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*Modèle migratoire en Sardaigne, région insulaire et frontalière*

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# *The immigration model of Sardinia, an island and a border region*

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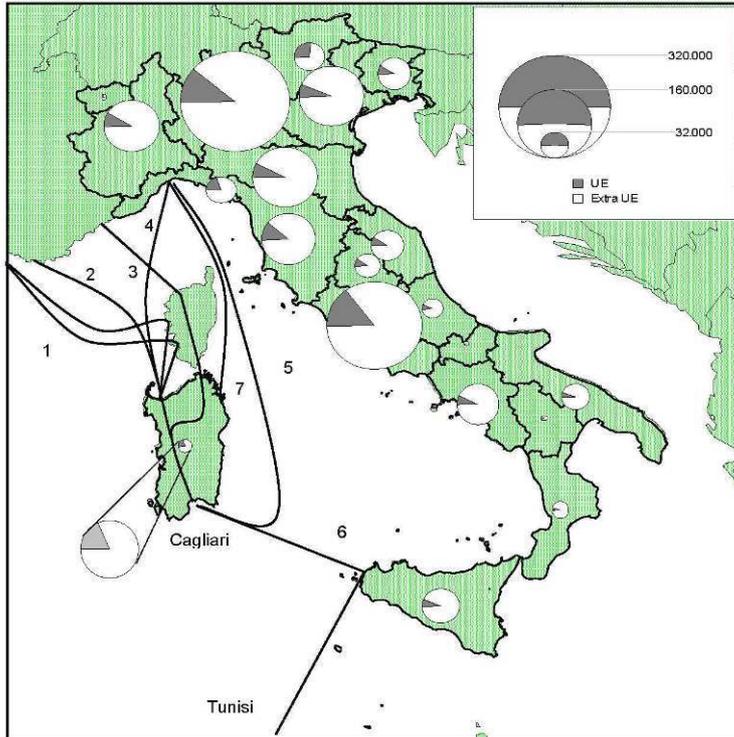
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## **Introduction**

- 1 In a recent public address, the President of the Sardinian Government described the island of Sardinia as a Mediterranean corridor, stressing the need for this role to be adequately recognized by the European Union, and for the provision of sufficient financial resources to enable the region to fully undertake this role. This could be accomplished in various ways: the transit of gaseous hydrocarbons imported from Algeria, Cagliari's container port, tourism and international cooperation with the countries on the southern shores of the Mediterranean. The Regional Law 19/96 was intended to provide the autonomous government of Sardinia with a tool for promoting relationships between North and South, channelling at least part of these across this region, with a view to creating a new role for and new development opportunities in Sardinia.
- 2 In actual fact, in spite of its position, Sardinia appears to stand apart compared to other regions of mainland Italy and its islands as far as international migratory flows are concerned. The island has no direct frontiers with other European countries from which immigrants arrive such as Liguria with France and Friuli-Venezia Giulia (but also Veneto) with the Balkan peninsula. The entire Adriatic coast is far more exposed to the inflow of European and non-European immigrants, so much so that it has been named the "Adriatic frontier". Sicily continues to be a region of both destination and transit for people arriving from Tunis. By contrast, no nation lies beyond the Sardinian Sea whose peoples look to Sardinia, and hence to Italy as a destination.

- 3 However, there is one aspect of this role as a Mediterranean corridor that Sardinia has already fulfilled and that is in the transit of immigrants from and to North Africa, via the Tunis-Trapani-Cagliari boat crossing, an ancient shipping route established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that now operates once a week (fig.1). Recently small inflows of immigrants, also coming from France<sup>1</sup>, have been observed to arrive via this route. Nevertheless, more important is the connection with Africa or with Asia through various international airports.

Figure 1. Permit holders from UE and non UE countries, 31/12/01, in the regions of Italy.



Sea - land links from France to Tunis, through the islands of Corsica and Sardinia are indicated.

Itineraries:

1. Marseille - Ajaccio - Bonifacio - Santa Teresa Gallura  
(on certain days: Marseille - Propriano - Bonifacio - Santa Teresa Gallura);
2. Toulon - P. Torres;
3. Nice - Calvi - Bonifacio - Santa Teresa Gallura;
4. Ventimiglia - Genova - P. Torres;
5. Ventimiglia - Genova - Cagliari;
6. Cagliari - Trapani - Tunisi;
7. Olbia - Genova.

Source: Dossier Caritas 2001

- 4 Thus with respect to migratory flows Sardinia is a *border region* (with Corsica and hence with France) and a *transit region* (via the connection with Trapani, for Tunisia which geographically is the nearest country after France, and the connection via Fiumicino international airport). Everything that influences the Maghrebian community in France thus also becomes significant for Sardinia. While the contact with Corsica and Tunisia has clear geographical ties, less clear is Sardinia's position as a destination region for flows from mainland Italy. In fact, the Rome region and northern Italy are preferred destinations for immigrants arriving at Fiumicino. Immigrants must have a specific

reason, some tie or an already established connection to choose Sardinia as a destination. The island is not a natural hinterland of Rome for foreigners arriving from abroad.

