

## Extended Abstract

### *Respect at Borders, Respect of Borders: the Italian experience*

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#### *Summary*

The main objective of our research is to study borders from the demographic point of view. The traditional demographic approach sees borders according to ethnic groups: for instance the Balkans' populations. Some attempts were made to see the boundaries of demography as the borders of fertility and mortality. The idea of the convergence of demographic variables is a direct consequence of the theory of demographic transition. There are border-related demographic variables: convergence or divergence of those variables can lead to migration. For instance in the neighbouring regions in the Mediterranean there are demographic borders across populations and there are population movements across borders. There is a third way to see borders from the demographic point of view. Demography in fact leads to demographic migration. Population aging in Italy had as a result the migration of Ukrainian women employed in the health care assistance for older people. The age pyramid of Ukrainian population in Italy is the result of such specific migration. Demography as a source of migration can be considered as a new field of borders studies: because new frontiers that are raised by demography itself. Our study is organized as follow: on the first part, we are going to explain the strong link between migrations and borders, focusing on the case of Italy and the Mediterranean. Then we will tackle the different definitions of borders. Third, we will analyze borders and migration management policies in the EU as well as in the Mediterranean region. In the last part, we are going to speculate on demographic borders as major issue to be taken into consideration when we think about future migration policies.

#### *1. The concept of border*

Migrants are defined with respect to borders: paradoxically, migrants would not exist, if there were no borders. Nevertheless, few studies address the question of borders definition (Cagiano de Azevedo, 2007). If we take a look at the EU migration policy, we notice that paradoxically borders are not anymore present inside EU, indeed they become worthwhile when we consider EU external borders. In such a context, the importance of border areas is constantly increasing. Another paradox is that the EU borders are, by definition multilateral and institutionally agreed: but they are frequently managed as a national or military affair. In its Europeanised, enlarged, multi-local and flexible form, the border has become the prominent site of an acute contest of diverse claims of inclusion and exclusion.

The "Europeanization" of borders reveals itself to be a significant factor in the evolution or involution of Italian migration policies and politics. Indeed, migration into Italy contributed to a growing concern at a European level about border control. There are two significant features of migration processes in Italy: rapid influx of substantial numbers of migrants and, among these immigrants, a high proportion of undocumented persons. Italy attracts illegal immigration more than other countries due to the difficulty of controlling such extensive borders and above all because of the size of its informal economy. However, Italian legislation changed profoundly and produced immediate consequences on security, perpetuating the stigmatisation of illegal immigration by fixing severe punishments on people who encourage clandestine immigration (Law n. 94, 15/7/2009).

Unfortunately, too often this feature contributed to the politicisation of the migratory phenomenon and the growth of the anxiety towards flows control and the popular tendency to represent migrants as a socio-cultural problem without appreciating the complexity and variety of migrations. The situation of the residents belonging to ethnic minorities of immigrant origin has been badly affected by this xenophobic climate engendered by a growing tension about the control of European borders, considering migrant as "Other". This representation may affect personnel in charge of the implementation of civil rights and of policies

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concerning immigrants entitlements (public health, public housing, large parts of public education) at the everyday and local level.

Nowadays, the world is becoming more and more globalized i.e. theoretically without borders: the distinction of national territories have less importance than it used to be in the past. However, the perspective used to define borders is too often top down. Indeed the use of a bottom-up approach focusing on individual experiences should be promoted. Borders have an impact upon the daily life practices of people living in and around both the borderland and transboundary transition zones. Borders may in fact imply a seam or a split between two countries or territories. In the first hypothesis cross-border relations occur; in the second, walls or other kind of instruments (legislation on visa for instance) make the borders more and more rigid. In positing an agenda for the next generation of border-related research, borders should be seen for their potential to constitute bridges and points of contact, as much as they have traditionally constituted barriers to movement and communication (Newman, 2006).

Nevertheless there is a need for a different approach to consider the borders as places of transition, passing and arrival. A recent study of Unesco (Pécoud and de Guchteneire, 2007) shows how contradictory is The Universal Declaration of Human Rights because “only emigration is recognised as a fundamental right” but not immigration. The research suggests ways to a Migration Without Borders scenario: an apparent utopia looking at the actual migration policies, nevertheless a fascinating human rights-oriented policy. In fact as the authors stated “restrictions on migration contradict the spirit of globalisation and liberalisation”. The contradiction between a globalized world and increasing border controls is also reminded by C. Wintol de Wenden in her book “La globalisation humaine” (the Human Globalisation) in which she shows how in a globalized world the movement of people became much more easier, on the other side the nation-state has huge difficulties in controlling its borders. The author hopes that the right of human and individual mobility will be soon included among human rights.

The definition and the perception of borders, their impact on relationship among countries, on the territorial divisions and in socialization process may vary in space and over time. Researches on borders are not only related to their political meaning. It is important as already underlined by Cassarino (2006), to have a multidisciplinary approach to borders, bearing in mind the implications of a reinforced border management and control on state-to-state relations, territorial integrity and sovereignty, cross-border mobility, society and 'borderlanders'. Borders have been studied in fact by several disciplines: geography, history, anthropology, political science, economy, legal studies, demography, statistics.

