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IMMIGRATION FLOWS AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE EU'S SOUTHERN MARITIME BORDERS

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Gemma Pinyol

In recent years, irregular migration has become a major political concern both at national level and in the European Union scenario. In the European Union countries, politicians have identified irregular migration as a "problem" and have given priority to preventing this phenomenon in national migration policies and in the development of common immigration policy.

The increasing pressure of irregular migration flows on the Canary Islands, Lampedusa, Malta and the Eastern Greek islands have underlined the EU countries' concerns for the protection of their (and the EU's) external borders. The main purpose of this issue of *Documentos CIDOB Migraciones* is to explore how migration flows are managed along the Southern maritime borders of the European Union and how debates on human rights and security are dealt with in these scenarios.

The different contributions do not focus exclusively on the prevention (control) of irregular migration, but also on the development of new instruments and policies on managing migration flows in these areas. In this sense, dialogue and cooperation with third countries have become important instruments, and progressively, bilateral agreements with third countries (on readmission and labour flows) have been signed. Furthermore, beyond them and the management of labour migration, European countries, and especially the Southern ones, are seeking innovative instruments to link migration and development policies and to incorporate into these policies technical cooperation with third countries.

In the autumn of 2005, international attention was drawn to Ceuta and Melilla, when organised groups of people, mainly from Sub-Saharan countries, tried to climb over the fortified fences of the two Spanish

enclaves in North Africa. These events became even more dramatic when a man was shot by the Moroccan gendarmerie and Morocco started to deport some of the Sub-Saharan nationals to the Morocco-Algeria desert border. As the route through Morocco became more difficult, irregular migration flows from Sub-Saharan Africa started reaching the Canary Islands by the "Cayucos" route (boats bigger than "pateras" that can travel over longer distances), though it was a longer and more dangerous journey for those desperately seeking to enter Europe.

The events in Ceuta and Melilla and the 2006 "Cayucos" crises were episodes that, similarly, have occurred in the Aegean islands or in the Strait of Sicily. Because of the dramatic images and the media attention given to these events, significant segments of EU public opinion believe that irregular migration in the EU is mainly arriving through the Mediterranean shores. Terms such as 'invasion'; 'inundated by waves of' or 'massive flows' hide the fact that irregular migration in the EU area mainly arrives through land borders and airports. To respond to their citizens' concerns, EU countries have strengthened the control of their external borders to prevent and combat irregular migration. As Maroukis and Triandafyllidou note in their contribution, this issue was of top priority prior to the 2004 EU enlargement, but less attention has been paid to the management of the (Southern) maritime borders. In that sense, 2005-2006 could be viewed as a turning point: the relative increase of irregular flows from Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia to the southern European countries brought the topic to the head of the EU's agenda, and the rest of the European countries became aware that southern borders were also European borders[1].

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1. It could be said that the year 2005 represented the discovery by the European Union of sub-Saharan immigration and its impact on their Mediterranean member countries and their Mediterranean neighbours. Zapata-Barrero, R. and De Witte, N. (2007): "The Spanish Governance of EU borders: Normative Questions". *Mediterranean Politics*, 12:1, p. 85-90.

But distinctly than before, the management of the maritime borders and the prevention of irregular migration have been conceived beyond the security and control dimension; and in a more cooperative perspective[2]. In the guidelines already proposed by the European Commission in its Communication 491 "A Strategy on the External Dimension of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice" (October 2005), countries like Greece, Italy and Spain are attempting to connect migration issues with broader areas of cooperation; trying to link migration and foreign policies and improving relations with third countries on migration issues. As Cuttita quotes in his text, over the last decade, Italy has been offering incentives to North African countries in exchange for cooperation in the management of irregular migration.

The contributions in this *Documentos CIDOB Migraciones* analyse the management of Southern Europe maritime borders through three case-studies. Greece, Italy and Spain share some distinct characteristics that explain this selection: among others, these three countries have a markedly borderline geographical position and share a large maritime border with third countries. On the other hand, comparing the GDP between neighbouring countries reveals a notable economic difference on the two shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Inequality and an economic differential could be noted in the Morocco-Spain and Tunisia-Italy cases, which explains the push/pull factors of these migration routes. Finally, the irregular economy has an important weight in these European countries: it could be defined

2. During its Presidency of the Council in 2002, the Spanish government demonstrated its intention to bring immigration issues to the top of the EU's agenda and to link migration management with development aid. The Spanish government proposed to apply sanctions against countries which refuse to cooperate with the EU in fighting illegal immigration: although the initiative did not prosper, it could be understood as an important step in which relationships with third countries on migration issues acquired a prominent significance.

as an attraction factor for irregular migrants and could also explain the importance of smuggling networks crossing their borders. Furthermore, irregular migration flows impact mainly on the insular border regions of these countries, and as Godenau and Zapata point out, these regions offer certain peculiarities –not only regarding their entry but also their departure- in relation to their continental counterparts.

In the Spanish contribution, Godenau and Zapata Hernández analyse the case of the Canary Islands, paying special attention to the renewed role of this archipelago as a transit area of African migration towards Europe. The short distance that separates the Canary Islands from the Sub-Saharan region, one of the most impoverished areas in the world, and the archipelago's condition both as Spanish and European border are considered in this article, in which authors also analyse the recent influx of undocumented immigrants who travel by sea and the implications of managing these human flows.

Paolo Cuttita gives an overview of border management along Italy's maritime borders, and pays special attention to the country's cooperation with North African Mediterranean countries. According to Cuttita, the release of many irregular migrants arriving at Italian coasts have led to an increasing participation of non-government actors in border management, building up a "human rights regime" which offers migrants an instrument to open the gates of "Fortress Europe".

In the Greek case, Maroukis and Triandafyllidou describe the irregular migration flows towards Greece and the more common (maritime) pathways of these flows, and analyse the different instruments designed to 'combat' the routes of irregular migration, not only in Greece but also in the EU scenario. Patrolling the sea borders 24 hoursaday/365 days-a-year using substantial human and technical resources, as well as increasing efforts to cooperate with origin/transit countries and externalizing border control to those countries are some of the approaches discussed in this contribution.

As a Mediterranean odyssey, this *Documento CIDOB Migraciones* begins at the Atlantic Canary archipelago and, through Lampedusa and Sicily, ends at the Aegean islands. To summarise some of the common conclusions that arise from the different contributions, it could be said that migrations are becoming an important issue that affect international relations mainly, but not only, because of security concerns. In sum, migrations are acquiring major importance for international relations because they are a widespread phenomenon that affects both countries of origin and destination[3]. In that sense, the Southern European countries are privileged actors that could play a key role in promoting a better and more coordinated management of the EU's sea borders and, at the same time, in encouraging actions and instruments to promote development in the countries of origin and transit, within the framework of a future and comprehensive European immigration policy.

3. As Weiner and Münz quoted: "Our principal argument -perhaps to state the obvious- is that international migration and refugee movements are foreign policy, not simply domestic, issues. Nevertheless, citizens and policymakers are all too often unaware that if they want to secure their borders against unwanted population flows, this cannot be done simply by unilateral decisions to regulate entry" (Munz, R. and Weiner, M.: Migrants, Refugees, and Foreign Policy: U.S. and German Policies Toward Countries of Origin. Berghahn Books, 1997: p.49).

The Case of the Canary Islands (Spain): A Region of Transit between Africa and Europe

Dirk Godenau and Vicente Manuel Zapata Hernández

"The first day I arrived here on the island of Lanzarote. I came on a small boat, I'm not going to say that I've suffered much at sea or in the Sahara… Or something. Two hours. I arrived through Aaiun. There are people there, as they say, mafia. Pay them and I came with 350 euros like this… Almost 400 euros […]. There is no confidence in coming. If they take the money you can get stuck there in the Sahara with no food, no money, nothing. To go back to your country you can't. And there is nobody that can help you for example, I say please I want to go back to my village they don't help you, there is no one, only the Sahrawis, because the Sahrawis are against the Moroccans. I had… The one who was smartest during the journey was me. I didn't pay for the voyage till I was in the boat. The boat is big: 6 metres and 50. Like that, and 2 metres for… Well, we got here OK… We called it a deadly voyage. For example, it's not like coming in a ship or a plane, it's not something a hundred percent safe. Well I came only to change my future, a future cause what we have there isn't a future or nothing. There is no work, and to live everyday and think… The people think just of leaving. There is no work, if you're going to do something the country doesn't let you. With the mafia we have there as a government… The boat left

me… I didn't pay without getting on because I know the mafia, they take the money from the people and leave them stranded. They have no heart. These 400 euros, my mother and father don't know what to sell to give me this money, My father sell 4 sheep, goats… to give me the money. We're a poor family. He said OK. I'm saying this, but you're never going to change. You're going to take me for real or you're going to take me on a tour of Morocco, and then come back here. And he said for real, this boat takes the people 7 times, and nothing ever happens, come on up. Give me the money and come up. Lie down in the boat. Twelve hours of water. Well, the island of Lanzarote is near, like from here to La Gomera, which you can see… We were left sleeping in the boat from two o'clock in the afternoon till three in the night. At three in the night we came in, calmly and peacefully, each one jumps slowly, the people change to good clothes. And… everyone walks. I went and looked for a telephone booth and I call someone who gives me his address, listen I'm here on the island, in Lanzarote. And I discovered a danger even greater than the sea, that I don't speak the language, or anything, and I speak two languages, my original language Arabic and French. Because we study French as a second language".

Account obtained from a Moroccan immigrant who arrived in the Canary Islands by boat. Extracted from the interviews of illegal immigrants conducted as part of a research project titled *La inmigración irregular en Tenerife* (Illegal Immigration in Tenerife), sponsored by the Tenerife Immigration Observatory between 2004 and 2007.

Introduction

The establishment of borders between territories has not stopped the mobility of persons between them, but it has conferred a renewed significance on them in the contemporary context, in which intense currents are trying to undermine the multiple obstacles put in place to hamper said mobility. These clandestine journeys, which involve individuals who have freed themselves of all documentation so as not to be identified, and thus taken back to their lands of origin, manifest themselves in various border areas across the planet. Some take place in spaces separated by sea, as is the case of Africa and Europe, where the Mediterranean and a part of the Atlantic set the stage in which a variety of actors move, both to advance and to contain. Hence the renewed interest in the study of migrations in these singular geographical settings, in which different strategies for managing human flows, especially of an illegal nature, unfold.

The Canary Islands are situated in this type of border territory, which has led to a significant change in their migratory model. Movements of arrival as opposed to departure predominate in this new scheme of things, and in this sense, the arrival of undocumented persons hailing from the African continent is acquiring a growing importance. Although its repercussions on the overall migratory phenomenon are not yet of great consequence, comparatively speaking, its social impact is. This is due in large part to the way this type of mobility is manifested and to its significance, since it emphasizes the relationship between the archipelago and impoverished regions of the planet. A short distance separates this region from one which has recently experimented extraordinary economic growth, bringing about a high level of prosperity, stemming from its comparatively recent incorporation into the European Union. This proximity to one of the planet's migratory routes creates a general feeling of uncertainty.

This article reflects on this renewed role of the Canary Islands in the migratory relationship between Africa and Europe, focusing on the border condition of the islands, and their now evident role as transit area. We stress the aspect of the recent influx of undocumented immigrants who travel by sea, including these people's specific characteristics, and conclude with an analysis of the management of these human flows and their implications, emphasizing some unsolved problems in this respect, such as the status of foreign unaccompanied minors.

The analysis is conducted from the perspective of an insular region separated from the rest of the State and without any authority in the area of border control and management of migratory flows, which limits its responsibility to favouring integration processes and providing the newcomers with basic services. This circumstance often creates conflicts of interest between different levels of the administration, both in terms of jurisdiction and competition in the management of migratory flows and their effects. The comparison with other insular regions of Europe is of special interest if we are to better understand the repercussions illegal immigration has on the current configuration of its various structures.

Borders and Insular Regions

Borders are social constructs whose objective is the regulation, both multi-directional (of capital, goods and people) and bi-directional (of arrivals and departures) of the permeability that connects a system with the exterior. Migratory policies are a part of this configuration of borders that define States. When dealing with migration, national boundaries appear as part of a series of intermediate obstacles to the mobility between origin and destination. Their permeability to the movement of individuals is not always homogenous, since different sets of admission rules usually apply, depending on the migrants' characteristics: origin, motivation, training, financial resources, etc.

Borders are just one type of *barrier* and usually tend to be combined with other means of separation. As such, quite often political boundaries coincide with physical ones such as seas, rivers or mountain ranges[1]. As a consequence, apart from their purely social permeability -conditioned by the control exercised on them, transportation infrastructure, the availability of crossing points, among other elements- they also offer varying degrees of natural resistance as determined by the possibilities of physically crossing them. In this sense, a maritime boundary is different from an overland one, even though their administrative functions might be the same[2]. If one adds the possibility of air transport, the concept of a physical boundary becomes three-dimensional, since people can access points inside territories by air, thus placing the border at every international airport.

The concept of a *border region* refers to the proximity of a certain territory to the outer boundary of a particular geographical entity, be it a state or a group of states sharing political boundaries. This is the case, for instance, of the *Schengen Zone*[3]. The Canary Islands is a border region stemming from its position at the southern limit of Spain and, hence, of the European Union, with a marked proximity to the western coast

1. At the same time, it is these same geographical frictions which have usually influenced the evolution and configuration of social spheres by reducing the degree of interchange between the parts.

