

Chapter 9

Emerging Reception Economies: A View from Southern Europe



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9.1 Introduction

Irregular migration in Europe and irregular migration flows mainly by sea and by land to Europe are not a recent phenomenon. However, while in the 2000s irregular migration was largely absorbed in fast-growing economies in central and northern as well as southern Europe, the early 2010s were marked by two concomitant dramatic developments: the global and Eurozone economic crisis and, since 2014, a sudden surge of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers moving to Europe from Syria and the Middle East as well as Asia, Western and Eastern Africa. Thus, while addressing irregular migration has been a long-standing concern at both local and national levels in most European countries, the most recent debate and policy developments take place in a context marked by relatively high unemployment, economic austerity, and public spending cutbacks in frontline countries of southern Europe (notably Italy and Greece). The context is also marked by high immigrant (and native) unemployment in Greece (Triandafyllidou 2016, 2017), while in Italy third-country nationals show a relative job retention during the crisis years but also a high segregation in low-skill/low-pay jobs (Fellini 2018). The management of the ‘migration crisis’ has put additional pressure on already-strained public finances and overburdened public services. Recent research has started to document the difficulties in

The opinions expressed in this chapter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

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the frontline border areas where payments of salaries of refugee centre workers can be delayed (Casati 2018) and where police and border guard officers feel they do not have the means to adequately fulfil their tasks (Chouliaraki and Georgiou 2017; Rozakou 2017).

Recent research has investigated *the economies of migration control*. One line of research has looked specifically into the border control industry, Claire Rodier (2012) has highlighted the triple function of migration controls—economic, ideological, and geopolitical—arguing that border management serves other interests than those it claims to defend, notably it leads to the development of an economy of security services, provided by specialized multinational firms. Rodier argues that this security industry has paradoxically profited from the introduction of free circulation within the EU. Fotiadis (2015) also shows how multinational companies and EU policies have boosted security concerns thus creating a market for high-tech control equipment. Carrying the argument a step further, Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen (2013) analysed the complex relations between civil society, government, and private actors in migration management. These relations impact on migratory flows as well as on policies and practices that try to regulate migration movement, from the flourishing of transportation and border-crossing smuggling services to deportation practices aimed at control and deterrence for future prospective migrants.

A second line of research has assessed the overall cost-effectiveness of migration control—a question that often escapes public attention. Lunaria (2013) has shown that Italy spent more than 1.67 billion euros on policies aimed at combatting irregular migration in the period 2005–2012, of which three-quarters came from national funds and the rest from EU funds. Most of this funds have been used to ensure control of sea and land borders through surveillance technology systems implemented at border areas, implementing returns, running the administrative detention centres for irregular migrants (CIE, *Centri di Identificazione ed Espulsione* or Centres for Identification and Expulsion¹), and cooperating with third countries to prevent and combat irregular flows. The study (Lunaria 2013) claims that the adopted measures were largely ineffective in increasing forced repatriation of irregular migrants and in discouraging further irregular migration flows, while they often violated the fundamental rights of migrants. A similar study in Greece (Angeli et al. 2014) has investigated the actual monetary and human resource costs of migration control policies and their effectiveness in achieving their objectives. The indiscriminate enforcement of control policies—notably generalised and racialized random controls in public places, apprehensions at border of migrants including those willing to ask for protection, blanket detention of anyone apprehended as a means of deterrence, and the insufficient availability of alternative schemes for monitored stay and assisted voluntary returns—created unnecessary expenditures and hampered the policies' effectiveness. The study shows how a tailor-made approach

¹These have now been transformed into CPR (*Centri di Permanenza per i Rimpatri*, or Centres for Repatriation) with the Legislative Decree N.13/2017, converted into law with Law N. 46 of 13 April 2017.

could have functioned better, significantly reducing both the human and financial costs of migration management in Greece.

Taking stock of the literature on the economies of migration control, this chapter focuses on a complementary and interlinked aspect that can be conceived as the economies of reception: notably, how national and local stakeholders manage the arrival of asylum seekers, refugees, and other migrants; how they distribute new arrivals in different territories; and how they build material and human resource infrastructures. In the last decade, the term ‘reception’ increasingly is used with reference to the arrival at EU land and maritime borders of migrants who in principle are not authorised to enter until they manifest the intention to ask for asylum. Reception refers to their initial first-assistance upon arrival, registration, legal and administrative processing, and often involves access to international protection procedures. Hence, national reception mechanisms become an administrative tool that distinguishes those who are considered irregular upon arrival and those who can access the asylum procedure and be entitled, at least temporarily, to stay. It may actually be argued that the way reception takes place may create (or not) regularity and irregularity. The reception systems at the borders of southern Europe actually has a mixed character as it differs from country to country, and it covers care and protection practices as well as repressive ones. The whole ‘industry’ around reception thus serves to restore the orderly management and control of arrivals through irregular migration channels.

Estimating the impact of the migrants’ presence on tax and welfare systems and the net fiscal consequences of immigration for public administration and the economy as whole, while also considering trends in unemployment and wages, is not an easy task and needs to consider also emergency funds and special instruments developed in Europe since mid-2015. Indeed, it is one of the most debated branches of the economic literature on migration, with regard to both national (macro) and local (micro) economies (Dustmann and Frattini 2014; Ruhs and Vargas-Silva 2015; Peri 2017). While acknowledging concerns about inadequate funding and poor services (Amnesty International 2017; D’Angelo et al. 2017; Ministry of Interior of Italy 2015) as well as human rights violations, especially concerning the impact of the EU-Turkey statement (Tunaboğlu and Alpes 2017), this chapter seeks to cast light on the economic aspects of reception.

