

The Mediterranean Sea, once a unifying element and meeting point of different peoples and cultures, is in the present demographic and economic context a growing economic, political and religious border between two worlds that seem to be drifting apart culturally and economically. However, the internationalisation of the economies of the countries around the southern and eastern borders of the Mediterranean Basin and the increasing differences of demographic and economic growth, when compared to Southern Europe, have despite increasing vigilance and control of the entries in the EU, built multiple border crossings that lead immigrants to the European El Dorado, often after an internal migration from rural to urban areas. In this context, the international migrants in the Mediterranean Basin, aside from being key agents in the urbanisation and transformation processes of the society and economy of the sending and hosting territories, are a central issue in the political agenda of this region, at international, national and local levels.

This special issue of *Finisterra – Revista Portuguesa de Geografia* presents a collection of papers that address a series of aspects having to do with migration in the Mediterranean Basin.

Some of the papers have already been presented at a workshop, organised by the two editors of this issue, within the ambit of the *Seventh International Metropolis Conference*, which took place in Oslo, Norway, on 9-13 September, 2002¹.

Two of the articles are of a comparative (cross-country) nature and address the issue of immigration into Southern Europe: one focuses on the changes that have been taking place in these latter countries as far as their immigration policies and immigrant recruitment areas are concerned, while the other analyses the migration system that is structured around the countries of the Maghreb and those of the northern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. The remaining papers

¹ The editors would like to express their gratitude to the Luso-American Foundation (FLAD), for making this workshop possible by co-funding the participation of several researchers from the Centre for Geographical Studies of the University of Lisbon (CEG), as well as of Fatima Sadiqi (University of Fes, Morocco), Martin Baldwin-Edwards (Panteion University, Athens, Greece) and Fäïçal Daly (University of Tunis, Tunisia).

All papers by Portuguese authors present partial results of the research project "Reinventing Portuguese Metropolises. Migrants and urban governance", hosted by the CEG and funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), with the support of the ERDF (POCTI/38599/GEO/2001).

have either an urban or national perspective and focus on a series of different aspects of what is most certainly a highly complex and diversified phenomenon, from both a geographic and a disciplinary point of view.

The stage is set by Martin BALDWIN-EDWARDS who seeks to challenge the idea that globalisation is a cause of immigration into Southern Europe, instead building on an empirical basis to identify regionalisation and networked migratory patterns as the fundamental causes. This is followed by papers on the recent immigration to rural areas and small urban centres in Spain (MORÉN-ALEGRETE & M. SOLANA); on certain aspects of the integration of the descendants of Angolan immigrants in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area (D. POSSIDÓNIO); and by two gendered approaches, one of which focuses on the impacts of male migration from Morocco into Europe upon the women left behind (F. SADIQI & M. ENNAJI), while the other analyses the position and status of Albanian women migrants in Patras (Greece) (D. CHARALAMPOPOULOU).

The issue of the occupational safety and health of labour migrants is then discussed, building on the case of Tunisian construction workers in the city of Modena, Italy (F. DALY). The following paper deals with the immigrants' role in the processes of economic restructuring and secondary internationalisation of the cities, by analysing the spatial diffusion of ethnic (Chinese and Indian) restaurants in the city of Lisbon, as compared with that of the franchises of two international fast-food restaurant chains: McDonald's and Pizza Hut (M. L. FONSECA & J. MALHEIROS).

Finally, taking into account the relevance of the Mediterranean as a political, economic and cultural divide between Europe and northern Africa, a global perspective is presented of the changes in the dynamics of migration from the Maghreb into Southern Europe, seeking to pinpoint some of the foreseeable economic, institutional and demographic developments that are likely to affect the future dynamics of the system (A. ABREU & J. D. MATEUS).

MARIA LUCINDA FONSECA²

RUSSELL KING³

² Centre for Geographical Studies (CEG), University of Lisbon. Email: lucinda.fonseca@fl.ul.pt.

³ Sussex Centre for Migration Research, University of Sussex. Email: r.king@sussex.ac.uk.