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ESTRATTO

Semi-reluctant hosts: Southern Europe's ambivalent response to immigration

The human tragedy of migration has become a regular feature of those Southern European countries with accessible coastlines (Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus), inhospitable illegal border crossings (Italy and Greece) or even borders set with landmines (Greece/Turkey). The number of deaths by drowning, freezing and explosion can only be crudely guessed, but it is the dramatic arrival of shiploads of starving emigrants which most captures the public attention – frequently with a humane and compassionate popular response. Public policy, however, does not generally approach such matters in other than legalistic formulations; the typical initial state response has been to characterise the migrants as “illegal”, then later to concede that some might be candidates for political asylum. This status is rarely granted in Southern Europe, and in some respects is actually scarcely better than that of illegal immigrant (Black, 1992; Malheiros and Black, 1997).

In this paper,¹ I hope to convey an impression of the massively complex, rapidly changing and frequently misunderstood nature of the international migration to Southern Europe; its relationship with the economy and society; and the role of the state in managing the phenomenon. I conclude with a short appraisal of policy, along with some personal thoughts on how progress might be made.

Migration to Southern Europe

Over the last two decades, immigration into Southern Europe has increased on a continuous basis, although with the major increases

¹ An earlier version of this paper has appeared in the *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, (8), 2, 2002, pp. 211-229, although with serious printing errors which have warranted republication in this updated and revised form.

into Italy and Greece caused by large-scale influxes of emigrants from the collapsing Albania in the early 1990s. A consistent pattern, which Southern European governments have been trying to amend only very recently, has been highly restricted access to the formal labour market. The resultant burgeoning of the informal sector and its population by immigrants has been met since 1985 by frequent legalisation programmes across Southern Europe, typically followed by lapses back into illegality along with more illegal workers and immigrants (Baldwin-Edwards and Arango, 1999). Most recently, policy developments in all countries except Portugal show a new racialisation of the politics of immigration in Southern Europe, with a clear focus on “illegals” as the unwanted and allegedly criminally oriented aliens.

The immigrants exhibit a remarkable diversity of nationalities, educational levels, professions, and immigration routes into Southern Europe. Furthermore, there is extreme doubt about the types of migration – whether they should be considered as temporary guestworkers, seasonal cross-border labour, semi-permanent immigrants, long-term immigrants, refugees, etc. One thing should be learned from the Northern European experience: that even intentionally temporary migrants frequently end up staying (Rogers, 1985). However, this should not preclude states from facilitating migrants’ return, most notably through provisions for minority language instruction for migrant children, and legal arrangements for co-ordination or exportability of acquired pension rights. Both of these issues are largely ignored in Southern Europe, thus providing structural encouragement of permanent immigration.

Owing to the great extent of illegal immigration and residence, official statistics give limited information about the resident immigrant population across Southern Europe – especially in Greece. Table 1 gives a rough picture, using the latest available official data along with estimates for illegal residents.

Typically, the immigrant-to-population ratio in EU countries is within the range 3–9% (Salt, 2000, p. 8), although this range includes only legally-present immigrants. Table 1 shows that within Southern Europe, only Greece has a remarkable proportion of immigrant stocks; however, in this case a reservation should be made about whether they are stocks or complex flow patterns. Across Southern Europe, the main nationalities, ranked according to approximate numerical importance, are thought to be as set out in Table 2.

With the notable exception of Portugal, which has historically important connections with Brazil and its former African colonies, the dominant nationalities are Moroccan in Italy and Spain, and Albanian in Greece and Italy. However, the very wide range of nationalities in all Southern European countries indicates the complexity and diversity of migration patterns into the region.

Table 1 – Total population, estimated immigrant stocks and work permits, 2000 [000s]

	Total population (million)	With residence permit	Of which, EU nationals	Illegal estimates	Total non-EU immigrants (minimum estimate)	Non-EU immigrants as % total population	Non-EU legal workers
Greece	10.3	309+148*	200	350-500	607	5.8	..
Italy	57.0	1,250	150	230-290	1,330	2.3	750
Spain	39.1	900	380	300-400	800	2.0	213
Portugal	10.0	190	50	100	240	2.4	92

Note: *granted temporary 'Green Cards' in legalisation.