Hence, the chapter delves deeper into the impact of significant funding in a relatively short period of time, in response to an emergency which has protracted for several years and looking specifically at the cases of Italy and Greece. It has an exploratory character: it seeks mainly to sketch the contours of an emerging reception economy and its possible effect on receiving countries and their local residents. The analysis we propose is not based on empirical material, and the few case studies presented in the text have an introductory character as they present what constitutes an interesting field for ongoing or further research. Our aim here is to explore the qualitative features of the reception economy: we investigate the emergence of significant reception infrastructures; the emergence of new professions; and the impact in terms of real and potential employment of reception beneficiaries in local labour

markets, particularly in relation to informal work in specific sectors (see the sectoral analysis proposed in Chap. 8).

The chapter proceeds with a brief overview of the national and EU funding given to local and regional authorities to face the ‘migration crisis’ in 2015–2016 and seeks to assess the management of these funds between different levels of governance. We then turn to consider how the development of camps to host refugees and asylum seekers in Greece and of multiple reception facilities in Italy has affected civil society sector employment. Last but not least, we briefly consider the participation of migrants and refugees in reception in local labour markets, often in the informal economy. The chapter concludes with some remarks on the character and features of local economies of reception as well as pointing to further avenues for research.

9.2 EU Emergency Funding and Multi-level Governance: Introductory Remarks

Scholars have suggested since the early 2000s the inherent contrast between the public announcement of strong control and security measures and the shadow politics in which migrants’ rights are extended, between the need to offer a symbolic reassurance to the electorate and that of attending to the pragmatic needs of security and social wellbeing of a polity (Guiraudon 2000, Massey 2009). The “vertical” and “horizontal” relationships between the EU and national governments and between multiple tiers of national governments leaves room for multiple overlaps in both policy framing and policy implementation, with a specific role for non-governmental actors and private actors (Scholten and Penninx 2016; Hepburn and Zapata-Barrero 2014). The local governments’ geographical proximity to their populations makes them immediately responsible, as well as the most visible and exposed level of migration governance. Local and regional governments’ portfolios include the implementation of several social and economic policies closely related to reception such as education, health services, training, and integration measures for active labour market participation of those in reception towards autonomy, eventually. This fact—together with the overlapping roles of European, central and local governments for the provision of public services in the field of migration management (control, reception, integration)—has strong implications on the multi-level governance of migration-related issues (Spencer 2018). In this context, this section sketches the size of the funding mobilised to respond to the 2015–2016 ‘migration crisis’ by the EU with a view to providing some insights as to the incidence of this funding at the local and regional level.

Two European funds are assigned to migration and security for the period 2014–2020, providing member states with a policy and budgetary framework for national and local implementation of programs and actions. At the same time, efforts

at the EU level to establish a more coherent and mandatory system for all member states are ongoing while approaches and implementation of the tools already available vary across countries.² The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF, EUR 3.1 billion, according to Regulation 516/2014) promotes actions towards a common approach to asylum and immigration with specific focus on strengthening the Common European Asylum System (CEAS); on legal migration and integration of third-country nationals; on returns as means to combat irregular migration; and on solidarity towards member states most affected by recent asylum flows. Of these initial funds, 88% was to be implemented through shared management with member states under the framework of their multiannual National Programmes, and the remaining 12% was to be managed by the European Commission focusing on Union Actions, Emergency Assistance, and the European Migration Network. This budget was nearly doubled in 2015 and 2016 compared to the initial allocation, through top-ups as a result of unforeseen needs and to foster some solidarity mechanisms and decrease the burden of the ‘migration crisis’ on the most affected member states. Thus, the total foreseen funding reached 6,894 million euros for the period 2014–2020³ to support relocation and resettlement, Union Actions, and most notably the Emergency Assistance (EMAS) to the most affected member states like Greece and Italy.

The Internal Security Fund (ISF, EUR 3.8 billion) aims at improving border management, visa regimes, and travel within the EU and combatting cross-border crimes, terrorism, and other threats to internal security. Moreover, the European Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (1.8 billion euros) and the Refugee Facility for Turkey (3 billion euros) were set up. Moreover, in June 2016, the European Commission also proposed allocating, through the AMIF, 10,000 euros per person resettled (from a third-country of first asylum), 6,000 euros per person relocated from Italy and Greece (and 500 euros for the two relocating countries to cover travel expenses).

Looking more specifically at Greece and Italy, the European Commission’s financial support has been allocated as follows. Approximately 189 million euros in emergency assistance has been given to the Italian authorities and to international organizations and NGOs active in the country on top of the 626.4 million euros allocated to Italy under the 2014–2020 national plans (61% from AMIF and 39% from ISF) (EC 2017). Approximately 393 million euros have been allocated to Greece as emergency assistance to support Greek authorities on top of the 561 million euros allocated through the 2014–2020 national programmes (57% from AMIF and 43% from ISF). These emergency instruments are deemed to provide a targeted

²At the time of closing this Chapter (March 2019), negotiations on the EU multi-annual financial framework for the period 2021–2027 are ongoing, while EU Parliament proposals for a revision of the Dublin Regulation are on hold before EU elections to be held in May 2019 and there is no significant progress in EU cooperation for what concerns operations of search and rescue in the Mediterranean and agreed disembarkation mechanisms.