- 5 Trade, the main activity of third world immigrants in Sardinia, relies on imported goods brought over from mainland Italy. In this case, preferential routes are followed: a daily ferry service links Cagliari to Civitavecchia port, close to Rome – where traders purchase their goods – and every Thursday a ferry departs from Naples – another supply source – to Cagliari, thus closing the circle that puts the retailers residing in Sardinia in contact with the Chinese and Pakistan wholesalers with premises near to the Stazione Termini (Quartiere Esquilino) in Rome and with the numerous wholesalers in Naples<sup>2</sup>.
- 6 Thus, Sardinia is a border region, just like Sicily – in that it has one or more ports that provide connections with foreign ports – but rarely a region of final destination, like Lombardy and Latium. Other frontier regions in Italy are instead both regions of destination and of transit of migratory flows. The earliest studies (Bottazzi, Milani, Puggioni, 1988) showed Sardinia to be a transit region. Sicily is also a transit region but is at the same time a region of destination especially for Tunisians, who have settled in various places, mainly in Trapani and nearby. Thus, few immigrants settle in Sardinia, in the first place because of its peripheral geographical position and the few direct international connections and also because those who arrive proceed to other destinations as the island offers few employment opportunities. With few exceptions, clandestine immigrants do not attempt the crossing from North Africa to Sardinia. However, many immigrants arrive in Cagliari via Ventimiglia – Genova – Porto Torres – Cagliari. Recent research on the high turnover of non-Europeans (especially Senegalese) has nonetheless shown that Sardinia is to a minor extent a region of destination.

## Numbers and nationality

- 7 Up to December 2001, European and non-European residence permit holders in Sardinia numbered 11,265 (end 2002, 11,737), 0.8% of the total number of temporary residents in Italy, whereas the island's resident population accounts for 2.8%<sup>3</sup>. Temporary residents account for 0.7% of Sardinia's population, against 2.9% for Italy as a whole. Added to this are perhaps 2-3,000 clandestine immigrants, according to Caritas. As can be observed, relatively few foreigners live in Sardinia, classified as the fourth last region in Italy in absolute terms, so the problem of managing migratory flows and integration of migrants is much easier to cope with.
- 8 Furthermore, unlike the rest of Italy, where the number of foreigners is increasing noticeably (+ 11% between December 2000 and December 2001), in Sardinia it tends to decrease (178 less compared to 2000, and 696 less than in 1999, but also a slight increase between 2001 and 2002). On the other hand, new arrivals on the island in 2001 were 3,407, equal to 30.2% of the *soggiornanti* (temporary permit holders), slightly more than double, the national average of 18.8%. This figure was higher only in Puglia (39.5%), Molise (34.5%) and Trentino – Alto Adige (34.9%). However, new arrivals accounted for just 1.5% of the total number of *soggiornanti* in Italy. The above regions are also ports of entry, Puglia and Molise for foreigners arriving at ports in Puglia, and Trentino – Alto Adige for those coming from central – Eastern European countries.
- 9 Thus it would appear that Sardinia has become, to a minor extent, a port of entry. In actual fact, abrupt minor variations and certain local factors that encourage new arrivals should be considered as having little significance and do not necessarily reflect stable

presence. A certain tolerance on the part of public administrations, the Sardinian people's great sense of hospitality, and also the action of organizations, ranging from foreign and mixed associations to cultural associations<sup>4</sup>.

- 10 In 1986 foreigners in Sardinia were estimated in a way not to be compared with more recent datas (Bottazzi, Milani, Puggioni, 1988). Setting the number of residence permit holders in 1991, which amounted to 7,253 (1.1% of the national total) equal to 100, in 2001 this figure increased to 155, against 210 for Italy as a whole. Sardinia ranks third last among Italian regions. The highest numbers are registered in North-Eastern Italy and in the Adriatic regions (Marche, Abruzzo, Molise, Puglia). This suggests a high turnover, with migrants moving to other regions in Italy once they have been granted a temporary residence permit – moving back and forth<sup>5</sup>. Also in Sardinia few (1,409) applications for regularization were lodged by immigrants in November 2002 (one every 8 *soggiornanti*), against 702,156 in Italy (almost one every 2 *soggiornanti*).
- 11 It is unlikely that the new arrivals will remain in Sardinia. It has been ascertained that the numbers of immigrants in central – southern Italy are diminishing, while the regions in the North are gaining. This South – North movement occurs just a few months after regularization (Dossier Caritas, 2002, p. 145). Latium is also a destination region for immigrants, since women in particular move to the large cities. The most accessible destination from Sardinia is Rome.
- 12 So it is not surprising that from an analysis of the holders of residence permits by length of stay, it emerged that in 2000 the proportion of immigrants who had been in Sardinia for at least 15 years was below the national average, while those who had been on the island for at least 10 or at least 5 years was higher.

## Countries of origin

- 13 Non-Europeans account for the majority of immigrants, though, compared to other regions in southern Italy, numerous EU immigrants live in Sardinia (mother tongue teachers, tourism employees, retired persons), but not as many as in Trentino – Alto Adige and Lombardy, the real border regions for EU migration. There are just 1,915 EU immigrants in Sardinia accounting for 17% of the total. Their numbers are however declining also because of the realignment of military bases in Sardinia which has resulted in a decrease in the number of military personnel and their families, relatives being required to apply for temporary residence to be able to benefit from services, unlike armed forces personnel who do not need to apply. Between December 1998 and December 2001, the largest decrease in foreign residents was observed for United States citizens<sup>6</sup>.
- 14 The number of Africans living in Sardinia is higher than the average registered for Italian regions. Moroccans head the list (1,899 in 2001, 1,886 end 2002) followed by the Senegalese (1,554 in 2001, 1,237 end 2002). These two nationalities alone account for 30.6% of the total number of residence permit holders. In no other Italian region is the percentage of Senegalese so high: 13.7% in Sardinia compared to the national average of 2.4% and less than 4% in the other regions of Italy. So the island is a port of entry into Italy for the Senegalese, and from here they then depart for other regions.
- 15 Adding the other African nationals to the Moroccans and Senegalese makes a total of 3,841 Africans, equal to 34% of the total number of immigrants. By comparison, African residence permit holders in Sicily number 19,104, 40% of the total, against 27% for Italy as

a whole. So the two islands have a much larger percentage of Africans than the national average. Can this be explained simply by their geographical position? We shall see later on some aspects of this question.