Sources: CEC (2001); Ministerio del Interior, Espana (2000); OECD (2001)

Table 2 – Principal third-country nationalities in Southern Europe, ranked

Greece	Italy	Spain	Portugal
Albanian	Moroccan	Moroccan	Cape Verdean
Bulgarian	Albanian	Chinese	Angolan
Egyptian	Filipino	Ecuadorean	Brazilian
Romanian	Tunisian	Colombian	Bissau Guinean
Pakistani	Yugoslav	Argentine	Mozambican
Ukrainian	Romanian	Algerian	São Tomé Príncipe
Polish	Chinese	Senegalese	Senegalese
Georgian	Senegalese	Romanian	Moroccan
Indian	Polish	Brazilian	Chinese
Filipino	Sri Lankan	Polish	Pakistani
Bangladeshi	Egyptian	Pakistani	Indian
Syrian	Peruvian	Nigerian	Bangladeshi
Nigerian	Brazilian	Bulgarian	
	Indian	Ukrainian	

Note: dominant nationalities in bold.

Source: author's compilation from national statistics and regularisation data.

Migration routes and modes of travel

There are three main routes of migration in the Mediterranean Basin. The first consists of South→North movements within the Basin, largely from Morocco, Algeria, Egypt and Turkey, and arriving in the Northern Mediterranean countries of Greece, Italy, Spain and France.

The second can be loosely labelled South-East→North, e.g. from Iraq and more remote Asian areas (e.g. Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan), and from Africa (e.g. Senegal, Nigeria, Congo and Somalia). Migrants using these routes either remain in the Southern European countries, or attempt to use them as transit countries to gain access to other parts of Europe (Icduygu and Unalan, 2001: 9-10). The third main movement is North-East→West, e.g. from Albania to Italy and Greece, and from Bulgaria, Romania and Poland (along with other USSR satellite states) to all of Southern Europe. This route exhibits more diversity in types of migration: some of it is shuttle migration, possible through geographical proximity; some appears to have started as temporary migration, but now looks to be more permanent; and much of the migration from the Baltic countries, and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, consists of trafficked women and children forced into prostitution (Budapest Group, 1999; Emke-Poulopoulou, 2001).

For the first two routes, travel by sea is the most common pattern, although increasingly complex stepwise movements have been noted for long-distance migration (Icduygu and Unalan, 2001). The arrival of “illegal immigrants”, as they are typically called, is not actually so large in quantity – although increasing markedly over the last two years. One of the problems besetting serious analysis of all aspects of immigration into Southern Europe is the extraordinarily inadequate compilation of statistics, especially in Greece and Italy. However, the latest report by the Greek coastguard gives the number of immigrants intercepted during the first ten months of 2001 as 5,242.² Until recently, the vast majority have been Iraqi Kurds; they are now Afghans and Iraqis, usually leaving from Turkey which they have reached by land. Italy estimates that over the two-year period 1999–2001, some 77,000 immigrants disembarked.³ Spain arrested some 3,500 immigrants arriving by boat in 1999, but this figure increased to nearly 15,000 for 2000; for 2001, the figure dropped to 4,500 for the first nine months, partly reflecting co-operation between Morocco and Spain, and also a cessation of such traffic immediately after the September 11th events.⁴ Three quarters of migrants arriving in Spanish waters are North African, mainly Moroccan with the remainder from Sub-Saharan Africa. Although these numbers are not small, and the Spanish and Greek figures are of actual arrests (which may be a small proportion of successful illegal immigration), they are nevertheless just a small fraction of total non-EU immigration into Southern Europe. Re-

² *Migration News Sheet*, Brussels, November 2001.

³ *Migration News Sheet*, Brussels, April 2001.

⁴ *Migration News Sheet*, Brussels, January 2001 and October 2001.

search in Spain in 2000, commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior, revealed that only 10% of immigrants had arrived illegally by sea, across the Strait of Gibraltar.⁵

Land border difficulties exist primarily for Greece and, to a lesser extent, Italy. The Greek–Albanian border is porous and it seems that most of the several hundred thousand Albanians in Greece have crossed it illegally. The Greek–Turkish border is passable, but filled with landmines which have not yet been removed in accordance with treaty obligations. The recently-created Greek Border Protection Corps has arrested some 45,000 illegal immigrants over a two-year period.⁶ Italy has released the figure of 14,000 caught at land borders over the two-year period 1999–2000,⁷ but there is no known estimate of the number who may have crossed successfully.

Asylum-seekers

Asylum-seeking into Southern Europe has never been a major issue, mainly because of the ease of illegal immigration, the historical difficulty of gaining asylum, and the minimal rewards for achieving such a status. The situation has improved slightly in recent years, but despite generally low application numbers – partly through active discouragement – the recognition rates are very low.

Table 3 – *Asylum applications, recognition rates and principal nationalities 1990–99*

	1999 figure	Total 1990–99	Geneva, Convention recognition	Total recognitions	Principal nationalities 1990–99			
Greece	1,530	24,610	8.6%	11.5%	Iraq	Turkey	Albania	Iran
Italy	33,360	89,530	13.4%	15.6%	Albania	Yugoslavia	Iraq	Romania
Portugal	310	5,590	4.9%	12.3%	Romania			
Spain	8,410	83,560	5.8%	8.1%	Romania	Poland	Algeria	Liberia
EU	367,400	3,746,410	11.1%	21.4%	Yugoslavia	Romania	Turkey	Iraq

Source: UNHCR (2000).