³Based on total AMIF funding reported in the Financial Programming dataset.

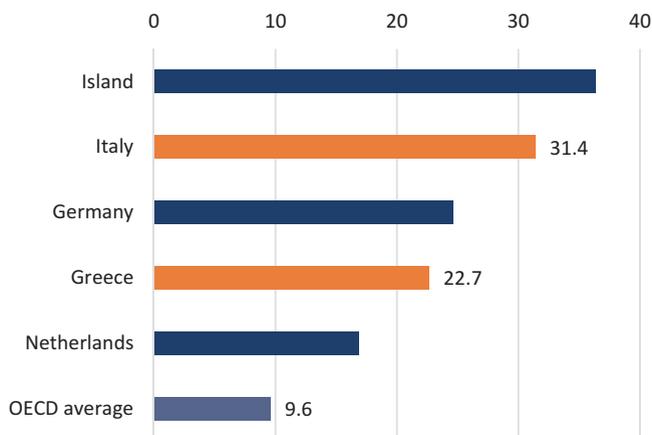


Fig. 9.1 Top 5 OECD countries by share of net ODA for refugees' expenditures (%), 2017. (Source: OECD 2018)

response to specific shocks while also channelling humanitarian funding to UN agencies and NGOs in close coordination with member states involved (EC 2018). Moreover, it is worth noting how expenditures related to refugee assistance are increasingly included in the official development assistance (ODA) of most European countries. According to the latest OECD data, Italy and Greece respectively devoted 31% and 23% of their official development funds to refugee-related expenditure in 2017, which means approximately 1.8 billion USD for Italy and 70.3 million USD for Greece (see Fig. 9.1).⁴

It is hence important to disentangle the inter-relationship between national and sub-national levels of government in the way all these funds, channelled to the two countries from the EU or budgeted at the country level, are utilised. While such distribution varies in relation to the overall level of state (de)centralization and to the country-specific structure of the reception system for asylum seekers, refugees, and other migrants, OECD estimates that the share of sub-national government spending in this field—after receiving fiscal transfers from the central states—is between 35% and 45% (OECD 2017). Usually, local and regional governments are asked to co-fund housing, language tuition and skills training, labour market and integration programmes as well as social benefit payments. In this respect, local entities frequently complain about late reimbursement of funds and additional fiscal costs generated from having a larger population on their territories to assist.

In order to assess the size and dynamics of the regional reception economies emerging over the last decade in Italy and Greece we would need a breakdown of

⁴See the OECD's DAC Temporary Working Group on Refugees and Migration page for the methods adopted to report in-donor refugee costs within ODA: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/refugees-migration-working-group.htm>

national and EU funds per region (or province or municipality) and per sector (e.g. maritime border control, first reception housing or camps, catering and provision of basic services, security of camps or accommodation, asylum processing, and so on). Such information, however, is not publicly available—not least because in both Greece and Italy most reception centres’ management and related services were given through direct assignment, under emergency procedures, from the local prefectures to associations or private entities in Italy, and from the Ministry of Migration Policy—founded in 2016—again to both private entities and non-governmental organisations in Greece. Thus, data are scattered and there is as yet no assessment of how these resources were spent. The recent ECRE (2018) report points to the lack of transparency in how some of the funds are allocated and both the EP Budgetary affairs department (2018: 23–24) and laments the lack of available data and the changing sectors of allocation between national and European funds responding to both structural and emergency needs (2018: 27–31). Therefore, the detailed allocation and use of the funds is neither complete nor clear so as to fully assess their implementation and—for the purposes of our study—their impact on local economies and local labour markets.

9.3 Local Frameworks of Reception: Infrastructures, Professions, Labour Markets

The sheltering of newly-arrived migrants while they are being registered and in relation to their application for asylum (where relevant), has had an impact on the creation of new jobs in the reception system writ-large. The large irregular migration flows via the central and the eastern Mediterranean routes have produced a domino effect for the creation of services that did not previously exist and the expansion of services in new areas and places to cope with the needs of migrants from their first humanitarian relief onwards. This reception economy has grown mostly in the countries of first-arrival—Italy and Greece above all—but also in all other European countries which receive not only migrants arriving by land but also those redistributed through relocation and resettlement programmes.

Looking at the wide range of services and activities enhanced or created from scratch to cope with recent arrivals by sea and by land in Europe allows to show the breadth of the areas of intervention for public and private actors, which changes depending on each specific local context but that invariably requires professional staffing and expertise. The next sections discuss the reception system structures in Greece and Italy, the emergence of new professions and related needs for training of social workers and other professionals, and the ‘refugeeization’ of local labour markets.

9.3.1 *Reception Infrastructure in Greece and Italy*

Upon arrival, procedures related to immediate first aid, first identification and registration, emergency shelter, and possibly referral to the national asylum procedure, typically pertain to central government actors, whose composition and competences varies by country but which generally involves maritime authorities, police forces, immigration forces, and, in some cases, defence forces. Moreover, European agencies (EASO and Frontex), UN agencies (UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF) and international and national NGOs do play a role in these phases, particularly after the implementation of the hotspot approach (D'Angelo 2018).