- 16 Clearly, the numerous Senegalese and Moroccan immigrants boost the proportion of Muslims with respect to Italy as a whole: 40% against 36% up to December 2001. For the same reason, there is a relatively larger number of young males compared to the other members of the immigrant community.
- 17 Of the foreign residents, the Chinese presence has registered the highest increase, especially in the urban areas. They have taken over a large number of shops in the city centre of Cagliari, which had succumbed to the competition of the large department stores<sup>7</sup>.

### **Their destination: distribution in Sardinia**

- 18 The main geographical issue lies in the places the immigrants head for, or that they pass through, in other words the regional transformations that their presence creates. This means tackling the problem at specific spatial scales, regional and sub-regional: in the locations where they settle immigrants alter population structure and dynamics, the local labour and housing market. Not to be overlooked is the increased demand for services associated with the presence of immigrants, to the extent to which they have access to them.
- 19 From the 1960s onwards there has been a marked shift of Sardinia's population towards the larger cities and the coast. In 1991, roughly 56% of the population was estimated to reside in Sardinia's ninety coastal municipalities<sup>8</sup>. In later years this phenomenon has begun to wane. The municipality of Cagliari has seen its population decline, and not only because first Elmas and Quartucciu, then Monserrato became separate municipalities as they are not situated on the coast and therefore their creation automatically diminished the numerical weight of the coastal municipalities. If the Pirri municipality is also granted separation, as wished for, then the population decrease will be even more significant. In 2001, Cagliari's population amounted to roughly 158,000. It is quite likely that at the next census it will no longer rank among the municipalities with over 100,000 inhabitants, a status it proudly achieved in 1928. However, the population has not moved very far, most people having settled in Quartu S. Elena, Capoterra, Assemini, Elmas and other municipalities in the two successive crowns of communes around Cagliari, which all continue to expand. In 2001 the population of the conurbation (Cagliari, Selargius, Monserrato, Quartucciu and Quartu S. Elena) accounted for 38% of the province's and 18% of the island's inhabitants. In fact, compared to the previous census, the number of residents has actually increased.
- 20 Thus, it is to be hoped that the population of the conurbation and of the metropolitan area of Cagliari will not increase further, but, on the other hand, that equilibrium will be restored with the remainder of the province and of the island. This is desirable for a number of reasons ranging from containing the urban sprawl to stemming the depopulation of the interior.
- 21 We cannot expect immigrants to follow the same trend, as by contrast they tend to congregate in the major urban centres and their outskirts. This is true for three of Sardinia's four provinces, the exception being Nuoro. In Sardinia non-EU immigrants

have concentrated in the capitals of two provinces, Cagliari (and hinterland) and Sassari, one of the largest municipalities in Italy which also encompasses the city's urban sprawl. More than half the holders of residence permits live in the province of Cagliari, 37% in the province of Sassari, 6% in that of Nuoro and 3% in that of Oristano (2000). The other foreign immigrants are scattered over the remainder of the island in 86% of its municipalities. At least half of Sardinia's foreign residents live in the major urban areas.

- 22 For the most part they live in the cities: Sassari, Olbia and Alghero between them accommodate 57.5% of the total number of immigrants residing in the Sassari province. In the province of Cagliari, 75% of residence permit holders live in the municipalities of Cagliari, Quartu S. Elena and their outskirts (Zurru, 2002). The Cagliari conurbation, defined above, accommodates 58 % of the foreign population of the whole province (Dec. 2000).
- 23 Up to December 2000, 83% of the island's foreign residents lived in the coastal belt, i.e. the 90 municipalities identified according to the criterion described in note (8). This means that the concentration of foreigners in the coastal municipalities is far higher than for the population of Sardinia (56%) which already has one of highest coastal populations in southern Italy (Viganoni, 1995). Besides, no increase in the coastal population has been observed over the last ten years which means that, with respect to Sardinians, settlement of foreigners show the opposite trend. In the coastal municipalities, mainly near to Cagliari and in the Gallura region, European immigrants predominate while non-EU immigrants are far more scattered (Zurru, 2002).
- 24 Further research is required to establish the proportion of foreigners who settle in three main types of settings:
- historic centres in the cities, especially in run-down housing;
  - municipalities in the urban outskirts, preferably in the former rural houses of old village centres;
  - clusters of municipalities, situated mostly in nodal points and near the coast.
- 25 Thus, in the main, foreign residents tend to concentrate in the cities and on the coast, especially in tourist and intensive agricultural areas. The reasons for this are to be sought above all in the labour market and in certain organizational aspects of immigrant groups.

## Employment

- 26 Another feature of the island's migratory model is on one hand third world immigration and on the other the continuing emigration of Sardinians, which contrasts with the emigration trend in Italy as a whole, where by the end of the 1970s migratory outflow had already attained minimum levels. This again is a sign of the lagging socio-economic development of the island that is often referred to. Clearly, the inflow and outflow of migrants is influenced by diverse factors: intellectual unemployment afflicts young Sardinian graduates who are often forced to emigrate to find work, though unskilled workers also continue to do so. Most immigrant workers will accept any kind of work, menial tasks, manual, unskilled or low-skilled labour.
- 27 The majority of residence permits granted to foreigners in Sardinia are for family reasons, much more than the national average. This is becoming a normal feature of immigration in Italy, more so in the South, where mixed marriages are fairly common and hence wives of ex-emigrants from different European countries are numerous.

