

Challenges to immigrant associations and NGOs in contemporary Greece

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Abstract

The paper explores the challenges faced today, in a context of severe economic crisis, by immigrant associations (IMAs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Greece. The data analysed here was collected between October 2009 and February 2010 and incorporates references to all recorded migration-related social actors operating in Greece. The paper takes into account such indicators as legal form, objectives, financial capacity and geographical range of activity, concluding with a typology of civil society actors dealing with migration issues. This study aims at informing the migration policymaking and migrant integration processes. By a spatial hot-spot clustering of IMAs and NGOs, we also illustrate the concentration patterns of civil society actors in Greece.

Keywords: Immigrant Associations, NGOs, migrant integration, spatial hot-spot clustering, Greece.

Introduction

Since the late 1980s Greece has undergone rapid transformation into a new country of destination, with immigration the basic component in population growth (Cavounidis 2004; Tsimbos 2008; Papadopoulos 2011). Between the population censuses of 1991 and 2001, the size of the foreign population increased from 167,276 to 797,091. Over half of the foreign population in 2001 was Albanian, followed by Bulgarians, Georgians, Romanians, Russians, Ukrainians and Poles. Currently 1.2 million foreigners live in Greece, comprising 10 percent of the country's population (Eurostat 2012). Much attention has been paid in recent years to clandestine migration flows, mainly from Africa and Asia, because of the large numbers of irregular migrants were apprehended.

On the basis of data documenting apprehension of irregular migrants in Greece, there have been significant changes since 2009 in the distribution of incoming migration by border gate. Entries through the Albanian border have gradually declined to around 12 percent of the total, while the Turkish land border becoming the main frontier crossed by irregular immigrants. By 2011 over 55 percent of apprehensions were taking place in the vicinity of the Ev-

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ros River. Five years earlier, this figure was only 15 percent. However, the inflow of migrants declined about 20 percent between 2011 and 2012).¹

Over the last two decades the socioeconomic and political scene has changed due to the expanding role of migrants in the economy and society in Greece (Papadopoulos 2009). Migrants were at first seen primarily as cheap labour that would contribute to the economic development of the country in the context of the European Union (EU). Within a segmented labour market, migrants were perceived as a way of alleviating labour shortages. As a multi-functional labour force, migrants moreover offered significant opportunities for economic expansion and improvement of the standard of living in Greece (Lambrianidis and Lymberaki 2001; Kasimis and Papadopoulos 2005).

In the current economic crisis, the lack of employment opportunities, along with xenophobia and racism, has implications for migrant integration. The unemployment rate among migrants increased to over 20 percent between 2009 and 2011, exceeding the unemployment rate for the local population, which was not the case in the past.

The crisis disrupted what had been a symbiotic relationship between migrants and the indigenous population in Greece, based on mutual economic benefits. Greek migration policy aimed at managing migration flows in line with the needs of the labour market. A number of regularization programmes and modifications in the legal framework were initiated but there were significant delays in introduction of measures on migrant integration and institutionalized civic participation in the host society. By 2005, as a result of the incorporation into Greek migration policy of EU directives on family reunification and long-term residents, integration had become an objective of migration policy. An Integrated Action Plan was designed, the *ESTIA Programme*, “for the smooth adjustment and integration of third country nationals legally residing in the Greek territory”, but it proved to be of limited effectiveness. Two years later participation of non-state actors in development of migration policy was further encouraged through establishment of a National Committee for the social integration of migrants. Its brief was to contribute to formulation of policy recommendations for integration of migrants, promote dialogue with civil society and monitor implementation of the Action Plan, although immigrant associations were not included.

A significant step was taken in the direction of securing civic participation by migrants with the enactment of Law 3838/2010, ceding limited active and passive local voting rights to third country nationals who are long term residents. In addition to this, to promote migrant participation in local migration policy, Law 3852/2010 (article 78) introduced Migrant Integration Councils (MICs) to all of the country’s municipalities. Aimed at strengthening social cohesion, MICs were given the task of recording and investigating problems faced by permanently resident migrants.

¹ The data has been taken from the Greek Ministry for the Protection of the Citizen (2006-2012).

A recent evaluation of migrant integration indicators across Europe places Greece about the EU average, albeit lagging in areas where most European countries do best (i.e. family reunion, long term residence, anti-discrimination). As regards civic participation by migrants, the recent migration laws that had come into force by 2010 brought Greece up to about the same level as the other southern European member states (MIPEx 2011). Hence the role of IMAs and NGOs come to the fore of policy making and research.