Depending on the level of state decentralization and how the national asylum system is designed, the central government and the sub-national authorities (regions, provinces, municipalities) are responsible for the management of first- and second-tier reception centres and the provision of a variable set of services. Literature has treated the proliferation of camps in different regions including Europe as a result of policies that address migration (Agier 2014). More recent literature investigates the transformation of European reception systems for asylum seekers, refugees, and irregular migrants since the beginning of the European migrant crisis. According to Kreichauf (2018), since 2015 a generalized tightening of national laws on asylum and local practices has been observed with regards to accommodation, duration of obligatory accommodation in first-reception camps, enlargement and increase in numbers of big centres either in remote areas or at the margins of big cities, changes in administrative detention practices, and the adoption of legal exceptions to normal standards of reception services provided.

In this sense, the term 'refugee camp' previously associated with situations in the global South is more and more common in Europe, and does not only refer to makeshift, irregular gatherings such as those in Idomeni (Greece) or Calais (France). These camp-like settings—or the "campization" (Kreichauf 2018) of the response in some EU member states—involve different living standards, management structures and responsibility chains, labelling spaces, and different guests and staff. Moreover, conditions that were initially meant to be exceptional and temporary become more and more permanent or frozen. Recent literature has shown how these changes have exacerbated the exclusion and marginalization of migrant subjects for whom a (re)integration into the society is more and more difficult as transiting periods last longer or indefinitely.

While 'campization' and confinement is used in some countries and under certain conditions (the Greek islands as well as Lampedusa island in Italy, but also in mainland regions of Greece and Italy), in other contexts (even in the same countries) there has been an explicit shift of paradigm—at least on paper—to more dispersed and urban reception solutions that have created multiple and smaller urban realities where migrants are physically closer to local communities. This has been adopted as global policy by (UNHCR 2014), and some measures have been implemented in Italy in this direction so as to provide better and faster inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees in local communities (SPRAR 2015) and formulas for the redistribution

of new arrivals across the country with consideration for the economic development and population density of each region (Ministry of Interior of Italy 2016).

The administrative management of camps and accommodation of migrants arriving by sea in Greece has changed over time since the beginning of the crisis and is quite complex. Since 2013, with the implementation of EU laws, more Ministries are involved in the management of housing. Sometimes, camps are directly managed by Ministry of Labour, or by the Army. In other cases, the management is given to NGOs funded through European funds, or to UN agencies (both IOM and UNHCR) in support of Greek authorities. Also, the situation of the islands is different from that on mainland, in Athens, Thessaloniki, or other areas. The permanent campization of the islands facing the Turkish coast has been the consequence of the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement and the requirement that migrants or asylum seekers arriving after 18 March 2016 stay there and are processed under a special asylum procedure (Triandafyllidou 2017).

On the Greek mainland a number of temporary—emergency—camps has proliferated since mid-2015. As the so-called Balkan Route was interrupted by the border closure of North Macedonia and other countries further north of Greece, temporary camps emerged in a short period of time to accommodate those ‘trapped’ in mainland Greece. These sites have included the Reception and Identification Centres (RICs), the open Temporary Reception Facilities for Asylum Seekers (*Δομές Προσωρινής Υποδοχής Αιτούντων Διεθνή Προστασία*), as well as open Temporary Accommodation Facilities (*Δομές Προσωρινής Φιλοξενίας*) for persons subject to return procedures or whose return has been suspended (Greek Council of Refugees 2018). The overall capacity and occupancy by type of facilities has changed from mid-2015 onwards. UNHCR for example provides accommodation to refugees and asylum seekers in apartments, hotels, and other buildings all over Greece, in collaboration with municipalities as well as central governmental institutions (Leclerc 2017). Moreover, information on the location, maximum capacity, and actual occupancy of existing shelters is scattered among different sources and hardly consistent over time. Table 9.1 presents data from UNHCR and IOM on the number of hosted migrants and refugees in 2016, 2017, and 2018 in the mainland and on the islands. The type and distribution of shelters have changed since mid-2016, when UNHCR started running an accommodation scheme. In short, two types of accommodation

Table 9.1 Migrants hosted in reception facilities in Greece, by type and location, 2016–2018

	Mainland	Islands	UNHCR Accommodation Scheme in the mainland	Total number of accommodated migrants and refugees
April 2016 ^a	45,890	7,969	NA	53,859
April 2017 ^a	34,791	12,822	14,460	62,073
December 2018 ^b	23,800	14,648	21,635	60,083

Sources: ^aData from UNHCR (2016, 2017); ^bData from IOM (2018, 18): mainland’s figure includes Open Accommodation Facilities, EKKA shelters for adults, EKKA shelters for UASC, Reception and Identification Centres, Detention Centres

Table 9.2 Hotspots reception capacity in Italy and Greece as of May 2018

Italy ^a	Lampedusa	Pozzallo	Trapani	Taranto	Messina	Total
	500	300	400	400	250	1850
Greece	Lesvos	Chios	Samos	Leros	Kos	Total
	3000	1014	648	980	816	6458

Source: EPRS (2018)

^aLampedusa and Taranto were temporarily closed for renovation works, re-opening by mid-2018. The center in Trapani has been converted into a CPR (detention centre) in the summer of 2018

emerge: reception centres run by NGOs alongside state's facilities and centres run by UN agencies (UNHCR and IOM).

