European countries, Greece presents a case of particular scientific interest as it serves today as a junction of irregular migration from Pakistan to Europe. My research is focused on the Greek case of Pakistani mobility and attempts to shed light on irregular migration in particular.

In this paper, I venture to discuss several questions concerning Pakistani migration to and through Greece in a socio-historical context, in which the immigration policies of Greece and Pakistan are systematically examined. One such fundamental question is how do the Greek policies of migration affect or even control the plans and actions of irregular migrants? And, equally important, what is the role of social networks in decision making processes leading migrants to travel to and stay in Greece?

1.2. Methodology

This study is based on a critical usage of the relevant literature as well as on research data. The existing bibliography, discusses Pakistani migration by focusing mostly on the migration routes to and from Pakistan in neighboring countries as well as in countries of the Middle East and of Europe. On the other hand, reliable written sources concerning illegal immigration to Greece are scarce. Although the relevant bibliography is slowly but steadily growing since the 1970s, the Pakistani case has not been thoroughly examined. There are only a few references, mostly of ethnographic origin, which deal with Pakistani illegal migration in such specific contexts of analysis as employment and social inclusion.

This research is informed by a critical review of the relevant international literature regarding irregular migration on two levels of analysis: a) migration from Pakistan to Europe and b) irregular migration in Greece, in general.

Additional data were collected from field research mainly through interviewing, conducted during February-March 2013. Based on interviews that were carried out on the basis of semi-structured questionnaires, a significant first-hand material was gathered, regarding such key authorities and institutions in Greece as public institutions and international organizations, national bodies and representative associations of the Pakistani community.

The research revealed a number of difficulties: firstly, the conduction of interviews with key actors in Pakistan was not feasible, although planned, due to the reluctance and mistrust of Pakistani actors for communication and dissemination of information relevant to the subject of research. European and international organizations with offices in various cities of Pakistan were also hesitant. Thus, communication with actors in Pakistan had to start from scratch, amid major changes in Pakistan (in view of the election campaign in the last two months and the national elections held on the 11 May 2013).

In contrast, representatives of Pakistani associations in Athens were very open to communication and discussion regarding the living conditions of the Pakistani migrant population in Athens, the difficulties encountered and the choice to return.

The present research uses the term 'irregularity' in relation to the action of migration and the term 'irregular' for immigrants. Irregular migration, basically refers to the entry and / or stay in a place beyond the established legal frameworks that apply. According to Triandafyllidou (2010) irregular migrants are defined as "non-EU citizens who do not have a residence permit and / or who are threatened with deportation if detected".

2. Migration and Pakistan

2.1. Internal Migration

Pakistan is a country of particular interest for the various actors involved in the migration field, as it combines all the elements that characterize a country as a country of origin and, in parallel, of destination and/or a transit country of migratory flows. Although it is primarily known as a country of emigration (especially to Europe and the Middle East), it has also been, since its establishment (1947), both a country of immigration and a hosting country of refugees, mainly from India and Afghanistan. Moreover, it stands out as a focal point of transit migration from Southeast Asia, mainly from Bangladesh to Europe. As a country of South Asia that borders the Arabian Sea, Pakistan constitutes a bridge between Central and South Asia to the Middle East. Its geographical position, combined with certain historical events within the state, contributed greatly to the formation of migration to and from Pakistan.

The current Pakistan consists of four provinces-Baluchistan (Baluhistan), North-West Frontier Province (North West Frontier Province NWFP, also known as the "Province of Afghanistan"), the Punjab (Punjab) and Sid (Sidh), and the Northern Areas (Northern Areas) that are federally controlled and the state of Azad Jammu (Azad Jammu) & Kashmir (Kashmir) which borders India and is considered as independent¹ (Hasan 2010, Gazdar 2003).

¹ The regions of Azad and Kahmir are administratively independent since the partition of 1947, under the overall control of the Pakistani state (Hasan 2010).

Picture1: Map of Pakistan



Source: University of Texas: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/pakistan_admin_2010.jpg (last accessed 08/04/13)

Historically, Pakistan was established in 1947 as a residence for the Muslims of India (Dermetzopoulos, 2009: 26). Two major population exchanges followed its establishment. The first relates to the period 1947-1948, when the partition of India and the full independence of Pakistan produced a one-sided flow of immigrants; more than 7 million Muslims migrated from India to Pakistan and almost 6 million Hindus and Sikh moved from Pakistan to India (Arif 1997, Moldenhawer 2005, Hasan 2010). The movement of populations resulted in the creation of tension and conflict on the border of Pakistan with India (Punjab) (Werbner, 2005:475).

The second great wave of migration in the history of Pakistan, was an informal exchange of populations that took place in 1971, the year which Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) became independent. The population of Muslims of Indian origin preferred, with the secession of East Pakistan to regain their Pakistani citizenship and move to West Pakistan (present Islamic Republic of Pakistan) (Vihe, 2007:79).

Consequently, these two migratory movements had a major impact on the demographic and ethno-cultural development of Pakistan. In particular, the population exchange of 1947 resulted in the creation of religious minorities that were forced to move through the new borders of the two countries (Hasan, 2010:36-37). Muslim immigrants from India known as "Muhajirs", people that left their home and settled in Punjab and Sindh regions, while, respectively, Hindus and Sikh from these areas moved to India (Gazdar, 2003:7). However,

there are several issues that remain unresolved- issues that emerged from the Civil War of 1971 and the migratory movement that followed. The community of Bihari (Biharis) has settled in the new state of Bangladesh, before the establishment of the Indian State in 1947. They were considered Pakistani nationals, although they were not of Pakistani origin and had never lived in West Pakistan. During the civil war between the Western and Eastern province, the Biharis supported the Pakistani army. This, together with the fact that they speak the Urdu language, made them unwelcome in the independent Bangladesh. On the other hand, they were also unwelcome in Pakistan, as internal stability would be jeopardized, based on the large number of already hosted immigrants. So, the right of return in the country was granted to almost half a million immigrants in the 1990s, while another 250-500.000 remained hosted in refugee camps of Bangladesh (Vihe, 2007:80).

As a consequence of the population exchange of 1971, the ethno-cultural composition of the population was transformed. In the new ethnic map of the country, the large cities in the areas of Punjab and Sindh were the main destinations for Muslim migrants of Indian origin (Hasan 2010, Moldenhawer 2005). The refugee population in India reached 26% in Punjab and 19% in Sindh and just 2% in the North-West Frontier Province (Arif, Irfan, Cohen 1997:992). The region of Punjab, especially the city of Lahore, became an important urban center that hosted a large part of India's refugee population, as well as internal migrants from rural areas of North and Northwest Pakistan (Gazdar, 2003:8). It is the first type of internal migration from rural areas to the emerging urban centers of modern Pakistan.

Another major urban center was the city of Karachi in the area of Sindh, where, according to the census of 1951, half the population consisted of Muslim refugees (Gazdar, 2005:153). The movement of the Muslim population of India and the internal movement of the rural population in the region, led to the increase of the urban population from 11% in 1941 to 29% in 1951 and 37% in 1961 (Arif, Irfan, Cohen, 1997:999). The urban population's percentage (36%) has been preserved since the 1960s until today (CIA World Factbook, 2010). The internal movement was mainly from rural areas of the North West Frontier Province (Hasan, 2010:37) as well as other border regions between Punjab and India (Gazdar, 2003:8).