2. Carling (2007: 324) argues that controlling maritime boundaries is different from controlling overland ones, since the first type requires the control of *areas*, while the second requires only the observance of *lines*.

3. The Schengen Zone was initially conceived in 1985 and acquired official status ten years later, with the purpose of abolishing border controls and harmonizing the external ones among the countries party to the accord. The first ones -Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg- over time were joined by almost all Member States of the European Union, including Spain in 1991.

of Africa. Actually, in geographical terms, the archipelago belongs to the African continent, and this fact is becoming more and more obvious to inhabitants on both sides of the divide[4].

The role of borders in the migratory dynamic also constitutes a theme of growing importance for reflection among social scientists who deal with the geographic mobility of populations. This process started in the Canaries with the first references by Domínguez (1992), and continues to this day as part of the study on illegal immigration (Godenau and Zapata, 2005 and 2007). The archipelago has recently become a 'hot spot' as regards the displacements of undocumented persons. This, in turn, has created a growing interest in the international and national press, especially as concerns the influx of boat people, the most spectacular manifestation of outsiders arriving at the islands.

Insular border regions offer certain peculiarities in relation to their continental counterparts. The overland discontinuity between the insular region and the outside conditions its accessibility, requiring that any arrival be by air or sea. The risk profile of a maritime border, and the likelihood of crossing it, is different from that of crossing an overland border due to the different transportation and border control technologies necessary in each case. In general terms, a journey made by boat or plane requires greater collective coordination, given the higher cost of individual transport. At the same time, group operations are easier to detect and require a suitable complementary infrastructure, like ports and airports, which makes them more visible and controllable.

Concerning migration trajectories, it is not just the entry to insular regions that is unique; similar arguments apply to the departure. Immigrants who desire to access other parts of the European Union by way of the Canaries must again use maritime or air transportation, and are thus subject to the

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4. The minimum distance between the archipelago and continental Africa, about a hundred kilometres or 53 nautical miles, lies between the eastern coast of the island of Fuerteventura and the area of Tarfaya in southern Morocco.

relevant controls found in these means of transportation. In this sense, one might think that the attractiveness of the Canaries as a place of transit is, in principal, relatively low, given that it does not offer the advantages of territorial continuity. This is accentuated even more in the case of some of the minor islands -where some of the undocumented migrants arrive- which have even less connectivity, either with the rest of the region or with other parts of the European continent.

Even so, the last few years have seen an increase in the number of undocumented immigrants arriving by sea from various points on the African coast, due to the interaction of various factors: a) the reduction of border permeability in other areas, like, for instance, the Straits of Gibraltar, motivated by a greater supervisory effort of the European Union and its Member States (Carling, 2007)[5]; b) the increased collaboration between the EU and African emigration transit countries as concerns prior control of entries to EU territory (López Sala, 2006: 80), which has contributed to shifting potential departure points to more southerly points on the west coast of Africa; c) the limitations on repatriation causing transfers from the Canaries to the European continent, which offers immigrants the possibility of being relocated to the Peninsula, thus allowing them to move on to their planned destination once the obligatory detention period ends[6]; d) the information and possibilities of choice available to the immigrants when it comes to assessing and choosing alternative entry points. The services provided by the

5. In 2007, 18,057 undocumented immigrants arrived on Spanish coasts, 53.9% less than the previous year, of which 30.9% (5,579 people) used the traditional Mediterranean route, according to information provided by the Ministry of the Interior, the remaining 69.1% using the Canaries.
6. A similar argument is applicable to the unaccompanied foreign minors increasingly present on rafts and fishing boats, given the special protection status accorded them, which orders that they be admitted to reception centres known as CAME.

intermediaries of illegal migration end once immigrants are taken to their destination; any difficulties with further displacements are not their responsibility. In this sense, it is likely that often the *smugglers* do not offer reliable information to their *clients*.

The border under consideration here is one which reflects one of the greatest disparities in equality on the planet, a fact that is one of the driving forces behind this type of immigration. If we consider development indicators, the distance separating the Canaries from any place of origin of the African immigrants who arrive by sea are abysmal, so much so that one headline in the national press read: "Africa's rich neighbour". This is the case, for instance, of the Republic of Mali, one of the principal countries of origin in the last few years, which accounted for 15.8% of the total number of arrivals by sea to the archipelago between 2004 and 2007. Its socioeconomic attributes place it among the poorest territories in the world, with a bleak outlook for its approximately 12 million inhabitants.

In fact, the Republic of Mali occupies the 173rd place in the 2007 Human Development Index (0.380, one of the last countries in the global list published by the United Nations Development Programme), with a per capita income of 1,033 dollars (26 times lower than Spain), a life expectancy slightly above 50, and a literacy rate of 1 in 4 inhabitants. This situation is not very different from that listed for Mauritania (137th place in the same list), Senegal (156), Gambia (155), Guinea Bissau (175), Guinea (160), and the Ivory Coast (166), among others, all being main countries of origin of the recent African immigration flows. It seems then that the destination of many people from these countries is increasingly intertwined with the opportunities they dream of discovering in territories such as the Canaries, gateway to Europe, where they hope to find alternatives to their present-day predicament, even if this means undertaking an adventure with an uncertain outcome.

Following the increased rate of arrivals of undocumented immigrants by sea throughout 2006, which roughly equalled that registered in the years 2002-2005, the effort put into augmenting border control in the Atlantic

has been rising progressively, and with it the probability of early detection of the vessels before they arrive at the Canary coast. The growing collaboration between Spain and an increasing number of neighbouring African countries to prevent these boats from sailing has also been making the crossings more difficult[7]. Consequently, the cost of the West Africa-Canaries route is on the rise, both for the immigrants and the smugglers, as well as for the States involved in the deployment of these control methods. It is possible that the recent reduction in the influx of vessels into the Canaries, coupled with a renewed increase in the Mediterranean, is indicative of the effects of this new cost-profit balance associated with the alternative entry points.

Dynamics and Characteristics of Mobility

The arrival of undocumented migrants to the Canary coast on board rickety vessels started in the first half of the 1990s[8]. From January 1994 to December 2007, 85,775 people reached the Islands -or attempted to- illegally, using 2,674 vessels, according to information provided by the Government

7. The different phases of Operation Hera, being run by the European Border Agency (Frontex) on the African Atlantic coast from Morocco to Gambia, with the participation of Spain, Italy, Portugal, France, Germany, the UK, Finland, Sweden and Luxembourg, have accounted for the interception of almost a hundred vessels carrying 8,574 undocumented migrants throughout 2007, according to information provided by the Spanish Ministry of the Interior.

8. This *adventure* has been magnificently reflected in award-winning publications by journalists Juan Manuel Pardellas Socas (Héroes de ébano, 2004) and José Naranjo Noble (Cayucos, 2006). Also, in recent documentaries, such as *Europa ¿paraíso o espejismo?* (2005) and *Dijarama (Bienvenidos)* (2008), sponsored by the Spanish NGO Nimba and directed by the duo Chus Barrera-Alicia Fernández, as well as *Cayuco* (2007), directed by María Miró and funded by the European Centre for the Study of Migratory Flows.

Delegation in the Canaries[9]. This number considers successful crossings, since there is little data and much speculation about those expeditions that are lost at sea, which serves to underscore the human drama involved in this kind of odyssey[10].

Graph 1. Undocumented immigrant arrivals in the Canaries by illegal points of entry between 1994 and 2007
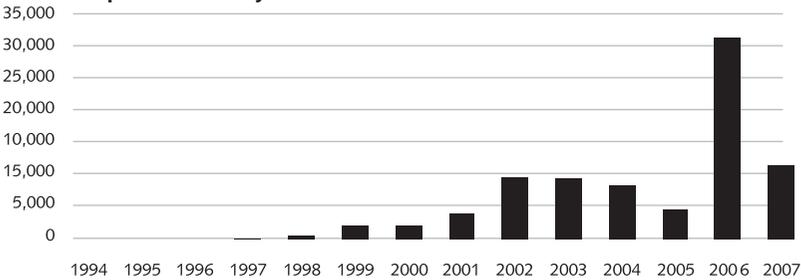
Source: Government Delegation in the Canaries. Compiled by the authors.

9. These figures are rough estimates since, until now, the progressive availability of informa-tion as to the arrival of undocumented immigrants notwithstanding, there does not exist a centre yet that documents this mobility, resulting in the appearance of different numbers that vary by source and date of inquiry. In preparing this article, the sources were mainly based on data provided by the Government Delegation in the Canaries, with special thanks to Marlene Meneses for compiling the required information.

10. According to the latest annual report by SOS Racism, during 2007 it was possible to do-cument the death or disappearance of 876 people while trying to reach the Spanish coast, mostly around the coast of the archipelago (2008: 45). The same source indicates, a year before, the high estimate of the Canary government of around 6,000 missing in the stretch of sea separating the Canaries from the African coast. The Ministry of the Interior, based on information provided by the Civil Guard which runs the Canaries Control Centre, estimates the number of dead in 2006 at about 1,260.

The last fifteen years have seen a preliminary stage, which lasted until 1997, in which the first boats arrived sporadically from the nearest points on the African coast, and continuing with the sustained increase from 1998 to 2002, and further consolidated in the period 2002-2006, which in turn boosted the process of building a basis for more effective border control through the signing of accords with Morocco and Mauritania[11]. The process culminated with the infamous *Cayuco Crisis,* which took place during the spring and summer of 2006, and which had its origins in the formation of alternative southerly routes and the use of larger vessels, a situation which abated progressively starting in October of that same year.

Throughout this period one can observe, for instance, the progressive increase in the number of *passengers* per vessel, a strategy used by the organizers in order to maximize each voyage[12]. It is also likely to be the result of the use of larger vessels constructed out of better material, fishing vessels (*cayucos*) as opposed to rafts (*pateras*), both terms becoming largely generalized in the everyday lexicon of the Canaries. Also of note is the improvement in the instruments that allow the Canary coast to be reached with more guarantees and from further away: more powerful motors, modern navigation systems such as GPS, mobile phones, etc.

The improvement in navigation systems relates both to the larger distances the expeditions have to cross as well as to different strategies for outmanoeuvring the denser policing presence, structured in layers, which forces many of the boats to sail many nautical miles off the African coast, a fact which often

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11. One has to take into account that during this period the immigration flow proceeding from Morocco decreased substantially, including via legal entry routes.

12. This tendency is in contrast to that detected by Jangle (2007: 305) for the illegal entries to the European Union from Eastern Europe, characterized by the progressive reduction in the size of the groups.

ends tragically for the immigrants. This sometimes leads to an increase in the amount of time spent at sea, a fact that negatively affects both the physical and mental state of the immigrants.

Graph 2. Median number of undocumented immigrants per vessel arriving in the Canaries by illegal points of entry between 1994 and 2007
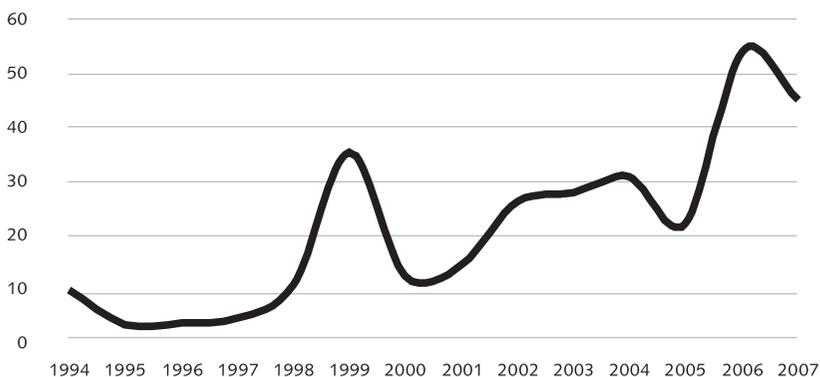
Source: Government Delegation in the Canaries. Compiled by the authors.

The flow of people is continuous all year round, with a tendency towards a greater concentration of arrivals during the summer months, between August and September, when weather conditions are optimal for carrying out the voyage. The monthly peaks have been changing in recent years, from October in 2003 and 2004, to December in 2005, August-September in 2006 and November in 2007, a fact that demonstrates a search for the best period for the crossing, and which is driven by the climate-related aspects mentioned above and the configuration of the control mechanism. The most intense episode was logged in the above mentioned interval of 2006, during which some 15,000 undocumented immigrants were caught trying to reach the archipelago by sea, mainly to the island of Tenerife.

Graph 3. Monthly average 2004-2007 of the number of undocumented immigrants arriving in the Canaries by illegal points of entry
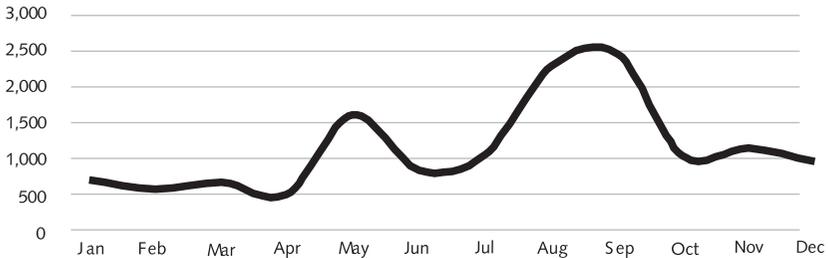
Source: Government Delegation in the Canaries. Compiled by the authors.