Moreover, in Italy as well as in Greece, the EU prompted the opening of hotspots: places of first reception and transit which are spatially-defined areas near harbours and which have been hosting large numbers of individuals (often beyond the official capacity, see EPRS, 2018) and where standards of reception fall below the average of ordinary reception centres. In Greece, the Reception and Identification Centres constitute these hotspots, where registration and identification take place and the screening “selects between those seeking asylum and those to be returned” (ECRE, CIR, and GCR 2016) (Table 9.2).

Besides hotspots and the so-called CPR (Detention Centres for Repatriation), Italy hosts different types of first- and second-tier reception systems for asylum seekers, refugees, and other vulnerable migrants (unaccompanied children, victims of trafficking and torture etc.), with different standards, numbers of hosted migrants, and responsibility chains. This makes the Italian landscape a mix of large hubs for hundreds of migrants in isolated areas or at the borders of big cities and of small and medium reception centres distributed throughout the country in line with a matching of offer and demand managed by the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), which has been lastly reformed with new legislative changes adopted at the end of 2018.⁵ The ‘ordinary’ centres, formerly known as SPRAR and now SIPROIMI (*Sistema di protezione per titolari di protezione internazionale e per minori stranieri non accompagnati*), benefit from a comprehensive approach aimed at the socio-economic integration of migrants who have obtained a recognized protection status. They are normally small reception places (apartments or

⁵The Legislative Decree No. 113 (the so-called Immigration and Security Decree), converted into ordinary law by Law 132 of 1 December 2018, introduced several innovations concerning immigration and security issues in Italy, including the abrogation of the humanitarian protection permit and the creation of new “special cases” protection permits; the transformation of the ordinary reception system “for asylum seekers and refugees” (the so-called SPRAR) into the protection system “for international protection holders and unaccompanied migrant children” (the so-called SIPROIMI) with criteria to access it and other non-ordinary, first-aid reception centres; an extended duration up to 180 days of stay in centres for repatriation of irregular migrants; new administrative rules for the registration into the municipal registers of asylum seekers. Additional ministerial communications issued by the Italian Ministry of Interior between December 2018 and February 2019 also included more specific indications on changes in the approach and guidelines for local authorities with regards to public tenders and the management of reception centres of various type.

centres), involving the local authorities for integration (including language learning and training) and employment services.

The second sub-system, initiated to face the sharp increase of arrivals in 2014, includes CAS (*Centri di Accoglienza Straordinaria*, Centres for Extraordinary Reception), CPA (*Centri di Prima Accoglienza*, Centres for First Reception), and ex-CARA (*Centri di Accoglienza per Richiedenti Asilo*, Centres for Asylum Seekers). These centres are managed by the local prefectures through NGOs and private actors and can be large in terms of their capacity, hosting even several hundreds of migrants each. They are often in isolated areas of each municipality so as to be ‘hidden’ from local residents. These centres do not offer a full range of support and integration services like the SIPROIMI does.

Although the capacity of the ordinary reception centres has increased over the years, they are still insufficient to respond to all reception needs for all types of adult and child migrants in the process of asking asylum or who have been granted a protection status. Thus, the ‘extra-ordinary’ centres hosted approximately 78% of all hosted migrants in mid-2018. At the same time, the total number of beneficiaries in reception of all types started to decrease in parallel with the decrease in arrivals by sea in Italy, being about 160,500 in July 2018 compared to 205,000 in July 2017 (Italian Ministry of Interior 2018) (Table 9.3).

The extensive reception infrastructure presented above already hints to the importance of reception as an economic factor for local and regional economies. In Greece in particular, where there was no official geographical dispersion system the creation of camps and reception centres either on the islands or the mainland aside from border areas, this was a new phenomenon. In Italy, the increase in arrivals by sea since mid-2017 has led to a growing number of people hosted temporarily at reception centres across the country. In both countries, reception infrastructure in geographically peripheral areas near the borders is more visible and its impact on regional economies and labour markets likely more pronounced. The maps presented in Figs. 9.2 and 9.3 help understand how some specific regions—like Sicily, Lombardy, Campania and Latium in Italy and the Aegean islands and metropolitan Athens in Greece—host a significant number of reception centres and camps of different types. The whole list of services and professions that developed around these structures are the focus of the next section.