Another reason for applying, that again is higher than the average for Italy as a whole, is to obtain permission simply to reside in Sardinia. This is likely associated at least to a certain extent with the central-northern Europeans who have moved to Sardinia to live. Compared to the national figures, the percentage of residence permit holders who state work or looking for work as the reason for their application is obviously much lower in Sardinia (48.5% against 57.7%). This does not necessarily mean that those who apply for non-work related reasons will not take up employment eventually. Besides, it is well known that applicants do not always state the true reason for seeking residence.

- 28 Few immigrants find dependent employment because of the scarcity of jobs in the island's few factories and the restricted entries in public administrations. Small companies are more likely to take on immigrant workers. As was to be expected, logically in Sardinia fewer under 18 and over 35 year old workers are registered with social security, because the few available jobs go to the more productive age group.
- 29 Many residence permit holders are unemployed: up to December 2001 they accounted for 11.6% of the immigrant work force compared to the national average of 7.4%. This is a common trait of regions in the South of Italy, apart from Abruzzo, Molise e Puglia.
- 30 With regard to the primary sector, for immigrants to Sardinia *agriculture* offers few employment opportunities. The two regions with the highest number of immigrants employed in agriculture are Trentino – Alto Adige and Sicily, while Sardinia ranks among those regions with the lowest number, just 6.4% of non-EU immigrants are taken on by farming enterprises, a noticeably small percentage for the regions of southern Italy. The Farmers Union (Coldiretti) for the Cagliari Province reported that just 32 applications for regularization of immigrant workers were received from farmers' associations in November 2002. A few dozen immigrants are employed as greenhouse workers in the Campidano region and in the Caputerra, and some in animal farming in the Nuoro region. This is somewhat surprising for an island that was included by Braudel among the "*îles de terriens*", or "islands of peasants", like neighbouring Corsica, as opposed to the *îles de navigateurs*, the islands of seafarers, a description more commonly assigned to the Greek islands (but including the small island of San Pietro in Sardinia). In fact, Sardinia does not have a sea-based but rather a land-based society and economy that rely on agriculture, dairy farming and livestock raising. So the new arrivals have not found jobs in fishing, shipping or shipbuilding, all industries that are shrinking.
- 31 *Industry* too offers very little employment for foreign workers. The island's main industries have been laying off workers for years. The labour market in Sardinia offers few opportunities in industry, with few exceptions.
- 32 The foreign work force is on the other hand concentrated in the *service sector*: licensed and unlicensed trading, food services, domestic work, caretakers, etc. There are few opportunities in the new economy for foreigners who find occupation in research centres. The attractions of the large cities are the job opportunities in the services sector (domestic work, restaurants and similar, street traders and shopkeepers). The number of foreign employees in the tourist industry in Sardinia, in hotels and restaurants, is three times the national average and one out of every three workers is foreign. Likewise, the number of immigrant traders in Sardinia is more than twice the national average.
- 33 Much of the work offered to immigrants is casual and seasonal, typical of the summer season. Many immigrants living in other Italian regions come to Sardinia for the summer, along with the holidaymakers and return at the end of the season. For some of them it is a

second holiday job. Their presence is sporadic and does not affect either demography or the labour market, apart from the pedlar trade. Like tourists, immigrants too are seasonal residents.

- 34 This readily explains the presence of foreigners in the major cities and tourist resorts, or areas nearby, where housing is less expensive and which provide easy access to their workplace. In recent years however, a certain numbers of foreigners have been observed to move away from the city centres. The first Chinese clothes shops have begun to appear in some of the minor towns (Sanluri, Mogoro, S. Gavino, etc.). Itinerant traders set up stalls at the weekly village markets, where they account for around 10% of street sellers. Trading licence regulations have enabled some of them to settle in certain areas, where housing is more affordable and easier to find. However foreign residents do not move too far from Cagliari, where they get their supplies. At the rate of one immigrant every three employed, hotels and restaurants in Sardinia take three times the national average of foreign labour. Trading represents twice the national figure.

## Housing

- 35 Therefore, the immigrants tend to settle in the cities and on the coast within easy reach of their workplace. However, as many foreigners are contingent workers they often commute from their place of residence (Cagliari and Quartu S. Elena) to other municipalities, so pedlars but also other categories, are forced to commute in the summer. Housing on the coast is usually too expensive for destitute foreigners unless the premises are awaiting modernization (former work premises in various locations, an old factory at Giorgino, even a decayed villa in the centre of Pula).
- 36 It is difficult to analyse the immigrant housing market as foreigners do not contact estate agents in Cagliari when looking for a house, preferring to rely on adverts in the local papers or asking door-to-door. Immigrants usually find accommodation in the more affordable areas namely the old town and village centres, where run-down housing has not been revitalized. In Cagliari, immigrants and students are offered some really dilapidated housing, by home-owners awaiting regional funding for modernization or waiting to sell or in apartments to be occupied by their children once married. In recent years immigrants have tended to move out of Cagliari, as old houses are renovated and the four old districts of the city centre revitalized. The occupants are no longer immigrants but Sardinians, people who have been transferred for work and families who purchase old houses and then refurbish them.
- 37 Between 1991 and 2001, Cagliari was the municipality that registered, in absolute terms, the largest decrease in the number of inhabitants in the whole of Sardinia, and for some years it also accommodated the largest numbers of foreigners. The first non-EU businesses began to appear in the regional capital: the first Chinese restaurant since the post-war years opened in 1987. Marina, the port district, has a high density of foreign shops and residents. Today foreigners tend to move out of the city, in particular to Quartu S. Elena, where 1,315 foreign residents were registered in the 2001 census, 2% of the total population (69,576 inhabitants), the majority Germans, followed by the Senegalese.
- 38 Few foreigners who have arrived over the last twenty years are associated in any way with immigrants who were already living in Sardinia. Apart from a small nucleus of Polish