It is worth noting that the population that moved from India was characterized by higher living and occupational standards than that of the natives. According to Arif (1997), it is one of the few cases in history in which the refugee population has more advanced educational and professional qualifications than the native population.

2.1.1. The causes of internal migration

According to Gazdar (2003), the migration patterns in Pakistan are two: a) the movement from the rural areas of the Northwest Frontier Province to Punjab and b) from the rural area to the cities of Punjab and in Sindh. These rural areas are characterized by uncertain working conditions and low incomes, a fact that leads to the movement of cheap labour force to the large urban centers (Memon, 2005:130) thanks to the laissez-faire policy pursued in Pakistan, characterized by zero restrictions on internal mobility and minimal restrictions on employment and housing. The 1998 census shows that 43% of internal migrants move mainly because of economic and family reasons. Most of them, being the heads of the households and breadwinners, had to support financially the rest of the family members. Memon (2005) considers that the wage was the main reason for the movement, as it determines the nature and position of labour migrants.

The phenomenon of migration is therefore closely linked to the history of Pakistan, since the establishment of the state. The movement of people to and from Pakistan has a direct impact on the distribution and the internal population mobility. Moreover, internal migration is a key demographic and socio-economic characteristic of the country and has influenced almost half the population of the country (Memon, 2005:129).

2.2. Pakistan as a country of destination: immigration from Afghanistan

Historically, migration links between the neighboring countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan have been essential to the evolution of both countries. The extensive border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, that is a mountainous borderline of 1500 km with three central points of proximity-the North-West Frontier Province, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Balochistan- includes 200 transit points that facilitate the daily movement of populations of the two countries (Mehdi, 2010: 37). The Pashtun and Balouchi tribes that reside in the border areas have been there even before the area's division in two countries. The constant movement of these populations led to the development of social networks and economic relations and exchanges (Altai Consulting & UNHCR 2009:13).

The 1980s are a milestone in the relationship of the two countries, since the Civil War and the invasion of the army of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan have forced, as it was normal based on the existing relationship, more than 3 million people to leave the country and move to neighboring Pakistan (Gazdar, 2003:3). Most of the Afghan refugees supported the war against the Soviets, which was consistent with the interests of the American friendly policy of the Pakistani government and the Islamic authorities in the country (Hasan, 2010:37-38). Therefore, the refugee population was particularly favoured by the Pakistani state.

The end of the Soviet invasion in 1988 did not result in the return of Afghan refugees to their country, as it could be expected. In contrast, new refugee flows were created as a result of the turmoil in Afghanistan during the 1990s and the Civil War which resulted in control of the capital Kabul by the Taliban in 1996 (Baseline study AENEAS, 2009:51). This period revealed the reluctance and suspicion of the Pakistani government towards the new refugee flows (Gazdar, 2005:156). By the end of 2001, the number of Afghan refugees in Pakistan reached approximately 3.5 million (Baseline study AENEAS, 2009:51).

The majority of refugees from Afghanistan gathered in camps in the border areas of Balochistan and the North West Frontier Province, which caused a rapid increase in the urban population of the cities of Peshawar and Quetta. Moreover, the social and economic networks developed by the continuous population movements have led to the gradual establishment of Afghans in the major urban centers and in their economic and social integration. It is estimated that in the city of Karachi 600,000 refugees have settled (Hasan, 2010:37-38) and that in the capital of the country, Islamabad, more than 25,000 Afghan refugees reside (Arif, Irfan, Cohen, 1997:992).

The "temporary" settlement of Afghan refugees with their families and their communities, brought to light issues of national identity in Pakistan. The arrival of new populations altered greatly the ethno-cultural composition of the country, strengthening the presence of Pashtuns against Balouchi, mainly in Baluchistan. Tensions and conflicts were not avoided both at cultural and political level (Gazdar, 2003:16).

The Pakistani government's position and the shaping of national policies on the issue of migration from Afghanistan have passed through a number of historical phases. The first phase of Afghan refugee entry (from the late 1970s until around 1988) was characterized by a very open, laissez faire national strategic movement of populations and their hosting in refugee camps. It is estimated that 300 refugee camps were created in this period in Pakistan (Baseline study AENEAS, 2009:51).

The second phase is characterized by the open national policy on migration from Afghanistan, introducing though some restrictions during the period 1988-2001, that continued during the third phase and were enforced after the introduction of supportive policies for the repatriation of refugees in 2001. The refugee repatriation programmes started after the end of hostilities and the withdrawal of the Soviet army from Afghanistan in 1992. However, when the civil war between the rebels and the government began, the majority of refugees have sought safety in Pakistan. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, after the fall of the Taliban regime, and in particular, during the period from 2002 to 2005, 4.5 million Afghans from Pakistan and Iran were repatriated (UNHCR & Altai consulting 2009:7). Some estimate that the voluntary

repatriation of 2002, led to the return of nearly 4 million Afghans, with about 1.7-1.8 million remaining in Pakistan (ibid). According to Gazdar (2003), despite the official government position expecting the Afghan refugees to gradually return to their country, which was reinforced by the closure of camps and the systematic efforts for 'voluntary repatriation', many were those who took advantage of the financial benefits of the Repatriation Programme and returned illegally back to Pakistan.

It is worth mentioning that with the change of government policy in Pakistan, two immigrant groups emerged: a) those who returned to Afghanistan - the number of which is neither accurate nor reliable and b) those who sought refuge and / or employment in Europe, avoiding returning to Afghanistan. Many managed to obtain counterfeit travel documents (and Pakistani passport / ID card) by exploiting their social networks, and to cross illegally to the Middle East or further afield (Mehdi, 2010:37).

Mehdi (2010) claims that an extensive network of illegal immigration supported by smugglers working in the highest tiers of government and administration, operates in Pakistan, and it has links that facilitate the transit either by sea or by the land borders of India-Pakistan as well as by the sea borders between Pakistan and the Gulf countries. It becomes clear that a part of the Afghan population, considered Pakistan not as a destination but as a transit country, especially for irregular immigrants, women and children to the Middle East.

2.3. *Pakistan as a country of transit migration*

The case of Bangladesh is of particular interest from a migration point of view, because of its historical relationship to Pakistan. After the partition from India in 1947, it became part of the newly created Pakistan that was divided into East and West Pakistan. Following its independence (1971), East Pakistan was renamed Bangladesh and West Pakistan was named Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The establishment of the new state and the demographic evolution brought to light a number of problems: thousands of Muslims (not Bangladeshis) who lived in the former East Pakistan chose to maintain the Pakistani citizenship, the majority of whom moved to Karachi. Meanwhile, Bengalis living in West Pakistan during the years of unification from 1947 to 1971 remained there. In the 1980s a large number of Bangladeshis moved illegally to Pakistan, especially in the areas around Karachi in search for better living conditions and economic recovery (Gazdar, 2005:157). It is estimated that about 1 million Bangladeshis continue to live illegally in Karachi (Mehdi, 2010:9).

