

# **The EU and the changing lives of fishermen.**

A study of Lampedusan and Fuerteventurian fishing  
communities.

G. Orsini

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Department of Sociology

University of Essex

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Based on 10 months' qualitative fieldwork and the filming of a documentary conducted on the islands of Lampedusa and Fuerteventura, this thesis examines ground-level Europeanisation, concentrating on two well-established Communitarian policy frames -- the Common Fishery Policy (CFP) and the management of the external border of the Schengen space of free movement of people -- and two populations of artisanal fishers who were exposed to them. It analyses how governmental logics operated on the ground through individuals' engagement with Communitarian policies, and it reconstructs the major transformations that the two islands' fishing industries underwent in the duration of more than fifty years of European integration.

While until less than thirty years ago the economy of the Italian island of Lampedusa was centred on bluefish fishing and canning industries, on the Spanish island of Fuerteventura most islanders lived from agriculture for centuries. Following the European integration of Italy and Spain, both islands turned into major tourist destinations and the centres of frequent European migration crises. By focusing on these two territories, this investigation explores how EU governance contributed to transforming the local sociocultural and economic fabric and the islanders' everyday life.

Following the overview of how both policies were played out on the ground, I analyse the effects that the CFP produced on the two islands, and those that the management of the European external border generated in Lampedusa. Giving centrality to the marine element, I push the study of Europeanisation towards the sea and reveal how European policies had reconfigured the islanders' relation with the seawaters surrounding them. Concurrently, by exploring the ways in which individuals interacted with EU governmentalities, I also unearth the several unintended consequences of Communitarian governance -- as conservation policies aiming at

recovering overfished fish stocks actually generated the conditions for increasing and uncontrolled overexploitation, while border policies for the securitisation of the European space *de facto* de-securitized life in Lampedusa.





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The first time I went to Lampedusa I took the 12 hour ferry ride from Porto Empedocle – a small fishing town in Southern Sicily - even though, for a few Euros more, I could have taken a 40 minute flight from Palermo’s airport. It was not just the fear of flying in a small aircraft and landing on a minuscule island in the middle of the Mediterranean that pushed me to choose the longer and less comfortable option. Rather, my intention was that by experiencing the distance separating Lampedusa from the rest of Sicily, Italy and Europe, I wanted to feel how much seawater surrounded the island. Besides, in my mind, that long trip was a good opportunity to start getting in touch with the islanders. As it was October and the tourist season had finished, I expected few people other than Lampedusans to be on board the ferry navigating to nowhere else than the Pelagic archipelago – whose major island is Lampedusa. Nevertheless, I soon discovered that I was wrong. Most of the people travelling with me were not Lampedusans at all: their accents were from other areas of Italy. More importantly, however, most of them wore a police uniform; a flak jacket with a truncheon and a gun.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CFP = Common Fishery Policy

CSDP = Common Security and Defence Strategy

EAGGF = European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund

EC = European Commission

ECU = European Currency Unit

EEZ = Exclusive Economic Zone

EFF = European Fishery Fund

EFFR = European Fishing Fleet Register

EP = European Parliament

EU = European Union

IAMC = Institute for Coastal Marine Environment of the CNR - Italian National Research Council.

MEP(s) = Member(s) of the European Parliament

TACs = Total Allowable Catches

## GLOSSARY

**Hand/Pole-lines:** 'A pole and line consists of a hooked line attached to a pole. This method is common to sport fisheries (angling) but it is also used in commercial fisheries. Fishing rods/poles are made of wood (including bamboo, also constructed of split cane) and increasingly of fiberglass' (FAO, 2014). 'Traditional deep-sea fishing involved one hook per line, and one line per person, much as it is the case with [recreational and small-scale] fishing today' (De Sombre and Barkin, 2011: 42).

