

## **EQUITY ASPECTS OF EDUCATION: DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY REGION AND SEX**

### **VARIATION IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT**

The national enrolment figures for the various levels of education were presented in Chapter 2 (Table 2.3). The current chapter explores aspects of educational equity. First, enrolment figures at the regional level are presented and differences in regional participation rates are identified. A further issue is differences among regions in drop-out rates for lower secondary education. And finally, this chapter turns to tertiary education and explores the distribution of students in relation to social background and sex variables. It should be mentioned at the outset that much of the discussion is necessarily general since we lack the data for primary and secondary education that would make more finely tuned observations possible.

Table 6.1 breaks down student enrolments by region and relates regional enrolment rates by educational level to total population of the region. Besides telling us about the distribution of enrolments, comparison to regional population can serve as a quasi-indicator of the "youthfulness" of the population of each region. That is, since from the national figures we know that the primary school level appears to enrol nearly all of the age cohort, the primary education ratios can serve as a baseline for other levels and as an indicator of the proportion of school age youths in the local population.

Crete has the highest ratio of primary school attendance relative to the general population. In part this reflects the "youthfulness" of the population of Crete. Indeed, Crete is the only area outside of Athens and Macedonia (Macedonia higher birth rate is due to the inclusion of Salonica which is the second largest city in Greece) where births outnumbered deaths in 1992 (see ESYE, 1994, p. 11). Most rural areas have primary school enrolment ratios far lower than those of Athens, indicating ageing populations. The lowest primary school enrolment ratios are observed for Central Greece and Peloponnesus.

Table 6.1. **Participation in non-tertiary education (1989-90)  
by geographical area and in relation to the general population  
(1991 census)**

Geographical area	Student enrolment		Students per 1 000 area residents <sup>1</sup>		
		Percentage of total	Pre-school	Primary	Secondary
Greater Athens	560 082	31.3	<i>11</i>	85	<b>86</b>
Macedonia	394 688	22.1	16	81	79
Central Greece	201 164	11.2	14	76	70
Peloponnesus	176 577	9.9	13	78	72
Thessaly	131 449	7.4	16	84	79
Crete	101 216	5.7	<b>17</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>80</b>
Aegean Islands	80 626	4.5	15	83	<i>69</i>
Epirus	59 283	3.3	16	80	79
Thrace	51 894	2.9	<i>11</i>	85	58
Ionian Islands	30 956	1.7	14	79	67

1. Highest rates marked in bold and lowest rates in italics.

Sources: Based on Skouras-Varnava *et al.* (1993, p. 8) and on ESYE (1994), *Population de fait de la Grèce au recensement du 17 mars 1991*, p. 11.

However, most rural areas have higher pre-school enrolment ratios compared to Athens: which indeed has the lowest pre-school enrolment ratio with the exception of Thrace. We note, however, that pre-school enrolment figures include only those centres supervised by the Ministry of Education (see also note Table 2.3). Crete once more has the highest enrolment ratio as regards the pre-primary level.

At the secondary school level one would expect to observe the same ratios to the general population as for the primary school level since overall, there were approximately equal numbers of students enrolled in primary and secondary education in the 1989-90 school year. This expectation holds for some areas such as Athens, Macedonia and Epirus, and to a lesser extent for the Peloponnesus and Thessaly. However in other areas the ratio of secondary school students drops sharply: Thrace (-25), the Aegean Islands (-14) and the Ionian Islands (-12). In these areas, fewer students continue their education up to the secondary level, implying lower social demand and less availability of secondary schooling in these regions. Interestingly, while Crete has a high secondary ratio overall, it is nevertheless 10 percentage points lower than the primary ratio.

These general observations can be taken a step further with regard to drop-out rates from "compulsory" lower secondary schooling. According to figures from a study in preparation by Paleokrassas *et al.* (1994), 8.9 per cent of all students enrolled in lower secondary education dropped out during the three years of gymnasium (1991-94). Nearly all of those who drop-out, do so in the first year

(7.3 per cent). Contrary to overall participation rates in secondary education, the drop-out rate is quite a bit higher among boys than it is among girls (10.4 vs. 7.4 per cent).

One of the most important findings is that the drop-out rate varies both among and within regions of Greece. Drop-out rates may be as low as 1 per cent or as high as 29 per cent. Of the 120 administrative areas covering all Greek secondary education, 19 reported drop-out ratios less than 5 and 17 per cent reported ratios greater than 15 per cent. In line with the previous analysis on participation rates, areas with drop-out rates over 20 per cent include certain areas of the Aegean Islands, the Ionian Islands, Crete and Thrace.