2.3.1. The reasons for migration from Bangladesh

Migration is linked to a constant "struggle for survival" in the case of Bangladesh. The country had to cope with the demographic changes until the 1970s, combined with slow economic growth, overpopulation and natural disasters in its territory (Mehdi, 2010:26). As a result, migratory flows seeking better economic and occupational conditions to neighboring Pakistan emerged. The selection of the country was made based on the historical ties of the years of unification but also because of the strategic geographical position of Pakistan that offered access to the rich oil states of the Middle East.

Moreover, a large number of Bangladeshi female immigrants moved illegally to Pakistan, in response to the intense demand for cheap female labour in the sectors of services, domestic work and the sex industry, in major cities of the country. It is estimated that during the last decade, more than 200,000 women from Bangladesh came illegally to Pakistan (Hasan, 2010:38). Their movement was facilitated by the wide smuggling network operating at the borders between Bangladesh-India and India-Pakistan (Mehdi, 2010:33).

2.3.2. Irregular Migration Networks:

i. Karachi: an irregular migration junction

The city of Karachi is undoubtedly a key crossing point for the human smuggling business. In the 1970s and 1980s it constituted a central transit point for Bangladeshi and Pakistani immigrants to the rich Islamic Gulf States (Mehdi, 2010:20). It hosts the largest and best networked community of Bangladeshis in Pakistan, which "facilitated" the arrival and transit of their relatives and compatriots, in collaboration with several other clandestine immigration networks of Bangladeshis, Pakistanis and foreign human smugglers (Baseline study AENEAS, 2010:43). The networks were wide and had their "informants" alongside the borders between Bangladesh-India and India-Pakistan, as well as in administrative posts- responsible for issuing counterfeit documents. The survey conducted by Action Aid-Pakistan,² revealed that some of the Bangladeshi who migrated to Pakistan in the early 1970s, became later the main agents of the human smuggling networks in the areas of Bangladesh-India-Pakistan (Mehdi, 2010:42).

The role of social networks in creating irregular migration networks is very important in the case of Bangladesh. Specifically, the Bangladeshis who live in the region of Sindh and especially in Karachi, attracted immigrants from Bangladesh who arrived illegally in 1980-1990 looking for a temporary stay in Pakistan, before crossing to the Gulf countries and in some cases to Europe (Baseline study AENEAS, 2010:47). The research conducted on migration from Bangladesh to the Gulf (Shah 1999), identified, apart from the legal labour demand from Arab countries or the operation of smuggling networks of irregular migration, the importance of family and social networks in Pakistan; 35% of respondents who had reached the Gulf countries succeeded thanks to their personal networks in Pakistan.

ii. Migration to the Middle East and the Gulf

According to the official Pakistani authorities, Bangladeshis in Pakistan cannot be recognised as legal residents even if they remain for a long-term period in the country or if they have previously lived in West Pakistan as Pakistani citizens in the decades before 1971 (Gazdar, 2005:169). Experiencing the status of irregularity and the political and social exclusion as a result, the community of Bangladeshis in Karachi is particularly vulnerable, a fact that increases the need for migration in the Middle East and Europe (especially England).

Second, the difficult living conditions that the Bangladeshi community experiences in Karachi have helped for high expectations to be developed, presenting the Middle East as the perfect destination for migrants. Almost 200,000 Bangladeshi migrants live in the poor coastal areas of Karachi³ working as fishermen (Hasan 2010:38).

Consequently, Pakistan ceased to be an attractive country of destination for migrants from Bangladesh and turned into an "easy passage to the target countries." The Arab countries became an attraction for immigrants seeking work, especially because of the strong demand for a) young women to domestic services and prostitution and b) for children in domestic services, prostitution and the camel races (riders) and c) for men, in transport and construction (Mehdi, 2010:17).

Generally speaking, migration to the Middle East and particularly to the Gulf countries was partly a result of the same division of Pakistan. Those who lived in West Pakistan (which after the separation became the current Islamic Republic of Pakistan) sought refuge in the Gulf where, after 1973 the demand for cheap labour,

² The research is called "Shattered Dreams and Living Nightmares" (Mehdi, 2010)

³ The slums in Karachi are known as *katchi abadis*

increased, were involved as mediators to help their people migrate in these countries (Baseline study AENEAS, 2010:47).

2.4. *Pakistan as a country of emigration to the Middle East and Europe*

This section examines the migration from Pakistan to Europe and the Middle East. The specific study on migration is of particular research interest, and reveals the similarity that characterises the different trends and migration phases to two different destinations. It shows the two distinct phases of migration, one legal (at first) the other illegal (at a later stage) that will be further elaborated.

2.4.1. Pakistan as a country of emigration to Gulf countries

In the case of migration to the Middle East, the movement was made with the support of the state apparatus. The government policy of Pakistan vigorously supported⁴ the legal working links with oil-rich countries. Thus, since the early 1970s, Pakistanis have undertaken to meet the demand for cheap labour, especially skilled, in the construction, service and transport sectors of the Gulf countries (Gazdar, 2003:3). The rapid growth rates of Arab states led to the sending of unskilled labour in the sectors of public services and trade since 1975 and onwards. In 1981, the population of Pakistani workers reached 2 million (Vihe, 2007:81). Thanks to the encouraging policy of Pakistan, and the financial reliance of families in Pakistan through migrant remittances, this number increased rapidly, representing one third of the total foreign immigrant population in the Gulf (Choucri, 1986:254). It is worth noting that remittances were the main driver for economic development in areas of emigration, mainly in Gujarat region of Punjab and the cities of Swat and Dir of the Northwest Frontier Province (Vihe, 2007:82).

During the 1980s, a policy restriction on visas and on citizenship granting was introduced. The control of migratory flows was imposed through the three years employment contracts, as well as the migrant's obligation to return to the country of origin by the expiration of the contract. After the completion of some major construction and building projects, the growing supply of cheap migrant labour, both from Asian and Arab countries, created a major problem for both overpopulation of manpower and competitive employment among immigrants from Arab and Asian countries (Choucri, 1986 : 254).

The Gulf War that followed in the 1990s had a negative impact on the economies of the Arab states that have ceased to accept unskilled labor (Arif, Irfan, Cohen, 1997:997). This led the Pakistani immigrants to seek illegal entry and stay in the country, especially after the termination of employment contracts (Gazdar, 2003:13). Irregular immigration of Pakistanis in Saudi Arabia boosted, thanks to the demand for seasonal religious Muslim immigration during the period of major Islamic holidays. It is estimated that a large number of Pakistanis remained illegally after the expiry of seasonal visas and some sought new destinations in Europe (Gazdar 2003, Vihe 2007).

Overall, the migration from Pakistan to the Gulf presents the following characteristics:

- a) It covers the broad range of skills requested in the sending countries
- b) It is the result of organized structural state policies and it represents both private and collective initiatives aimed at creating future economic and trade relations with the Gulf countries. (Choucri, 1986:260).

⁴ The Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment registered 3.131.776 Pakistanis who proceeded to the Middle East for employment (Vihe, 2007:81).

2.4.2. Pakistan as a country of emigration to Europe

The international literature on emigration from Pakistan to European countries is particularly extensive. In the present study, due to space limitations, we will focus on the description of the main temporal phases of the emigration of the group at question.