Table 9.3 Migrants hosted in reception facilities in Italy by type, 2016–2018

	Ordinary system (former SPRAR, SIPROIMI)		Other types of facilities ^a		Total
	Presence	% of Total	Presence	% of Total	
July 2016	20,347	15.0	115,438	85.0	135,785
July 2017	31,313	15.3	173,690	84.7	205,003
July 2018	35,881	22.4	124,577	77.6	160,458

Source: Italian Ministry of Interior, <http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/it/documentazione/statistica/cruscotto-statistico-giornaliero>

^aIt includes hotspots, CAS, ex-CARA, CPA. It does not include detention centres

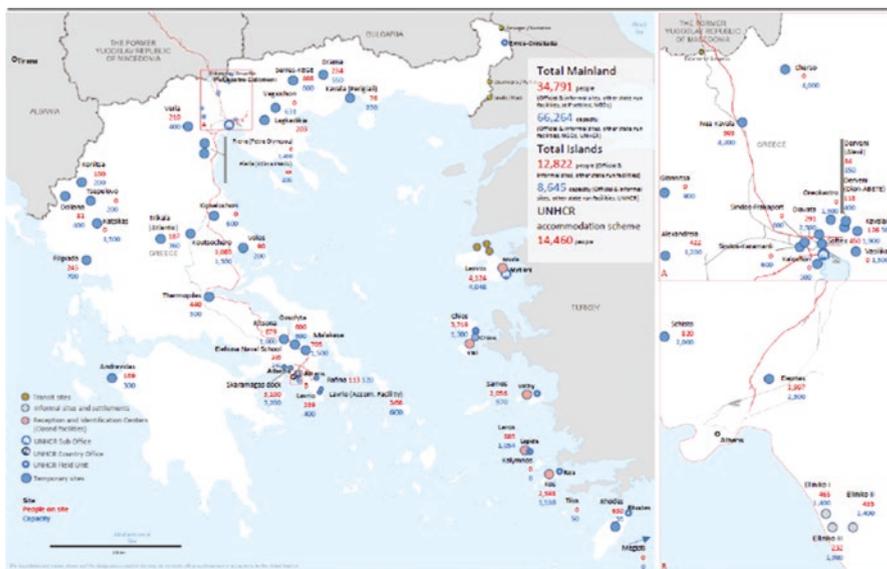


Fig. 9.2 Capacity and occupancy of reception centres in Greece, as of April 2017. (Source: UNHCR 2017)

9.3.2 Reception Services and Migration-Related Professions

Upon newcomers' arrival and accommodation, whether in camps or dispersed accommodation schemes and centres, the relevant reception localities and towns were confronted with the need to provide them with services. These include basic accommodation, food and healthcare, and language training, legal and administrative support for those in the asylum process (legal counselling and assistance to help with completing forms and administrative work, for example, to access the national healthcare system). Additional services concerned access to primary and secondary education for children, mentoring services in tertiary education, social welfare support for finding independent housing (and moving out of the centres or camps), and assistance to seek and find employment. These services have been supported by the national and European funds presented earlier in this chapter, and involved a wide variety of stakeholders, from local cooperatives and third-sector organizations to national and international NGOs as well as international and UN organizations and European agencies.

The new local demand has fostered fresh training courses and education paths that provide regional or national certificates aimed at qualifying and possibly "re-ordering" migration-related professions such as university courses on cultural mediation and interpreters; Masters and lifelong training courses and diplomas for social workers or immigration lawyers were the most visible among all new professional and training paths available. These new "locally-produced" professions competed



Fig. 9.3 Share of migrants hosted in reception facilities in Italy by region (%), July 2018. (Source: IOM 2018)

with the expansion at the international level of prestigious universities offering intensive migration courses and curricula that produce a pool of international experts hired by UN and European agencies. These external experts are in some cases perceived as intruding the local equilibrium, trying to replace, coordinate or support local municipalities and actors. According to Howden and Fotiadis (2017), “international UNHCR staff earn three times more than their local counterparts”. The two authors quote a Greek UN employee who describes how “local staff were side-lined and ‘treated like secretaries’ by the newly arrived international staff”.

Tensions between different actors in the same areas—especially in emergency settings and in the first reception of new arrivals—might frequently arise because of differences in the organizational culture, the knowledge of the local context, the spoken language (local versus English), and salaries and benefits (ranging from the EU agencies’ officers to the short-term contracts of local staff of municipalities and NGOs). Whether directly funded by public resources (European, national, or local) or through private fundraising, the presence of these actors too has an impact on the “normal” local economy in terms of providing market services (food, housing, clothing) and activating or increasing available local services. Coordination issues also arise from different agendas and priorities.

In addition, there were cases of corruption when public procurement contracts were issued through non-transparent procedures bypassing open calls and evaluation mechanisms (Howden and Fotiadis 2017; ECRE 2018: 9). Such instances of corruption impacted negatively on the cost-efficiency and effectiveness of implemented programmes for baseline service provision (see for example Pianezzi and Grossi 2018 on a recent corruption case in the management of Mineo’s ex-CARA in Sicily, which hosted some 3000 migrants at that time) and the overall public credibility of the reception system.

On the other hand, in some cases policymakers have tried to steer these new funds and investments to stimulate economic activity in previously depressed and depopulated areas. In Italy in particular, there are examples of municipalities in peripheral areas that have explicitly tried to combat geographical isolation and population ageing through the reception and integration of new, young generations of citizens (see for example the cases of Riace in Calabria⁶ and Belluno in Veneto). At the same time, larger municipalities have joined EU-wide networks of cities for the exchange of good practices and expertise on a wide range of aspects (see for example EURO CITIES⁷ or some networks of inclusive universities⁸).

In Greece the proliferation of the different camp-like settings also constitutes an opportunity for the creation of small contract jobs which contributed to curb—even if temporarily—unemployment. The Hellenic Manpower Employment Organization

⁶ See Marrazzo (2018).