immigrants who still live at Silius, in the mining district where they have worked for years, the case of Santa Margherita di Pula, where a group of non-EU immigrants are employed as greenhouse workers, especially by farmers coming from Tunisia (the so-called Tunisians, often of Sicilian origin) deserves mention. When Bourguiba nationalized the land in Tunisia, in the 1950s many natives left for Italy and purchased plots of farmland in the ETFAS (land reform board) districts at S. Margherita and Castiadas (Terrosu Asole, 1965). The custom of bringing in Tunisian natives – as immigrants – for working the land is not new as this practice dates back to the early 1960s. Today there are around ten foreign farm labourers (Piras, 2002).

## Demographics in Sardinia

- 39 Censuses conducted over the last decade or so showed Italy's population to have decreased by 1.1% between 1991 and 2001. This trend is even more pronounced in Sardinia, where, according to the communal Registry offices, the population began to diminish in 1997. In the 2001 census, residents numbered 1,599,511, 3% less than in 1991. This is the first time there has been a drop in the population since the beginning of the 1800s, attributed more to the negative migration balance than to negative natural population growth. The drop is even more pronounced in the provinces of Nuoro (-4.7%) and Oristano (-4.8%). The province of Sassari fares somewhat better, its population increasing slightly, and consequently its percentage of the island's total population. To a certain extent the population is increasing in the north of Sardinia, though it remains far behind the Province of Cagliari. Though the situation in the metropolitan area of Cagliari is fairly healthy, the same cannot be said of many small municipalities in the Sarrabus, Marmilla and Trexenta regions.
- 40 Recent research carried out by A.S. Frau and A.M. Gatti (Frau and Gatti, 2000), analyzes the negative consequences of the decreasing population, especially the growing elderly population that in Sardinia is ageing much more rapidly than in Italy as a whole. The cause of this is to be sought in the decreasing birth rate, though this started to occur later in Sardinia. In fact the island entered the demographic transition at a later date, the fertility rate in the early 1970s being still 2.9 children/woman. Due to numerous factors the drop in birth rate, that still continues today, occurred very abruptly in Sardinia. By contrast, in other regions of Mediterranean Europe, including Italy, natality remains stable and is actually increasing in Northern Europe. A number of factors have contributed to creating this peculiar situation in Sardinia, which can be briefly summed up as follows: insularity, which delays all processes of change, firmer family values, with the result that Sardinians continued to have larger families for much longer, tardy but rapid modernization, emigration that started later, isolation of the interior, events associated with women's emancipation.
- 41 The most negative trend, however, is the growing elderly population. Up to 2001 in Sardinia there were 109 over 65 year-olds for every 100 young people (0-14 years old) against a national figure of 127. Though the island has not yet reached national levels, the population is ageing rapidly. The ageing population and the consequent increased economic burden of pension and health expenses is cause for major concern in Italy.
- 42 Thus immigrants, who are on average younger than the Sardinian population and tend largely to return to their homeland in old age, are expected to improve this situation. In the first place, because of their age and secondly as a result of the higher birth rates of

young immigrant families. France's immigration policy was designed to improve the demographic situation. In Sardinia, the fact that many immigrants apply for residence permits for family reasons would appear to be a positive sign. But, in actual fact the unfavourable labour market discourages immigrants from settling definitively in Sardinia. The birth rate among foreign residents (average 1993/2000) is the lowest in the whole of Italy.

- 43 The concentration of immigrants in coastal areas has a negative impact as it increases the difference between coastal and inland population. Among the 380 or so municipalities of the island, 130 are classified as being at "high risk of depopulation". These areas would benefit from an influx of young families, but they are almost all in the interior.

## Peddling as a niche

- 44 In the main, immigrants are self-employed as most of them work in the retail trade. Peddling is visibly and statistically a trade that occupies significant numbers of non-EU immigrants in Sardinia and not only because they peddle their wares in public spaces, where they are easily seen and give people the impression that they are more numerous than the figures would suggest. Visitors coming to Sardinia from other Italian regions and from abroad never cease to be impressed by the large numbers of pedlars both in summer trading their wares on the beaches and in winter. A law enforced by the Sardinian Regional Government in 1991<sup>(9)</sup>, allows foreigners to peddle their goods all over the island, not just in the province where they are registered. Hence, foreigners apply for licences to the provincial authorities and no limits are placed on the numbers of street traders and pedlars, apart from the number of pitches established by the local council at the weekly markets in order to ensure fair competition with shopkeepers in the built-up areas<sup>9</sup>.
- 45 Street traders are divided into two classes: *market stall holders* who occupy the pitches assigned to them in the local markets, and *itinerant traders* who move about freely, partly at the local markets and partly in other spaces (streets, parking areas, squares, church courtyards, etc.). In the province of Cagliari stall holders with a fixed pitch number 1,383 and itinerant traders 1,435 (data from Chamber of Commerce, December 2002; in February 2004, the figures are 1332 and 1691 respectively).
- 46 The two classes are not rigidly restricted: a street trader is not necessarily obliged to have a fixed pitch: he is permitted to have one or more at the local markets and can also continue as an itinerant trader between market days. Or the other extreme, he may have a fixed pitch at different markets every day of the week. Traders with fixed pitches pay a fee to the local council (ten-year concession) and are hence subject to control. Itinerant and unlicensed traders are not looked upon kindly by the other street traders and wardens are authorized to move them on. Several articles protesting about unlicensed traders have appeared in the newspapers.
- 47 A hierarchy of positions can be easily identified, each differing significantly with respect to the possibilities of obtaining a place and to earning potential, to the different levels of bureaucracy involved and expenses incurred to obtain and maintain the position held:
- the highest position is occupied by *street traders with fixed pitches*. They have applied to the council (or councils) for a fixed pitch, received a certificate for that pitch, and have been issued a licence by the provincial authorities. All this has a cost <sup>10</sup>. The bureaucracy involved