Table 3 shows asylum data for Southern Europe. As can be seen, all except Italy have had very small numbers of asylum claims: the Italian

⁵ *Migration News Sheet*, Brussels, July 2001.

⁶ Macedonian Press Agency, 28 November 2001.

⁷ *Migration News Sheet*, Brussels, April 2001.

figure is skewed by the 1991 arrival of Albanians *en masse* and a large increase in 1999. There is also extreme doubt surrounding the Italian statistics.⁸ For all of Southern Europe, it can be seen that the recognition rates are well below those of Northern European countries, despite both the small number of applicants and the apparent strength of their claims, judging by country of origin – i.e. war zones and oppressive regimes.

Trafficking and smuggling of migrants

Organised crime has benefited massively from European restrictions on immigration, originally merely facilitating the illegal entry of immigrants as a short-term commercial arrangement (smuggling). The organisations providing this service are usually specialised in human smuggling, and not necessarily involved in other forms of organised crime (Budapest Group, 1999, p. 26), although Europol believes that drug smuggling is often linked. Research conducted in 1993 by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in Vienna, suggests that 15-30% of illegal immigration into Europe was arranged by smugglers, and that the profits for that year must have ranged from a minimum of US\$ 100 million up to as much as US\$ 1.2 billion, with world profits of the order of US\$ 6 billion in this criminal sector (Savona, 1997:5). The ICMPD estimate for 1999 was that 400,000–500,000 people were smuggled into Western Europe in that year (Widgren, 2000), more than double the figure they estimated for 1993.

Since the early 1990s, the criminal activities in this area have not only multiplied, but changed massively in both character and organisation. Thus the distinction between "smuggling" and "trafficking" has been made, by all professional analysts, including Interpol and Europol (Budapest Group, 1999). Trafficking involves a form of exploitation over an extended time period. The most horrendous form of this exploitation is the enforced prostitution of women and children, which has great commercial attraction for organised criminal groups. The profits are as high as drug smuggling, and until recently the penalties if caught were rather lower (Emke-Poulopoulou, 2001).

In Southern Europe, there are two main areas of concern. The first, the less worrying, is the use of smugglers for transit migration through Turkey: it was reported for 1995 that 45% of such migrants had used smugglers, although the proportion was 66% for Iraqis (IOM, 1995: Table 17). Some 20% of the sample in the same study were intending to

⁸ *Migration News Sheet*, Brussels, February 2001.

enter either Bulgaria or Greece illegally, with the aid of smugglers, and with either Greece or Italy as the final destination. There are also reports of professional smugglers being used for illegal migration from North Africa to Spain (Koslowski, 2000: 205), although there is little evidence that they are used so extensively. The second area of concern is the trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and children from Eastern Europe and the Baltic countries, which appears to be extensively operating in Greece (Emke-Poulopoulou, 2001) and Italy (Campani, 1999). Furthermore, this sort of exploitation has been reported by Interpol as becoming “increasingly violent”, including beatings and rape (Budapest Group, 1999, p.23).

Some observations on immigration patterns into Southern Europe

The evidence presented above shows that, through their geopolitical situation, Greece and, to a lesser extent, Italy are the recipients of three sorts of illegal immigration:

- spontaneous emigration from Albania and other nearby countries;
- organised smuggling from the east using the Turkish route;
- trafficking and sexual exploitation from Eastern Europe and Nigeria.

Spain, and to a lesser extent Italy, have the phenomenon of some illegal boat migration from North Africa. However, the majority of illegal immigrants in both Spain and Italy arrived legally. Recent research carried out by Eurostat on illegal immigrants in Spain and Italy, along with sending and transit countries, indicates that 15-36% overstayed their permit, whilst only 7–17% entered illegally. Apart from refusals to answer, the remainder – some 35-60% – claimed to have complied with the immigration rules. The exception seems to lie with Moroccans, who showed a greater tendency to travel without a visa or permit – roughly 42% of those sampled in Spain (Icduygu and Unalan, 2000: Table 4). Other recent research in Spain by the *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* in Madrid suggests that 67% of illegal immigrants entered with valid documents – mostly a tourist visa - and that over 75% did not rely on help from others, meaning that smuggling or trafficking of migrants has not been the major mechanism of migration into Spain.⁹

Thus, Greece stands out as unique in Southern Europe for its extent of illegal immigration. It is also unique in the proportion of immigrants to population (refer back to Table 1), and especially in the ratio

⁹ *Migration News Sheet*, Brussels, September 2001.

of non-EU to native population. The latter can perhaps be attributed mainly to geography; however, the extent of illegality, it has been argued, is the direct result of government policy (Baldwin-Edwards and Fakiolas, 1999; Baldwin-Edwards, 2001a).