A number of qualitative studies have been carried out on IMAs as instances of the self-organizational and solidarity aspects of migrant communities in Greece (Petronoti 2001; Schumbert 2005; Cavoulakos 2006; Zachou and Kalerante 2009). Most of these studies have focused on a limited number of associations. There has however been systematic analysis of the numerous Albanian associations operating in Greece (Zachou and Kalerante 2009). The institutional framework in Greece is state-centred and it is in no way surprising therefore that IMAs are weak organizations, accorded only limited recognition and thus not recognized as a significant civil societal force (Gropas and Triantafyllidou 2005). NGOs, by contrast, are seen as effective consulting or mediating organizations which act towards the improvement of migrants' position in the host societies. Moreover, they extend their services to cover social inclusion of the less integrated target groups (Cavoulakos 2006; Varouxi 2008).

Civil society organizations that act as intermediaries for, and/or represent the interests of, migrants are significantly under-researched in Greece considering their impact on the prospects for the migrants and the opportunities of the latter for integration in the host countries. In the relevant literature, NGOs play a pivotal role for the strategic orientation and restructuring of migration policies in the developed countries (Sharry 2000; de Montclos 2007). The role of NGOs is not confined to substituting for state services to migrants and other socially excluded target groups. NGOs remain key participants in the consultation processes for migration policy and for setting the agenda on migrant incorporation and welfare in developed countries.²

The role of IMAs in the civil society of host countries is dependent on socio-economic conditions in the countries in question and the extent to which political opportunities are conceded by the relevant states (Soysal 1994; Od-malm 2005). There are different 'regimes of incorporation' in host countries, with a corresponding diversity in the availability of opportunities for social and political activation of IMAs. We discern four different ways of handling the incorporation of migrants: a) the 'corporatist' (e.g. Sweden, the Netherlands); b) the 'individual'/'liberal' (e.g. United Kingdom, Switzerland, etc.); c)

² See for example the role of NGOs in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), which is regularly organised across the globe (see <http://www.gfmd.org/>), as well as the consultation processes carried out by international organisations such as the IOM, the OECD, the World Bank, etc.

the 'statist' (e.g. France) and d) 'mixed statist-corporatist' (e.g. Germany) (Soysal 1994; Sardinha 2009). Each of these ways involves different relations between the state and the immigrants' associations and different corresponding arrangements, and these differences predicate how the state handles (or fails to handle) the integration of the migrants into the host society. Greece appears to fit most comfortably into the 'statist' category, with all that implies for the functions and capacities of IMAs.

IMAs are relatively new social actors. In southern European states their emergence is a by-product of these countries' transformation into countries of immigration. In their initial phase most IMAs serve the short-term needs and/or interests of migrants in the host countries. Typically, with the passage of time, they acquire more and more of the characteristics of pressure groups. The emphasis in the existing literature is on the operations of IMAs in southern European countries, where their functions range from providing a vehicle for migrant integration to offering a base for migrants' self-organisation, empowerment and solidarity (Danese 2001; Fonseca *et al.* 2002; Caponio 2005; Pero 2007; Pojmann 2007; Caselli 2009; Sardinha 2009; Pilati 2010; Morales and Ramiro 2011).

Given that this paper seeks to explore the challenges faced by IMAs and NGOs face in present-day Greece, in a context of severe economic crisis, one way of developing a typology of civil society actors dealing with migration issues is by factoring in indicators such as legal form, geographical range of activism, financial capacity and political objectives. In the interest of improved migration policymaking and more effective integration of migrants, our analysis is supplemented through introduction of the technique of hot-spot clustering of IMAs and NGOs, revealing the concentration patterns of these actors.

Analyzing the challenges faced by the IMAs and NGOs

The data analyzed here was compiled between October 2009 and February 2010 and includes all recorded migration-related social actors operating in Greece. Following location of the civil society organizations, research was conducted by means of a semi-structured questionnaire (of 80 questions) addressed to the representative of the IMA or NGO and aimed at gathering detailed information on the actor profile, the specific social and economic characteristics of the organisation and its activities in relation to migration. In most cases the method of face-to-face interview was adopted and when this was not possible (e.g. due to distance) the interview was conducted by telephone. In total 375 questionnaires (220 addressed to IMAs and 155 to NGOs) were filled in.

