Introduction to *Migration Patterns Across the Mediterranean*

Adelina Miranda and Antía Pérez-Caramés

In the early 1990s the theoretical construct of the Southern European Migration Model (SEMM) was created in order to better explain the characteristics of the migratory movements of Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece, under the assumption that their shared recent history and socio-economic traits explained the similarities observed in their migratory patterns.

Three decades have passed since the original formulation of the SEMM, during which time it has continued to be employed empirically and developed by various authors, resulting in contributions to the debate that require critical analysis in order to formulate an updated version of the model. This book revisits the construct, providing an analysis that takes into consideration the challenges posed by the diverse temporal, spatial and political scales of the Mediterranean, as well as examining both the similarities, and the variability and heterogeneity of the migratory phenomenon in the region. Our approach adopts a scale large enough to embrace a multidisciplinary analysis of the interrelationships of migratory processes, and a perspective that is critical of Eurocentrism to critically review the interpretative categories applied to migratory phenomena, focusing particularly on the formulation of the SEMM.

The following two broad perspectives will serve to provide a critical account of the ruptures and continuities found in the SEMM. First, a connection between the observed current migratory trends and the extensive history of migrations in the Mediterranean is retraced. The book details the diverse nature of the history of migration in this area, organised around the concurrence of different migratory trends across a range of time periods and actors involved. From this perspective the colonialisms that have permeated and structured the relationships between the countries situated on both sides of the Mediterranean are considered. Second, the need for a change in the interpretative paradigm which takes the plurality of migratory patterns into consideration is highlighted. The book offers a contextualisation of the current political situation which deconstructs the categories applied to migrants and migration phenomena such as the exiled, the political refugees, the asylum
seekers, the authorised and unauthorised migrants, the return migrants and their descendants, the traders, and the expelled migrants.

It is also important to address the changes in conditions for migration, mobility and exile in the Mediterranean stemming from the socio-economic transformations that accompanied the birth of modern nation-states. Indeed, the study of migration in the countries situated on the southern and eastern shores leads us to look at the Mediterranean not only from Europe, but also from Africa and the Middle East. This decentred perspective in relation to Europe shows that Mediterranean migratory processes are based on a plurality of poles, tensions, and confrontations in time and space.

THE SEMM AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

In order to explain the singularities of the group of countries comprising Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece, which in the early 1990s were beginning to become places of immigration rather than emigration, migration processes in Southern Europe have traditionally been addressed through what has been called the ‘paradigm of the Southern European Migration Model’, a theoretical construct proposed by various scholars (see King and Rybczuk, 1993; Arango and Baldwin-Edwards, 1999; Anthias and Lazaridis, 2000; King et al., 2000; King, 2001; Venturini, 2004; Enrico, 2012, among others).

The emergence of the SEMM as a paradigm and a theoretical construct for explaining international migration processes in this region since the end of the Second World War was first used in the analysis of Gastarbeiter migration that dates from the 1960s, when migrants from Southern European countries (Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal) started travelling towards the north (France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium and Switzerland). After the oil crisis of the 1970s this began to change, with those nations most accepting of immigration adopting more restrictive policies, resulting in part of the migration flow originating in countries south of the Mediterranean beginning to head towards Italy, Spain, Greece, and later Portugal. During the 1980s this flow became more substantial due to the modification of labour market conditions in Northern Europe and the arrival of immigrants in these countries as a ‘temporary detour’, linked to the absence of restrictive immigration regulations. During the 1990s, immigration became a structural element of Southern European countries. Despite their high unemployment rates and a long history of emigration, greater numbers of immigrants settled in Southern European countries, with the Mediterranean Sea being described as a kind of European Rio Grande (King, 1996).

Concepts and theoretical constructs such as the SEMM, Euro-Mediterranean migration, and the Mediterranean Migration Model directly question the ‘Mediterranean’ nature of migrations, requiring a perspective that does not
essentialise these migratory processes. Circulations in the Mediterranean cannot be understood within the limits of each nation-state in the area which, for centuries, has been at the very heart of the processes of globalisation. The question is therefore asked as to whether an increased flow of people, goods and information is creating new forms of exchange. Are new borders being created and local socio-cultural stratifications redefined as a result of such migration?