Immigrants' location in economy and society

The economy

Despite Southern Europe (with the exception of Portugal) having the highest unemployment rates in the EU –along with the lowest participation rates, especially of women and young people –there is not an important issue of job competition with immigrant populations (Baldwin-Edwards, 2002). The dual labour market hypothesis of Piore (1979) is evidenced throughout the region: even with quite high immigrant stocks, as shown in Table 1, certain sectors are begging governments to increase legal labour immigration. In all four Southern EU countries, the economic sector most obviously in need of labour is agriculture. Over the last year, with a new immigration law in Spain, substantial fines were imposed on farmers for employment of illegal workers, but their requests for several hundred work permits were met by allocations of one per farm, leaving the choice of a destroyed harvest or employment of illegal workers. In June 2001 strawberry producers in Andalusia demanded, through their local mayors, that the state legalise about 3,000 undocumented workers.¹⁰ In January 2001, some 50% of the broccoli harvest in Spain was reported as having been sacrificed for lack of legal workers.¹¹ Greek agriculture has had problems of agricultural labour shortages throughout the 1990s (Baldwin-Edwards and Safilios-Rothschild, 1999), along with Italy, which also has difficulty recruiting factory workers in the northern part of the country. Portugal is reported as needing, by the end of 2001, some 20,000 more workers in agriculture and construction, in addition to 100,000 legalised.¹²

Society

The social reception of immigrants in all four countries is shaped by factors other than their economic role. Media coverage of immigration-related events has varied greatly, both across Southern Europe

¹⁰ *Migration News Sheet*, Brussels, July 2001.

¹¹ *Migration News Sheet*, Brussels, February 2001.

¹² *Migration News Sheet*, Brussels, September 2001.

and also over time. Thus the most negative representations were occasioned in both Greece and Italy in 1991 with the mass influxes of Albanians; although the stereotyping of Albanians as criminal has abated, its long-term effects are still evident. Spain and Portugal show more tolerance of immigration than Italy and Greece; the latter two consistently appear as xenophobic societies according to the European Commission's *Eurobarometer* surveys. There is, however, great doubt about the cross-national comparability of these surveys and, consequently, the value of the results.

Several major social issues regarding the social integration of immigrants stand out as paramount, and deserve some discussion. These are: undocumented status; the criminality of immigrants; local immigrant population ratios; and access to healthcare services.

Undocumented status

This undocumented status is the greatest stumbling block to the integration of immigrants in Southern Europe. Despite frequent amnesty programmes and an increasing use of longer-term work permits, there remain substantial illegal immigrant populations across Southern Europe. Their size varies, with by far the largest illegal proportion in Greece. As has been acutely noted by Suarez-Navaz (1997) in her ethnographic study of immigrants in Andalusia, "the distinction between 'legal' and 'illegal' immigrants ... pervades daily life as well as institutional programs for immigrants' integration". She continues by noting the real-life ambiguity – the grey areas of semi-legality – such as legal immigrants who work illegally, or who have a work permit to work in a different sector. Many simply go in and out of legality, through their vulnerable and changing employment situation. The differentiation between legal and "illegal" is frequently used as a justification for discriminatory practices, although it also reflects the marginality of natives employed in the informal economy and without a stable social location. A "restricted notion of citizenship [exists] that indirectly requires potential citizens to have a high economic level. The group of immigrants that do not have the ideal level are condemned to join the ranks of the informal economy and to be subject to permanent persecution..." (Suarez-Navaz, 1997).

This account, focused on a region of Spain, seems applicable to almost any part of Mediterranean Europe. Research in Greece has suggested that increased personal contact with immigrants leads to more positive evaluations on the part of members of the host society, which can empirically undermine the social stereotyping of immigrants. At the same time, a genuine dislike – even fear – of the illegal status of im-

migrants has been noted (Baldwin-Edwards and Safiliou-Rothschild, 1999). We should also be aware of a general public concern about male immigrants, as opposed to families; this connects to the issue of whether the migration is temporary, seasonal, variable or permanent. Without generous family re-unification policy, male temporary migrants have little possibility of being joined by wives and children.