The data was subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS 19 software, with the ArcGIS 9.3 employed for creating the Geographical Information System (GIS) of the study area and generating a number of thematic maps to depict the distribution of the two basic types of civil society organizations in Greece, and especially in the area of Greater Athens. GIS-based spatial clustering has

been implemented recently in a number of relevant studies (Sokal and Thomson 2006; Gavalas and Simpson 2007). The following GIS-supported procedures were implemented: a) Spatial Database creation; b) Geocoding – Aggregation of data; c) Visualisation in the form of various thematic maps; and d) Assessment of spatial clustering. For analysis of spatial clustering in the Athens area in particular a more detailed sectorisation was adopted on the basis of postal districts. This was followed by geocoding and aggregation of the available data on migrants (the 2001 population census) and data on IMAs and NGOs, e.g. the addresses of the migrants and their organisations. On the basis of this procedure, the civil society organisations were allocated to spatial units in the Greater Athens area. The advantage of taking postal districts as the spatial units for the clustering analysis is that there is (by design) an even population distribution between them.

Each of the two types of civil society organisation is sub-divided into formal and informal organisations³, corresponding to different types of social actor: a) IMAs have been established mainly by migrants: most of them offer their services to specific migrant groups and/or specific foreign nationalities more generally; and b) NGOs are mostly established by non-migrants and offer their services to migrants generally. Numerous researchers have argued that IMAs are typically temporary constructions by nature: they start as informal networks (Danese 2001; Caponio 2005; Moya 2005; Caselli 2009), which generates complications for the study of their evolution in host countries. It is important to note that in Greece, as in other southern European countries where immigration has been a recent phenomenon, IMAs have a much briefer history than NGOs (Figure 1).

Whereas only 44 percent of NGOs were established in the post-2000 period, 71 percent of IMAs have been started in this century. There is little differentiation between the various IMAs, all of which have developed in accordance with the evolution of migration flows to Greece and the regularization processes of the different migrant groups.

Most IMAs aim at providing for the needs of their members (to find a job, to secure accommodation, to gain access to health services, etc.) and at representing their interests publicly in the host society. They therefore include among their main objectives the safeguarding of their particular culture, maintenance of solidarity towards members of their community, furthering of social integration and education/training of their compatriots.

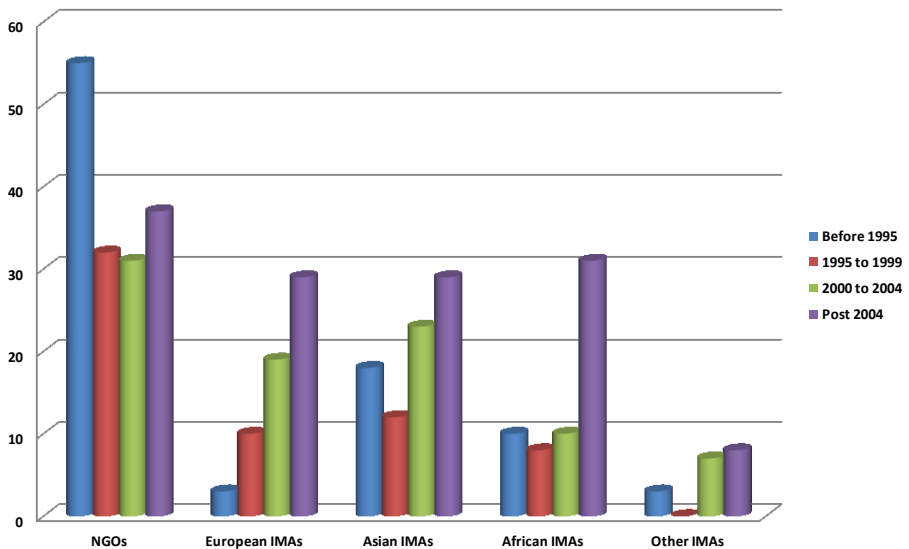
NGOs, by contrast, seek to address a wider range of issues which have to do with the social inclusion of disadvantaged social groups, provision of services to migrant populations, and so on. The specific objectives of NGOs

³ The formal organisations have prepared and approved a legal statute which has been submitted to the Greek Courts of Justice. The majority (79 percent) of organizations are legal entities – 87 percent of NGOs and 74 percent of IMAs – enabling them to claim funding from EU member states or from the EU itself and also to be legitimate discussants, in the public arena, of migrant problems.

include protection of human rights, encouragement of social integration of migrants, promotion of intercultural dialogue and multiculturalism, sponsorship of the education/training of migrants. NGOs aim to cater for all migrants; IMAs typically offer their services to narrowly defined migrant populations.