To apprehend borders meaning and to better address migration policies it is necessary to study how different disciplines look at them.

1. Geography: border is a territorial limit that can be marked in a map. How many borders exist in the world? In the world there are 322 borders between countries, that can be translated into 248 000 kilometers of terrestrial borders. That means hundreds of thousands of kilometers to manage, to keep under surveillance, to open and to close (M. Foucher, 2007).

2. History: the notion of borders and borders have an history (Balibar, 2002). History looks at how borders changed over time. Borders are territorial and historical demarcation.

3. Anthropology: the border is a territorial limit between two areas.

4. Political science: borders are considered as institutions

5. Economy: borders correspond to trading costs that includes differences in monetary regimes (Frattanni, 2004)

6. Legal studies: international and national laws that regulate border management. Strictly related to the political science approach.

7. Demography: borders denote a different demographic regime. Demographic borders does not correspond with the political one. Demographic convergence theory.

8. Statistics: borders are seen from their statistical meaning. That lead to the measurement of how many people cross the border of state, the reason of crossing and the date.

## *2. Demography and Borders*

How demography deals with borders?

The traditional approach sees the borders according to ethnic group: for instance the Balkans' populations has a specific demographic behavior according to racial affiliation. That specific behaviors may be also related to different cultural background of subpopulation living in the same area or in neighboring regions.

Some attempts were made to see the boundaries of demography as the borders of fertility and mortality. The idea of the convergence of demographic variables is a direct consequence of the theory of demographic transition. Nevertheless, few efforts have been made to address the idea of demographic convergence<sup>2</sup>. There are border-related demographic variables: convergence or divergence that produce migration. For instance in the neighbouring regions in the Mediterranean: there are demographic borders across populations and there are population movements across borders.

The last part of this study will speculate on the Italian experience. Italy, a former mass emigration country, has become since the 80's an immigration country. At present, Italy has together with Spain and Ireland, the highest net migration rate in Europe. During the last 10 years the number of foreigners residents in Italy increased rapidly. The Italian foreign-born population has quadrupled from about 1 million in 1996 to about 4 million in 2009 (see figures B1 and B2, Appendix B)..

Immigrants from Europe account for more than an half (54%) of foreigners living in Italy. Immigrants from Africa represent 22% of the foreign population, followed by Asian (16%) and American (9%) (see figure B2, Appendix B). Nevertheless forecasts on future foreign born population predict a stabilisation process for Eastern European residents in Italy and an explosion for Latin America (Ecuador and Peru), Asia (Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India), and Africa (Senegal, Nigeria and Egypt) (Fondazione ISMU, 2009).

As a consequence of the end of the second demographic transition process, that implied fertility decline and huge improvements in life expectancy, the age pyramids of Italy nowadays (figure B4, Appendix B) has a narrow bottom and a wide top. This is the inverse shape that the pyramid had at the beginning of the transition (wide bottom and narrow top). In the current scenario Italian population is characterized by a decreasing share of younger age groups in the overall population, and an increasing share of older age groups. Italy is at present, one of the oldest world countries. At the same time, other countries around the world are still in their final stage of demographic transition, and they have an huge mass of young population entering in the labour market. This is for instance the case of several Southern Mediterranean countries.

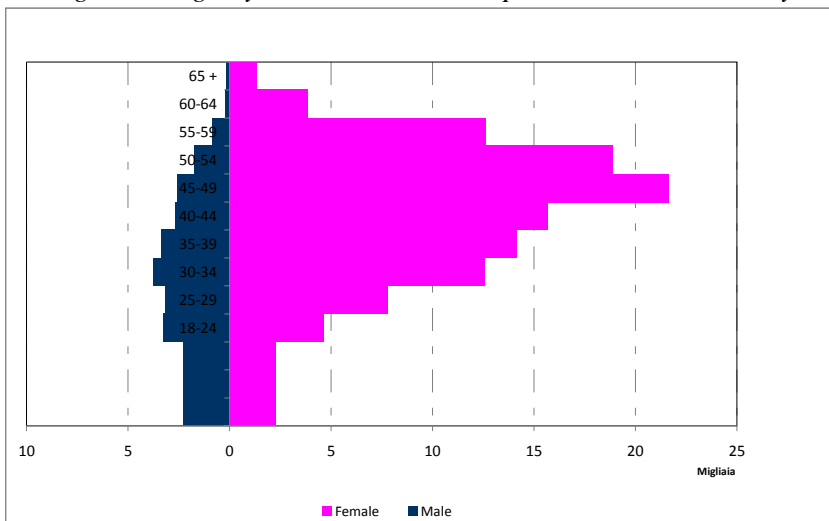
A lot have been said by population scientists and politicians during the last decade about the so called issue of Replacement Migration<sup>3</sup>. Although we are not going to deal with that subject, we are going to address another issue in the field of demography, showing how demography leads to "demographic migration": e.g. the aging population is the source of migration of Ukrainian women who came to Europe and in particularly in Italy to work in the health care sector for older people. This movement has not well-established roots: Ukrainian women have not received specific training, and are not selected ex ante, but they are selected ex post. The age structure of the Ukrainian population changed radically in the country of origin and mainly in the destination country (figure 1). The contrary happened to the Egyptian population in Italy (figure 2), a predominant male population for the time being.