The alleged criminality of immigrants

Statistics are frequently cited by European governments as "proving" that there is a problem with the criminality of immigrants. Generally, immigrants have been increasing as a proportion of prison populations across Europe, most dramatically so in Greece. Table 4 gives the latest available data. It can be seen that across Europe there have been large increases of immigrants in the prison system over the last two decades. The largest proportion is in Greece, where the figure has now grown to around 50%. There has been no systematic research in Europe to explain these figures, although it is clear that many are imprisoned for breach of the immigration rules. A study of the Greek situation (Baldwin-Edwards, 2001b) has shown that there are highly discriminatory reasons why immigrants are imprisoned for crimes unrelated to immigration offences, including automatic pre-trial detention (where a native would not be detained), concentration on arrests of immigrants by the police, the assumption by judges of guilt in other crimes because of an immigrant's illegal status, inadequate legal representation, and even imprisonment beyond the actual sentence length through inability to deport.

Table 4 -- *Immigrants as a proportion of total prison populations, selected European countries (%)*

	1983	1988	1991	1997
Austria	7	9	22	27
Belgium	22	30	34	38
France	25	26	30	26
Germany		15	15	34
Greece	12	19	22	39
Italy	8	9	15	22
Netherlands	23	20	25	32
Spain	8	12	16	18
Sweden	17	22	20	26
Switzerland	32	40	44	nd

Source: Council of Europe data, cited in Baldwin-Edwards (2001b, Table 1).

Although there is some evidence to suggest that immigrants have contributed disproportionately to certain specific petty crimes, such as document forgery and theft, generally the native population seems to be more involved with serious crime, such as murder. A notable exception to this statistical generalisation is the behaviour of foreign and indigenous mafias. Public perception of the crime phenomenon is shaped largely by media reporting and government publicity, both of which seemed to have improved across Southern Europe in recent years, but now have started to re-appear as Southern Europe's new "racecard".

Local immigrant population density

The third social issue I want to say something about concerns the social geography of local immigrant/population ratios. The importance of localised high immigrant population densities is an increasingly accepted axis of analysis in immigration literature. Using various types of empirical data, its relevance for Greece has been shown as impacting upon relative wage levels of illegal immigrants, and also for public perceptions of immigrants (Baldwin-Edwards and Safilios-Rothschild, 1999). Of course, Greece has a particular vulnerability in Southern Europe, with its northern borders – especially that with Albania – and the large number of illegal immigrants in the border regions providing mainly agricultural labour in depopulated zones. More general theoretical positions emphasising the local dimension of the politics of immigration have been laid down by both Money (1997) and Karapin (1999). Their starting point is that the national geographic location of immigrants is uneven, with concentrations in certain local areas: for Money, the crux lies in local economic conditions to which local politicians respond; for Karapin, the mechanism is, rather, anti-immigrant social movements and the local political opportunity structure (Karapin, 1999: 427).

Across Southern Europe, important regional concentrations of immigrants have been noted. In Spain, some 50% of non-EU immigrants are thought to live in Catalonia (179,000) and Madrid (149,000), of whom 162,000 are Moroccan.¹³ The total non-EU immigrant population of Spain in 2000 was estimated (by combining residence permit data with application data for legalisation) at 516,000, plus another 418,000 EU nationals. In Italy, ISTAT data (ISTAT, 2000) show the highest concentrations of immigrants as being in central Italy (3.3% of total population in 1999), the north-west (2.8%) and north-east (2.6%). These are actually the most populous areas of Italy, reflecting the internal migration

¹³ *Migration News Sheet*, Brussels, January 2001

of Italians for work as well as the immigrants' distribution and relocation. In Greece, the distribution of immigrants is complex owing to the border with Albania, the available work in rural regions, as well as the more usual urban employment in Athens and Thessaloniki.

Table 5 – Typology of immigrant relationship to local communities

	Immigrant/population ratio	High level of integration	Marginality
Rural context	Low	Stable, few problems	Transient but accepted
	High	Affects social structure	Potentially threatening
Urban context	Low	Stable, few problems	Ignored
	High	Changes city patterns	Can form minority ghettos

There is a serious lack of research on the impact of immigrants on local communities in Southern Europe. I hypothesise, on the basis of limited data, a fourfold typology of such interactions (see Table 5). According to my schema, although rural and urban settings accommodate small numbers of immigrants in different ways, there should be few problems. With larger numbers, there are different implications. A large concentration of well-integrated immigrants in a rural area can completely shift the demographic and social structure, repopulating schools which would otherwise have closed, for example; other possible effects are on the housing market, hospital services, and so on. A large number of marginalised immigrants in a rural context is likely to be threatening; they may even have recourse to petty crime for survival, thus increasing their marginalisation. In a city context, in both cases a small proportion of immigrants is likely to be unnoticed or of little consequence. With increasingly larger numbers, there will be an impact on urban structures – for example, by populating declining inner-city areas, which would impact on the housing market. In the case of weak social integration, there is the danger of ethnic ghettos emerging – which may not be acceptable to the host community. All of these socio-geographic effects have been observed across Southern Europe, although it is unclear without rigorous empirical evidence that they are valid as general propositions.

