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Although a traditional migrant-sending country during most part of the 20th century, Greece became a destination country for hundreds of thousands of immigrants, especially from the Balkan countries, following the collapse of the former socialist regimes in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s. More recently, due to its geographical position as the first entry-point into the Schengen Area, Greece received over 1.25 million migrants and refugees from war and poverty-stricken zones in the Middle-East and Afghanistan, on their way to the more prosperous European North. The closure of the European borders in March 2016 (following the EU-Turkey agreement) that stranded tens of thousands of asylum-seekers in the Greek islands and the mainland and the continuous influx of migrants and refugees ever since, have put considerable pressure on the administrative capacity of the Greek authorities and the country's infrastructure, all the more so as the refugee/humanitarian crisis took the country by surprise and coincided with the prolonged economic crisis, drastic cuts in public spending and social unrest.

The present publication aims to provide an overview and assessment of migrant integration policies in Greece during the crisis period and beyond. In particular, the book investigates, through an extensive desk research and a qualitative analysis, not only the impact of policies and social practices on the social inclusion of migrant populations in Greece, but also how migration policies, smothered by the refugee crisis, have gradually drifted to reception policies for asylum-seekers.

The book also identifies the challenges that remain to be addressed, at the national and the EU level, in order to enhance the successful integration of migrants and refugees and to contribute to a better-informed public debate in Greece.



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