Despite the variety of migratory flows in the Mediterranean region, immigration has long been perceived to be a consequence of the demands of industrial capitalism following the Second World War, with studies often focusing on the image of the male immigrant working in the industrial sector. However, a closer look at post-Second World War migration reveals that different kinds of immigration have consistently been significant, including during the 1960s and 1970s. The image of the proletarian immigrant does not adequately render the variability and diversity of the migration process, with colonial and post-colonial immigration overlapping in the Mediterranean context. Furthermore, in addition to the simultaneous presence of emigration and immigration, one must also consider the impact of transit migration. Historians have outlined the importance of transit as a component in all Mediterranean countries, with the Mediterranean migratory setting also being marked by political conflicts. The Palestinian, Kurdish and Armenian issues, the conflicts in the Balkans, and the tensions in the Middle East, all weigh heavily on Mediterranean migratory arrangements, as demonstrated most recently by the increase in the number of people arriving on the coasts of Italy, Spain and Greece.

Research that refers to the SEMM has allowed us to understand the dynamics of post-Ford era migration; however, it fails to address the following major issues. The first of these issues is related to the need to consider the Mediterranean setting as being linked to a larger scale, requiring a theoretical approach able to take into account the role of networks and diasporas (Paradiso, 2019; Lorcin, 2017). The phenomena of the interlocking (Bernes et al., 2017) and superposing of national, cultural and social borders produces particular patterns of alterity and identity (Mellino, 2005) that must also be taken into account.

The second of the issues that the model fails to consider is the relevance of economic and demographic conditions in Southern European countries (Ambrosetti et al., 2016; Ricucci, 2017). Migratory processes involving Southern European countries cannot be thoroughly understood without considering gender and generational dynamics. A third issue is the highly politicised nature of migration, and the fact that its management revolves around the production of irregularity (Ambrosini, 2018).
STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The Foreword, written by Natalia Ribas-Mateos and Jorge Malheiros, sets out the main arguments against a Eurocentric approach to migration in the Mediterranean. In their Conclusions, the final chapter in this book, the editors Adelina Miranda and Antía Pérez-Caramés gather and synthesise the critical points raised in each of the preceding chapters in order to propose an updated, denationalised and decolonised version of the SEMM.

The chapters of the book provide a comprehensive analysis of recent population movements in Southern European countries within the larger context and scope of the Mediterranean region as a whole, outlining changes in migration routes, the characteristics and profile of those who migrate, and the roles of the diverse countries involved (countries of origin, transit, first and subsequent destinations), taking into account how these affect migratory strategies and projects, the reasons behind and purposes of migration, policies implemented, and recent political, social and economic changes in Mediterranean societies.

First, in ‘An extended foreword to a critique on Mediterranean Europe as a place of migration’, Natalia Ribas-Mateos and Jorge Malheiros select two fundamental topics as the basis for a meaningful analysis of Mediterranean Europe: place and contemporary mobilities. The authors recall the importance of the dynamics linking the rural and urban worlds. The connections between rural and urban should be seen in the perspective of a continuum rather than that of two opposite types of places. Therefore, while cities have historically formed the core of the Mediterranean, the place of rural societies should not be forgotten. This dynamic vision alters an essentialist view of borders. It also serves to demonstrate the contemporary relevance of mobility, of the mobility of people both inside and outside the Mediterranean region, in connecting with borders.

Since colonial times, migrations have contributed to creating a caravan-serai (Ribas-Mateos, 2017) with cosmopolitanism traits, and a model of Mediterranean Europe must therefore hold both the longitudinal and latitudinal links (and their construction) in greater consideration than the breaks. It should explore the dynamics and the diversity of the region, and combine processes and perspectives departing from various places: some in North Africa, and others in Europe.

This book explores these questions in two broad parts. Part I, entitled ‘Mobilities and Colonialisms’ proposes a perspective that traverses past and present, thus questioning the continuities and ruptures that exist in different historic moments.