Access to healthcare services

Immigrants' access to healthcare services, the fourth social issue to be briefly treated, varies greatly across the EU, and information ap-

pears to be deliberately suppressed by national governments. Generally, it seems that state facilities are available to undocumented and uninsured immigrants – even if only for emergency treatment. Across Southern Europe, there continue to be *contra legem* practices – although these often vary substantially by local region (Ugalde, 1997; Zincone, 1999). In Italy, a 1995 decree law permits not only free emergency medical care for undocumented immigrants, but also for serious illnesses and some preventative prescriptions; the 1998 Immigration Law extended all state medical services to undocumented children (Zincone, 1999, p. 67). Thus, Italy since 1998 has given free access to healthcare services to both illegal and legal migrants, with specialised services for immigrants including interpreters and support counselling. In the matter of health research, 2.4% of the Italian Ministry of Health budget is devoted to projects covering migrants (Schinaia, 2000). In Greece, the new Immigration Law of 2001 stipulates that state hospital care is provided for undocumented immigrants only in emergency cases and until the condition is stable, and requires state employees to notify the police. There is no special provision for undocumented children.

Across Southern Europe, the voluntary sector plays a major role in healthcare for immigrants. Organisations such as *Médecins sans Frontières*, *Médecins du Monde*, and Caritas – along with many other less-well known or individual NGO clinics – constitute the only medical support that a majority of immigrants can receive.

Research on the health of immigrants in Southern Europe suggests that there are serious health problems in the following categories: communicable diseases, such as TB, hepatitis, AIDS, meningitis and diphtheria; non-communicable illnesses, including organic disorders (e.g. cardiovascular risk, diabetes, dental diseases); occupational illnesses, to which illegal migrants are particularly vulnerable; sexual abuse, noted in the extensive trafficking of women for prostitution; psychosocial illnesses, which illegal migrants seem vulnerable to;¹⁴ and finally, poverty and living conditions as themselves causes of illness (Carballo *et al.*, 1998, p. 937; Gushulak and Macpherson, 2000).

Policy: the two faces of Janus

The response of most Southern European governments to immigration has been bifurcated. On the one hand, there has been a policy to close borders with increasing efficacy and varieties of techniques. On the other hand, governments have felt compelled to attempt some

¹⁴ See “Editorial” in *Journal of Immigrant Health*, (3), 2001.

social integration of immigrants into the society, notwithstanding the large numbers of undocumented migrants "on the ground". The major exception to this double-faced approach has been Greece, which offers virtually nothing in terms of social integration, with the state exhibiting a consistently hostile approach to its large number of illegal and semi-legal immigrants.

It is important, at this point, to recognise some essential differences in the migration problems facing the four Southern European states. Portugal is stressed by relatively few problems, mostly relating to its colonial past. Spain has, by virtue of its geographical position, the difficulty of illegal immigration by Moroccans and others leaving North African shores, along with its historical ties to some South American state. Italy experiences illegal coastal immigration, frequently using Turkey and Greece as transit countries, along with some illegal border crossings. However, it is Greece which is the recipient of mass illegal immigration, primarily through its border with Albania, but also from Turkey as a transit country, and through the other Balkan countries neighbouring Greece.

Turning to non-EU immigrant ratios, again it is Greece which has the largest proportion, over 6%, with Portugal, Spain and Italy at just over 2%, although Spain has a large number of EU nationals in addition. Although regional concentrations are also important in evaluating the effects of these numbers, clearly the strain is likely to be greatest on Greek policy-makers. Furthermore, of all these countries it is Greece and Greek society which has had the highest ethnic and cultural homogeneity - placing additional pressures on the state for policy solutions,

Let us examine in more detail the two antithetical policy responses –controlling the borders, and integrating the immigrants.

Controlling the borders

Following the requirements of both the EU and Schengen, over the last decade all four countries have adopted mechanisms for increased border control. These include:

- Visa requirements for certain countries' nationals
- More effective policing of land borders
- More coastguard patrols
- Expedited asylum applications
- Principle of "safe country of origin" of asylum-seekers
- Expulsion of undocumented immigrants
- Exchange of information within Schengen on undesirable aliens and asylum seekers

In addition to these general principles, all four countries have passed new legislation on immigration. Much of this legislation is concerned with trying to legalise the position of large numbers of irregular immigrants, the great majority of whom were in fact once legally present on the territory (with the exception of immigrants in Greece). The many legalisation programmes carried out across Southern Europe over the last 15 years constitute a major study in their own right, and will not be dealt with here. The principal problem with them has always been that they awarded short-term residence/work permits, requiring the immigrants to renew them with continuous work records. More recently, Spain and Italy have been awarding longer-term permits, in an attempt to solve that problem.

