Modern Greece is a country used to economic hardship; the decades following World War II (especially the 1940s, ’50s and ’60s) and the last seven years of financial catastrophe (2009–16) have brought about major economic and social problems, the likes of which are rare in modern Western countries. As a result, during both periods (but even traditionally before World War II) Greece has been a country of emigrants. One could argue that every Greek family has relatives who emigrated, while a whole subcategory of traditional songs is inspired by the phenomenon. Greek economic hardship and emigration is quite well known; thus, many with casual knowledge of Greece and its modern history will be surprised to find out that the country enjoyed thirty-five years of prosperity between 1975 and 2009 (especially the 1990s and early 2000s), and that, as part of that prosperity, it became a destination for immigrants.

Most immigrants came to Greece as a result of the collapse of communism. Indeed, today over one million people (in a country of eleven million) are recent immigrants, and their descendants, mainly from Albania and the former Soviet Union. Both of those groups claimed Greek descent.
Among the many ethnic groups that make Greece their home today, sub-Saharan Africans, of which the Nigerians constitute a major part, represent an interesting case study. Although, most recently, some of them can claim that they left their homeland due to civil war and persecution, traditionally, and even today, they are primarily economic migrants. Also, while other refugees might claim that Greece was their country of destination, the Nigerians found themselves stranded in the country, initially but a stopping point for them on their way to Western Europe (mainly Britain). Also, while other immigrants can claim a degree of cultural affinity with Greece, Nigerians do not belong in that category. Demographically, the Nigerians appear to be young and overwhelmingly male, with few whole families emigrating.

Even though the Nigerians are much less numerous than other immigrant groups in Greece, they have a high visibility in society; this is due mainly to two reasons. As people of color in a European country, the Nigerians are easily identified (maybe not as Nigerians but clearly as sub-Saharan Africans) in the streets of Athens and the other Greek urban areas which they frequent. Even a short stroll in the streets of urban centers shows how ubiquitous the Nigerians have become to the Greek urban landscape. This is due largely to their professional activities. Nigerians in Greece are overrepresented in the street peddler trade. They are to be found alone or in groups around cafeterias, major bus and train stations, and busy streets, selling a variety of merchandise, from the useless (various toys which will not last for long) to the useful (batteries, selfie sticks, etc.) and the essential (umbrellas as soon as the rain starts). Most, if not all, do not have a peddler’s license, and they often try to sell in areas where (for some reason or another) they are not supposed to do so. Finally, many of them sell illegal merchandise and contraband, from pirated CDs and DVDs
to, of course, “Gucci” and “Louis Vuitton” handbags, which are too cheap to believe! Thus, while the Nigerians in Greece represent a tiny minority of the total number of immigrants in Greece (just over two thousand in an immigrant population of about one million in 2001), they have a relatively high profile. Nevertheless, details about their background, life in Greece, and so on were not systematically examined until the appearance of this book.

Fouskas is a sociologist specializing in immigration and, as one would expect, approaches his subject using the methodology of his discipline. He devotes the first chapter (out of a total of six) to explaining to the reader the theoretical basis of his study. Chapter four is devoted to the explanation of the methodology used in compiling the information. Those two chapters are important to understand the author’s work, as well as his conclusions. This part of the book might be difficult reading for non-sociologists; clearly, the target audience is not the general public.

Chapters two and three are devoted to an extensive and impressive review of literature and research on immigrant associations and Nigerian immigrants in particular. Here, both the specialist as well as the more casual reader will be able to understand the work done in the field but also find works of interest to them, regardless of specialty. The book’s literature review alone makes the project worthwhile and useful to a more general reading audience.

Chapter five (by far the lengthier in the book) comprises mainly interviews the author had with over two hundred Nigerian immigrants in Greece. Here, the reader can hear the voices of people whose lives have been invisible (besides their professional activities). From them we learn firsthand about the reasons why they came to Greece, what makes them stay, their lives and backgrounds in Nigeria, and the problems they face in their new home. The accounts themselves, and the much larger versions that the author must have omitted from the book in the interest of space, deserve a wider readership, as they help us understand the plight of Nigerians, and immigrants in general, in Greece.

Another invaluable tool for any researcher is to be found in Fouskas’s compilation of forty-two tables of statistics. Twenty-three of these tables are scattered throughout the book, with the rest grouped together in the appendix. Here, readers and scholars of various disciplines will find useful statistical data, such as the numbers of Nigerians in Greece, their gender ratio, their occupations, levels of education, and areas of origin in Nigeria. The book culminates in an impressive and comprehensive seventy-page bibliography. In reality, Fouskas’s book is a comprehensive reference work on the subject that is of use to the sociologist, but also to other scholars interested in the subject of Nigerian immigration (to Greece and beyond), immigration to Greece in general, and in the subject of immigration itself.

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The Modern Greek Studies Yearbook is published by the Modern Greek Studies Program at the University of Minnesota. The price for volume 32/33 is $60.00. Checks should be made payable to the Modern Greek Studies Yearbook, and sent to:

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The main objective of the Modern Greek Studies Yearbook is the dissemination of scholarly information in the field of modern Greek studies. The field is broadly defined to include the social sciences and the humanities, indeed any body of knowledge that touches on the modern Greek experience. Topics dealing with earlier periods, the Byzantine and even the Classical, will be considered provided they relate, in some way, to aspects of later Greek history and culture. Geographically, the field extends to any place where modern Hellenism flourished and made significant contributions, whether in the "Helladic space" proper or in the Diaspora. More importantly, in comparative and contextual terms, the Mediterranean basin and Europe fall within the province of the Yearbook’s objectives. Special attention will be paid to subjects dealing with Greek-Slavic relations and Eastern Orthodox history and culture in general.

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ISSN 0884-8432

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