is burgeoning and a lengthy process and not all applicants complete it. In the province of Cagliari foreigners account for just 5% of this category (2003). According to the responsible offices, sometimes foreigners (but not just foreigners) only start the process. In fact, permission from provincial authorities is sufficient to obtain a residence permit from the police department. Some foreigners, once in possession of a residence permit, move to other regions in Italy or other states of the European Union or perhaps return home, without withdrawing their application or following it up. On the other hand, applications not processed expire after six months. So when an amnesty is announced for residence permits, the number of applications increases as a consequence<sup>11</sup>. Street traders in this category, which include numerous Chinese, set up stalls at the local markets every week and have their regular customers. The goods sold by foreign traders are not diversified<sup>12</sup>.

- *Itinerant traders*. Itinerant traders do not require a certificate from the local councils so it is easier and quicker to obtain permission. Once a licence has been granted from the Province, the immigrant can obtain a residence permit from the police department and then move to anywhere within Italy or the EU if desired, and may even choose not to conduct business as an itinerant trader<sup>13</sup>. However, there is a ceiling on the number of licences issued, currently 3,417, and up to January 2003 that ceiling had already been reached. Immigrants account for 80% of itinerant traders<sup>14</sup>. It is not easy for this category to set up stalls at the local markets. Only a limited number are admitted, so as not to put stall holders with fixed pitches at a disadvantage. However, itinerant traders can apply to the council and when a place becomes vacant they are assigned a fixed pitch, thus passing to the higher category. In the meantime, they can sell their wares alongside the others, but only if there are a small number and if some regulars have not shown up. These are the so-called “sprouters”. The wardens check that their documents are in order. Understandably, itinerant and unlicensed traders set up “spontaneous” markets improvised here and there, also to evade control. This category includes a large number of foreigners (around 80%). They have a precarious existence but tend to become regular and move up to the next category.
- *Unlicensed traders* are the proletariat of the category. Often the foreigners include clandestine immigrants. They do not possess stands but move about with huge bags hung over their shoulders. Some of them use public transport. They go about on their own or in groups, some ferried by car early in the morning following carefully planned schedules. Some have been caught selling counterfeit goods, others do not have the proper documents. This is an ephemeral and unstable category of traders.

48 The data supplied by the different authorities involved in the process of granting licences therefore differ substantially. The local councils receive the largest number of applications, followed by the provincial authorities, chamber of commerce and social security services. In this sort of upturned pyramid the number of applications and of licences issued decreases progressively making any cross-comparison worthless. Since the current system was introduced, the provincial authorities have received around 6,000 applications, but many have expired without being renewed. Following the approval of the law Bossi-Fini, this situation is due to change.

49 Summing up, the opening up of street trading to non-Italian citizens has undeniably resulted in a large numbers of foreign street traders in Sardinia as in the other Italian regions. However, in 1998 the procedure for obtaining a trading permit in Sardinia was simplified. Before these changes were introduced, the applicant was obliged to take an exam and register with the REC (traders register). At the time the REC counted just a few registrants, while all the others conducted their business without a licence. Between 1991

and 1996, no licences were issued. So, it is since 1996 that the simplification of licensing procedures (and slackening of controls) has favoured the expansion of this category as a channel for providing foreign immigrants entering into Sardinia with work.

- 50 The distribution of street traders throughout the provinces and the island as a whole is governed by a number of factors: the willingness of local councils to provide a large number of market pitches, a decision clearly opposed by traders with fixed pitches and shops; the possibility of having fixed pitches in more than one market within the same municipality (Cagliari has a number of open air markets) or in different municipalities, and lastly the fact that pedlars are allowed to sell their wares in any of the island's municipalities, but not in more than four. Outside the market pitches, itinerant traders can find spaces almost anywhere, religious festivals, fairs, any other event.
- 51 It is for the above reasons that street trading plays a role in the distribution of foreigners in Sardinia. Generally speaking, this occupation drives people to look for accommodation outside the major cities. However, the location of wholesalers who supply them with goods prevents the street traders from moving too far away from the cities. Eventually, of course, the entire trade system will be more decentralized, from the wholesalers to the retailers to the street traders. The Chinese traders will likely become the pivot around which the entire system will revolve as they are practically the only immigrants who can raise the necessary capital to set up warehouses and retail shops as well as provide transport. Some kind of interethnic distribution chain already exists which renders street traders less dependent on specific suppliers and specific places, improving decentralization. Furthermore, the expansion of large retail chains on the outskirts of the major urban areas has led to the closure of many shops in the smaller towns and villages. Today, the Sardinian or foreign pedlars, with their door-to-door service, make up for the lack of corner shops. They end up fulfilling a social role meeting the necessities of those people who because of their age or lack of transport would have the greatest difficulty in getting to markets to shop.
- 52 Because of these reasons, and above all as a consequence of the low demand of workers in other trades and of the low qualification of the workforce, street peddling in Sardinia is much more important than in the rest of Italy: 4.1% of the total number of itinerant pedlars in Italy are found here, against only 2.8% of the population share in this region.