⁷ See ‘Integrating cities, common solutions for shared challenges’ project, available from: <http://www.integratingcities.eu/>

⁸ See ‘In here, higher education supporting refugees in Europe’ project, available at: <https://www.inhereproject.eu/homepage> or ‘Tandem partnership project on migrant and refugee integration on Southern Europe’, available at: <https://iomintandem.com/>

(OAED) offers small-scale contract employment programs for staff working inside the various reception and accommodation facilities in order to meet the different needs of these facilities. According to representatives of the First Reception Service, since OAED runs this program through different municipalities, most of the personnel employed are locals.

The different commitments of the Greek Administration in the recession era—where successive bailout agreements have proscribed new permanent hiring in the public sector—has led to the proliferation of such solutions for labour force absorption to counter unemployment, especially among younger generations. At the same time, such solution met the needs of the administration, in terms of new tasks emerged with the management of different reception facilities. Similar to the above is the absorption of a significant number of staff employed by the municipal police that lost its mandate during 2013.⁹ According to First Reception representatives, many of the personnel hired in this service—in the headquarters, as well as in the different RICs—has been re-assigned from municipal police staff.

The different funds available represented an opportunity for already-established organizations and NGOs to grow in number and expand their work in more migration- and protection-related areas. This is the case of Generation 2—a well-established national NGO in Greece with an important role mainly in the integration of second-generation migrants. From 2016 onwards, the organization showed considerable growth in order to address the needs of newly-arrived migrants and asylum seekers. As recent arrivals in Greece became more and more permanent stayers in Greece, rather than transiting towards northern Europe, NGOs such as Generation 2, specialized in long-term integration intervention, come to meet the needs of larger shares of the migrant population.

Migration and refugee UN agencies also have increased their presence in Italy and Greece over the past years. IOM and UNHCR offices have expanded their operations with multiple projects to support national authorities in the management of new arrivals, such as assistance and protection activities for the most vulnerable, cultural mediation services, health and movement assistance (for example with regards to the EU-funded Relocation Scheme), on-site assistance in camps, and distribution of Non-Food Items (NFI), depending on the context. At the same time, the EU agencies Frontex and EASO also expanded their operations and presence in these countries. In particular, as stated by EASO's operational plans for Greece and Italy in 2018, the staff deployed to support national authorities with regards to the asylum procedures (registration and assessment) and capacity-building reached more than 200 individuals in Italy and more than 300 individuals in Greece at the end of the year (EASO 2017a, b).

Finally, the recent legislative changes to the overall reception system in Italy which aimed, among other things, at reducing public expenditures for integration services, started to produce effects at the beginning of 2019 locally also in economic

⁹The municipal police constitutes a branch of the Greek administration separated from police forces. In 2013, as a result of the economic crisis, the tasks of this department had been abolished. The municipal police was re-established in 2015.

terms, with closures of facilities and loss of jobs.¹⁰ All these experiences show the economic relevance of the described local reception systems. Even in a political and public debate which is hostile to more migration, the role of local entities and cities as policymakers, service providers, employers, and buyers of goods and services in all cross-cutting activities pertaining to migrant integration are increasingly recognized.

9.3.3 The ‘Refugeeization’ of Some Local Labour Market Sectors

The arrival of large numbers of asylum seekers and other migrants and their territorial distribution in centres and camps has had a tangible impact on local labour markets, particularly as first reception and asylum processing were prolonged and those in reception started seeking employment—even if in the informal economy—with a view to making some money and covering their needs or to plan secondary movements within Europe. The latter, for example, is the case of many beneficiaries of open reception centres in the Attiki region, such as Schisto. According to representatives of the reception and identification service interviewed in spring 2018, many asylum seekers residing there are employed in seasonal agricultural occupations (often informally) in nearby districts or more distant ones.¹¹ The employment of asylum seekers within the reception system in itself is also quite widespread: this is the case of many translators and cultural mediators employed under short-term contracts in different reception facilities. There is no detailed data on the number of asylum seekers absorbed in this sector, and this could be an interesting field for further investigation.

As Chap. 8 in this book has shown, irregular migrants are typically concentrated in sectors and occupations such as agriculture, tourism, construction or care services that are not intrinsically outsourceable to other low-wage countries. Among all possible combinations of stay and work statuses, the one of asylum seekers in the process and of protection holders seem to be particularly conducive to specific types of irregular employment as migrants in reception can be ready to accept to work for lower wages than both natives and regular migrants as they receive, temporarily, accommodation and food at least. Even when they are not or no more entitled to reception, migrants with pending applications or granted protection status are non-deportable although might lack proper housing and, hence, official residence. Hence, various degrees of regularity of residence status are paired with employment

¹⁰As reported by main trade unions, see for example: <https://www.rassegna.it/articoli/cgil-cisl-uil-licenziamento-per-351-addetti-servizi-immigrazione>

¹¹Interviews with representatives of the Reception and Identification Service conducted at the headquarters on 04/05/2018 and at the Schisto camp on 18/05/2018. This is only a pilot phase for a larger study under development in both Greece and Italy seeking to collect both qualitative and quantitative information on the local/regional reception economies in Greece and Italy.