Colonisation and decolonisation have influenced and continue to influence the migratory events of the Mediterranean shores, where forms of colonialism
Introduction

occupy a specific place within the construction of continuities and discontinuities. Migratory phenomena in the Mediterranean region originated in part from the political financial and cultural continuities which still shape relations between colonising and colonised countries today (Liauzu, 2009), and as such transcend differences, continuing to fuel the mechanisms for building alterity. Part I provides the reader with an understanding of the porosity that exists between the scientific and socio-political categories of migration, as well as the process of the stratification of individual and collective memory over time on both sides of the Mediterranean. Current migration dynamics are marked by the construction of a European geopolitical context that has created a gap between the countries around the Mediterranean, which is unprecedented in certain respects. The representation of migratory phenomenon participates in the construction of a supranational identity through a supposed opposition between a ‘Christian West’ and an ‘Islamic East’, now fixed around the figure of the ‘Islamic’ migrant. The colonial imaginary has accompanied and continues to accompany this political construction at the basis of the collective perception and symbolic elaboration of current mobilities. Therefore, Mediterranean migrations are ‘postcolonial’ since they refer to the political, economic and cultural continuities and ruptures that still shape the relationships between countries that were colonisers and countries that were colonised.

The analysis proposed by Wolfgang Kaiser and Claudia Moatti in Chapter 1, entitled ‘Human mobility in the pre-modern Mediterranean’, provides the basis for a revision of migration paradigms from a historical perspective. This contribution allows us to return to the roots of the development of migration paradigms. By underlining the multitude of causes of mobility, the authors demonstrate the futility of systematically positioning it in opposition to sedentariness, thus underlining the need to review the freedom/force duality, and that of keeping the tensions between migratory flows and the existence of structural xenophobia in societies ever present.

The analysis of the pathways of people in mobility and of reception policies highlights status gradations, which make any unitary definition of the term ‘foreigner’ futile. Freedom of movement must be considered to be a negotiated privilege that falls within the sphere of positive law. The authors recall that freedom of movement was most often experienced not as a characteristic of free people, even less as a subjective right, but as a positive right, regulated by a set of institutions. The recognition of this was in no way based on a natural principle, nor on simple norms, but on negotiation. It is the analysis of this mode of interaction and its transformations over the centuries that allows us to understand the evolution of societal practices and the phenomenon of migration, their historicity, that is to say their discontinuity.

In Chapter 2, ‘Migration and otherness in the Mediterranean region: colonial past and postcolonial continuities through the envision of the “Other Moor”’,
María-Jesús Cabezón-Fernández demonstrates that the current processes of otherness are based on the historical sedimentation of representations of the other. In order to understand the way in which migrant otherness is constructed, the author outlines the continuities that refer to the articulation of the collective imagination of the ‘Other Moor’, and to a lesser extent the ‘Other Spanish’. Each period of Hispanic-Muslim history corresponds to an evolution of stereotypes associated with the Moors. This chapter confirms that identity (Hispanicity in this case) around the Mediterranean has always been constructed from historical exchanges. As the analysis of the Algerian case study demonstrates, it is important to take into account the Mediterranean migratory system.

Chapter 3 by Mustapha El Miri, ‘The weight of colonial cultural legacy in scholarly and political discourses on migration: for a denationalisation of the migration issue’, offers a critical and original reading of the complex relationship between colonialism and immigration in France. This link suggests that the manner in which colonial memory is treated conditions the place given to migrants and, in turn, conditions the institutional, legal, intellectual and social accommodations that this entails for ‘native’ French society. The author recalls the violence of the debates and controversies around the question of colonial memory, and that in France, migration only became an object of study at a late stage. The chapter examines the links between colonial memory and migration and the history of the French colonial period, which is also the result of a long-standing and porous relationship between science and politics on these issues, and analyses its effects on the place of ‘immigrants’.