Tenerife and Gran Canaria are the main logistical points for handling this influx, namely in the southern ports of Los Cristianos (Arona) and Arguineguín (Mogán), to where almost all of the vessels caught in the high seas, especially fishing boats, are towed. It is also the destination for those persons saved at sea by the coast guard. The arrival of boats remains quite frequent in the easterly part of the region, almost always directed towards Fuerteventura, the insular region with the longest tradition and highest figures for this kind of mobility. Some even manage to reach land without being previously detected by the External Patrol Service (SIVE, in its Spanish acronym). For these arrivals, the composition in terms of origin is characterized by a higher percentage of people from the Maghreb, mostly Moroccans, while in the more westerly arrivals the percentage of those originating from sub-Saharan Africa, especially Senegal, Gambia and Mali, is greater[13].

13. Not all *arrivals* correspond to the exact choice of island made by the passengers themselves, since a high percentage of these vessels are intercepted on the high seas and towed to the nearest port with the proper facilities.

Now and then there appear on the horizon of the islands what are known as *barcos negreros*, or *slave ships*, shabby, rundown vessels that can transport in their old hulls several hundred immigrants, occasionally also of Asian descent. They often await their opportunity to sail north from the gulf of Guinea. In some cases they have been linked to the existence and activity of so-called *mother ships*, which supposedly approach the islands and disembark their passengers onto launches. The most notorious incident of this type occurred in 2002, when the freighter Noé docked in the port of Las Palmas originating from Senegal with 250 sub-Saharan Africans on board. *Ashva, N. T. Conakry, Fullbeck, M. V. Polar* and *Ile Dolonne*, among others, are all part of the recent history of these voyages to the Canaries. Lately they are being intercepted en route, and even detained while still at anchor and preparing the start of their journey.

Increased controls in international waters surrounding the Canaries have, over a short period of time, changed the impact of the influx of immigrants to the different islands of the archipelago, with Tenerife and Gran Canaria accounting for around two thirds of all detained immigrants, as mentioned above. Significant measures have been put in place in the Capital islands for controlling the reception, health, documentation, internment, repatriation or transfer of the incomers, of particular importance when handling the arrival of larger vessels, sometimes several in one day, which can carry well over a hundred people. In some cases they also arrive on the smaller western islands, where the lack of adequate infrastructure and sufficient personnel make it more difficult to manage the situation and comply with established protocols.

Usually the majority of the immigrants is comprised of young males, and occasionally women. Specific statistics, compiled since 2006, show that women do not even make up 1% of these arrivals. Even so, sometimes pregnant women, or mothers with young babies, also make this journey, a fact which confers an even greater degree of drama to this migration. The same applies to those unaccompanied minors present on nearly every boat and who arrive in small groups in the area, where they have to be housed

and cared for in keeping with applicable laws. The physical and mental situation of these people tends to be quite delicate when initial medical care is provided, especially following a long voyage and/or when the newcomers have had to face adverse weather conditions. Thus, it is common for these journeys to have grave consequences, despite the immigrants being attended to by increasingly specialized personnel[14].

Table 1. Undocumented immigrants arriving in the Canaries by illegal points of entry between 2004 and 2007

Islands	2004	%	2005	%	2006	%	2007	%	TOTAL	%
Gran Canaria	535	6.3	1,399	29.7	5,464	17.2	2,965	25.2	10,363	18.2
Fuerteventura	7,532	88.4	2,239	47.5	2,269	7.1	694	5.9	12,734	22.4
Lanzarote	348	4.1	323	6.8	822	2.6	637	5.4	2,130	3.7
Tenerife	104	1.2	637	13.5	18,275	57.4	5,813	49.5	24,829	43.7
La Gomera	0	0.0	72	1.5	3,138	9.8	244	2.1	3,454	6.1
El Hierro	0	0.0	0	0.0	1,891	5.9	1,262	10.7	3,153	5.5
La Palma	0	0.0	48	1.0	0	0.0	131	1.1	179	0.3
CANARIES	**8,519**	**100**	**4,718**	**100**	**31,859**	**100**	**11,746**	**100**	**56,842**	**100**

Source: Government Delegation in the Canaries. Compiled by the authors.

There has been a noted surge in the nationalities of those Africans making the crossing, although most are from the arc that extends from Morocco to Ghana, including the landlocked country of Mali. The boundary has been shifting south as a consequence of border

14. An increasing number of seminars and courses are being held in the archipelago on the connection between this kind of immigration and the medical measures required to cope with it.

control efforts, resulting in turn from greater international coopera-
tion and the growing tendency on Spain's part to *externalise* its border
controls[15]. The direct and *short* routes from Tarafaya (Morocco) and El
Aaiun (Western Sahara), still operational but with reduced traffic, have
been partly replaced by the use of much longer and perilous itineraries
originating in Nouadibouh (Mauritania), Saint Louis (Senegal) and even
Abidjan (Ivory Coast). Although originally disputed, the impact that
the FRONTEX force deployed in the region has had is evident in the
reduction of arrivals recorded throughout 2007, causing many people to
insist on the need for its continued existence and on the redoubling of
its efforts with more material and human resources.

15. This practice is not exclusive to EU countries and is carried out mainly in Africa, both in
areas of the Maghreb and south of the Sahara, the origin and transit area of the majority
of current undocumented immigrants (Carling, 2007: 322), since the phenomenon is being
observed in other regions of the planet such as the US-Mexico border (Angina Tellez and
Tao Pena, 2007).

Table 2. Undocumented immigrants by nationality arriving in the Canaries by illegal points of entry between 2004 and 2007

Nationality	2004	%	2005	%	2006	%	2007	%	2004-2007	%
Angola			13	0.3	11	0.0	9	0.1	33	0.1
Algeria	37	0.5			4	0.0	3	0.0	44	0.1
Benin			2	0.0	5	0.0	12	0.1	19	0.0
Burkina Faso	125	1.5	5	0.1	64	0.2	286	2.5	480	0.9
Burundi			1	0.0					1	0.0
Cape Verde			4	0.1	5	0.0	8	0.1	17	0.0
Cameroon	18	0.2	4	0.1	7	0.0	11	0.1	40	0.1
Chad			1	0.0	2	0.0	26	0.2	29	0.1
Congo (Zaire)	44	0.5	10	0.2	17	0.1	45	0.4	116	0.2
Ivory Coast	308	3.7	264	5.7	1,696	5.6	706	6.2	2,974	5.5
Eritrea					1	0.0	1	0.0	2	0.0
Ethiopia			2	0.0	5	0.0	5	0.0	12	0.0
Gabon					15	0.0	27	0.2	42	0.1
Gambia	1,654	20.1	1,228	26.5	3,627	12.1	2,245	19.7	8,754	16.1
Ghana	363	4.4	201	4.3	189	0.6	393	3.5	1,146	2.1
Guinea Bissau	351	4.3	328	7.1	956	3.2	562	4.9	2,197	4.0
Guinea	519	6.3	200	4.3	718	2.4	909	8.0	2,346	4.3
Eq. Guinea					500	1.7	161	1.4	661	1.2
Kenya					2	0.0	3	0.0	5	0.0
Liberia	70	0.9	24	0.5	62	0.2	44	0.4	200	0.4
Mali	2,830	34.4	1,299	28.0	3,418	11.4	1,042	9.2	8,589	15.8
Morocco	902	11.0	784	16.9	1,225	4.1	869	7.6	3,780	7.0
Mauritania	187	2.3	65	1.4	186	0.6	414	3.6	852	1.6
Mozambique							1	0.0	1	0.0
Niger	100	1.2	6	0.1	71	0.2	131	1.2	308	0.6
Nigeria	81	1.0	23	0.5	70	0.2	78	0.7	252	0.5
Rwanda			2	0.0	4	0.0	3	0.0	9	0.0
Sao Tome							1	0.0	1	0.0
Senegal	21	0.3	117	2.5	16,215	53.9	2,683	23.6	19,036	35.1
Sierra Leone	54	0.7	27	0.6	78	0.3	65	0.6	224	0.4
Somalia			3	0.1	7	0.0	19	0.2	29	0.1
South Africa					5	0.0			5	0.0
Sudan	219	2.7	14	0.3	31	0.1	46	0.4	310	0.6
Tanzania					1	0.0	1	0.0	2	0.0
Togo			6	0.1	10	0.0	22	0.2	38	0.1
Uganda					2	0.0	2	0.0	4	0.0
Zimbabwe					1	0.0	1	0.0	2	0.0
Others	335	4.1	7	0.2	853	2.8	542	4.8	1,737	3.2
TOTAL AFRICA	**8,218**	**100**	**4,640**	**100**	**30,063**	**100**	**11,376**	**100**	**54,297**	**100**
India	301	100	77	98.7	23	14.6	144	98.6	545	79.9
Pakistan					123	78.3	2	1.4	125	18.3
Palestine			1	1.3					1	0.1
Sri Lanka					11	7.0			11	1.6
TOTAL ASIA	**301**	**100**	**78**	**100**	**157**	**100**	**146**	**100**	**682**	**100**

Source: Government Delegation in the Canaries. Compiled by the authors.

Although the intention was to centralize all the access points and to organize the handling of this influx of people into the archipelago by locating them in the places best equipped with the proper facilities, it should be noted that all the islands receive vessels, albeit in different proportions. It had already happened with raft traffic, which even reached El Hierro arriving from the east, and now it is also occurring with the fishing boats, which skirt the African continent starting in the extreme south before making a last ditch effort to reach the central and western islands as a result of the route they must follow so as not to lose their way. This has resulted in Tenerife becoming the main destination for this journey, judging by the numbers issued for the region by the Government Delegation.

In summary, fourteen years of influx of undocumented persons by sea, with various episodes of heightened intensity in the number of arrivals, (which all took place initially on the same beaches or in other adjacent areas off the coast), have acutely conditioned the vision held by the Canary society of immigration[16]. Notwithstanding the figures or the

16. In this respect, it is worth reviewing the document titled *Reflexiones sobre la actual inmigración Africana en Cayucos*, written and issued in October 2006 by a group of Canary University professors in the framework of the so-called *cayuco crisis* (summer 2006), which involved the arrival of a large number of undocumented immigrants via a new sea route, more to the south than the traditional routes which linked the neighbouring African coast with the eastern islands of the archipelago. The ten-point document aims to draw attention to the shift in the public debate over immigration in the Canaries. The documents' authors reaffirm their stance that "the collective perception of immigration tends to be interpreted more as a threat than as an opportunity", thus causing the proliferation of controversies and myths, which routinely, and without empirical proof, are associated with other problems such as unemployment or the quality of basic services like health and education. Thus, citizens and politicians are invited to reflect "on how the challenges posed by immigration can be turned into opportunities". The text was published in the Op-ed section of El País under the title "Canarias, ante la inmigración africana", on Monday, November 13, 2006.

final destination of the majority of these individuals, almost always out-side the archipelago, the after-effects of this migratory phenomenon are still evident on a population which has been slowly discovering, through the dynamics and characteristics of this mobility, the wide range of dif-ficulties faced by the African continent and which impel these journeys in which the immigrants literally risk their lives.

Managing the Flows and its Implications

The implications of the migration in question are important for the archipelago, since a complex structure to receive and assist the immi-grants has had to be created. During times of maximum influx, the establishments used to process the immigrants proved to be insufficient, as were the internment centres, requiring temporary housing to be pro-vided in old military bases. The debate generated stemming from the high economic cost of this system, coupled with the prejudices arising from the extensive use of public services by the newcomers, is becoming more and more intense in Canary politics, even though the central gov-ernment, under its jurisdiction, has devoted numerous resources to the issue. Such is the case of the *Comprehensive Plan of Action on Immigration between the State and the Autonomous Community of the Canaries,* which established a fund of €188.2 million for the period 2005-2007, of which more than a half was earmarked, on the one hand, for maritime assistance and first aid for immigrants intercepted in Canary waters or on the coast, and on the other, for the fight against clandestine immigra-tion and to the orderly channelling of migrant flows.

The increased influx of undocumented persons and their access to the islands via a wider array of points has caused a marked increase in the number of internment centres (CIES) designated to house the immigrants during their stay in the region, according to current regulations which allow for an internment of up to 40 days. This is currently under review for adoption by the European Union and its member states. Along these lines, the Hoya Fría

in Santa Cruz de Tenerife (321 beds) has been added to the first installations of Barranco Seco in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (168 beds) and El Matorral in Puerto del Rosario (Fuerteventura, 1,269 beds), which meet the needs resulting from the influx in the eastern Canaries. These were the existing resources until 2006, when Fuerteventura was the most affected by the arrival of undocumented immigrants.

The capacity in place was outstripped in 2006 as a result of the temporary increase in the rate of arrivals, which led to the establishment of various centres for the temporary internment of immigrants (CETI), provisional structures of an interim nature located next to the police station of Las Américas beach (Arona, Tenerife), La Isleta in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, La Camella in San Sebastián de La Gomera and Valverde in El Hierro[17]. The conditions in all these centres, permanent or temporary, especially during their initial operations, were questioned by various public and public agencies, their concerns about the violation of human rights reaching the international stage. The fact that access to these sites is strictly limited for persons or agencies that have no connection with their operation has given rise to speculation and heated debate concerning the conditions in which the immigrants are housed in these centres.

From these centres, and before the legally stipulated period of detention is over, most of the immigrants are transferred to those countries with which Spain has signed repatriation agreements[18], frequently utiliz-

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17. Currently, a new CETI is being prepared in the old barracks of Las Canteras in the Tenerife town of San Cristóbal de La Laguna, according to information from the Ministry of the Interior, so as to cope with possible future scenarios.