in irregular forms and even under exploitative conditions, especially in agriculture but also in construction, where substitution is observed in some specific market niches and locations (Ottaviano and Peri 2012; Peri 2017). This is the case of the agricultural sector (see also Triandafyllidou and Bartolini, Chap. 8) of southern European countries—and Italy and Greece in particular—where newly-arrived African and Asian migrants are extensively employed alongside eastern European ones in conditions where the stratification of different legal statuses of residence and work produces various forms of informal settlements (camps established close to official reception centres) and of labour exploitation (Perrotta and Sacchetto 2014; Palumbo and Sciarba 2018; Papadopoulos et al. 2018; Corrado 2018). This allows producers to squeeze labour market costs and try to be competitive in an overall framework of low prices for agri-food products. Some scholars have called this phenomenon a “refugeeization” of a specific segment of the migrant workforce (Dines and Rigo 2015). Given the humanitarian approach of most European countries over the past years, migrants might prefer to keep their protection status or might be unable to convert their documents into work permits, which usually have stricter requirements of residence and work. Keeping migrants in a non-regular position in employment seems to add particular, though unfair, economic advantages to their presence (Düvell 2006). If this is the case, the overall humanitarian structure in which newly-arrived migrants are inserted—while, in parallel, legal channels for labour migrations are precluded to most—works in a way that privileges informal and usually exploitative insertion in local labour markets at the expense of both migrant and native workers (D’Angelo 2018).

9.4 Concluding Remarks

The local/regional dimension in migration studies has so far focused mostly on legal migrants and their integration, pointing to divergence between city-level and national policies (Caponio and Borkert 2010; Ambrosini 2013; Scholten and Penninx 2016; Bellabas and Gerrits 2017). These studies have often focused on large cities rather than smaller municipalities to explain different patterns in terms of ethnic mobilization, relative political openness or closure in a specific territory, and broader pragmatism to solve locally perceived hot issues of inclusion and coexistence (see Spencer 2018 for a broad review). Recent research however has focused on rural areas that constitute ‘New Immigration Destinations’ (NID), and the important transformations that smaller localities are going through in – and out – migration (McAreavey 2018). This branch of research has mainly focus on the mobility of migrant workers, their different processes of incorporation in NID, the transformations they induce in the rural landscape and the emerging inter-group relationships. More specifically on southern Europe, research on rural migration has focused on the harsh conditions and exploitation of labour migrants in the strawberry fields of Manolada in Greece (Papadopoulos et al. 2018) and of crop-pickers in Italy’s southern regions of Sicily, Calabria and Apulia (Corrado 2018). While presenting

the precarious and harsh living working conditions of migrants involved, these studies also point to how these conditions are contested through migrant agency and mobilisations.

Migrant inflows from the central and eastern Mediterranean routes in the last few years have increased the visibility of small and marginal locations and municipalities in many countries and their grappling with massive irregular arrivals of mixed migration inflows. The Greek islands, the areas surrounding the green borders across all western Balkan countries, coastal areas of southern Italy as well as green borders within the EU and the Schengen space are the most visibly and routinely affected by the arrival and transit of migrants from the Middle East and North Africa. The role of small and large municipalities as first arrival points, transit hubs, and final destinations is only gradually being acknowledged in academic research (Manara and Piazza 2018) and policy debates. Rozakou (2017) in a recent paper presents the way different procedures that take place in the Greek islands create a kind of irregular bureaucracy. Casati's (2018) analysis of the everyday and non-institutional contexts that the different encounters of migrants in irregular situation with locals take place in Italy sheds light on the role that the local communities play on the reshaping of the deservingness of asylum seekers. The debate on their role in providing services and coordinating policy, coherence, and proper funding from higher government levels has often pitted security and control against solidarity at the local and national levels, disregarding the emerging economy of reception in local and regional contexts.

This chapter is a first effort to fill this gap by focusing on the emerging local/regional economies of reception, underlining that while putting pressure on scarce regional resources, the reception of newly-arrived migrants through irregular means in Italy and Greece comes together with the development of a whole reception infrastructure (centres and camps of different types) and a whole set of occupations and professions (such as certified social worker in the field of migration) that increase or transform the economic activity and particularly employment for both locals and settled migrants. While a full analysis of the issue and of the economic impact of the reception infrastructure on a given region or city goes beyond the scope of this chapter, here we have identified the main components of reception economies. These include a reception infrastructure, notably the emergence of centres and camps for reception and first accommodation of the new arrivals in local societies; and a socio-professional infrastructure, notably the emergence of new professions, new economic activities and even new education and training modules for the reception workers. We have documented the emergence of a range of new services and professions that respond to the funding and cater for the needs of the newcomers, thus creating a whole local ecosystem. Furthermore, the economy of reception includes the insertion of beneficiaries into local labour markets, sometimes at the expense of low-skilled local inhabitants and for the benefit of local employers, particularly in agriculture.

While this chapter does not offer a quantitative assessment of the impact of these reception economies on the economic situation of specific provinces or regions, it points to important developments and avenues for further research with a view to

providing a comprehensive and critical understanding of the systems that developed in response to the recent and protracted irregular arrivals of refugees and other migrants in southern Europe.

It would not be an exaggeration to argue that the ‘migration crisis’ of the last few years has led to the emergence of a whole *reception industry*. It is our contention that this emerging economy of reception is turning into a strategy for survival and development in certain peripheric areas of Europe, and of Italy and Greece in particular.

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