Part II, titled ‘Beyond National Migratory Dynamics’, provides an analysis of the plural forms of migration. From the 1970s onwards, as previously mentioned, the entry of new emigration, immigration, settlement and transit countries on the migration scene was witnessed. This variability of population movements was first apparent in the countries of Southern Europe.

As Fabio Amato demonstrates, in Chapter 4, ‘Migration in Italy: a multiscalar analysis’, case studies of the countries of Southern Europe allow us to focus on the arrangement of different migratory scales. Italy stands out as a country of immigration, but continues to be a country of emigration, and has also become a transit stop on the way to other European countries. A long history of emigration is an element that conditions the interpretation of a place of immigration especially since, following the 2008 crisis, a resumption of departures abroad and/or to the north of the country have been noted. As the author points out, in order to study Italian migration, one must take into account the processes of territorialisation in response to increased pressure from global migration. The place that migrants occupy in the spheres of work, housing and education confirms that a multiscalar approach (from local to regional, national to international) is required to restore the complex artic-
ulation between these different phenomena, generating localised migratory morphologies that change over time.

Italian migration needs to be placed in a wider context of reflection. Indeed, if migration phenomena are considered from the different spatial and temporal scales of the Mediterranean, it appears that the emergence of new migration dynamics requires a rethinking of the interpretative models that present Mediterranean migrations as a unilinear movement linking the ‘South’ to the ‘North’.

In Chapter 5, ‘The Maghreb of transit, new laboratory of postcolonial migrations’, Michel Peraldi demonstrates the importance of this phenomenon at the level of the Maghreb countries. According to the author, we are in the presence of a complex mutation in migration in the Maghreb, rather than a simple change, with migration being primarily a matter of autonomy, either individual or diasporic. In contrast to the era of Fordist migration, we are currently seeing a clear fragmentation of migrant categories and reasons for migration, regardless of destination. The author concludes that if we accept that a transformation of the mechanics and dynamics of migration from the colonial to the transnational is taking place here, it is not only migratory modalities that are changing and new figures that are appearing, but a more fundamental change in the relationship to the world is occurring, marked by the privatisation and feminisation of flows, and increased autonomy in journeys. This process determines transformations at different migratory scales as well as on the European level. Looking at the contemporary migratory map of the Mediterranean, the boundaries between categories of migrants appear blurred and reversible, and the distinctions between ‘new’ and ‘old’ migration, irregular and political migration, pendular, stabilisation and return migration, are constantly being questioned. In countries of recent immigration such as Italy, Portugal and Spain, the phenomenon of emigration abroad continues to be fuelled by young graduates and skilled workers, bringing intra-European migration to the forefront.

In Chapter 6, ‘Gender and emigration: labour market integration and work–life balance strategies of young Spanish female migrants to France and Germany’, Belén Fernández-Suárez and Alberto Capote Lama study the recovery of migration flows from Spain to France and Germany after the 2008 economic crisis. The authors highlight the socio-structural elements in the societies of Southern Europe that might have encouraged these intra-European migrations, and also how educational profile and gender are explanatory elements in the establishment of these new migrations. They note a predominance of young people with a university degree among migrants, and the increase in female migration. The authors underline in an original manner how these migrations should be understood in the light of other social relations such as gender and class. They analyse the integration processes of these young
migrants and how, when they become mothers, they try to balance what it means to be a mother in the country of origin as well as in the host country.

Mediterranean Migration Model researchers have stressed that foreign migrants have arrived in response to a demand generated by the informal economy, and in particular the unskilled sectors. These post-Fordist immigrant flows are part of the tertiarisation process of the economy, and respond to the needs of the primary and service sectors. Thus, the comparative analysis between Italy and Spain carried out by Francisco Checa y Olmos, Francesco Saverio Caruso and Alessandra Corrado in Chapter 7, ‘A Southern European model of migrant agricultural labour: two case studies in Andalusia (Spain) and Calabria (Italy)’, demonstrates the existing correlations between the Southern model for agricultural labour exploitation, and the Mediterranean model of migration. The development of agricultural industrialisation and the transformation of the rural world were supported by migrant labour. The chapter focuses on these processes of agrarian change in two areas in Southern Europe: the province of Almería in Andalusia (Spain) and the Sybaris plain in the province of Cosenza, in Calabria (Italy). The case studies demonstrate that in the countries of Southern Europe, which include Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal, the processes of informalisation and segmentation of the labour market increase demand for local labour supply especially in low-skilled, poorly paid, dirty, demanding, highly precarious and even dangerous sectors, such as agriculture, construction, care, service, home delivery, cleaning, and irregular self-employment. This situation produces the social conditions for exploitation and segregation that in turn produce a climate of social tension that cyclically results in racist policies, and uncontrolled and xenophobic events. However, the rural–urban dimension of the two contexts of reference seems, in fact, to favour the passage from an informal and circular migration to a more stable family migration.