18. As of early 2008 Spain has repatriation agreements with the African countries from where the majority of clandestine immigrants arrive to the Canary coast: Senegal, Gambia, Mali, Morocco, Guinea Bissau, Ghana and Mauritania, as well as with Equatorial Guinea, Algeria and Cape Verde. Regarding the table listing the largest influx, only Ivory Coast and Guinea are missing.

ing charter flights that leave from Canary airports. Information about repatriation is highly sensitive and tends to be disorganized, since it mainly affects the governments of those countries whose citizens entered the country illegally. This was the case, for instance, with the 5,285 repatriations to Senegal in 2006 during the *cayuco crisis,* which caused a great controversy in said country between the authorities and the thousands of youngsters who were sent back after completing the perilous outward journey (Ndoye, 2007: 23).

As expected, the number of repatriations has markedly increased in recent years, being, moreover, one of the reasons that Ministry of the Interior officials cite as a sign of the success of the control mechanisms put in place in an effort to pacify public opinion. Between 2004 and 2007, Spain repatriated 370,027 individuals, including returns, readmissions and expulsions. Of the 50,138 people who tried to enter Spain via illegal entry points in the same period, 92.3% were transferred to their countries of origin, many of them from the Canaries.

The people who cannot be directly repatriated from the Canaries are moved to other Autonomous Communities, especially when the number of immigrants in the Canaries increases considerably due to recurrent arrivals. Occasionally there is news of immigrants found in various parts of the country with a deportation order in hand, after the 40-day period of detention legally permitted had expired without these immigrants' identification being possible.

In relation to these movements, one of the questions still left unresolved is the arrival of minor undocumented immigrants who, under existing laws, have to be cared for and housed by the Child Protection Services of the Autonomous Community (Asín Cabrera, 2007). This has resulted in the number of these individuals in specific housing centres (CAME and CAI) exceeding that originally planned for the Canaries, around 300 places generally distributed between the islands of Tenerife and Gran Canaria. The figure for 2006 was around 1,000 minors, with

2007 exceeding this number, according to the Autonomous Government, which had to provide emergency centres and resources (DEAMENAC) to cope with this extreme situation[19].

**Graph 4. Foreign unaccompanied minors under tutelage in the Canaries in 2006**
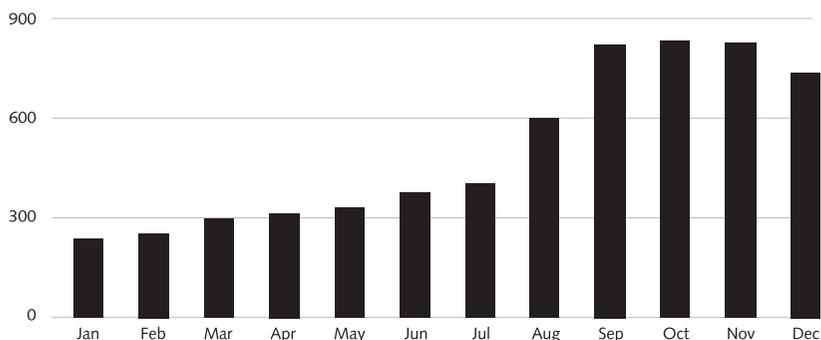
Source: Official Digest of the Canary Parliament (number 125, 2007: 26). Compiled by the authors.

19. In 2006, the number of unaccompanied and undocumented minor immigrants under the care of the Canary Government had almost quadrupled, with a significant increase in the numbers of those from sub-Saharan Africa -like Senegal and Mali- arriving by sea, in comparison with the traditional but reduced influx of minors from Morocco by raft. During that year, the CAME and CAI centres were filled to capacity, resulting in the emergency adaptation of new centres: Agüimes and Arucas, in Gran Canaria; Tegueste and El Rosario, in Tenerife. Some of these housed more than a hundred minors, according to a report published by the Parliament of the Canaries in its official digest of March 2007 (number 125). This pattern of arrivals continued, though to a lesser extent, during 2007 and the first months of 2008.

Although the available resources have increased gradually (especially on the island of Tenerife, which in 2007 had 550 places), in excess even of the quantities agreed to by the Island Councils in proportion to their means and to immigration patterns, the constant influx of minors, ever present in the arriving vessels - albeit in small numbers -, has exceeded the forecasts made a few years ago, especially in light of the considerable influx produced in 2006: 928 minors, 2.9% out of the total number of immigrants received by sea that year. The number for 2007 was lower but its percentage out of the total was higher (459 minors, 3.9%). The minors usually stay in the Archipelago due to problems with their repatriation or transfer to other Autonomous Communities. It was possible to relocate about 500 to the Peninsula in 2006 and 2007, in most cases resulting in the tutelage passing from the Canary Government to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Ministry of Labour and Immigration after the formation of the latest Government in Spain). As of June 2008, sources from the Canary Government reported that the 28 centres subsidized and run by the Island Councils were housing some 1,200 children[20].

20. The typology of all the available resources intended for minors is ample, and indicative of how complex it is to manage and cope with this group of immigrants: Aid Centres for Foreign Unaccompanied Minors (CAME, in Spanish), Emergency Services for Foreign Unaccompanied Minors (DEAMENAC), Immigrant Processing Centres (CAI), Residences, Houses, Flats designed to ease the transition to an independent life, supervised housing, rehabilitation centres for problem children, centres for disabled minors. A small fraction of the minors are serving time in centres run by the Canary Government.

Graph 5. Distribution by percentage according to the origin of the foreign unaccompanied minors under tutelage in the Canaries on December 31, 2006
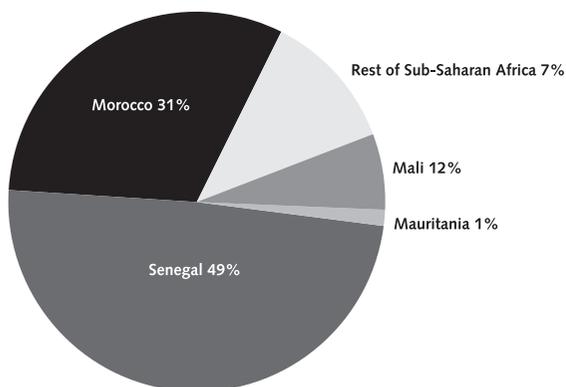
Source: Official Digest of the Canary Parliament (number 125, 2007: 26). Compiled by the authors.

The plight of unaccompanied foreign minors parallels the phenomenon of the arrival by sea of undocumented individuals. Until recently Moroccan children, especially from the southern part of that country, comprised the majority of this group, but now most of the newcomers are from sub-Saharan Africa, mainly Senegal and Mali. Their purpose for migrating, and that of their families which often fund their voyage, is to work and send remittances, that is, to contribute to supporting the family back home. In interviews conducted by the Tenerife Immigration Observatory in Tenerife CAMEs in 2005, as part of the research on illegal immigration, the minors manifested their displeasure at being held in these centres, since this was contrary to their purpose for emigrating (Barranco *et al.*, 2007*).* The situation of the minors in the CAME and in other centres is at times troubled, especially when individuals of different nationalities are housed together. *Regarding this latter point* there have been recurrent denancements by various human rights organizations, includ-

ing international ones, this being one of the most heated topics of discussion in the Archipelago.

In fact, the issue of minors is a source of constant confrontation between the local and central governments. The former seeks more assistance, as well as greater resolve on the part of the State to transfer the minors to other Autonomous Communities, which are expected to show more solidarity, understanding that the Canaries are only a transit point for the bulk of the newcomers. The Canaries have even threatened to return jurisdiction in this matter to the State. In any case, this issue is causing growing discontent on the islands, with minor incidents of xenophobia being reported, and all this on top of the previously mentioned reports of abuse and mistreatment by international organizations for the protection of minors and human rights.

The management of the influx of undocumented persons in its various stages and settings, despite their small numbers, albeit with huge media impact, has led to a continuing conflict at different administrative levels, especially between the governments of the State and the Autonomous Community, both in the deployment of their jurisdictions and in the competition to assume responsibility as appropriate for each. The continuous influx of rafts and fishing boats, including the sporadic news on the preparation and/or arrival of *junk boats* aboard which a significant number of people travel, serve to keep those resources intended to deal with them in a state of constant alert, and to keep the whole of Canary society in one of uncertainty, very much influenced by the media coverage of this issue and by the attention it receives in political debates.

The current situation of international economic uncertainty, which also affects the archipelago, can introduce changes into the dynamics of the immigration patterns in question. In any case, if conditions do not improve in the countries of origin, or even worsen, such flows may well remain in place in the context of immigration to the Canaries, although in constant transformation due to the different strategies used for their control. The externalization of the problem, shifting the border to the coastal areas of origin countries, and even opening detention facilities

in those countries with which agreements are reached for managing this immigration, are only partial measures. Moreover, although the attractiveness of the archipelago for this influx appears to be limited because it is made up of islands and the consequent lack of territorial continuity, the Canaries remain an appealing platform for entry into the European Union, given the growing impassability of other transit areas across the Mediterranean and the tightening immigration restrictions in most countries in southern Europe. But strategies can change, which makes it all the more important to better understand this phenomenon, especially as concerns the root cause for these migrations.

The challenge is to achieve a more efficient and less politicized management of this aspect of immigration, one that deals with those persons who have reached the islands by sea and arrive without documentation, ensuring that their stay is under the best possible conditions, be it short or long, as is the case of minors. A goal which is yet to be realized, because of the particular situation of their internment, is the utilization of the time available during their retention for working closer with these immigrants, especially by changing the structure of the centres adapted to house them to allow for more fluid contact with local resources, so these can put their expertise at the service of managing this mobility, being as they are closer to its protagonists.

Conclusions

The maritime borders of the Canaries generate an environment of increasing complexity in terms of the geographical mobility of the population, although the most intense movement of persons is comprised by those wishing to access and settle in the Islands -or visit them on a temporary basis as part of a broader migration plan- and who arrive through its airport border control system. Transit through these borders is high because the region bases the bulk of its economy on tourism, reflecting an annual flow of more than 12 million visitors passing through its airfields, most of them open to international traffic and with direct connections with some of the main gateways

to immigration in Europe. This is the main way for documented tourists to enter under false pretences, especially on the islands that offer greater labour opportunities. The failure of some of these people to meet with the legal requirements for remaining in Spain, as specified on the visas and permits presented upon arrival, account for the recent upward trend in illegal immigration (Zapata *et al.*, 2007: 151).

The reduction in the permeability of borders along the Mediterranean has placed the Canaries, at least temporarily, as a migration gateway and transit point toward the south of the European Union. Despite the low appeal of the archipelago, at least initially, as a transit point for illegal immigration, the year 2006 saw an extraordinary influx of immigrants in rafts and fishing boats, which in turn triggered the redoubling of efforts by the Spanish State and the EU Frontex task force to monitor a growing area of the waters separating the islands from the African continent. This greater control, along with the collaboration of some African countries in preventing emigration, has contributed to reducing the mobility since then, changing again the relative appeal of the Canary Islands as an entry point compared with other alternative routes.

The overall impact of this kind of mobility on the immigration received by the islands is low, since the sea route used by illegal immigrants results in few changes to the resident population in the Canary Islands, despite being the preferred object of media coverage and political and social debate, which usually swing between humanitarian and xenophobic points of view. Moreover, it overshadows the development of immigration policies aimed at immigrants who have managed to settle in the region and integrate themselves into the host society, policies which, in this case, are developed within the framework of those competencies specific to the Autonomous Community. More emphasis is placed on border control, and less attention paid to the effect of the migratory phenomenon on the various aspects of regional reality. And this facet needs increased attention from the Administration, especially as regards the progress of the integration process and the management of mobility that can acquire an increasingly positive meaning in the current eco-

nomic and social context, even if the weaknesses in the existing immigration control system do not yet seem to offer sufficient guarantees for its proper incorporation.

Epilogue

The boat found abandoned on the beach of Roque de las Bodegas (North Tenerife), and which was appropriated by the residents of this place until it was removed from the location shown, as evidenced by an inscription on its hull that said "property of the neighbours of Taganana", is one of many testaments to a human traffic as reflected in the first half of the nineties, but which, in all likelihood, goes further back and is linked with the relationship traditionally established between two shores separated by a narrow stretch of sea, where the borders were not as sharp as today.

Image: Abandoned boat in Roque de las Bodegas (Taganana, Santa Cruz de Tenerife).

This human mobility has gone through many stages over the past fourteen years, remaining silent and poorly known at first, both inside and outside the region. Its recent prominence, due to the expansion of the areas of origin and embarkation of the expeditions, has placed the Canaries at the forefront of international news on the impact of migration. It has affected both consciences and diverse interests in the archipelago, and in so doing led us to forget that a phenomenon of this magnitude can only be addressed through the cooperation of all involved, to include increased ties and collaboration between the points of origin and arrival. Working together, here and there, spurred on by the memory of all these people who have left their body at sea and their spirit bridging both shores.

In memory of the men, women and children who have remained at sea trying to cross a vast and exhausting blue frontier to reach our small islands…

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The Case of the Italian Southern Sea Borders: ¿Cooperation across the Mediterranean?

Paolo Cuttitta

At the end of 2007 Italian government leaders emphatically announced that the number of migrants apprehended by Italian authorities in the Strait of Sicily or immediately after landing in Sicilian territory (also including the island of Lampedusa) had dropped from 21,400 to 16,875 that year. They said the decrease was the result of increased controls by the Italian government and strengthened cooperation with NAMCs (North African Mediterranean countries). As an example of the latter they presented the new police coope-ration agreement with Libya of 29 December 2007, providing for Italian-Libyan joint patrolling in Libyan territorial waters. They also stressed that the new agreement would help both saving lives at sea and combating criminal organisations.