Immigration to Europe is intertwined with the creation of the newly-founded state of Pakistan. Since early 1950, the first major immigration group of Pakistanis, mostly in the areas of Azad Jammu, Kashmir and the Northern Punjab moved to meet the demand for labour in the construction sector in the United Kingdom (Vihe 2007, Gazdar 2003). By the end of World War II, the reconstruction of the British economy and especially of the shipping industry was based on the recruitment of young men coming from peasant areas with little or no specialization (Webner, 2005:475). This period is the first phase of legal migration to Europe of this group that was accompanied by a permanent establishment until the 1980s (ibid).

Immigration continued in the 1960s during which the Pakistani immigrants moved to England and other European countries. It is a form of legal immigration of educated and qualified members⁵ of the middle class of Pakistan, employed in industry and services in Central and Northern Europe (England, West Germany and Norway) (Vihe 2007, Webner, 2005). It is estimated that in 1961, 32,000 Pakistanis were living in England Arif, Irfan, Cohen, 1997:995). This decade saw the first movement of trained, middle-class, professional Pakistanis in the Nordic countries (global brain drain). The movement was primarily from cities with large immigrant tradition as the Gujarat region of Punjab (Punjab) and Mirpour (Mirpur) Kashmir (Kashmir). It is estimated that in 2010 27,000 Pakistanis were living in Norway, the majority of whom, were originally from Gujarat (Hasan 2010:40).

The generally homogeneous migration profile initially led to the socio-economic and cultural homogeneity among the Pakistani community in Norway and Denmark. The 1970s and 1980s saw the installation of Pakistanis in the Nordic countries, followed by the gradual movement of the female population for family reunification reasons. Pakistani communities in the Nordic countries have sought the social, economic and cultural integration through language training, employment of women and children's education (Moldenhawer, 2005:8).

In the early 1990s, the first flows of irregular movement to EU countries appeared. Irregular migration from Pakistan to these countries referred to the majority of men who belonged to the poorest and moved to Europe through smuggling networks. Some manage to gain legal status through the asylum system of the countries. There are cases of semi-legal situation in which migrants enter legally in the country, either as students or as tourists and stay after the expiry of their visas (Baseline Study AENEAS, 2009:17). There is no exact number of irregular immigrants from Pakistan in European countries (ibid: 119).

Overall it is estimated that about 4 million Pakistanis reside outside Pakistan, while half of the population lives in Europe, especially in the United Kingdom, forming the largest Pakistani diaspora community (Hasan 2010, Webner 2005). According to available research, the majority of irregular migrants were from the Punjab province (Punjab), followed by the regions of Northern Pakistan. For these areas, migrant remittances are the main source of economic growth, in particular the city of Gujarat whose economy relies completely on them (Hasan 2010).

The available literature shows the two distinct phases of migration from Pakistan to the countries of Europe; at first the legal phase and the illegal at a later stage. Among them, is Greece, the case of which is particularly interesting as it has evolved today into an irregular migration junction from Pakistan into the wider Europe.

⁵ It is the first type of Pakistani brain drain to European countries that is mentioned. The highly qualified labour moved for employment and studies in the USA, Canada and Australia during the 1960s and 1970s (Baseline Study AENEAS 2009, Arif, Irfan, Cohen 1997).

3. Migration from Pakistan to Greece

3.1. Historical Background

The influx of immigrants from Pakistan to Greece starts in the 1970s, with the signing of a bilateral agreement for the temporary employment of Pakistani workers in Shipyards (Dermetzopoulos 2009, Leghari 2009, Triandafyllidou, 2010). This was followed by the trade agreement between the Association of Enterprises in Greece and Pakistan; **specialized Pakistani workers were “imported” in order to meet the needs of the largest textile industries** (Dermetzopoulos, 2009:5). These transfers were legal and were in the form of “metaklisi⁶”. Over the next decade (1980), a second flow of Pakistanis arrived in Greece probably, according to Tonchev (2007), due to the establishment of the Single European Market at that time and the expectation of migrants for easy movement within the former European Economic Community (EEC). At the same time, Greece constitutes a transit point for many Pakistanis who enter the country illegally seeking other European destinations. According to the National Statistics Office, in 1981, 1,829 Pakistanis were documented in Greece, out of which 1,349 were irregular (Lasarescu & Broersma, 2010:387).

In subsequent years, there was a gradual increase (in the 1990s) in the number of immigrants from Pakistan, most of whom entered illegally, either by using a tourist visa or student visa, and remained in Greece after the expiry of the document. The 2011 census showed a large increase of Pakistanis in Greece: 11,130 people (Lasarescu & Broersma, 2010:388). The actual number of migrants is not known, as it is estimated that there is a very large number of irregulars, which are not counted officially (Tonchev, 2007:18). Tonchev (2007) claims that in 2006 the Pakistani community was the largest Asian community in Greece, with a population of approximately 40,000-50,000 people, as opposed to official sources, which indicated only 15,478 people. This large Pakistani community was the social vehicle that facilitated the new migration flows from Pakistan to Greece (Dermetzopoulos, 2009:5).

3.2. Greece as a country of destination

There are a number of factors that determine the selection of Greece as a destination country. Its geographical location serves the prospect of moving to economically developed countries of the European Union, thus Greece facilitates the passage of migratory flows through its territory to the other EU countries (Tonchev, 2007:27). Another reason for attracting immigrants was the Greek immigration and asylum legislation ceased until 2005. Through its legalization programmes that took place in 1998, 2001 and 2005, the legalization of immigrants living illegally in the country was made possible. The Pakistani diaspora took advantage of this fact through a variety of social networks, both in Europe, and in Pakistan (Leghari, 2009: 6).

The research -conducted mainly through communication with Pakistani actors in Greece- brought to light the importance of social networks in the choice of destination. It seems that immigrants who had intended to settle in Greece already had a wide family network in the country. The role of this network was multidimensional. First, it constituted a basic and reliable source of information about the existing conditions in Greece and the European Union. Second, it provided support to new comers residing in Greece. Third, it was a major source of financial aid back home (Pakistan) through cash transfers to relatives. And finally, it was a moral and social motivation for reluctant migrants who were advised in order to dare the plunge of expatriation motivated by their “brothers” who were now members of the Pakistani community - “Since T did it, the..., I can also do it” (Interview No. 1).

⁶ “Metaklisi” refers to the system of inviting foreign workers for seasonal labour that is organized mainly through bilateral agreements between the host country and emigration countries (Tonchev 2007, Μαρούκης 2008).

In some cases, Greece served as a transit country of migration, more as a stopover, to the final destination. The social networks played a significant role as they ensured reliable information on the living conditions and other issues relevant to immigration in destination countries. According to the representative of the Pakistani Community in Greece (Interview No.2), this case applies to the majority of Pakistani migrants.

Finally, there are immigrants who do not have social networking in Europe and intend to settle down in any European country that offers work opportunities (Smith, 2004:9). This was the case in Greece, where the suitable conditions for migrants to settle down were met, especially as they could get employed in the largest economic sector of the country, the shadow economy (Lasarescu & Broersma, 2010:413). Long term stay in Greece, gives them the opportunity of better access to reliable information regarding employment opportunities in Europe, both from the social environment (friends, relatives, fellows from Pakistan) and from the human smugglers too.