There are also significant differences between the two types of civil society organizations in terms of economic resources and financial capacity. IMAs have generally low revenues (median revenue for 2008: 6,000 Euro; minimum 500 Euro and maximum 500,000 Euro); they employed an average of 2 persons in the 2008-2009 period. Note that the majority of IMAs (85 percent) actually work without permanent staff, delegating the necessary tasks to volunteers.

Figure 1. Distribution of IMAs and NGOs by year of establishment



Source: Field research data, 2009-2010.

NGOs typically have greater economic resources and a superior financial capacity. Their median revenue is quite large (76,500 Euro in 2008; minimum 700 and maximum 39.2 million Euro). On average they employ between 10 (in 2008) and 16 (in 2009) persons. More than half of NGOs (59 percent) have permanent staff, but in nearly all cases voluntary work is also widely utilized.

In the period between 2005 and 2009 one third of all formal organizations were in receipt of funding from their national governments or from the EU. This figure corresponds to 61 percent of NGOs and 10 percent of IMAs. In the same five-year period one fifth of all formal organizations participated in

funded projects related to migration. This corresponded to 38 percent of the total number of NGOs but only 4 percent of the IMAs.

To sum up, the challenges faced by IMAs encounter are mostly a corollary of the small scale of their operations and the limited role they play in serving the everyday needs of migrant populations. Because of their circumscribed networking and financial capacities, only a handful of IMAs succeed in having more than a marginal impact on migrant integration. The IMAs' strong point is their solidarity with their compatriots and their guardianship role in dealings with the host society and its organizations and policies. NGOs are able to take up the challenges issued by the national governments and the EU, in return acquiring significant benefits in terms of financial resources and access to migration policy-making mechanisms. The way that NGOs participate in the domestic policy-making process distinguishes them from IMAs, which focus on the management of issues of everyday importance to migrants and their families. In many cases IMAs collaborate with NGOs to gain access to the public sphere and, more importantly, to ensure that their compatriots derive benefit from initiatives or projects financed by member-state governments and/or the EU.

Geographical distribution of the two types of organisation

The geographic distribution of civil society organisations coincides with the regional distribution of foreign population provided by the population census and - with some minor exceptions - with the regional distribution of residence permits granted to third country nationals (TCNs). It is evident from the 2001 Population Census that the greatest part of the country's foreign population is concentrated in the Attica region, with a significant percentage residing in Central Macedonia, in the Peloponnese, in Crete and in Central Greece (Table 1). The majority of IMAs and NGOs are located in the country's major urban centres and particularly in the Athens area. This reflects the fact that migration is an urban-centred phenomenon due to the greater availability of migrant services in the cities and to the way migrants co-ordinate their movements with their co-nationals throughout the country.

Figures 2a and 2b give a more detailed representation of the geographical distribution of IMAs and NGOs throughout the country on the basis of their official addresses (both headquarters and branches). The overconcentration of NGOs and IMAs in Athens corresponds to the realities of Greek organizational and administrative culture. Athens is the country's administrative centre, as well as being a transit point not only for the indigenous population but also for the migrant populations. Both types of civil society organization have their headquarters in Athens and extend their activities over the whole of the national territory. A number of IMAs and NGOs are, for example, involved in actions in the northern border area along the Evros River, which is used by most irregular migrants as a gateway into Europe. The activities of these

IMAs and NGOs include monitoring of vulnerable migrant groups and provision of related medical care and support.

Table 1: Geographical distribution of migrant population and organizations (NUTS II)

Region	Population Census 2001		Migrant residence permits 2010		IMAs and NGOs 2009/2010	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
Attica	370,218	48.6	210,200	40.5	290	77.3
Central Macedonia	100,178	13.1	78,123	15.1	21	5.6
Crete	40,424	5.3	34,005	6.6	18	4.8
Western Greece	35,144	4.6	25,800	5.0	12	3.2
Thessaly	31,957	4.2	35,403	6.8	9	2.4
North Aegean	9,711	1.3	7,945	1.5	6	1.6
Peloponnese	47,882	6.3	30,580	5.9	5	1.3
E. Macedonia & Thrace	15,146	2.0	12,872	2.5	4	1.1
Central Greece	39,397	5.2	29,787	5.7	4	1.1
South Aegean	28,112	3.7	19,377	3.7	3	0.8
West Macedonia	8,870	1.2	12,514	2.4	1	0.3
Epirus	15,692	2.1	12,524	2.4	1	0.3
Ionian Islands	19,460	2.6	9,545	1.8	1	0.3
Total	762,191	100.0	518,675	100.0	375	100.0

Source: ELSTAT, Population Census 2001. Ministry of the Interior, Residence permits of TCNs, March 2010. Field research data, 2009-2010.