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<sup>2</sup> For further details see for instance Chris Wilson, On the Scale of Global Demographic Convergence 1950-2000, In *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Mar., 2001), pp. 155-171.

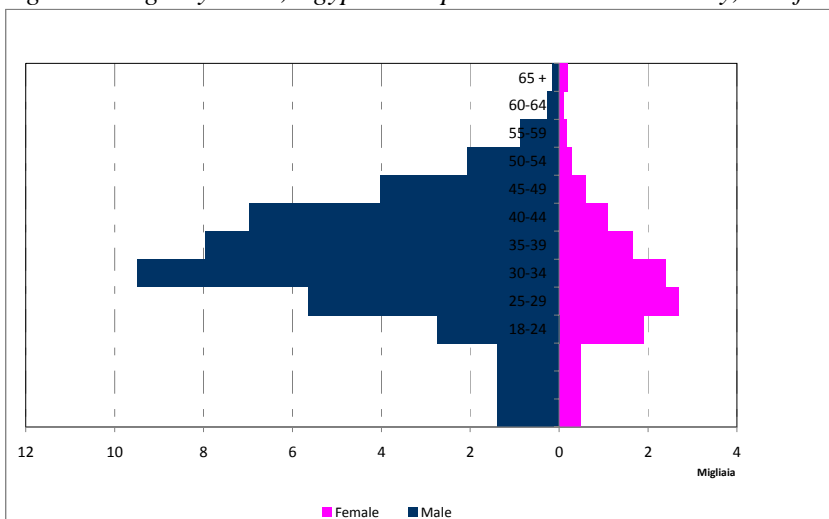
<sup>3</sup> "Replacement migration refers to the international migration that a country would need to offset population decline and population ageing resulting from low fertility and mortality rates"  
<http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/ReplMigED/migration.htm> (accessed online the 29/01/10)

Figure 1.- Age Pyramid, Ukrainian Population resident in Italy, 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2008



Source: Istat: <http://demo.istat.it/>

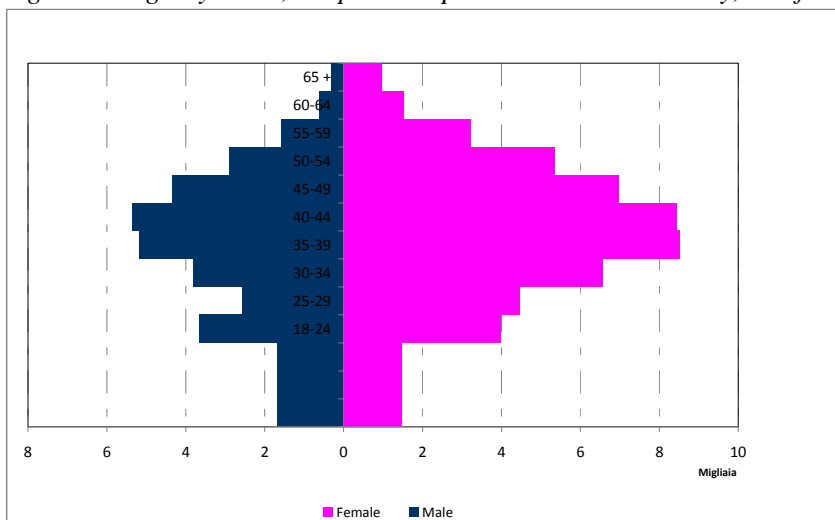
Figure 2.- Age Pyramid, Egyptian Population resident in Italy, 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2008



Source: Istat: <http://demo.istat.it/>

So far we can state that there are demographic and labour market frontiers that allowed such an age structure for those ethnic groups. If we look at the Filipinos community we see another reality. This population at the beginning of its migration to Italy was specialised on health care and services to the person (1st generation). But the age pyramid of this population nowadays shows a second and third generation reality with family reunification, citizenship acquisition: that lead to an almost classic age structure (figure 3) and to an equilibrated repartition by sex.

Figure 3.- Age Pyramid, Filipinos Population resident in Italy, 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2008



Source: Istat: <http://demo.istat.it/>

Demography as a source of migration can be considered a new field of borders studies: because as we have seen there are new frontiers that are raised by demography itself, leading only specific subpopulations to migrate. Demographic borders are of course related to other kinds of socio-economical variables. For instance women role in the society, labour market in the host and sending countries, the structure of the economy in the receiving countries and so on...

The hypothesis of migration without borders belongs to the illusion and not to everyday experience. Nevertheless some geographic area are regulated by boundaries which are also the consequence of the demographic experience. It will maybe possible in the future to think of areas of demography without borders.

Bearing in mind the speculation that we made in this last paragraph we will address to social scientists and to politicians an important question: is-it possible to study to be a “demographic migrant”? In other words: demographic boundaries can lead to migrants’ training?

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