They did not mention the fact that in the same year the number of migrants arriving by sea to Sardinia from Algeria, and to Calabria from Egypt (and partly from Turkey), had increased from 91 to 1,548 and from 282 to 1,971 respectively, while the number of casualties in the Strait of Sicily (including dead bodies found and missing persons) had risen from 302 to a record 556 (FORTRESS EUROPE, 2008). And they did not know yet that in the first half of 2008 the number of arrivals to Lampedusa would double, while the number of casualties would reach a record 311, and no joint patrolling actions would be carried out in Libyan national waters – in spite of the new agreement and a €6.2 million allocation from the Italian government for this purpose.

In fact, many factors play a role in the dynamics of both migration and migration controls, and the plans and choices of migrants and refugees can be as unpredictable as those of a North African dictator who knows how to take advantage of Italian requests for cooperation.

Particularly in the last decade, after Italy implemented the Schengen agreements (abolishing controls at internal borders between the signa-

tory states) in 1997, Italian governments have been multiplying efforts to stem irregular immigration by sea. Since arrivals from Albanian to Apulian coasts have strongly decreased, the southern front has become the weak point of the Italian sea border regime (see table 1).

Table 1. Illegal immigrants apprehended at Italian sea borders

Region	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Apulia	28,458 (74.58%)	46,481 (92.96%)	18,990 (70.81%)	8,546 (42.43%)	3,372 (14.21%)	137 (0.95%)	18 (0.13%)	19 (0.08%)	243 (1.10%)	61 (0.30%)
Calabria	873 (2.29%)	1,545 (3.09%)	5,045 (18.81%)	6,093 (30.25%)	2,122 (8.95%)	177 (1.24%)	23 (0.17%)	88 (0.38%)	282 (1.28%)	1,971 (9.63%)
Sardinia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8 (0.04%)	91 (0.42%)	1,548 (7.57%)
Sicily	8,828 (23.13%)	1,973 (3.95%)	2,782 (10.38%)	5,504 (27.32%)	18,225 (76.84%)	14,017 (97.81%)	13,594 (99.70%)	22,824 (99.50%)	21,400 (97.20%)	16,875 (82.50%)
Total	**38,159 (100%)**	**49,999 (100%)**	**26,817 (100%)**	**20,143 (100%)**	**23,719 (100%)**	**14,331 (100%)**	**13,635 (100%)**	**22,939 (100%)**	**22,016 (100%)**	**20,455 (100%)**

Tunisian and Libyan coasts have been serving as springboards for migrants from the Maghreb, sub-Saharan Africa and (to a smaller extent) some Asian countries since the 1990s. Arrivals from Tunisia decreased notably after 2004, as a consequence of tighter controls carried out by Tunisian authorities. Most third country nationals and many Tunisians were thus diverted to the Libyan route, and Libya became the main country of departure by far: 22,591 migrants arrived from Libyan coasts in 2005 and 20,907 in 2006, that is nearly all those who reached Sicily and its minor islands in that period. At the same time, entry restrictions and intensified coastal patrolling in Libya caused an increasing number of migrants to set off from Egyptian and Algerian coasts.[1]

1. Although most of the migrants are Egyptians and Algerians respectively, arrivals from Egypt to Calabria and Sicily also include citizens from Pakistan, Iraq and Turkey, while arrivals from Algeria to Sardinia also include Tunisians and Moroccans. These routes may be followed by migrants of other nationalities in the future.

The main outcome of increased controls seems thus to be the differentiation and diversification of migration routes, rather than the reduction of irregular migration and the defeat of criminal organisations. This means that routes become longer and more dangerous, resulting not only in an increase of casualties but also in higher expenses for migrants and higher revenues for smuggling gangs.

Too Little an Invasion?

The word "invasion" has been often used to describe the arrival of irregular migrants by sea. In 2004 the minister of Interior Pisanu spoke of an "assault on Italian coasts". In 2008 the vice-minister of Interior Palma spoke of an "aggression".

In fact the number of people entering or trying to enter Italy irregularly by sea is much smaller than it is generally perceived. Twenty thousand is a small number if we relate it to the nearly 4 million foreigners residing regularly in Italy. It becomes smaller if we compare it with the demand for foreign workforce in the Italian labour market: Italy allowed the legal entry of 1.6 million foreign workers within the frame of regular immigration quotas in the ten years period from 1998 to 2007; since 1995, in addition to legal immigration quotas, regularisation programmes granted further 1.1 million permits of stay to foreigners who were residing (and working) irregularly in Italy. The number of people arriving irregularly by sea from North Africa becomes even smaller if we relate it to the whole surface and population of the EU (European Union), for only a little part of the migrants entering Italy irregularly wish to remain in the country, while the others (70-75% according to an estimate made by the Italian ministry of interior in 2004) aim at reaching other European countries.

Indeed, only a small percentage of the foreigners who reside irregularly in Italy has entered the country irregularly by sea, while most of them (between 51% and 75% in the period 2000-2006) are overstayers (people who enter the country regularly and remain beyond the expiry date of

their visa or permit of stay), and 15% to 34% have entered the country irregularly by land. The share of irregular arrivals by sea was estimated at 17% in 2000, 12% in 2001, 15% in 2002, 10% in 2003, 4% in 2004, 14% in 2005, 13% in 2006 by the Italian ministry of Interior.

On the other hand, the percentage of arrivals by sea on total irregular immigration increases if calculated only on citizens of African countries. This is the first reason why Italian governments have been stressing the importance of strengthening surveillance of southern sea borders. Furthermore, many of those who attempt the sea crossing are fleeing persecution in their home country. Should they reach Italian territory, Italy would be the sole EU member state responsible for their asylum applications[2] and should grant them protection, a permit of stay and a number of rights and entitlements. Although Italy's refugee population is far below the EU average, this is a burden that Italian authorities would prefer to avoid.

Besides, there are at least two further internal political motivations. First, arrivals by sea (including casualties) have a much stronger mediatic impact on public opinion than overstayers and immigrants entering the country illegally by land do have. Secondly, the attempt to link the fight against illegal immigration with the fight against international terrorism has increased fear against arrivals from North Africa.[3] For both

2. According to the EU Council regulation No. 343/2003 of 18 February 2003 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the member state responsible for examining an asylum application lodged in one of the member states by a third-country national.

3. In 2004, under the second Berlusconi government, the minister of Defence Martino said "illegal immigration is infiltrated by Al Qaeda" and is often managed "by terrorists". In September 2006, under the second Prodi government, the vice-minister of Interior Lucidi said that the link connecting illegal immigration "with international terrorism requires a particular surveillance of clandestine immigrants from the Horn of Africa as well as from the sub-Saharan region, where Islamic fundamentalism is spreading rapidly".

reasons, most political parties' propaganda includes the engagement for strengthening southern sea border controls and reinforcing cooperation with NAMCs.

Since the mid-1990s all Italian governments have been carrying out a process of delocalisation and externalisation of border controls. After the centre-left governments had fostered cooperation with NAMCs and signed the first cooperation agreements in the late 1990s, the centre-right government amended Italian legislation in the summer of 2002, with the aim of making rejections at the borders and expulsions more effective. Navy ships were allowed to board vessels suspected of transporting illegal immigrants also outside Italian territorial waters. Dozens of patrol boats, naval ships and aircrafts, and thousands of people, are now deployed for the surveillance of the Mediterranean. The new centre-left cabinet appointed in 2006 did not resume deportations to Libya (which had been carried out by the previous government since 2004), but it strengthened cooperation with Libya in order to stop migrants before they could leave Libyan coasts. Now, in the early summer of 2008, the newly-appointed cabinet has started again immediate rejections from Lampedusa to Egypt, and premier Berlusconi has met colonel Ghadafi in Libya in order to discuss further cooperation.

Cooperation across the Mediterranean

In the last ten years, not only did Italy strengthen surveillance in and over international waters, but it also requested EU participation in the protection of southern EU Mediterranean borders. Patrols composed of border guards from different EU member states patrolled the Strait of Sicily within the Neptune project from September 2003 to 2005. Since 2006 EU member states have cooperated for short periods in operation Nautilus under the coordination of FRONTEX (European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the European Union).

In the same ten-year period, Italy also requested NAMCs to: a) Cooperate with Italian police against irregular migration and organised smuggling, and engage in signing formal police cooperation agreements for this purpose; b) Readmit irregular immigrants (including their own nationals as well as third country nationals setting off from their coasts), and engage in signing formal readmission agreements for this purpose; c) Strengthen regulations on the emigration of their citizens and on the immigration and stay of foreign citizens; d) Strengthen surveillance at their land borders (in order to prevent the inflow of would-be transit migrants from neighbouring countries) as well as on their coastlines (in order to prevent the departure of migrant boats towards Italy); e) Extend controls not only all over their territories (in order to apprehend irregular immigrants and expel them) but also over international waters (in order to take back migrants departed from their coasts); f) Improve legislation and capacity in the field of asylum and protection.

These requests have been at least partly met.

All NAMCs have signed and implemented police cooperation agreements (see table 2) and have been carrying out cooperation activities with Italian authorities, such as exchange of information, joint investigation and joint patrolling actions. Liaison officers from the Italian ministry of Interior have been dispatched to all NAMCs in order to coordinate police cooperation activities.

New laws on emigration, immigration and the stay of foreigners have been passed in all NAMCs, introducing penalties for irregular migrants and facilitators.

Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt now cooperate in the readmission of their citizens who cross the Mediterranean irregularly (Cuttitta, 2008a).[4] Tunisia and Libya have also readmitted third country nation-

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4. These countries have all signed readmission agreements with Italy, but readmissions have often been carried out even before the agreements were signed or came into force.

als from Italian territory (readmissions to Libya were carried out in the absence of an official readmission agreement).

Table 2. Agreements signed with North African countries

Country	Type of Agreement	Place and date of signature
Algeria	Police cooperation	Algiers, 22 November1999
Algeria	Readmission	Rome, 24 February 2000
Algeria	Executive agreement	Rome, 9 October 2000
Egypt	Police cooperation	Cairo, 18 June 2000
Egypt	Readmission	Rome, 9 January 2007
Libya	Police cooperation	Rome, 13 December 2000
Libya	Police cooperation	Tripoli, 3 July 2003
Libya	Police cooperation	Tripoli, 29 December 2007
Morocco	Readmission	Rabat, 27 July 1998
Morocco	Executive agreement	Rome, 18 June 1999
Tunisia	Readmission and police cooperation	Rome, 6 August 1998
Tunisia	Police cooperation	Tunis, 13 December 2003

Tunisia, Libya and – more recently – also Algeria and Egypt have strengthened surveillance over their coastlines according to Italian requests, and they also seize boats and take back migrants from both national and international waters. Actions on the high seas have been carried out also in cooperation with Italian authorities. On several occasions since 2003 Italian authorities, after apprehending migrants in international waters, handed them over to Tunisian patrols that returned them to Tunisia.

Raids against irregular immigrants all over the national territories (particularly in the districts of larger cities where irregular immigrants live, or in informal camps set up by migrants in border regions) have become daily work for police forces of NAMCs. The Jamahiriya News Agency (JANA) announced on 16 January 2008 that Libyan authorities would "demolish huts and cottages that shelter illegal residents" and "immediately gather all foreigners illegally residing in Libya for immediate deportation". Indeed, Libya has been an immigration country long before becoming also a country of transit, and foreigners were occasionally subject to deportations long before Italy started pressuring Libya for tighter controls. Nevertheless, the continuous and systematic deportations of

tens of thousands of foreigners every year since 2003 was definitely determined by Italian pressure. Libyan authorities repatriated around 43,000 illegal immigrants in 2003, 54,000 in 2004, 47,991 in 2005, 53,842 in 2006, while in May 2007 around 60,000 foreigners were awaiting their expulsion in Libyan detention centres. Also Algeria has increased arrests and deportations: over 12,000 foreigners were removed only from the Tamanrasset district in 2007.

As regards the improvement of national protection systems, NAMCs have been more reluctant, and Italian (and EU) pressure might have not been strong enough. Although the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) is de facto allowed to operate in all NAMCs (but it must be stressed that its activity in Libya is not formally recognised), not only asylum seekers but even people who have been already granted the refugee status by the UNHCR are often subject to arbitrary arrest and deportation by the local authorities.

Thus, Italian border controls have been not only delocalised to international waters (through Italian and EU patrolling) and to the territories of NAMCs (through the establishment of a network of liaison officers operating in these countries), but they have been also externalised, insofar as they are now partly carried out by external actors, that is by NAMCs (and cooperating international and non-governmental organisations), on behalf of the Italian government.

Incentives for Cooperation

As early as 1998 the first Italian-Tunisian agreement on police cooperation and readmission stated that Italy would grant Tunisia technical, operational and financial support, as well as a preferential treatment with regard to immigration quotas. Nine years later, the Italian minister of Interior, Giuliano Amato, explained that Egypt had laid "fair claims" for more legal immigration and development cooperation before signing the readmission agreement in January 2007.