One major difference between the two types of civil society organizations is that the access of IMAs to transnational networks is relatively limited. Of course IMAs do maintain linkages with co-nationals across Europe but NGOs have established more official, and broader, transnational networks, as illustrated by the fact that 28 percent of them collaborate with NGOs in other European countries.

On the basis of the qualitative information compiled in the course of the fieldwork, a significant distinction has been traced between the two organizational types. IMAs collaborate with cognate organizations in 'bonding networks' involving no activity or benefit other than increasing solidarity and/or acquiring resources for increasing impact on migrant integration. A number of NGOs, by contrast, have constructed, and maintain, 'bridging networks'. The-

se tend to be more complex, branching out into operations at different spatial and administrative levels (also see Fennema 2004; Jacobs and Tilly 2004; Caponio 2005; Schrover and Vermeulen 2005; Pero and Solomos 2010). In short, by comparison with NGOs, IMAs are able to mobilize less effective networks and the social capital they convey is correspondingly less extensive and their impact of migrant integration only mediocre.

Figure 2a: Geographical distribution of IMAs in Greece, Athens(a) and Thessaloniki (b)

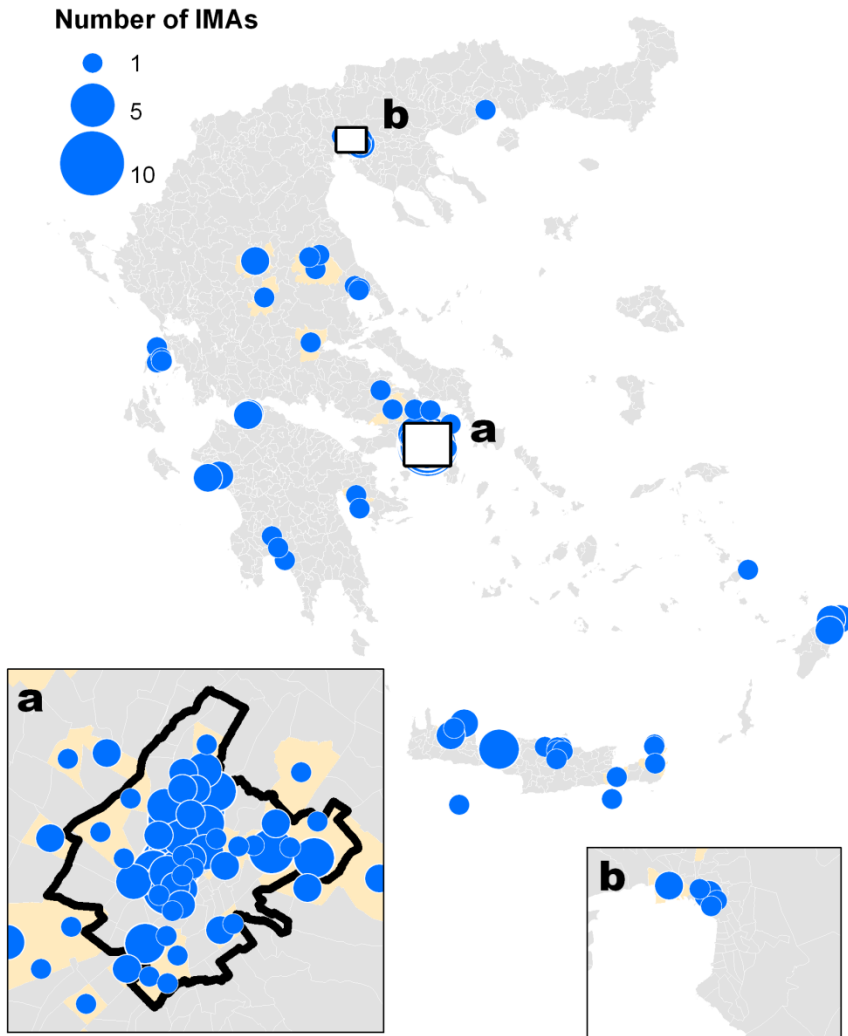
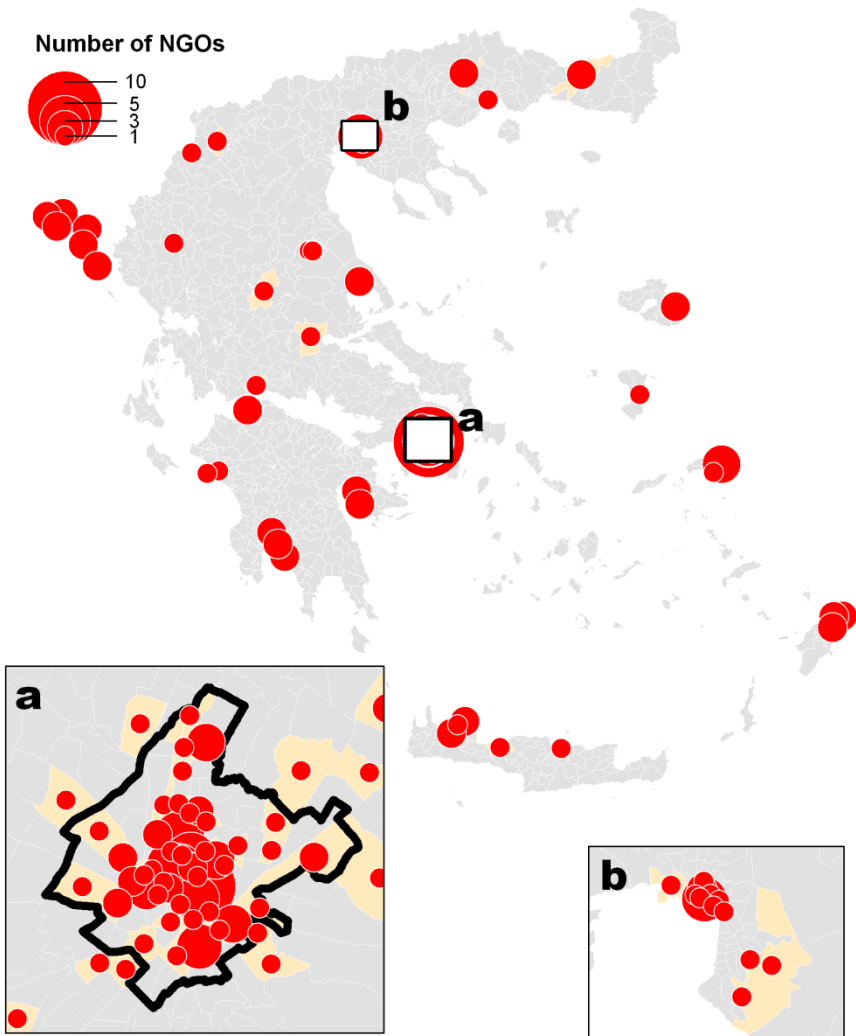
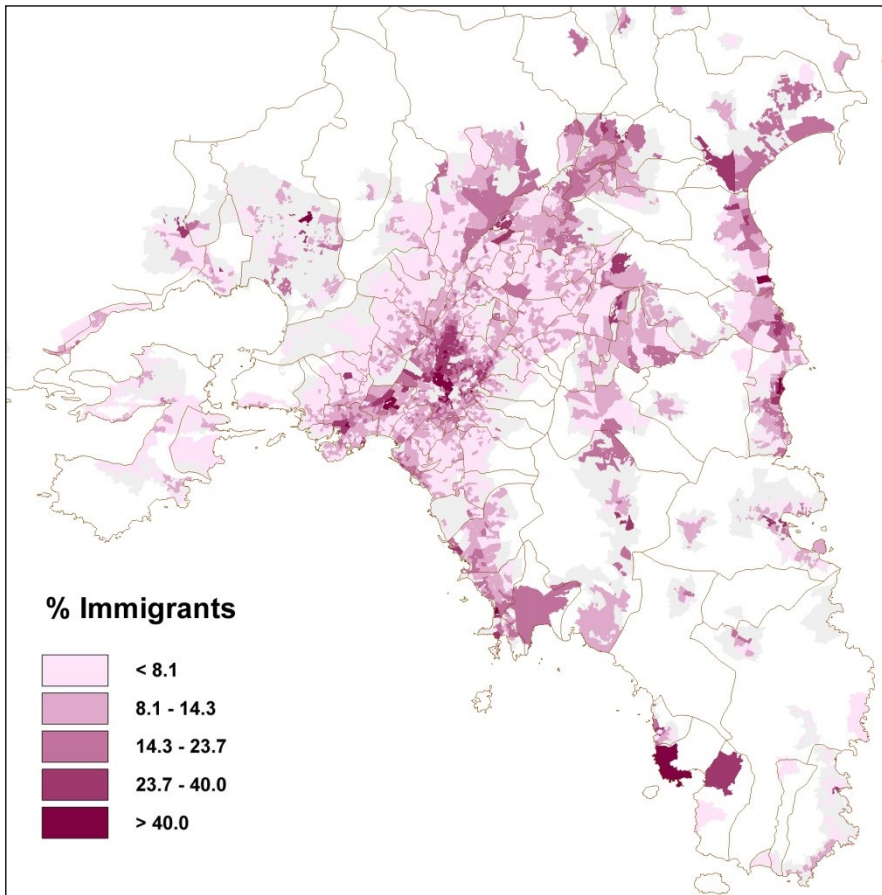