The European Union has played a virtually non-existent role in international agreements for the return of illegal migrants, despite the Association Agreements with Morocco and Tunisia, and the stronger Customs Union with Turkey. It was determined in principle in 1995 that the European Union should have re-admission clauses inserted in all future agreements with third countries (Baldwin-Edwards, 1997, p. 502); this has been achieved so far only with the Ukraine, and is planned for Morocco, Pakistan, Russia and Sri Lanka (Cholewinski, 2000, p. 394). In fact, it has been left to individual states to negotiate bilateral treaty arrangements for return of illegal migrants, and in some cases for labour recruitment; there are also *ad hoc* regional groupings, attempting to secure the borders of southern and south-eastern Europe.

Apart from the re-admission provisions negotiated with third states under the Schengen arrangements, the known bilateral agreements for re-admission are actually rather few. Greece has arrangements with Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Albania – although the extent of their utilisation is not known. Recently concluded agreements consist of a Spain–Nigeria agreement signed in June 2001, a Greece–Turkey agreement signed in November 2001;¹⁶ and discussions between Italy and Turkey on co-operation against human smuggling early in 2001. Spain has been pushing for some time for Morocco to include repatriation in a renegotiated agreement, but has not been successful.¹⁷

Only two out of the four Southern European countries – Italy and Greece – carry out mass expulsions of illegal immigrants. Italy has made public information that over the period 1998–2000, some 193,000 illegal immigrants were "repatriated" and 149,000 were ex-

¹⁵ *Migration News Sheet*, Brussels, October 2001.

¹⁶ *Athens News*, 9 November 2001, p. 5

¹⁷ *Migration News Sheet*, Brussels, August 2001.

pelled.¹⁸ Greece has had a much longer history of the police “broom” searches and mass expulsions of all those not in possession of valid residence documents. During 1992–95, these expulsions averaged over 225,000 a year (Baldwin-Edwards, 1998) and for 2001 the figure is expected to remain high at 270,000.¹⁹ Spain has adopted a rather more inclusive approach to its illegal residents, and repatriates relatively small numbers – mainly Moroccans and a few Nigerians.

Labour recruitment agreements were signed in 2001 between Spain and Morocco, Ecuador and Colombia. Spain is planning further labour recruitment agreements with Poland and other East European countries, with the objective of matching specific nationalities with occupational skills. Greece has bilateral agreements with Albania and Bulgaria, but only a few thousand seasonal workers have ever been recruited (OECD, 2001, p. 76). Italy had, until recently, a more far-reaching system which allowed sponsored immigration rather than being confined to bilateral agreements.

Integrating immigrants

With the massive extent of illegal immigration and/or residence, Southern European countries have had to tackle the problem of illegality before considering longer-term issues of integration. Increasingly, states have had to find pretexts to include as many as possible in the legalisations, otherwise their purpose would not be achieved. In Spain, a legalisation programme with the cut-off date of July 2000 approved only 60% of the 227,000 applications. Protests and demonstrations in early 2001 led to another legalisation in 2001 with 323,000 applicants. Preliminary processing of the applications shows an approval rate of 94%.²⁰ Greece’s second ever legalisation was also conducted in 2001, with 351,000 applications; some applications from the first legalisation in 1998 were still pending, and the total number of legal immigrants in Greece has been an unknown figure since 1997 (Baldwin-Edwards, 2002). However, given that the total number of immigrants in the last few years has generally been estimated as being at least 800,000, the number of applications is very low. It can safely be assumed that Greece will continue with several hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants for many years to come, even if they are regularly arrested and expelled from the country. Portugal conducted a low-key continuous amnesty in 2001, which legalised some 90,000 workers.²¹ Italy has

¹⁸ *Migration News Sheet*, Brussels, April 2001.

¹⁹ *Migration News Sheet*, Brussels, November 2001.

²⁰ *Migration News Sheet*, Brussels, September 2001; November 2001.

²¹ *Migration News Sheet*, Brussels, September 2001.

avoided using legalisations recently, in order to prevent the cycle of legalisation→new illegal immigration→new legalisation.

Spain and Italy have undertaken fairly extensive family reunification, with such measures constituting a large proportion of legal immigration and taking these countries into the mainstream of European immigration patterns. Greece discourages family immigration, and only in 2001 slightly relaxed its rules on the matter.

Permanent residence is granted in Spain and Italy after 5 years of legal residence, but requires 10 years in Greece and Portugal (Groenendijk and Guild, 2001); the average period required in the EU is about 5 years.