Over the last decade, Italy has been offering incentives to NAMCs in exchange for the cooperation in the management of irregular migration (Cuttitta, 2008a, 2008b). Not only do NAMCs lack the necessary resources to tackle irregular migration effectively, but they often also lack any interest in it. Countries of origin like Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt benefit from high levels of emigration resulting both in a decrease of internal unemployment and in an increase of remittance flows. Countries of transit may have no interest in stopping irregular migration either. On the contrary, they may benefit from transit migration movements, from cheap foreign workforce from sub-Saharan countries and from maintaining good relations with neighbouring countries of origin. For all these reasons, convincing arguments are needed in order to gain collaboration from NAMCs of transit and origin. In some cases these countries have been able to "capitalise on their participation in the joint management of migration flows and border controls" (CASSARINO, 2005) and gain important benefits in exchange for their cooperation. Libya is probably the best example, but also other countries have learnt that they can make best conditions for cooperating with Italy and the EU.

Incentives offered by Italy are the following: a) Legal immigration opportunities for citizens of cooperating countries; b) Development cooperation; c) Technical assistance, financial assistance and training programmes for authorities of NAMCs; d) International political support and increased trade partnership.

Morocco and Tunisia were the first NAMCs to sign readmission and police cooperation agreements as early as 1998, and they were also the first to be granted reserved shares for their citizens within the frame of the Italian quota system for legal immigration of foreign workforce. Egyptian citizens obtained a reserved share for the first time in Autumn 2002, when Italian and Egyptian authorities implemented the police cooperation agreement of 2000 and started the joint control of the Suez Canal in order to stop the irregular transit of migrants from Sri Lanka. Algeria was not granted a reserved share until 2007. The Algerian reserved share

was not only a reward for the ratification of the readmission agreement in October 2006 and for the readmissions already carried out, but also an incentive for further improving cooperation after the strong increase of migrant boats arriving from Algerian coasts.

The link between development cooperation and cooperation against irregular migration was ratified by law 189 of 2002: article 1 states that the Italian government, when concluding or assessing cooperation and aid programmes with non-EU countries, shall also consider the cooperation offered by the relevant country in the prevention of illegal migration flows. Cooperation and aid programmes are subject to reassessment if the relevant countries do not adopt appropriate measures. In fact, the principle of conditional development cooperation had already been put into practice by the previous two governments. Development cooperation with Morocco and Tunisia was resumed and increased in 1998, when both countries signed agreements on police cooperation and readmission. Also the Italian-Egyptian agreement on debt for development swap of February 2001 followed the signature of the police cooperation agreement, and the number of ongoing Italian development cooperation projects with Egypt has notably increased since 2002, that is since actual police cooperation started.

Since part of the aid is allocated to activities related to border controls and migration management, it could be argued that development projects are (at least partly) an instrument of direct assistance in this field, rather than a reward for increased cooperation.

On the other hand, direct assistance is mainly granted through other channels, activated and managed by the Ministry of the Interior. Italy has provided Tunisian, Libyan and Egyptian authorities with technical equipment such as vehicles (patrol boats and four-wheel-drive land vehicles), satellite systems, falsified document detectors, night vision devices, computers, tents etc. Furthermore, Italian authorities organised bilateral training programmes for Tunisian, Libyan and Egyptian police officers. In this field, Italy also participates in a specific EU funded project,

named "Across Sahara", offering training to the Libyan police. "Trim" is the name of another EU-funded project supporting the return of irregular migrants from Libya to Niger and Chad with the participation of the Italian government. Italy has supported repatriations from NAMCs also within bilateral cooperation frameworks. In 2003 and 2004 Egypt was offered charter flights for the repatriation of migrants who had been apprehended in the Suez Canal while on their way from Sri Lanka to Italy. In the same period, Italy also paid 50 charter flights to repatriate 5,688 persons from Libya to ten different countries. Finally, Italy has offered Libya the construction of detention centres:[5] between 2004 and 2005 the Italian government allocated 6.6 million euro for a detention centre in Gharyan and 5.2 million euro for a centre in Kufra. The following government formally changed the destination of the buildings: the Gharyan centre was opened in June 2007 as a training centre for Libyan police, while the Kufra centre was officially converted into a border medical centre – but its construction had not yet started as of July 2007. However, the centres will be managed by Libyan and not by Italian authorities, so it will be up to them to decide how to use them in fact.

The question of migration and border controls in the relations between Italy and NAMCs must be seen also within the general framework of consolidated economic and political bilateral partnerships. Italy is the main trade partner of Libya and Egypt and one of the main partners of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. The undemocratic regimes of Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt have long been enjoying the international political support of Italy and the EU, and such support also strengthens their position against internal opposition. Since part of the opposition

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5. Tunisia instead did not accept Italian funding for detention centres, probably fearing this would lead to Italian interferences in domestic questions such as the management of the centres and the expulsion of detainees.

in their territories is led by Islamic fundamentalist movements, these regimes are particularly willing to cooperate with European countries against the threat of terrorism and in security issues in general – and security issues also include migration, from the EU's point of view.

Also Italian-Libyan relations are a good example of the existing link between migration issues and economic and political ties: during the period of international isolation, Libya asked Italy, in exchange for Libyan cooperation against irregular migration, to pressure the EU for ending the arms embargo imposed on Libya in 1986. It was no coincidence that a week after Libya accepted to readmit into its territory irregular immigrants who had reached Italy from Libyan coasts, Italian premier Berlusconi travelled to Mellitah (Libya) to open the biggest Mediterranean gas pipeline, which has been supplying Italy with Libyan methane since then, and a further four days later the EU lifted the arms embargo on Libya. Currently, Libya – which was an Italian colony from 1911 to 1943 – is still bargaining with Italy over the reparations for the colonial period.

Human Rights at Stake

The policy and practice of preventing migrants from leaving North African coasts, or returning them from Italian territory or international waters, is questionable from a juridical and/or ethical point of view.

Transit migrants are forced to remain in (or are forcibly sent back to) countries where their basic rights are systematically violated. Not only are all migrants subject to inhuman treatments, unlimited detention and mass deportation by local authorities, but even refugees run the risk to be returned to countries where they fear persecution or the death penalty. For example, Eritrean political opposers have been repeatedly repatriated from NAMCs in recent years. Hundreds of Eritreans have been repatriated from Egypt in 2008. Large numbers of Eritreans have been repatriated by Libyan authorities at least until 2007: a repatriation flight was financed by the Italian government in July 2004, whereas other returns were carried out without

Italian support. While around 70 Eritreans were resettled from Libya to Italy between November 2007 and April 2008 (which had never happened before) with the cooperation of UNHCR, IOM (International Organisation for Migration), CIR (Italian Refugee Council) and IOPCR (International Organization for Peace, Care and Relief), many hundreds are still detained in Libyan camps and at risk of being repatriated. It should be stressed that most refugees from sub-Saharan countries – like Eritreans – have no choice but crossing the Mediterranean irregularly if they want to seek protection in Europe. According to Antonio Virgilio, head of the Italian mission of MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières), 30% of the persons arrived in Lampedusa in the first half of 2008 came from the crisis region of the Horn of Africa. According to Laura Boldrini, spokesperson of the UNHCR in Rome, one out of three persons arriving in Italy by sea in 2007 has submitted an asylum application, and one out of five has been granted asylum. It is reasonable to presume that a similar percentage of those who are apprehended before they can attempt the sea crossing would be granted protection in Italy if only they were allowed to get there.

Italy was strongly criticised by the UNHCR, as well as by human rights organisations and other international institutions, for carrying out immediate rejections of irregular immigrants to Libya without prior identification or legal advice since October 2004. Access to the detention centre of Lampedusa before and during return operations was denied to UNHCR as well as to deputies of both the Sicilian and the Italian Parliament. On 14 April 2005 the European Parliament voted a resolution to call on Italy to stop deporting irregular immigrants to Libya. In May 2005 the European Court for Human Rights stopped the expulsion of 11 migrants who had not been immediately returned to Libya with their travel mates upon their arrival in March. Though, Italian authorities continued returning migrants to Libya until January 2006.

Rejections from international waters carried out jointly by Italy and NAMCs do not allow for any verification of identity and origin of migrants (indeed, no information is available about the nationality of the migrants

returned jointly by Italian and Tunisian authorities), nor for the necessary information to be given to refugees regarding the possibility to apply for protection. This raises the concern that there might be refugees seeking protection among the persons returned. The same question can be raised with regard to FRONTEX interventions on high seas. Within the 2008 sea joint operation Nautilus, "migrants saved in the Libyan Search and Rescue Area (SAR) will be taken to Libya, when not possible to closest safe haven" (FRONTEX, 2008). This confirms that FRONTEX, although it has not yet convinced Libyan authorities to participate in the Nautilus actions, will return migrants to Libya if only it will be allowed to do so.

Indeed, it seems that both Italy and the member states participating in FRONTEX activities operate outside their national territories as if they were not subject to obligations deriving from international refugee law there. On the contrary, there is a widespread (although not unanimous) opinion that "it is the exercise of state jurisdiction vis à vis an individual that determines the engagement of States' obligations under international law, regardless of whether that individual finds himself within or outside the territory of the state" (Gil-Bazo, 2006: 594). In January 2007 also the UNHCR stated that "States are bound by their obligations not to return any person over whom they exercise jurisdiction to a risk of irreparable harm. In determining whether a State's human rights obligations with respect to a particular person are engaged, the decisive criterion is not whether that person is on the State's national territory, or within a territory which is de jure under the sovereign control of the State, but rather whether or not he or she is subject to that State's effective authority and control" (UNHCR, 2007: 16). In other words, these obligations apply "wherever a State exercises jurisdiction, including at the frontier, on the high seas or on the territory of another State" (UNHCR, 2007: 12).

In June 2008, however, UNHCR signed an agreement with FRONTEX establishing a framework for cooperation, in order to ensure that persons seeking protection are given access to EU territory in compliance with international obligations of the member states.

Italian Southern Sea Borders within the EU Migration Regime

I have already mentioned several non-government actors which have joined Italy in the management of its southern sea borders. Indeed, migration controls worldwide have long built up a global network of actors, involving not only states but also international organisations, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organisations etc. (Düvell, 2002). Lampedusa is a good example in this regard. After the period of immediate rejections to Libya the Italian government decided to "humanise" reception conditions on the island in order to prevent too strong international criticism. In February 2006 Lampedusa's detention centre (*centro di permanenza temporanea*) was officially converted into a centre for first aid and assistance (*centro di primo soccorso e assistenza*). Since then, migrants are still detained there, but UNHCR, IOM and Red Cross (since 2006), as well as Save the children (since 2008), are formally allowed to operate in the centre and should prevent any breach of migrants' rights, while MSF is allowed to assist migrants upon their landing on the island.

Thus, non government actors cooperate with Italy and the EU to build up a southern Mediterranean border regime which also includes a "human rights regime" (Karakayali, Tsianos, 2007: 13) that on the one hand represents an instrument for migrants to open the gates of "Fortress Europe", on the other hand grants the label of political correctness to "a process of selective inclusion of migrants" (Mezzadra, 2007: 24) which seems to be based on the exploitation of irregular immigration on a temporary basis, according to the principle of the "revolving door" (Palidda, 2006), as well as on the multiplication and differentiation of legal positions (Cuttitta, 2007). Indeed, the real aim of the current Italian and EU border regime seems not to be "to arrest mobility but to tame it" (Walters, 2004: 248) through the selection of both regular and irregular immigrants.

Part of the process of selective inclusion of irregular immigrants begins at the very southern maritime borders of Italy. Some of the migrants arriving in Lampedusa (or elsewhere on Italian coasts) are first transferred

to a detention centre and then released upon expiry of the detention duration. Others are not even detained because camps are full: they are just given an expulsion order instead. Some of them will be able to find a job and a way to get a temporary regular status – probably through the "crypto-regularisation" offered by Italy's legal entry quotas (Cuttitta, 2008c). Lampedusa and its camp can thus be seen not only as the utmost barrier of the EU Mediterranean border, but also as instruments for the slowing down of mobility (Panagiotidis, Tsianos, 2007), as the filtering threshold turning those who cross it into irregular immigrants who may one day turn to (temporarily) regular immigrants.

Finally, it deserves to be stressed that the principle of selection applies not only to so-called "economic migrants" but also to asylum seekers. Refugees who wish to be granted protection in Europe must not only fulfil all international, national and EU law requirements, but they "must also possess certain other, implicit characteristics" (El-Enany, 2007: 22): they must have sufficient financial resources for travel expenses, and they must be strong, healthy and brave enough to face long and dangerous journeys, and often also rejections at sea, detentions and deportations. The eldest, weakest and poorest – that is the most vulnerable, those who are most in need – are destined to remain far away from Europe's protection.

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The Case of the Greek Islands: The Challenge of Migration at the EU's Southeastern Sea Borders

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The Challenge of Migration at the EU's Southeastern Sea Borders

The European Union has paid increasing attention to the management of its external borders with a view to preventing and combating irregular migration. This has been an issue of top priority prior to the 2004 enlargement, enhancing cooperation and mutual training among border patrols in the EU 27, providing new member states in Central Eastern Europe with sophisticated equipment and advanced know-how. Moreover, a European Neighbourhood Policy has been established which mainly aims at promoting friendly relations, political and economic stability in the EU's Eastern European 'neighbourhood' and thus both preventing immigration flows as well as externalising their management and control at the neighbouring countries before irregular immigrants reach the EU external borders. The European Neighbourhood policy has recently been expanded to include the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and the Middle Eastern countries but it is yet too early to assess its outcomes, especially on the migration front.

Until 2006, less attention has been paid to the management of sea borders. However, the importance of such last borders has been felt acutely during the last couple of years since a dramatic and relatively unexpected increase in arrivals of irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa and Asia to the southern coasts of Europe has been registered.