**Purse-seine:** 'A purse seine is made of a long wall of netting framed with floatline and leadline (usually, of equal or longer length than the former) and having purse rings hanging from the lower edge of the gear, through which runs a purse line made from steel wire or rope which allow the pursing of the net' (FAO, 2014a). It is 'used to encircle a school of fish; the net is then pulled closed and the catch hauled in' (De Sombre and Barkin, 2011: 41). Schools of pelagic fish of any size – from sardines to tunas – are the main target of fishers using this fishing gear.

**Set-gillnets:** This fishing gear 'consists of a single netting wall kept more or less vertical by a float line and a weighted ground line. The net is set on the bottom, or at a certain distance above it and kept stationary by anchors or weights on both ends' (FAO, 2014b). These nets target fish all across the water column, depending by how deep the net is positioned (De Sombre and Barkin, 2011) so that fishers using them target 'pelagic, demersal and benthic species [whose] size distribution [depends] on the mesh size' (FAO, 2014b).

**Set-longlines:** This fishing gear consists of 'long fishing lines to which baited hooks are attached from subsidiary lines that hang from the main line' (De Sombre and Barkin, 2011: 41). Longlines 'may be of considerable length [and] each line hanging from

[floats] at the surface. [Longliners target] pelagic species [such] as tuna and swordfish' (FAO, 2014c).

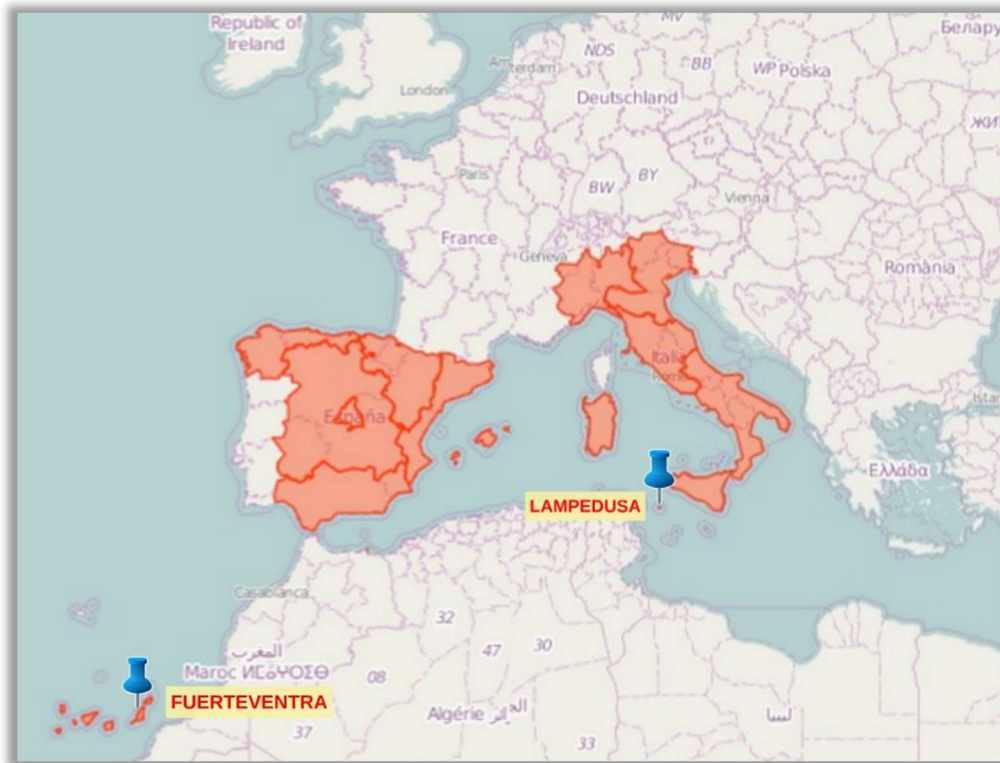
**Trawls:** 'A bottom trawl is constructed like a cone-shaped net that is towed [...] on the bottom. It consists of a body ending in a codend, which retains the catch. Normally the net has two lateral wings extending forward from the opening. [...] Bottom contact with the gear is needed for successful operations' (FAO, 2014d). Moving vessels drag 'the net across the sea floor, in search of groundfish species' (De Sombre and Barkin, 2011: 41).





## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Italian and the Spanish islands of Lampedusa and Fuerteventura are both located at the geographical periphery of the European Union (EU), closer to Africa than to any other European territory (see Figure 1.1).



**Figure 1.1:** Lampedusa and Fuerteventura (@ European Commission - elaborated by the author)

Placed somehow at the core of the Mediterranean, over the centuries, Lampedusa served as a natural safe port for seamen navigating the seawaters surrounding it. More recently, across the 1950s and the 1990s, the island became a major fishing centre for the fishing and canning of bluefish. As for Fuerteventura, islanders sustained themselves through agriculture and stockbreeding for centuries, even after the Spanish conquered the Canary Islands archipelago and turned it into a major hub for trade and fishing across the colonies and mainland. Only a few Fuerteventurans

worked at sea and they fished almost for sustenance as they often combined fishing with agricultural work on land.

Today, however, Lampedusa is mostly known in Europe and outside of it as one of the most symbolic places where the EU's fight against undocumented migration takes place (Cuttitta, 2013). Similar to Lampedusa, between 1999 and 2011 more than 100.000 boat migrants reached the Canary Islands from the sea (Cuttitta, 2012). Yet, despite the islands becoming the stages of several major European migrant crises, both Lampedusa and Fuerteventura's economies are today centred on tourism, which has become the main local industry. For example, each year an average of more than 60,000 tourists spend their holidays on the tiny Italian island that counts less than 6,000 registered residents (Contino, 2013). In 2014, the island's most popular beach – the Rabbits beach – was picked as the second most beautiful beach in the world by the US television channel CNN.<sup>1</sup> As for Fuerteventura, the tourist industry contributes to 80 per cent of the entire local economy with over one and a half million tourists visiting the island's beaches and its extinguished volcanos every year (Pérez Fernández, 2008).

Among the many global as well as local factors that contributed to transforming life in Lampedusa and Fuerteventura, the European integration of Italy at the end of the 1950s and that of Spain in the 1980s certainly played a role. European fishers' work has been regulated from Brussels since the 1958 Treaty of Rome when fish were included among the agricultural goods whose production and market was regulated and subsidized within the frame of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Since the 1980s, then, Brussels' institutions designed five different reforms of the Common Fishery Policy (CFP) and implemented them in all European seawaters and ports –

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<sup>1</sup> <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/05/28/travel/100-best-beaches/index.html> [Accessed on August 9, 2015]

including those of the two islands (Gray and Hatchard, 2003). Moreover, when Italy and Spain joined the Schengen area of free movement of people across the 1980s and 1990s, both Fuerteventura and Lampedusa became isolated spots integral to the European external border. Since then – but occasionally also before - thousands of boat migrants and asylum seekers started arriving on the two islands from the sea, aiming to enter the EU.

This research looks at the local effects that EU governance produced on these two isolated European territories. Throughout the following pages, I disentangle the several local social, cultural and economic dynamics that specific European policies – i.e. the CFP and the EU external border management – activated on the islands. Given the maritime geography of Lampedusa and Fuerteventura, the attention concentrates on local fishers in order to show how Europeanisation – as the collection of all the changes and opportunities that European citizens experience as a direct effect of the implementation of European policies, norms, and regulations - contributed to pushing fishers away from their profession and turn to the tourism industry, consequently transforming everyday life on the islands, as well as the islanders' perception and experience of the maritime environment they inhabited.

Looking at EU governance from this bottom-up angle – as local fishers' biographies and everyday experiences constitute the core source of data – I examine how Communitarian governance mutated islanders' everyday lives and the islands' sociocultural fabrics as a consequence. By comparing the two case studies, I demonstrate how EU policymaking generated similar pressures on the two communities of fishers, but produced diametrically different outcomes for the small-scale fisheries on the islands. If today professional fishery is disappearing in

Lampedusa, on the Spanish island, fishers had organized and achieved economic and environmental sustainability.