Figure 2b: Geographical distribution of NGOs in Greece, Athens(a) and Thessaloniki (b)



The differences in impact between the two types of civil society organisation can easily be seen through visual representation of the spatial clustering of IMAs and NGOs in the Athens Municipality. This area was chosen because of the fact that a large proportion of the migrant population is concentrated there (Maloutas 2007). As shown in Figure 3, migrants represent a large proportion of the population living both in the central city and in suburban areas. This high density of migrants living in the city's central area is one of the distinguishing characteristics of migrant settlement in Athens compared to other European cities, where migrants tend to gravitate to the suburbs (Musterd 2003; Musterd and van Kempen 2009; Arbaci and Malheiros 2010).

Figure 3: Density of migrants in Great Athens area (Source: Population Census 2001)



Figures 4a and 4b show the spatial clustering patterns of IMAs and NGOs in the centre of Athens, using a hot-spot technique⁴ that highlights districts of high rates surrounded by districts of high rates. Analysis of this kind shows how spatial clustering is much more solid for IMAs than for NGOs. Figure 4a, for example, exposes a solid hot spot cluster in the central and northern part of the municipality, extending along the road axes of Patission and Acharnon streets. In figure 4b we can see scattered hot spots around the centre of the municipality, without any unifying pattern connecting them. A sig-

⁴ This method of spatial clustering conducted in accordance with the Getis-Ord G_i^* statistic (Getis and Ord 1992; Ord and Getis 1995). It involves evaluating the contribution of each location to the Global Getis-Ord statistic for the whole area. It uses 5% significance filtering and 9999 permutations of randomisation (Monte Carlo simulation).

nificant hot spot pocket is also to be found in the centre and to the south of the city centre.

The meaning of the spatial clustering of IMAs perhaps becomes clearer in the light of the high rates of migrant concentration at the centre of the city of Athens. IMAs orient their services and assistance to co-nationals, who tend to reside in, and/or frequent, certain neighbourhoods in the city. The centre, within its northern axis of Kypseli, Patission and Acharnon streets, and its northeastern axis extending to Ambelokipoi, comprises the main residential area for European and African migrant groups. It should also be noted that the different migrant groups live adjacent to one another, rarely sharing the same neighbourhood.