The islands of the Aegean in Greece are the preferred target destination for mainly Asian irregular immigrants (Afghans in their majority) that seek to enter Europe through Turkey and cross the narrow straits from Turkish mainland to the islands of Mytilini (Lesvos), Samos, Chios,

Rhodes, Kos, notably the major islands in the region but also since last year (2007) to smaller islands like Leros. The Greek coastguard has been intercepting between 3,000 and 8,000 people per year (with an average closer to the 4,000) and estimates that these account for approximately 70-80% of all irregular migration through the Greek sea borders.

Migration through the Greek and generally the EU sea borders is in total numbers relatively small. In 2006 it went up to 45,000, but in 2005 it was under 30,000 (as mentioned the main increase has been registered in the Canary Islands during 2006). Considering that the EU 15 (except Greece) received a total of 2.6 million immigrants in 2004 according to OECD data, they are home to an estimated irregular migrant population of 1.5 million, and the EU 27 have a total population of 486.5 million, it becomes evident that such irregular migration presents only a tiny fraction of overall irregular flows and stocks and indeed a negligible number in the overall population of Europe.

The nature of migration through sea borders however gives it a *high news value*: arrivals are dramatic, small boats are sometimes capsized or sink near the shore and immigrants (including pregnant women or children) often die in their attempt to reach EU territory. The tens or a few hundreds (certainly not thousands) of migrants aboard each of these 'boats of fortune' arrive in small islands where even a small number of Black Africans or southeast Asians are highly visible to locals. The facilities in these first places of arrival are limited and coastguard, police and immigration officers including also the staff of international organizations (IOM, Red Cross, UNHCR) find themselves unable to deal with these small crises. Nonetheless, it is the true features of the phenomenon, which are outlined below, that should drive policy making and not its exploitation by the media.

In the following section we shall outline the main routes through which irregular migrants from Africa and Asia reach and attempt to cross the Greek sea borders. We shall discuss the flows and trends, the means of transport and the strategies for crossing the sea borders illegally, the main sending, transit and destination countries as well as the measures taken up

to now at the national and European level to address the phenomenon. The final section will offer an assessment of the situation and present some policy proposals for consideration at the EU level.

Irregular Migration Flows towards Greece

The approximately 1.1 million regular migrants (including co-ethnics) in Greece account for 10% of its total population. It is also estimated that about 200,000 irregular migrants live in Greece. In the period 2003-2004, there were approx. 50,000 irregular migrants arrested either at the border (sea and land border) or within the Greek mainland. Numbers have increased since; in 2005 there were more than 66,000 arrests, rising further to 95,000 in 2006 and to nearly 70,000 for the first eight months of 2007. It is worth noting that numbers have increased for all three categories (illegal entries by sea, land and undocumented aliens apprehended within the country) (see Graph 1 below). However, it should be stressed that the rising numbers do not necessarily reflect an actual rise in the number of people residing in Greece illegally or seeking to cross the Greek borders illegally. They are also likely to reflect an intensification of the enforcement efforts of the border guard forces both at the border and within the country.

Indeed, efforts for apprehensions at the sea borders may have increased given Greece's overall effort to argue in favour of the creation of a European sea patrol force. Efforts at the land border may have been constant during this period. While it cannot be ruled out that efforts within the Greek territory may have been reduced during the past three years; according to comments by a Ministry of Interior official in a research interview in November 2007, internal controls decrease in volume when there are regularization programmes in course since it is understood that there are people who are illegally in the country and who are in the process of regularizing their status. However, this is not always the case according to the Directorate of Greek Police who did not relate their enforcement efforts to regularization (Int.2).

Graph 1. Aliens apprehended at the border or in the inland
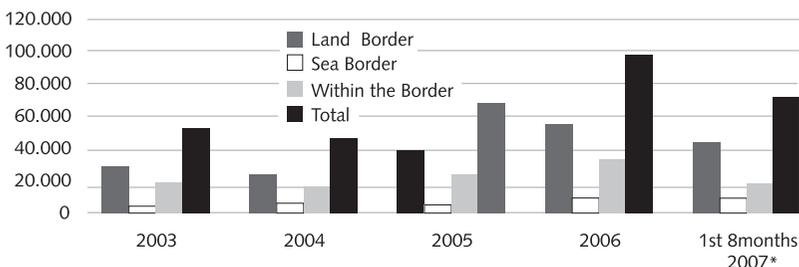
* Data for 2007 refer to the period January to August 2007.
Source: Ministry of Interior, Police Command Office, Branch of Security and
Order, Aliens' Directorate, 4th department, 15 October 2007.

In any case, a better understanding of the pathways of migration
through illegal entry requires a distinction between the two main routes:
the Turkey-Greece path through the sea border of the Aegean or through
the northeastern land border along the Evros river, and the Balkans-Greece
path along the northern land border which has been numerically the most
heavily-trafficked zone during the 1990s.

The Aegean route

The main irregular migration route from Asia to Europe goes through
Turkey into Greece crossing either the narrow straits that divide
mainland Turkey from several of the Greek islands of the Aegean (e.g.
Lesvos, Samos, Chios, Rhodes, Kos and Leros) or the Evros river on
the northeastern part of the border in Thrace. They cross on board of
small vessels, often accompanied by the smugglers that hide among
their customers; this is not the case, however, with the lowest cost
'transport', the rubber dinghies, where the smuggler is rarely on board
(Int.1). Similarly, when crossing the Evros river, smugglers usually give
migrants instructions and leave them to their own devices. They do not

risk being caught along the heavily-guarded Greek Turkish border in Thrace or falling into a mine field. Many smuggled migrants have lost their lives at a minefield trying to cross the border (Papadopoulou 2004; Antonopoulos and Winterdyk 2006).

Smuggled migrants more often than not are caught by the Greek coastguard or border guard. The coastguard conducts a pre-interrogation that is passed on to police officers who interrogate them formally and prepare a file for each person. The main aim of the coastguard and police forces is to establish the migrants' identity and country of origin and also to get information on the smuggling networks that helped them in the crossing.

Following their apprehension undocumented migrants are brought to local police detention centres. They are held there, in overcrowded facilities and in unhygienic conditions for a maximum of 90 days. Every now and then they are visited by medical personnel which provides only basic, over-the-counter medicines. Severe conditions or health problems are only rarely treated through transfer to a local hospital. In most of these centres near Evros or on the islands there are no special provisions for women and children and often minors are kept together with adult men.

During this three months period in the detention centres the Ministry tries to establish the irregular migrants' identity through correspondence with the countries of origin or transit (Kanellopoulos et al. 2006: 58-59, Int. 1). However, it is common amongst the migrants attempting to cross irregularly the Turkey-EU sea border to hide their identity with a view to avoiding being returned to their country of origin. Additionally, they may successfully object to their detention (using the services of a lawyer) and hence be left free with a deportation order asking them to leave the country within 30 days. In the event that the police authorities have not been able to establish their identity and either repatriate them or return them to the last transit country within the three month detention period, it is obligatory to set the detainees free under an administrative deportation order. In either case, irregular aliens are registered in the EURODAC system and if apprehended again their full record can be traced via the EURODAC database.

Map 1: Greece and Turkey

Source: Adapted from Greek Ministry of Mercantile Marine, Department of Security, February 2007.

In practice, in many cases, irregular migrants that are set free with the obligation to leave the country in 30 days continue their journey by ferry from the islands, on foot or by truck (if they have crossed at the Evros river) with a view to joining relatives, friends or co-nationals in the Greek capital, Athens. They either settle there and join the informal labour market or move on to another EU member state, depending on where they eventually intend to go and/or have further contacts (Papadopoulou 2004). In some cases, irregular

migrants are shipped directly to the coast of mainland Greece (the peninsula of Eubea) from which they can easily reach Athens.

The numbers of irregular migrants entering Greece through its sea borders is not particularly high (see table 2 below). The main nationalities among those intercepted are Afghanis, Iraqi Kurds, and Pakistanis followed by Turkish Kurds, other Iraqis, other Turks, and Iranians. Some Egyptians and Syrians have also been registered. Smugglers arrested are mainly Turks and Greeks.

According to our research interviews with the Police Forces and the Ministry of Mercantile Marine Security Department smugglers' networks operating through Turkey have their hub in Istanbul mainly and may adopt different *modus operandi*. Some are loosely-organised networks of smaller teams of 'guides' that take responsibility for the different legs of the immigrants' journey (e.g. crossing the Turkish border from Iraq, Syria, or Iran, moving north to Istanbul, then reaching the Aegean coast and then crossing the sea border to enter Greece). Others resemble more mafia-like organisations with a journey schedule and contacts at transit stations. In some cases, migrants 'buy' their journey not only to Greece but further north. They are smuggled to Italy (hiding in ferries), through Albania (hiding in trucks) or by plane (using fake passports) (Papadopoulou 2004: 173).

Table 2: Top five Nationalities of Illegal Immigrants Apprehended at the Greek Sea Borders

Country \ Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007*	Total
Afghanistan	1,851	1,254	653	928	634	1,264	3,239	9,823
Iraq	2,677	1,100	166	139	304	348	471	5,205
Palestine	80	73	325	647	445	624	903	3,097
Somalia	10	139	439	234	298	182	921	2,223
Egypt	3	4	29	450	821	296	21	1,624

* Data for 2007 refer to the period January 1st to October 14th 2007.
Source: Greek Ministry of Mercantile Marine, October 2007

According to recent studies (Icduygu & Toktas 2002), smuggling and trafficking of people through Turkey operates mainly by informal organisations that, in effect, are networks of local agents operating as independent individual groups. These networks are maintained by the mutual interest of smugglers and their customers to conclude the journey and are characterised by interpersonal trust and national, ethnic, kinship or friendship relations.

The length of the Greek islands' coastline in the Aegean and their close proximity to Turkey make the policing of this part of the external EU sea border particularly demanding in terms of human resources and technical equipment. For example, the Greek coastguard operates in cooperation with the Europol and police authorities in western and northern EU countries (e.g. Britain or France) towards the capture of irregular migrants. An irregular migrant was for instance arrested by British officers in trying to cross illegally the Channel tunnel between France and the UK. The person had in his pocket a deportation order from the island of Lesvos, issued three months earlier. Greek border guard also cooperates with Turkish police in establishing the routes through Turkey and in dismantling the smugglers' networks.

Papadopoulou (2004) notes the European dimension of the smuggling of migrants into Greece but criticises the entanglement between irregular migration and asylum seeking. People who are persecuted may indeed come to a country illegally – this does not nullify, however, their need for international protection.

Contrary to the claims of the officials of both the Greek Police Headquarters and Ministry of Mercantile Marine that their operations and their staff operate with full respect of the migrants' human rights there has been evidence for the opposite.[1] The Pro Asyl report (2007) and our sources make

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1. See letter of the Greek Ombudsman: http://www.synigoros.gr/pdfs/_proasul.pdf (accessed on 14.12.2007) and also newspaper articles at one of the major Greek dailies *Eleftherotypia* on 31 October 2007 and 1 November 2007.

reference to cases of migrants that are intercepted and eventually 'pushed back', in other words refouled, to Turkey outside any legal procedures and human rights concerns (they are put back on their boats by force and carried to Turkish waters or they are returned to Turkish soil on the other side of the river Evros at the northeastern border in Thrace). Occasionally they may also be beaten or threatened to disclose information about their smugglers. Similar reports were already registered by NGOs and international organisations in 2000 and 2001 (Papadopoulou 2004: 171).

In recent research interviews (conducted in October and November 2007), high rank officers from the Police and the Ministry of Mercantile Marine, Security department firmly denied such allegations and strongly affirmed their commitment to respecting the human rights of irregular migrants or asylum seekers. However they also argued that most asylum seekers are in reality irregular migrants who seek thus to obtain the 'pink card' which allows them to stay and work legally in Greece for six months and/or until their application is processed. When the application is rejected these people disappear in the informal economy of Athens or other areas. This view indirectly justifies why irregular migrants are not provided with the opportunity to seek asylum. The implicit argument is: 'if they are there to cheat the system, the police ought not allow them to seek asylum in the first place.'

A high-ranking police officer we interviewed in November 2007, shortly after the scandal on human rights abuse at the Aegean islands had broken out, argued that they are able to establish whether an irregular migrant is a true or bogus asylum seeker depending on the country they come from. He was thus applying the notion of 'safe' and 'unsafe' country of origin. He also noted that there is a problem with finding reliable interpreters for languages spoken in Asia (such as Urdu for instance) who are willing to work on the Aegean islands. Interpreters need to be brought to the islands from Athens and this is not only difficult but also costly. In a research interview, an asylum seeking expert explained that asylum applications are only processed actually in Athens. Local lawyers at Evros or on the islands,

working at times for free as volunteers in human rights' NGOs and other times asking to be paid for their services, help the irregular migrants who wish to apply for asylum to leave the detention centre and head to Athens to file an application.

Recent research (Papadopoulou, 2004) suggests that some of those who could claim asylum in Greece (people of Kurdish ethnicity for instance) do not wish to do so because they prefer to continue their journey to the west and north with a view to reaching a country where they have relatives and claim asylum there. Another motivation for this is that Greece has an extremely low approval rate for asylum applications (steadily below 10% and since 2002 below 1%, contrary to most western European countries where approval rates range between 20% and 40%). Cabot (2008), on the other hand, argues that there are cases where desperation from experiencing inhumane detention conditions at the border leads people to apply for asylum eventually. Papadopoulou (2004: 174-5) confirms from her own fieldwork with smuggled Kurdish migrants and asylum seekers that some chose to come to Greece with a view to staying with family or friends that are already in the country while others see Greece only as a transit country and/or are informed about asylum approval rates in different countries.