## Conclusion

- 53 In brief, even immigration in Sardinia has its distinctive features and contrasts: Sardinia is not a "port of entry", but behaves as if it were; it needs families, but families do not settle there, it needs stability but has the highest turnover of immigrants. There is plenty of land to cultivate, but the possibilities of doing so are rarely feasible, for a series of reasons, the primary one being the scarcity of water.
- 54 Sardinia is already experiencing a demographic problem, namely the ageing of its population described by Frau and Gatti as "alarming". And this problem triggers a series of other problems: the low proportion of young people will lead to a decline in the work force, a drop in consumer spending, higher health expenses, more expensive services, etc., closure of schools, post offices, reduction in transport services with the further loss of jobs resulting in the risk of the system breaking down, especially in towns and villages inland.

- 55 Faced with these clearly negative developments, it is difficult to imagine what remedial action should be taken. The island's image as a holidaymakers' paradise, the availability of housing (in inland locations), the climate and its natural beauty no longer suffice. The problem concerns employment and transport. Depopulation of the inland areas will only increase the cost of services and generally the cost of living.
- 56 It was believed that replacement migration could solve the problem in areas where the local population is ageing more rapidly, but the forecasts do not support this hypothesis. Foreign immigrants are unwilling to live in areas which Sardinians themselves tend to leave. Evidence of this is the distribution of residents on the island, which only represents a proportion of the foreigners. The non-residents are probably concentrated to an even greater extent in the urban coastal areas. Employment in the tourist industry drives them towards the coastal zones or nearby. Tourism and associated activities will likely rely increasingly on foreign workers. What is more, few foreigners are inclined to stay on the island, preferring to move as soon as possible to other areas which provide better employment. Only mixed marriages can assure that foreigners remain in Sardinia as permanent immigrants and improve the demographic situation in Sardinia, provided they are not elderly couples. The increase in the number of arrivals from Eastern Europe, may well boost the numbers of permanent residents to the benefit of the demographic situation in Sardinia.

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## NOTES

1. In recent years the port of Cagliari has been undergoing «southernization» as far as passenger traffic is concerned. With the Cagliari-Genoa ferry service transformed into a summer line, no improvements took place, while the lines to Palermo and Trapani have remained unchanged. The ferry services to Naples and to Civitavecchia deteriorated, the last one since the inclusion of a stop at Arbatax, adding two hours onto the very long journey and by the non-introduction of the new fast ferries that now operate on the other routes between Sardinia and the Italian mainland. However, new coach connections with the port of Cagliari are now provided for passengers arriving at Olbia or at Porto Torres from Genoa and from some French ports. Both these routes are used by African natives living in the South of France or in Corsica. In fact by taking the ferry from Marseille or Toulon to Ajaccio and Porto Torres, one can then reach Cagliari by train or coach, and proceed by boat to Tunis via Trapani operated by the Tirrenia shipping line (cheapest ticket for a seat € 52.56). Travellers from France bound for Tunis can also reach Genoa and from there take the ferry to Porto Torres or Olbia (in summer to Cagliari) and then proceed to Cagliari by train, coach or car. Another ferry service operates between Toulon and Porto Torres. In the summer emigrants coming from the North travel in vehicles loaded with a variety of goods:

electrical appliances, clothes bought cheaply on the markets to take to Tunisia. They claim that it is much more economical to travel to Tunisia via Sardinia. Lastly, the French shipping line Corsica-Sardinia Ferries has recently discontinued services from the port of Cagliari and is planning to move to Olbia.

2. Rome Town Council has decided to move wholesalers (mostly foreign) from the Termini zone to sites beyond the ring road. By so doing, the suppliers traffic to foreign traders will also eventually be moved towards the outer belt, thereby diminishing the role of the Stazione Termini as a main gathering point for foreign emigrants in Rome.

3. In the following, unless otherwise specified, data supplied by Caritas are used, source the Ministry of Home Affairs.

4. As examples, the first group includes the brotherhood of the Murid, the second Sardegna / Belarus, Sardegna/Algeria, Co.Sa.S., Cittadini del Mondo, Gilgamesh, Msp Italia, Associazione Culturale Mediterranea, Sucania Onlus.

5. The title of the book edited by M. Zurrù (Chi viene e chi va - who comes and who goes) well reflects the variability of the foreign community in Sardinia.

6. Notwithstanding the fact that there is no obligation for U.S. military and their relatives to register as residents (they are estimated to number about 3,500 according to the Population Register of the Commune of La Maddalena, where the basis is located), their presence produces a small number of applications, owing to mixed marriages, real estate purchase and retirees settling in the town.

7. Long opening hours, cheap prices, cheap labour apparently make up the Chinese shopkeeper competitiveness.

8. We have considered coastal municipalities those whose territory extends to the sea and/or whose main town lies no further than 10 km from the sea.