In reality, social networks played a major role for the selection of the destination country, while with the networks created along the way, contributed in raising awareness and making the final decision. In other words, it was the social networks that have affected in a positive or negative way the transit and / or stay in the country, always together with the most critical factor for the execution of the transit through the country-the human smuggler.

During the last three years, however, some new factors influenced significantly the customary choice of Greece as a final destination of migrants from Pakistan. The social change in society, the lack of regularization programmes, and the general economic crisis of recent years are now deterrent drivers in the migrant's decision to move to Greece. During the last two years, the information that Pakistanis were receiving through the television and the social media on the living conditions of immigrants in Greece had a major impact (Interview no.3).

3.3. Irregular Immigration of Pakistanis to Greece

The movement of Pakistanis to Greece followed different ways, as indicated by the Greek and international literature. The migratory journey usually takes the following route: From Pakistan to Iran, specifically the city of Quetta, and there through Turkey to Greece (Interview No.2). The path in the Greek-Turkish border is done either by land-in the Evros region of the province of Edirne in European Turkey, or from the coast of Izmir to the Greek islands (Lesvos, Samos, Chios) (Icduygu, 2004:298). The selection of transit either by land or sea borders varies depending on the complexity of the route, for example, if it is a route where border police or coastguard is possibly present, the cost of travel, etc. (Antonopoulos & Winterdyk 2006: 452).

According to Antonopoulos (2006), the cost of the route depends on various factors such as the distance, the means of transport, provision of documents or not (Passport / tourist visa), the involvement of many / few smugglers and the level of border control in the region. In the case of Pakistanis, at least half of the agreed fee is paid before the trip. The fee is paid after the successful outcome of the mission, by intermediaries, either in Pakistan or Greece that can be the migrant's relatives or friends. It is worth mentioning that the cost of the route is rapidly declining. More specifically, from 8,000 euros, it fell to 3,500 euros in 2011 and just 2,000 euros in 2012 (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis 2012 and interview n.2). Clearly the cost's reduction is a consequence of lower demand, information that stems from the social networks of Pakistanis living in Greece. Moreover, the price of 2,000 euros refers to the journey that is to be made on foot! (Interview No.2).

Our research showed that up to 2010, a small number of Pakistani tourist visa holders arrived in Turkey by plane and few weeks later to Greece. According to the literature, until 2005, migrants were driving up the road into trucks and private cars (Kanellopoulos, 2005:31). In recent years, according to the annual report of FRONTEX (2012) smuggling of migrants with the help of sailing boats has increased, mainly in the route from Greece to Italy. As Koser states (2008), the number of vehicles used on the road is interrelated to the fee paid to smugglers.

A large team of smugglers is responsible for the organisation and the operation of the trip, which often consists, among others, of their "leaders" and "local" smugglers or drivers. The longer the journey, the greater the number of persons of different nationalities involved (Kanellopoulos, 2005:28). The trip is mainly based on the cooperation of many independent actors or otherwise in the "chain collaboration of smuggler to smuggler" (Içduygu and Toktas 2002) that naturally poses risks in the top down cooperation to the smugglers group, the chances of death or kidnapping from the same or other smugglers at the intermediate stops of the trip⁷. Based on statistics, 726 smugglers were arrested by the Hellenic Coastguard in 2012 (Interview No. 4)

Significant role in the smugglers circuit, play the ones who supply the group with counterfeit documents. Usually they are public servants who work in Greek organisations / local authorities / consulates or even members of the Greek police or coastguard that "turn a blind eye" (Antonopoulos & Winterdyk 2006:451).

Recently, mostly due to the economic crisis experienced by Greece, smugglers' networks seek to extend the irregular migratory movement of Pakistanis from Greece to Europe in order to balance the reduction in Pakistanis demand to travel to Greece (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012:130).

3.4. Demographic characteristics of Pakistanis

A common characteristic of immigrants from Pakistan is the almost exclusive male presence. In 2009, out of 7,035 Pakistani legal migrants in Greece, only 432 were women (Dermetzopoulos, 2009:6). This can be explained, as male migration is part of Pakistan's culture. This fact can be also combined with the Greek state policies that impede family reunification and contribute to the creation of polygamous relationships in Greece and Pakistan (ibid).

The majority of the migrant population has low level of education, are Muslims, from rural provinces that mainly use social networks for job and residence searching (Leghari 2009, Dermetzopoulos 2009). The rate of illiteracy among Pakistanis (13.8%) exceeds the average of all immigrants (9.2%), while the largest groups are found in those who have attended primary school – 30.6% (Tonchev, 2007:21). This fact probably affects the capability of learning the Greek language and reduces the possibilities for professional and social inclusion in the Greek society (Fokas, 2012:7).

Finally, most Pakistanis (about 80%) that live in Greece originally come from the Northern Punjab and particularly from Gujrat. This area has developed a particular tradition of migration to Europe after the 1960s (Leghari, 2009:4).

3.5. Residence Status of Pakistanis in Greece

The Pakistani community in Greece has a high number of both regular and irregular immigrants. Legal Pakistani immigrants are the ones who came to Greece in the 1970s in the form of "metaklisi" (labour migration) in the fields of shipbuilding and textile industry. Moreover, there are those who came for family reunification reasons, mostly women and children, according to Law 3386/2005, which allows application for family reunification after two years of legal residence of immigrants in the country (Maroukis, 2008:10). The conditions for family reunification are becoming increasingly difficult, due to the financial and administrative

⁷ For example, the article in the newspaper *Kathimerini* (2008) that refers to third country nationals of Pakistani origin who were kept hostage until they or their families back in their homeland are able to pay back the cost of their trip «*Even five minors were prisoners of smugglers' circuit*» (Maroukis 2008).

requirements, based on the views of representatives of Pakistani associations (interview 1, 2 & 3)⁸. In addition, the entry to the country with tourist visas or student visas offers immigrants the possibility of a short term legal residence.

In general, Pakistanis that live in Greece, although they entered illegally, had the opportunity of regularisation by 2005. The three regularisation programmes of 1998, 2001 and 2005, were formed with the ultimate aim of reducing the number of illegal immigrants. It should be noted that "illegal" immigrants are those who entered the country illegally and everyone else who remained after the expiry of legal documents. The legalisation process faced extraordinary difficulties. The majority of migrants were seasonal workers, so they were not able to collect the necessary documents. There were even some who did not intend to become "legal" as they were aiming at other destinations (Lasarescu & Broersma, 2010:402).

Regularisation could not be guaranteed in a long term period through the programmes as they can easily pass to a situation of irregularity when they are unable to renew their residence permits. Specifically, there is a risk of de-regularisation of foreigners after a long stay in the country as they face administrative difficulties during the application residence permits or they cannot demonstrate the required number of social insurance stamps or are unemployed, etc. (Interview No. 5). The latter are expensive and the seasonal occupations where usually Pakistanis are employed, do not supply them (Maroukis 2008, Lasarescu & Broersma, 2010).

Only after ten consecutive years of legal residence one can apply for the status of the "long-term resident." Our communication with the Pakistani associations demonstrated that in the recent years, Pakistanis that travel in Europe, although they hold this card, they are not entitled to legal work in the various European countries (Interview no.3).