External Control Policies and (Non-)Cooperation with Sending/Transit Countries

Overall, the philosophy of enforcement of external controls has changed since the 1990s when massive deportations of Albanian irregular migrants, arrested in the streets of Athens and elsewhere, were common practice. Greece does not seek to fend off its border from the inside but rather to act in cooperation with neighbouring countries that are important sending or transit countries providing in exchange programmes of seasonal migration and development aid. However, this cooperation seems to work better with the countries at the northern land borders than with Turkey along the eastern and southeastern sea border.

Readmission agreements have been signed with Albania, Bulgaria and a Protocol of Readmission with Turkey while there are local cooperation agreements on the Greek-Macedonian (FYROM) border. The Readmission Protocol signed with Turkey in 2002 remains however not implemented: out of nearly 4,000 requests for a total of approximately 28,000 people submitted from Greek to Turkish authorities, less than 2,000 persons have been readmitted back to Turkey.

The Protocol requires Greek authorities to submit their re-admission request within 15 days from the arrival of the irregular migrant(s). This is often difficult because of difficulties in establishing the country of origin and identity details of the irregular migrants. After the Greek authorities send their files, Turkish authorities usually delay their processing beyond the 90-day limit. When they eventually contact back the Greek authorities it is too late: they usually often have freed the irregular migrants (as the 90-day limit for police detention has elapsed) and are no longer able to find them and send them back to Turkey. It appears that this is a deliberate strategy of Turkish authorities aiming at blocking the actual reinforcement of the Readmission Protocol, which however they had accepted to sign in 2002.

The Pro Asyl report (2007) suggests that an informal strategy adopted by the Greek coastguard to exert pressure on Turkish authorities on this issue is to force dinghies with irregular migrants to return to Turkish waters. This often takes place through dangerous manoeuvres of powerful speedy boats of the Greek coastguard while dinghies and small boats carrying the irregular migrants are usually very poorly equipped and severely overcrowded. Irregular migrants who arrived through the sea border have repeatedly testified (Pro Asyl 2007, or also http://fortresseurope.blogspot.com/2006/02/immigrants-dead-at-frontiers-of-europe_16.html) to the fact that coastguard officers damage their dinghies and force them to go back to Turkish waters where they are either arrested by the Turkish coastguard or forced by weather conditions and their failing boats to land back to the Turkish coast.

These external border control policies, notably readmission agreements with neighbouring countries, and with particular reference to Turkey and the Greek-Turkish border; the practice of not allowing irregular immigrants to land on Greek soil, even through such strategies violate international law and the human rights of the irregular migrants and are illegitimate, are complemented by two more policies discussed below.

First, since 2007 the Border Guard Forces have been reinforced through new recruitments who are meant to operate mainly on the Aegean. The Greek Border Guard Force (*Synoriofylaki*) was created as a special body in 1998. Their aim is to identify, arrest and send back irregular migrants. The Border Guard Forces do not only operate in prefectures that are near the borders but also in prefectures that receive a large number of illegal immigrants.[2] Border Guard forces are currently (November 2007) staffed by 4,600 border guards and 500 police officers. Border guards however are not police officers. They belong to a special force of the police and are usually people who served in the Greek Marines corps their military service. Their training is thus partial – by comparison to the training of police officers who graduate from the police academy after completing their high school studies – and their duties are limited and much more focused: they have to locate irregular immigrants and bring them to justice or deport them. There has been as yet no empirical study on the *esprit du corps* or the enforcement practices of this special service but it certainly is a matter worth exploring.

In line with the above strict enforcement measures, Greek authorities use an additional deterrent to keep people off the Greek border. They routinely reject asylum applications (Pro Asyl 2007) many times judging on the basis of the country of origin rather than on the basis of actual evidence referring to the specific individual applicant. This is apparent as noted by Pro Asyl (2007) in the standard wording of rejection decisions which only vary in the name and personal details of each applicant.

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2. http://www.ydt.gr/main/Section.jsp?SectionID=940&LanguageID=2

The situation could improve if joined control actions took place in the framework of the FRONTEX agency or with the assistance of international organisations like the IOM (International Organisation for Migration) as happened in the case of Albania and Italy with a view to effectively combating human smuggling and trafficking and diffusing information to interested migrants about the dangers of illegal border crossing and undocumented stay/work in Greece.

There is one FRONTEX joint operation currently implemented in Greece named POSEIDON[3] (I and II). It is a combined land-and-sea effort targeting Greece's land borders with Turkey to the east, Albania and Bulgaria to the north, as well as the Aegean Sea, and employs patrol boats and land cruisers, fixed and mobile radar, and aerial surveillance. Each phase of the Poseidon operation has led to the apprehension of less than one thousand irregular migrants and a total of nearly 30 smugglers. Moreover, about 350 illegal immigrants were diverted back to their country of origin and a few hundreds of forged and/or falsified documents were detected.

Unfortunately, our empirical research shows that there is no purposeful coordination between external or internal border controls and the overall policy for managing migration flows and stocks. Thus, control efforts seem to have been constant if not increasing through the years despite the fact that during the last ten years Greece has enacted three regularization programmes with over 800,000 applicants in total. In other words, contrary to what our interviewee at the Ministry of Interior suggested, notably that the Police relax their controls when there is a regularization process ongoing, our informant from the Police directorate did not relate their enforcement efforts or practices to the enactment of regularization programmes. Regularisations seem to have happened unplanned, totally independently from control efforts.

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3. http://www.frontex.europa.eu/examples_of_accomplished_operati/art8.html

Asylum Seeking at the Border

A recent study (Cabot 2008) that is actually still work in progress points to a number of problems related to legality, fair process and human rights concerns that affect the Greek asylum seeking system. First of all, asylum-seeking temporary stay permits, the notorious pink cards, are not available for request at border stations. They can only be requested at the central Asylum Office in Athens. Thus, irregular migrants who want to claim asylum have to reach Athens first. Practically applying for a pink card is not easy as queues are long, the Asylum department is understaffed (see also Pro Asyl 2007), and a maximum of 50 cases per day can be processed. People queue from as early as 3.00 am outside the office with the hope that they will be able to file an application and receive their card the following morning. Pink cards are issued for six months and give the pink card holder the right to work. Cabott (2008) suggests that several asylum seekers are not aware (given that all the instructions and paper work is in Greek and interpreters are overworked and sometimes not readily available) that their paper is not a work permit but an asylum seeker card.

The authorities appear to operate on the basis of safe-unsafe country distinction. Hence, applicants from certain Asian and African countries are routinely rejected on first instance but most of them, with the help of the Greek Council for Refugees an Athens based NGO that provides legal assistance to asylum seekers, file an appeal. Applicants from regions and countries that are war-torn and clearly unsafe such as Sudan (Darfur) or Iraq for instance remain often with their applications pending for years. They do not receive a rejection like others but they are not given refugee status either. They are held in a kind of limbo (Cabott 2008) until further notice, without any welfare assistance but with the right to work to maintain themselves and their families. Naturally many among them live in very poor conditions as housing is hard to find, they are often employed in underpaid, unsafe and unstable jobs.

Concluding Remarks

So far, there are two main pathways to deal with irregular migration policy wise: border control enforcement measures and cooperation with transit/sending countries. The measures taken to 'combat'[4] the routes of irregular migration mainly revolve around intensive efforts to patrol the sea borders 24 hours a day during the entire year, using substantial human and technical resources. While increasing efforts to cooperate with transit countries and externalizing the border control to those countries is the other policy directive. This is increasingly the case as regards, say, Italy and Spain and the Maghreb countries and much less so the case of Greece and Turkey. Nonetheless all the EU member states involved exert high pressure individually and through the EU to the transit countries for more efficient control of their borders. It is worth noting that this control sometimes comes at the expense of human rights considerations: re-admission and further deportation of irregular migrants by the transit countries do not satisfy the EU standards for human treatment and are often in violation of the non-refoulement principle.

The recent establishment of the FRONTEX agency (2004) has significantly helped the development of joint operations between all EU member states, both southern and northern countries that are affected by irregular migration as transit and destination countries. These operations have mainly functioned at a pilot stage and have involved the

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4. Sometimes this terminology describes literary the border guards agenda. Indicative is the way the Head of the Coast Guard in the Greek island of Mytilini described the migrants that attempt to cross the sea border: "when Afghans arrive, you see that they are all young men between 14 and 17 – it seems as though it were a sort of army, moving from the east to Europe" (Pro Asyl 2007).

exchange of personnel as well as technical means and know how among EU countries and to a lesser extent between EU countries and non-EU transit countries.

Another important issue that should be considered when talking about policy regards the migrant's side of the story. Once migrants start their journey it is very unlikely that they will stop before reaching a place (in North Africa or Europe) where they can find employment and/ or feel safe. The reason often is that during their journey they borrow money or get themselves in debt to various smugglers that they are supposed to pay back once in Europe. This situation on top of their initial need to migrate makes many among them determined 'to go or die'. Thus being stopped at the external EU border even several times does not discourage them from trying again. Policymakers should, therefore, learn the limits of border control policies and reflect back on the latter to assess whether they are worth the funds invested in them. The perspective from the push factors of migration could help in re-orientating policy-makers and the scientific community towards the investigation of other avenues of tackling irregular migration.

Simultaneously, the pull factors showing the host societies and economies interests in migrant labour should be re-evaluated and re-addressed in public discourse. There is an imbalance when presenting the economic rationale behind the migration entry-exit policies. The high tech innovation sectors of the economy that attract the spotlights are regarded in neoclassical economics as the steering wheel to growth. But the jobs they create are too little in comparison with the so called low-skilled sectors[5] and after all economic theory also shows that growth is dependent on the market that connects sectors and not on a single sector. Some

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5. Richard Sennett (2006) discusses the difficulties that many economies experience in absorbing highly skilled workers and poses the problem of 'usefulness' that many national labour markets (the Greek one is such a case) face on the eve of the 21st century.

will readily argue that the internationalization of the market economy renders firms less accountable to one particular pool of demand. The economist Alan Blinder [2006] argues on the other hand that the international competition on jobs that do not require the physical presence of the worker in a certain working place or country is bound to have a positive effect on jobs whose product or services cannot be transferred on the web and are territorially bound and human contact intensive. In any case, there are many jobs that cannot be substituted by technology. While low-status jobs are on the rise and traditionally insecure manual jobs are shifting from the reality and insecurity of low wages (Lyberaki 2005) while other jobs in services (salespersons, waiters/tresses) become low-paid and gradually low-status. It is therefore a matter of prevailing perspectives over the economy. The modernist lure of high skills hijacks the political discourse on the desirable aspects of migration. Economy and demography are equally dependent, however, on low-skill jobs.

There is certainly a lot more that can be done to address the challenge of irregular migration through the Greek and, in effect, EU sea borders and relevant policy measures should have the following aim: *to better manage the EU sea borders, to do so in coordination with the demographic and economic needs of Europe whilst promoting development in the countries of origin through concrete plans of action with a view to preventing people from migrating illegally and risking their lives.* Irregular migration policy-debate should not circle solely around border controls. What is at stake is a communication and coordination between the interests and agendas involved based on certain commonly agreed criteria and rules (Maroukis 2008).

What does the Greek case suggest as regards the management of the EU southern maritime borders:

(a) to improve cooperation with the transit country authorities so as to prevent to the extent possible migrants from attempting to cross the EU borders. Certain bilateral agreements seem to be moving

towards that direction. The particularities of the Greek-Turkish (non) cooperation nexus, however, brings in an important lesson on the issue of cooperation with transit countries. They show that cooperation is not a matter of political will only; it is a discourse that weaves through various interconnected political, social and economic interests and agendas expressed by different NGOs, political systems, state agencies and institutions, business and the media that develop their own dynamics in both host and transit countries.

(b) to improve cooperation and exchange of experience and specialized knowledge as well as technical means among the southern EU member states,

(c) to improve cooperation with northern and western EU member states that are often the final destinations of irregular migrants, with a view to dismantling the transnational smugglers' networks involved,

(d) to put pressure *and* simultaneously offer motives (like the revisiting of the EU accession of Turkey) to transit countries with a view to ensuring the human treatment and the respect of the human rights of irregular migrants. To be knowledgeable of the political, economic and social evolutions in these countries and use and enrich the available resources of these countries towards that goal,

(e) to ensure that irregular migrants that may seek asylum are given the possibility to do so when they reach the territory of an EU country and they are not deported back to the transit country in violation of the non-refoulement principle. This is a special concern when the transit country to which they are returned is NOT a full signatory of the 1951 Geneva Convention for Refugees (as is the case of Libya, but also for instance Turkey that is signatory to this Convention but only as regards asylum seekers that come from Europe). Ensure, in other words, that the host country does its part efficiently and impose sanctions if necessary. Towards this end, the Dublin II European Council Regulation that puts insurmountable pressure to the bordering countries of the EU should be modified if not abandoned.

As regards measures for managing migration:

(f) to open new channels for legal (seasonal, temporary or long term) migration in different sectors of the labour market (both low skill and high skill)
(g) to encourage brain circulation between Europe and Africa (not just brain drain) as regards high skill migration
(h) to promote concrete development plans through not only direct financial aid to state structures but through joint ventures with local communities where possibly corruption and embezzlement of EU money can be better prevented or controlled.
(i) to promote intensive information campaigns about the risks and costs of irregular migration compared to tangible options of legal migration.

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