9. It appears that many immigrant workers who for the rest of the year are active in another Italian region, mostly Latium and the North, come down to Sardinia in July - August and peddle their goods on the beaches. Aside from illegal traders, existing regulations allow workers registered with the national security in any region of Italy, to apply at the local Chamber of Commerce for permission to peddle for a short period of time, without further payments. The permit is valid throughout the national territory, Sardinia included. This recently introduced regulation facilitates the taking of two jobs (peddling and another job) and seasonal work, also allowing greater mobility.

10. Besides the fee due to the Commune, the amount to be paid to the provincial authorities consists of a one-off payment of around € 77.47 and an annual fee of € 38.73. The street trader will then register with the provincial chamber of commerce paying a registration fee of around € 28, plus € 20 of state stamp and an annual fee of € 80 plus a social security contribution of around € 2,171.64 a year.

11. It should be mentioned that the licence may be sold to another person, a fellow countryman for example, through a solicitor. Licence holders are obliged to have the professional requirements established by law. They must attend a two-month course organized by the Traders Union, at a cost of around € 500. For non-EU immigrants wanting to practise as street traders this obligation is a burden.

12. Selling clothes is typical of Chinese but also Moroccan pedlars. Shoes, bags and other leather or synthetic leather goods are commonly found on the stalls. Lately a wide variety of goods are offered for sale: mobile phones, electric appliances, bathroom furnishing. A certain similarity between the products for sale suggests a common network of wholesalers. Very few non-EU immigrants keep food shops in Sardinia. They can be divided into two categories: those who supply ethnic food products to foreign customers (most of whom live in the cities) and those who supply ethnic products to the Sardinians, usually people with a cosmopolitan outlook, who also

live in cities. However, this kind of shop may well begin to expand as foreigners move out of the city to live in the suburbs and elsewhere.

13. Since the Bossi-Fini law came into power (l. n. 222 / 9.10.02), the immigrant who has been granted a licence from the provincial authorities must also enrol with the Chamber of Commerce and the national security, both formalities being necessary to obtain or renew the residence permit in Italy.

14. There is a waiting list for new licences at the provincial authorities (200-300 applications to January 2003) consisting of applicants waiting for existing licences to be cancelled. Once revised, the list was reopened last June. This list demonstrates the pressure on aspiring itinerant traders. The immigrant (or Sardinian) can pass his licence on to a fellow countryman, relation or friend, by submitting an application. This procedure will transform the person in a self-employed worker in a simple and relatively cheap way. Until the law Bossi-Fini came into force, it could be used as an easy way to obtain residence permits for a chain of nationals.

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## ABSTRACTS

With its small numbers of foreign immigrants, originating from both EU and non-EU countries, Sardinia seems to remain a rather distinct and lonely destination compared to the major immigration flows in the Italian peninsula and the other major Italian island, Sicily. High unemployment, especially among the young, which has resulted in persistent labour emigration, is of course the main reason why this region attracts few immigrants, even if they occupy jobs refused by the natives. Moreover, turnover of the foreign population is high with major inflows of seasonal workers employed in the tourist trade. There are also few jobs in agriculture, a sector which by contrast attracts large numbers of foreign workers in southern Italy. Therefore, among the reasons declared in their applications for temporary residence, work ranks lower than in the rest of Italy, family and residence rating higher. A distinctive feature in Sardinia is the large number of foreign workers in the pedlar trade of non-food goods. On the whole, the island does not exhibit the characteristics of a border region, in spite of its connections by boat with two foreign countries (direct with Corsica and indirect with Tunisia, via Trapani) and of its extension towards Africa, but it looks more as it were both a second destination region for people coming from the mainland and a first destination following the common immigration chains. It is undeniably a transit region, soon to be abandoned for more promising lands.

Avec une présence très limitée d'immigrants étrangers, provenant de l'Union Européenne ou d'autres pays, la Sardaigne demeure une région plutôt à l'écart et une destination inhabituelle par rapport aux flux massifs, qui aujourd'hui traversent l'Italie péninsulaire. Il en va de même, en la comparant avec l'autre grande île italienne, la Sicile. Des taux de chômage très élevés, spécialement parmi les jeunes, expliquent la persistance de l'émigration des Sardes. Le chômage est aussi la raison principale du faible pouvoir d'attraction de cette région, même si les immigrés acceptent des emplois refusés par les résidents. Par ailleurs, la population étrangère montre une forte fluctuation saisonnière, en rapport avec l'emploi touristique.

Une autre différence importante par rapport au Mezzogiorno est la rareté des emplois agricoles des immigrés, au contraire de la tendance qui prévaut dans le Sud de l'Italie. En conséquence, parmi les motifs énoncés pour l'obtention d'un permis de séjour, le travail est moins fréquemment cité que dans l'ensemble de l'Italie. Par contre, les raisons de famille et de

résidence le sont beaucoup plus. Une caractéristique assez particulière à la Sardaigne est la concentration d'étrangers dans le commerce ambulant de denrées non alimentaires. Dans l'ensemble, la Sardaigne ne se comporte pas comme une région frontalière. Et pourtant, ses ports sont liés directement à deux états étrangers, la France, par le biais de la Corse, et la Tunisie, par l'intermédiaire de Trapani en Sicile. La Sardaigne est plutôt une destination secondaire pour les étrangers, qui transitent généralement par la Péninsule. En conclusion, il s'agit certainement d'une région de passage, qu'on abandonne assez rapidement pour une destination plus prometteuse.

## INDEX

**Mots-clés:** Sardaigne, immigration hors UE, commerce ambulant, itinéraires des migrations

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