Finally, applying for asylum is a basic option for Pakistani migrants, in order to acquire legal residence. It is a way used by Pakistanis in order to "buy some time" without always being effective, and, often, Pakistanis get rejected as "economic migrants" (Dermetzopoulos 2009, Lasarescu & Broersma 2010). "There are though some people who hesitate to apply for asylum, considering that it takes time, and during the examination process of the request, they are not set free." (Interview No. 6).

The police figures show that there have been 36,600 applications for asylum from Pakistanis in the period from 2006-2012 (Interview No. 8). Indicatively, asylum applications in 2011 were 9,311, out of which, 24.80% were submitted by Pakistanis (UNHCR 2012:4). It is interesting to see why some irregular immigrants decide to apply for asylum and some prefer to remain undocumented (Papadopoulou 2004).

It is evident, therefore, that Pakistani migrants come across various institutional and administrative difficulties in their request to be legalised in the country. Temporary solution to the bureaucracy and the inflexibility of public policies offers the spoofing of the necessary documents. The statistics of the Greek police in 2012 showed that 19 migrants of Pakistani origin were related to the organisation and operation of fully equipped laboratories that produce counterfeit passports, asylum and residence permits, were arrested (Interview No. 7).

Result of the government's policy to control irregular migration was the establishment of a new programme of arrests, called "XENIOS DIAS" in the Attica region. The operation was based on the logic of protecting public health from the alleged foreigners in Athens carrying diseases from their home countries (Human Rights Watch 2013). During its implementation, 349 Pakistanis were arrested since August 2012 (interview n.4).

⁸ Family reunification has been a major issue for the Pakistani community in Greece, as it comes out from the interviews conducted with Pakistani associations in Greece. It has been the main reason for migrating, especially the last two years. It will be analysed in the following chapter.

The arrest is followed by the transfer to the detention centers, both migrants and asylum seekers⁹. More specifically in Greece, illegal migrants are subject to administrative detention, as they do not comply with the immigration laws. Also, the asylum seeker can be detained- while his request for asylum is pending examination-either upon entry into a country or pending deportation. The detention may last up to 18 months¹⁰, until the decision on deportation for third country nationals is taken. In the case of asylum seekers, no decision for expulsion is made until the request has been examined and the executive decision is issued.

“When you increase the duration of detention with the perspective of detaining a population of up to 18 months, you create automatically a permanent population. If you have not secured the accelerated examination process of asylum and return eventually of those who are kept in order to be returned, it has no meaning”.

(Interview No.6)

Certainly, the management of all these people in various detention centers, creates a huge burden for the state, denying in reality the most precious human right, one's freedom, together with the serious issues that are raised for the people who have to deal with the problematic conditions of detention, being deprived sometimes of food, water, space and the necessary hygiene and care (Interview No.6). Greece has often been accused for the terrible conditions of detention (Interview No. 8). Basically, the country's problem is that migrants remain trapped, unable to go back to Pakistan, nor to other European countries. They end up remaining in Greece, with a note from the police. They fall to illegality, often are arrested again and end up in the detention centers. It is a vicious circle (Interview No.6), the vicious circle of irregular migration.

4. Living Conditions in Greece: Main issues in the time of the economic crisis

4.1. Employment/Entrepreneurship

The employment sectors of Pakistanis in Greece have changed over the years. Initially, during the first years of their presence in Greece in the late 1970s, because of the socio-economic characteristics, they were employed mainly in the agricultural and textiles sector. They also managed to meet the country's need for blasters in the shipbuilding industry (UNHCR, Against Racism, 2012). Following the rapid increase of Pakistanis in the 1980s and 1990s and their concentration in specific areas of the capital, several shops started working so as to meet the needs of the Pakistani community. These shops were mainly restaurants and mini markets, selling Asian products, video clubs and telecommunication centers (call centers) that aimed to smooth the communication with the country of origin as well as shops for sending money to facilitate sending remittances to relatives and friends in Pakistan.

⁹ Asylum seekers are the third country nationals who have applied for asylum in order to be recognised with the refugee status. The term does not refer to the outcome of the application, it only refers to the fact that a person has applied for asylum (definition IOM 2009, see at: http://hosting01.vivodinet.gr/unhcr/IOM/IOM_tool_gr.pdf)

¹⁰ Based on articles 6, par. 4 of the Constitution and Presidential Decree, ar. 287, par 2, temporary detention can not exceed the period of one year for the same crime, except for some extreme cases in which the extension of six months can be given. Accordingly, the maximum period of 18 months cannot be exceeded, see at: <http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/67715b2c-ec81-4f0c-ad6a-476a34d732bd/7477039.pdf>

At the same time, a significant percentage of the Pakistani population in Athens was employed in the sectors of manufacturing, construction and services, such as garages and petrol stations (Dermetzopoulos, 2009:6). A large group of Pakistanis are active in areas outside of the Attica region, mainly in crafts and farms in Marathon in Attica, Boiotia, Evoia and other counties (Tonchev, 2007:18). Moreover, the majority of the newly arrived Pakistanis remain in the country illegally, working mainly at traffic lights, and as vendors on the main streets of Athens (Dermetzopoulos, 2009:6). In general, Pakistanis work legally or illegally with little or no expertise in sectors for which Greeks develop no real interest. Employment conditions are characterised by long working hours, even low-income wages and social or physical isolation (Leghari, 2009:6).

The economic crisis of the last three years in Greece reduced the opportunities of employment for Pakistanis. There was a significant reduction in the proportion of those who are employed for frequent and long periods of time. The lack of continuous work is one of the main reasons leading to the mass departure of Pakistanis from the country. Their work is mainly of low-status, without social insurance, and the legal ones, especially in times of economic crisis, are considered "expensive" and less "desirable" as their employers are often reluctant to provide insurance contributions for their employees (Lasarescu & Broersma 2010, Tonchev 2007). At the same time, a percentage of legal immigrants manage to maintain various groceries and restaurants in the centre of Athens and call centers in the area of Piraeus with great effort (Lasarescu & Broersma, 2010:399).

4.2. Family Reunification

A fairly high percentage of married Pakistanis live in Greece without their wives. Specifically, 78% of Pakistanis are married. The vast majority of those who have family back home and wish to apply for family reunification, are confronted with a terrible time consuming and expensive process-as mentioned above-. The cases of family reunification to Pakistanis do not exceed the meager 2% (Tonchev, 2007:18).

We were informed by a representative of the Association of Pakistani Shiites that there is no proper information about the process. The immigrant is confronted with a process that includes an application with the relevant municipality, the approval of the application by the respective District, then the verification by the Immigration Department and lastly the call reaches the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then the application is forwarded to the Greek Embassy in Pakistan (PD 131/2006, ar. 6)¹¹. The Greek authorities are not the final destination. The next step is the investigation and identification of date and family ties of the applicant for family reunification by the Pakistani police and lawyers working with the Greek Embassy in the country. Similarly, the response, positive or negative, follows the same path. One can imagine the required years of attendance, "At least six," as noted by an interviewee (Interview No. 3).

It is worth noting that in recent years there have been documentaries (in Urdu¹²) examining the process of family reunification between Greece and Pakistan and seeking reasons for the delay and inefficiency of bureaucracy.

It is striking that in the last two years the only form of legal entry into the country that is applied to the Pakistanis case, is that of family reunification. The state's policies do not converge in this direction. According to Maroukis (2008), the target is the restriction of migration flows as they affect the country economically, especially in a time of crisis.