Figure 4a: Hot Spots of IMAs in Athens

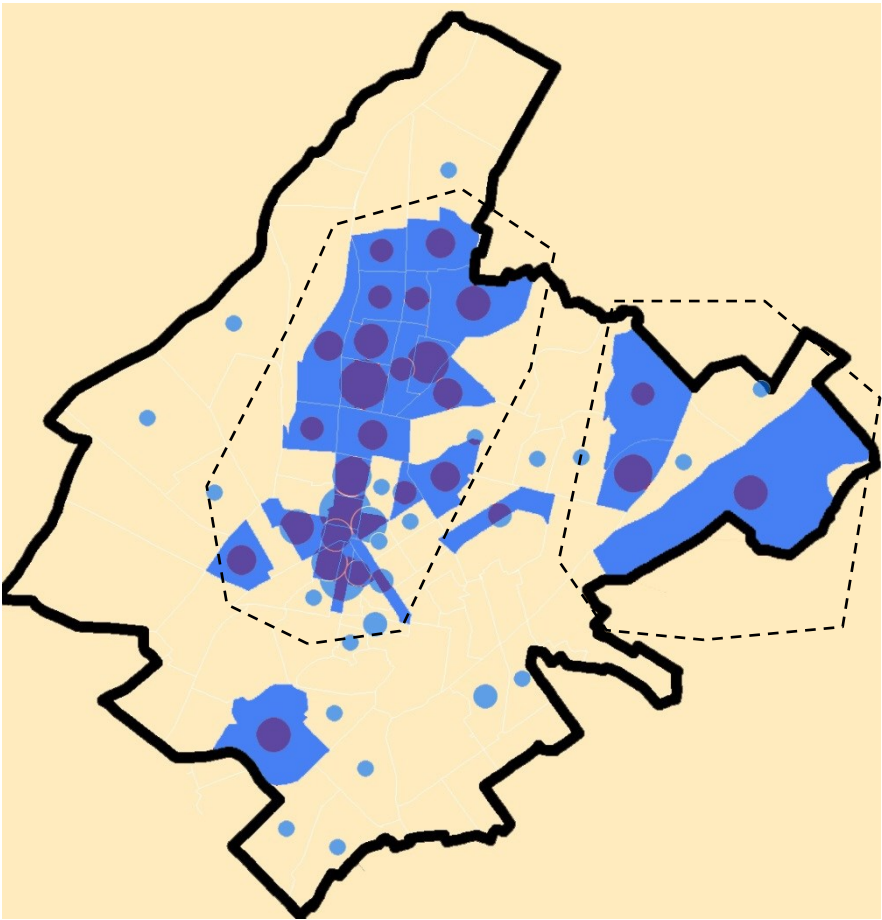


Figure 4b: Hot Spots of NGOs in Athens

Due to the fact that they extend their services to the migrant population as a whole, which tends to reside in the Athens area to travel through it, but also wishes to be in proximity to public services (e.g. ministries, municipal offices, etc.), NGOs tend to be scattered around the city centre. Not surprisingly, though, certain NGOs prefer their offices to be in higher-class neighbourhoods, from which they derive certain benefits, while at the same time making their services available to the poorer strata of the native-born population and/or to migrant groups.

To sum up, there is significant geographical variation within both types of civil society organisation, despite the fact that they tend to concentrate in the Athens area. This concentration in the capital city does not prevent them from being active in various locations around the country, depending on the needs of migrant populations. The main differences between the two organisational types are to be found in their networking patterns, reflecting differences in their degree of access to the policymaking centres and asymmetries in their capacity to impact on migrant integration. The spatial clustering of the

two types moreover makes it amply clear how much capacity is possessed by their social capital when it comes to gaining access to migration policymaking or maintaining closeness to migrant population groups.

Conclusion

One major conclusion is that the challenges facing the two types of civil society organization in the overall context of the Greek host society are widely different. Despite the fact that they are both concerned with the welfare of migrants, they are not the same in operational structure, size or capacity when it comes to their impact on migration policymaking and the migrant integration process.

Empirical analysis revealed that IMAs are small-scale organizations whose purpose to provide solidarity to their co-nationals with a view to improving migrants' living standards in Greek society. Their main concern is to cater for the everyday needs of migrant groups. This focus on providing assistance to their co-nationals leads to them taking on more and more tasks for the benefit of people who remain large excluded from Greek society. While strengthening the social bonds between migrants, many IMAs thus objectively intensify the social segregation of their co-nationals from the local community.

The majority of NGOs, on the other hand, are medium to large-scale organisations utilizing modern management tools and approaching migration as a contemporary issue of concern to the host society. Their institutional capacity to participate in formation of migration policy and their organizational ability to deliver services to migrants puts them in an advantageous position for operating state services aimed at social integration of migrants.

Study of the spatial distribution of the two civil society organizations has revealed significant differences in their networking patterns. The IMAs' social networks are of limited capacity and do not really connect them with the wider Greek society. The social and business networks of NGOs extend beyond the national borders and also convey valuable social capital which enables them to have an impact on policy making involving migrants and on the migrant integration process.

Spatial clustering analysis provides clear evidence of the closeness of IMAs' location to migrant population groups and corresponding distance from policymaking centres. By contrast, NGOs benefit from being strategically located near public services and decision making centres, without this taking them too far away from migrant groups.

There has been much praise of what has been achieved in terms of migrant integration but in fact it still falls far short of what is required, owing to disruptions caused by the economic crisis and the upsurge of xenophobia. Daily incidents of racist violence burden the already overheated discussion concerning the role of migrants and their associations in Greek society. IMAs and NGOs have created coalitions to fight against racism and xenophobia and

such coalitions of civil society organizations have the potential to evolve in the future and become a solid basis for pursuing migrant integration.

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