From all the previous analyses it is obvious that at the national level significant progress has been made over the past decades in the provision of compulsory and post-compulsory secondary education. The above analyses, however, make it equally apparent that both opportunities and needs vary between the different areas of Greece. *Identifying these needs raises a complex set of issues that extend beyond the educational system.* For example, Athens has among the lowest compulsory school drop-out rates but the greatest school overcrowding and incidence of double shifting, while Rethymno and the Dodecanese have some of the highest drop-out rates and no double shifting.<sup>13</sup>

Yet one of the most salient aspects of equality in educational opportunities has to do with student achievement. Unfortunately there is no systematic monitoring of students' attainments that would allow regional comparison and analysis of needs. Thus, for example, participation of schools in the experimental program of remedial intervention that was launched 1991 was on an *ad hoc* basis rather than targeted to the needs of communities (Skouras-Varnava and Kostakis, 1992).

## TERTIARY EDUCATION

At the tertiary level it goes without saying, that demand far outstrips supply in the Greek educational system. Over the past decade (1982-92) an average of 133 723 candidates sought entrance to tertiary education every year, and about 44 210 or 33 per cent each year were successful (Skouras-Varnava *et al.*, 1993, p. 26). The inability to satisfy social demand means that equity considerations are often focused at the tertiary level rather than at lower levels of education. Recent data on the social background of university students entrants in 1989-90 shows that the largest constituencies are offspring of Technicians and Workers (7 000), Clerical Workers (6 000), and Professionals (5 000) (rounded figures from Skouras-Varnava *et al.*, 1993, p. 32). These cursory figures would suggest overall stability in educational opportunity by social background despite the expansion of university and non-university tertiary education over the last decade (see Table 6.2).

Table 6.2. **Social background of students in university, 1970-90 and educational opportunity index<sup>1</sup>**

Father's occupation	Percentage			Opportunity index <sup>2</sup>		
	(1) 1970-71	(2) 1980-81	(3) 1989-90	(4) 1970-71	(5) 1980-81	(6) 1989-90
1. Professionals	10.7	16.1	19.2	2.3	2.7	1.8
2. Managers	2.1	0.8	0.7	1.3	0.3	0.3
3. Clerical	14.0	18.0	21.8	2.8	3.1	2.7
4. Trades	13.0	14.8	14.2	1.5	1.6	1.0
5. Services	3.4	5.2	5.2	—	—	0.6
6. Farmers	27.0	23.7	11.3	0.6	0.5	0.5
7. Technicians/Workers	17.9	21.9	25.3	0.9	1.0	0.7
8. Other	10.3	3.6	2.4	—	—	—

1. Ratio of students in various categories to economically active males.

2. Indices in columns 4 and 5 are based on economically active males aged 45+, whereas column 6 is based on all economically active males.

*Sources:*

Column 1: Kintis in Kassotakis (1987, p. 25).

Column 2: Kassotakis (1987, p. 25).

Column 3: Estimated with rounded figures from Skouras-Varnava *et al.* (1993, p. 32).

Column 4: Kassotakis (1987, p. 22).

Column 5: *Ibid.*

Column 6: Estimated from Skouras-Varnava *et al.* (*ibid.*), and ESYE, *Labour Force Survey*, 1990, Economically active population by occupational category.

Women are equally represented in higher education overall; though the enrolment of women varies markedly by school or field. Women constituted 50 per cent of all university students in 1991-92 and 46 per cent of the student body of Technological Education Institutes (MoE, 1994, pp. 68, 81). Interestingly while 56 per cent of university students were making normal progress toward their degrees in 1991-92, this figure increased to 61 per cent for women students (*ibid.*). Certain schools and faculties, however, enrol more of one sex. Faculties where over 60 per cent of enrolment (1989-90) is female are: Philology/Philosophy (84 per cent), Education (82 per cent), Law (64 per cent), and Social Sciences (64 per cent); whereas faculties where over 60 per cent of the enrolment is male are: the Polytechnic (75 per cent), Agronomy (66 per cent) and Physical Education (63 per cent) (Skouras-Varnava *et al.*, 1993, p. 33). Notably, Greek women make up 41 per cent of the student body in the Science Faculties (*ibid.*).