¹¹ **Presidential Decree n. 131/2006 (ΦΕΚ 143 Α')** that refers to the «Harmonisation of the Greek legislation with the European directive 2003/86/EK concerning the right to family reunification». The conditions and the supporting documents that are required for the application, refer to articles 4 and 5 of the Presidential Decree, see at: http://www.ypes.gr/el/Generalsecretariat_PopulationSC/general_directorate_migration/diefthinsi_metanastefikis_politikhs_Proedrika_diatagmata/

¹² The interviewee referred to the research presented in a British satellite channels informing people back in Pakistan about the family reunification process and the living conditions of Pakistani migrants in Greece. The research can be viewed on the internet. The interviewee hesitated to give more information and preferred to remain anonymous (interview n.3)

4.3. Racist Attacks

The phenomenon of racism has risen in the past two years in Greece. Third country nationals, including asylum seekers, refugees and irregular migrants are increasingly attacked, by mainly members of right-wing groups, in a context of racist motivations and the principle that “the majority has priority”, meaning of course a 'Greek' majority who shares a common history, language, religion and national consciousness. Discrimination against minorities and foreigners in general and the creation of racist stereotypes and xenophobic tendencies are based on this principle (Pavlou, 2007:18). For Muslim immigrants of Pakistani origin, the lack of historical and cultural ties with the Greek society makes things worse in terms of racial stigmatisation and ideological constraint on the symbolic and practical acceptance of Pakistanis by the majority.

The Pakistani community is targeted by racist attacks, which have taken alarming dimensions since the beginning of 2011, according to statements by representatives of Pakistani associations in Greece. The Pakistani Community has denounced 60 incidents of racist violence in the first quarter of 2011 (Interview No. 2, HRW, 2012).

“Pakistani community is the largest among other communities, better organized, and because we are Muslims in organized Islamic associations where various events take place, we become an easy target “ (Interview No.2)

It should be noted that not only members of migrant and refugee communities have become a target but also informal mosques, shops and community lounges belonging to members of immigrant communities (Amnesty International, 2012:23).

For the purposes of this study newspaper articles and web resources about the attacks were collected. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, a series of criminal attacks has been directed against foreigners based on criteria such as the color of skin, the geo cultural and geopolitical origin and religion (AFP, September 26, 2011). More specifically, the image presented in the press is as follows:

A plethora of attacks that evolve after sunset or in the early morning hours and are organized actions by groups of Greeks, members of extremist groups, including the Golden Dawn, usually 20-30 years old motorcyclists or pedestrians dressed in black, holding knives and bats in main squares or public transportation stops, to immigrants who usually wait to move to their workplace. During the last year the attacks continued into buses and in subway stations frightening other passengers too (Aformi, September 16, 2011).

Another picture of attacks in the media are those that are organized by members / supporters of the Golden Dawn, in private places, mainly in shops or in migrants' houses in various parts of Athens, where apart from being beaten, migrants are also victims of looting and theft (UNHCR, Against Racism 2012, ANTIGONE, 2012). Recorded incidents of racist violence in shops in the areas of Nikaia and Renti and the North: Metamorphosis, Heraklion, Likovrisis were victims of attack not only immigrants but Greek customers too, that used the shops' services boosting the foreigners' economy. Victims of violence are often be Greek citizens who witness the attacks and/or try to prevent violence against immigrants (Daily, March 1, 2013).

It is worth noting that lately attacks on workers of Pakistani origin who protested against the Greek employers for compensation or arrears accrued, have increased. The economic recession of the last three years has affected particularly the development of the rural sector, where mostly immigrants are employed, leading to a radically increased racist violence and economic and social exploitation. Payments are scarce and when employees react by requesting their salaries, they end up at the hospital or in the best scenario they get replaced by other compatriots. Among many other similar situations, the case of Nea Manolada in the

Peloponnese is distinguishable; it saw the light of publicity recently and confirms the incidents of racist violence and labour exploitation, where about 5,500 workers-out of which a large number of Pakistani immigrants- work in farms of the area (Ethnos, 20 April 2013).

The incidents that relate the police with the racist violence are a special category. These are incidents in which police officers during the performance of their duties, resort to unlawful acts and practices of violence. Cases of adductors and mistreatment in police stations and detention centers, and the destruction of legal documents were recorded (UNHCR, Annual Report 2012). According to the Racist Violence Recording Network of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Greece (2012), complaints were lodged by victims, representatives of the Pakistani community and Greek NGOs where police failed to take steps to protect citizens of third countries from attacks of racial motives. In such cases, for example, police officers either arrived very late to the scene of the attack, or were present in assaults by extremist groups, mainly supporters of the Golden Dawn against Pakistanis, but took no measures to protect the victims; or they did not arrest the perpetrators (Against Racism, 20 July 2012). In some cases it was reported that policemen adducted the injured victim to the police station to check the legality of residence documents, instead of carrying it to the hospital or even discouraged the victim from filing a claim, or failed to make a formal complaint as a racially motivated attack (Amnesty International, 2012: 23).

In a general climate of fear, 90% of victims of racist attacks seeking help for their injuries, choose not to report the case to the authorities, because of lack of legal documents and of fear that they will be arrested, then detained and possibly deported (UNHCR Greece, Against Racism 2012, ANTIGONE, Annual Report 2012). The general climate of impunity for the perpetrators of the racist attacks discourages also the victims from filing a case. The culprits of violent attacks against foreigners remain overwhelmingly unpunished, and when they get arrested, in most cases they are set free again (UNHCR, 2012:23-24).

The Pakistani Community reacts to the general climate of racism and xenophobia in several ways, including various marches and protests of antiracist initiatives such as the "United Movement against racism and the fascist threat" (KEERFA) taking place for general awareness of the public. (Against Racism, 16 September 2012)

5. Voluntary Repatriation

"40% of Pakistanis living illegally in the country have decided to return to Pakistan as life has proved to be worse in Greece than in their homeland" (Interview n.2).

The decision of many Pakistanis to move to the rest of Europe has changed over the last three years because of the difficulties encountered in finding or keeping a job in times of economic crisis, and because of racist attacks by groups of the Golden Dawn that have intensified, mainly in the last year and a half. The expectation to return home applies both to the ones who entered the country illegally and remain undocumented and those who passed to a status of irregularity unable to renew their residence permit in the country (Interview No.2).

Return to Pakistan is operated through these programmes organized by the office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Athens and through returns conducted by the Greek Police (Interview No. 9). Assisted return requires broad information campaigns targeting a broader immigrant population, as well as sufficient incentives to encourage voluntary return. These incentives may include financial assistance but also offer specialized training prior to the return and reintegration measures (reintegration). According to a representative of the Immigration Police, Greece's planning for the years 2008 to 2013 looks at a combination of know-how transfer from Member States with prior experience, extensive training of police forces and awareness campaigns for refugees in combination with the creation of supportive mechanisms to promote voluntary, assisted return of migrants intending to reintegrate (Interview No. 10).