Increasingly, Spain, Italy and Portugal have been attempting to stabilise the position of immigrants by awarding longer-term residence permits, and also attempting to minimise the traditional requirement of continuous employment for their renewal. This policy, if continued, will lead to a replication of Northern European immigration countries' experience of permanent alien residents or "denizens", frequently with unemployment rates higher than the indigenous populations. This latter has already started to occur in Italy. Greece has no such problem, as the vast proportion of its immigrants are either illegal or in some grey area of semi-legality.

Since access to the welfare state is determined mostly by social insurance coverage in Southern Europe's less-developed welfare systems, only those immigrants who are legally resident and insured are easily included. Italy, as was noted above, has been more inclusive in this regard. Greece, departing from a previous situation of tolerance, has tried to prevent use of state services by illegal immigrants. Thus, in all four countries, the voluntary sector remains crucial for both legal and illegal immigrants.

Policy failure

Probably the biggest policy failure across Southern Europe has been the inability of the state to adapt to changing global patterns, to accept migration as a reality of the late twentieth century, and to manage it in economic, social and political terms. By persisting with exclusionary patterns of immigration control – notably issuing very few work permits, setting absurd conditions for employers to recruit illegal labour, horrendous bureaucracy in the application process – Southern European governments have effectively closed off legal labour recruitment. At the same time, they have made only token efforts to control their borders. Thus the phenomenon of an expanding informal sector began, staffed principally by illegal immigrants who accepted the terms of their host country.

The informal employment of immigrants has done much for economic growth, and in particular has propped up entire ailing industries –but at a cost. That cost has been borne by the illegal immigrants themselves, who are socially excluded and by the indigenous population, which feels somehow threatened by all this illegality. It has also set back the normal process of social integration of immigrants, although this is now proceeding at a reasonable pace in Spain and Italy, despite governments which are broadly anti-immigrant. Greece has yet to initiate any such process, given its failure to provide legal status to even a majority of its immigrant population.

Another consequence of over-restrictive immigration structures (the term “policy” hardly seems applicable) has been the involvement of organised crime. Originally starting with the involvement only of people-smuggling, it has now accelerated into a multi-billion dollar business, exploiting its victims, and forcing women and children into prostitution across Europe. The activities are also linked, in parallel form, with drug-trafficking, money-laundering, and other mafia-style activities. European governments are desperately trying to repair the damage which their own policies have actually caused.

What are the policy options that might effect some improvements? First, a recognition by all of Southern Europe that it actually needs more immigrant workers: in no southern country is there an issue of too many immigrant workers for the economy, although possibly Greece has some sort of equilibrium of supply and demand. Thus, the legal employment of workers from both within and without the territory must be expedited, preferably without the usual bureaucratic horrors.

Secondly, a recognition of the sad fact that police hounding and searching for illegal migrants within the society sends a message of “unwanted” to the entire population: it is inconsistent with the social integration of immigrant communities, and likely to promote racist tendencies. Even illegal immigrants have human rights, and should be treated with dignity: this reflects as much upon the host society, as on immigrants’ presence within it. One step would be for all the countries to sign the 1990 UN Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families, as suggested by the European Commission. Also, Greece should reconsider its refusal to sign the two ILO Migration Conventions which protect legal and illegal migrant workers’ rights.

Thirdly, there has to be some consideration given to the structural factors surrounding the informal economy. It is not enough simply to harass employers of illegal labour: it may be necessary to change social insurance provisions, requirements by the state for the employer to provide ‘bonds’ etc., and avoidance of all the impediments to employment of foreign labour which encouraged employers to hire illegal la-

bour. There should also be special consideration given to small businesses, which might need extra workers, but not under the conditions currently on offer by the state.

Fourthly, a more constructive approach to dealing with refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan etc. would be desirable, rather than grudgingly accepting very small proportions of small numbers of asylum-seekers. Southern Europe is now part of the “FirstWorld”, and as such has obligations as well as benefits; moreover, refugees can be integrated into society, taught the language, trained in semi-skilled jobs that Southern Europeans refuse to do, and so on. These things require management and investment by the state, for the future of the society. It seems doubtful that any politicians have enough vision to promote such schemes, at least at this time.

Finally, and the most demanding, a plea for some planning and effective management of immigration and immigrants’ integration. By planning, I do not mean the sort of “command economy” approach which has tended to prevail in parts of Southern Europe. Rather, I am thinking of some research agendas, and recognition of likely problems, in order that possible measures be considered. We might mention here several things: healthcare and immigrants’ communicable diseases, minority language teaching for immigrant children, local housing markets and immigrant communities, the criminal justice system and immigrants... The list is almost endless. Yet, all these problems and more already exist: would it not be wise to address them?

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