Maurizio Ambrosini’s analysis in Chapter 8, ‘The care shortage and social acceptance: why the welfare needs of native families subvert immigration policies’, confirms that the ‘familist’ welfare state in Southern European countries does not respond adequately to changes in society, and that the work of immigrant women is used to compensate for the dysfunctions and shortcomings of an inadequate social policy. This has often occurred outside the legal framework, through the informal hiring of immigrants without a legal status. Tolerance is the general rule in regard to immigrant women working in the service of Italian families and taking care of their frail seniors. An analysis of Italy’s ‘triangle of care’ involving frail old people, relatives as ‘care managers’, and immigrant ‘care workers’, confirmed that the domestic care worker can be seen as a way to save the social order, resulting in Italian families playing a crucial role in migrant irregularity and campaigns for the regularisation of unauthorised immigrants.
The management of the agricultural and care sectors in Southern European countries raises the issue of the articulation between globalised capitalism and the implementation of specific migration policies. The contributions of Kamel Doraï and Imad Amer, as well as that of Alice Latouche, allow us to look at this articulation from two angles: that of conflicts and that of the category of vulnerability.

In Chapter 9, ‘Lebanese migration policy since 2011 and its role in the Syrian refugee movement’, Kamel Doraï and Imad Amer recall how the Mediterranean migratory context is marked by political conflicts. The Kurdish and Armenian issues, the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, and the tensions in Lebanon, have a strong impact on Mediterranean migration patterns. The historical scale of the phenomenon of forced migration in the Middle East is a constituent element of analysis of changes in the regional socio-political context. In the Middle East, where conflicts have generated large refugee groups, the existence of structured and ancient diasporas is key to the understanding of current refugee mobility. An analysis of the case of Syrian reveals two essential conditions. The first is that the management of displaced persons and refugees includes regulation concerning Syria migrants and their access to residency and the labour market. The policies implemented by the Lebanese government have placed Syrians on the margins of society, despite the fundamental role they have played in the reconstruction of the country, and in the agricultural region of the Bekaa. The second of the features marking migration in the region is the blurring of categories, and the coexistence within the same population of people with different legal statuses.

Alice Latouche takes a gendered perspective in Chapter 10, ‘Repoliticising gendered vulnerability: the blind spots of vulnerability-focused humanitarian programmes in Greece’, to highlight the dual consequence of the implementation of specific policies aimed at women asylum seekers. The first of these consequences is that this ‘vulnerability’ relies heavily on stereotypes of gender that exclude men, and force women to ‘perform’ their vulnerability according to the implicit expectations of the evaluators. The second is that the experiences of ‘vulnerable’ migrant women demonstrate how the accommodation policies actually reinforce their precariousness, by forcing women to accept undeclared jobs within the same gendered and racialised sectors of employment. The only options available for them are often undeclared, in the gendered sectors of care, the sex trade or the tourist industry, a dynamic previously analysed by the Southern European Migration Model in the 1990s. The author shows that beyond a humanitarian category of ‘vulnerable women’, the migration policies create long-term precariousness. This Southern region will also be analysed from a family, cross-generational and gender dynamics perspective, permitting us to set aside the unstable borders that are characteristic of the geopolitical
definition of this region, as well as to deconstruct an essentialist vision based on a reductionist interpretation of the phenomenon of migration.

REFERENCES