In the case of IOM, programmes have been launched in 2009 and since then they have been financed via the European Return Fund and the European Economic Area. Irregular migrants can basically participate but also regular, as long as they submit their residence permits. The percentage of regular migrants is small and does not allow any ground for estimations or conclusions, for example, that due to the crisis or due to the racist attacks regular immigrants seek repatriation. The vast majority of participants are men from Pakistan. Specifically, in 2010-2012, 5,000 people returned to Pakistan. By participating in the programme, immigrants enjoy the allowance of 300 euros for the first period of reintegration in the country. Additional financial assistance is offered to support vulnerable groups for the purchase of a shop or field in the country of return (Interview No. 9).

Return to Pakistan for a large number of Pakistanis also takes place via the Greek Police in two ways, funded mainly by the European Return Fund. In the first case, the return is inevitable and it takes the form of administrative expulsion of an alien. In this case the police cooperate with FRONTEX, through the return programme called Attika operated over the last three years. In the context of Attika, good cooperation with embassies is required to obtain travel documents of aliens and the overall coordination with the police department, regarding the special trainings for screeners and escorts for safety during a return operation and as well as on fundamental rights. Specifically, FRONTEX is involved in the coordination of joint return operations, (Joint return flights) between Greece and other countries.

“During the joint return, vacant seats are filled with migrants from other foreign countries too. Several Member States may hold some positions to send migrants back home. According to the regulation, FRONTEX can since recently finance such operations” (Interview n. 11)

The last two years have seen a dramatic increase in the number of deportations of Pakistani immigrants (see Table 1). According to the representative of FRONTEX, «in the past national return flights were taking place every semester, now we operate flights almost twice a month, which is too much.” (Interview No. 11)

Table 1: Administrative Expulsions of Pakistanis

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012
Expulsed Pakistanis	245	405	1293	5135

Source: Hellenic Police (2013)

In the second case of refunds there is cooperation between the police and a migrant who seeks to return to his country of origin. These are voluntary returns of the police, where only issue the ticket without financial aid to immigrants.

“Practically foreigners come on their own after informing the police. Return decision is issued without a reservation and a period of 30 days is given. If there is a scheduled return flight, or if their number is such that it a flight can be scheduled, we inform them about the date and time to come to the airport and travel.” (Interview n. 10).

Migrants are also informed, while in detention, about IOM’s repatriation programmes. Cooperation with IOM takes place as follows; initially IOM registers them, works with embassies to issue travel documents and as soon as the travel documents become available the police amends and revokes the deportation order with reservations. The migrant is returned, with an added financial assistance of 300 euros offered by IOM. The participation of Pakistanis in these programmes has seen a sharp increase in 2012 (see Table 2).

Table 2: Voluntary returns of Pakistanis

Year	2011	2012
I.O.M. Athens	421	4575
Hellenic Police	294	1870

Source: Hellenic Police and IOM Athens (2013)

An additional incentive for all voluntary programmes (Police and IOM) is the non-inclusion of alien in the black list of entry.

“This means that if you ever want to return through legal means, visa can be issued normally. The migrant by getting the ticket, receives 300 euros and avoid his inclusion in the list of unwanted.” (Interview n. 10).

Consequently, the following question is raised: To what extent is indeed voluntary the repatriation of Pakistanis? There is no doubt that apart from the deportations of immigrants back to Pakistan, which are compulsory, in the case of IOM's and Police's voluntary return programmes, their involvement is purely based on their own decision. The question remains if one considers that the last three years the Pakistani immigrants have been facing the economic crisis, the increasing irregularisation of migrants, for the above mentioned reasons, and the inability of regularization for the irregulars. Adding the racist attacks by extremist forces that have intensified over the past year and a half, one wonders what other choice Pakistani immigrants could have apart from returning home.

6. Conclusions

In this study, I have discussed the patterns of contemporary migration from Pakistan to Europe in terms of their legality or illegality. Variations in choice for legal and illegal immigration on the part of Pakistanis are correlated with the nexus of immigration policies of hosting or transit European countries. Special emphasis has been laid on the conditions concerning policy implementation with regard to immigrant residency. In the same vein of thought, I have tried to show that mainly due to the volume of migration flows, the state provision of social benefits and institutional opportunities that could help to facilitate the regularization of immigrants, is not adequate. Among the European destinations of transit migration originating from or using Pakistan as a launching country, the Greek case is singled out as unique and eventually paradigmatic, as it has evolved today into a junction of irregular migration from Pakistan to Europe.

Pakistani immigrants react to the harsh Greek immigration policy, which almost excludes regularization and perpetuates the vicious cycle of irregularity, by applying for asylum. It is probably the only effective option they have to “buy some time” in their effort to seek and obtain legal residence, as applying for family reunification is usually rejected by the authorities. As a rule, applications for asylum are turned down on the grounds of Pakistani applicants being “economic migrants”. According to the Police, there were 36,600 such applications from Pakistanis during 2006-2012. It is interesting to inquire into why and how some illegal immigrants decide to apply for asylum and some remain undocumented.

Pakistanis constituted the largest community of Asian immigrants in Greece in 2006, numbering 40,000-50,000 people, a sharp contrast to the official sources that indicate only 15,478 people for the same period. The Pakistani community acted as a social vehicle, facilitating new migration flows from Pakistan to Greece. In

fact, already existing networks were used for the selection of the country of destination, to raise awareness and to reach a final decision. In other words, the social networks have played a crucial role by affecting either in a positive or negative way the transit and / or stay in the country, always in combination with the key factor- the smugglers circuit.

During the last three years, new factors have significantly contributed to changing the customary choice of Greece as a final destination of migrants from Pakistan. The change in society, the lack of regularization programmes, the intensification of the phenomenon of racism and the recent economic crisis –they all play a significant role in the immigrants' decision- making process, concerning their movement to Greece. Awareness raising, especially through online sources and the social media, regarding the living conditions of Pakistanis in Greece has led over the last two years their compatriots at home to a significant change of attitude about traveling to Greece. The influence of information in networks of immigrants is of particular interest and it will be further investigated at a later stage of the research.

Finally, the migration business between Pakistan and Greece, which includes professional and social networks, smugglers circuits and immigrants as the main protagonists of the enterprise in question, is forced to cope efficiently with Greece's economic crisis. Hence the following question appears pertinent: "If not in Europe or in Greece in particular, where else will these networks be able to operate effectively and what could be the role of Greece in such a new situation?" It is worth considering the future trends of migration from Pakistan and their impact on the Greek case.

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8. Annex I - Actors involved in the research

Interview Number	Organisation/Institution	Communication	Date
1	Pakistani Community of Greece «Unity»	Interview	14/2/2013
2	Pak-Hellenic Cultural and Welfare Society	Interview	18/2/2013
3	Association of Shia Muslims Pakistanis	Interview	3/3/2013
4	Hellenic Police, Aliens Division	Written communication	26/2/2013
5	The Greek Ombudsman	Interview	5/2/2013
6	UNHCR Athens	Interview	11/2/ 2013
7	Hellenic Police, Aliens Division, (P.Ralli) Coordination department	Interview	11/2/2013
8	Hellenic Police, Aliens Division,(P.Ralli) Asylum Department	Interview	11/2/2013
9	International Organisation for Migration	Interview	15 & 18/2/2013
10	Hellenic Police, Aliens Division	Interview	5/4/2013
11	Frontex	Interview	1/2/2013