Due to the relatively small size of Fuerteventura and Lampedusa, and the locals' exposure to European policies, the two islands constitute accessible and contained settings from which to develop a ground-level assessment of the local impact of the implementation of EU policies. Looking at the EU from this angle means to push the academic study of the EU – that is largely the realm of European studies – somehow 'downward' so as to concentrate on the individuals through which Communitarian policies are implemented.

Efforts to analyse the working of the EU at national and regional levels have tended indeed to concentrate principally on the process through which European member states incorporate European norms, regulations and directives (Favell and Guiraudon, 2011; Featherstone and Kazamias, 2001). When they do involve individuals, mainstream European studies' literature tends to focus on European and national or regional elites and policy makers (Checkel, 2001; Christiansen, et al., 1999; Delanty and Rumford, 2005; Favell and Guiraudon, 2009; Medrano, 2008). As a sociology of the EU, my study instead concentrates on 'ordinary' European citizens - the fishing communities of Lampedusa and Fuerteventura – in order to put 'a human face to the process of EU integration' (Favell and Guiraudon, 2011: 11-13). That is why I decided to analyse European governance by concentrating on 'real individuals experiencing and living out the micro-level consequences of macro-level regional integration on an everyday, social level' (Favell and Guiraudon, 2009: 564).

Moreover, as my study concentrates on the maritime environment, I concurrently expand sociological perspectives over an only marginally explored sociocultural and geographical ground - the sea. To do this, I assign centrality to maritime ways of living,

and frame and structure my analysis by using participants' categories of understanding. For island communities, the sea was not just one of the many elements composing the environment in which they lived. For people living in small islands, the sea structures everyday life and, with it, local economies and sociocultural fabrics. In the minds of people working at sea, often there is no clear divide between land and sea: both grounds are socially experienced and lived. Yet, policies designed in the continental centre – in Brussels – interacted with such pre-existing ways of living, and local social and economic structures. Unavoidably, as a sociology of the EU that concentrates on fishers, this is also a sociology of the sea, which puts the maritime element at the core of the investigation.

Moving from this maritime perspective, the investigation unearths the several unintended consequences of Communitarian governance – as conservation policies aiming at recovering overfished fish stocks actually generated the conditions for increasing and uncontrolled overexploitation, while border policies for the securitisation of the European space had *de facto* de-securitized life in Lampedusa. By questioning some fundamental elements of the EU enterprise, the thesis thus demonstrates how governmentality (Foucault, 1979) constitutes a valuable conceptual tool to examine how EU governing operates, but also illustrates how it offers only a limited explanatory framework for understanding the ways in which governance is produced and reproduced by individuals in their everyday lives.

### *Outline of the thesis*

The thesis consists of nine chapters. In chapter one, I specify the main theoretical coordinates of my study. I start by describing how the study of European fisheries contributes to the development of a maritime sociology that concentrates on the sea

as a social space and a key element shaping everyday life in coastal communities. Shifting focus to the EU, I explain why I frame it as a multi-level system of governance, and employ governmentality (Foucault, 1979) as an analytical tool to investigate the EU's role in the transformations of the Islands' economic and social fabric. Once these theoretical coordinates are presented, I move to an analysis of the main features and historical development of both the CFP and the European external border management system. At this point, I also explain the choice of border as an analytical focus for this study in my attempt to unravel the micro-social foundations of the changes in the island. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a brief description of Lampedusa and Fuerteventura's geography, demography and fishery.

In chapter two I discuss the data collection techniques I used during almost 13 months of fieldwork. I first describe the diverse governance levels – European, regional, local – within which I conducted my investigation, and I provide a description of the different stakeholders I addressed which were divided into four major categories - institutional actors, members of the civil society, workers of the local fishing-related industry, and fishermen. Once the mapping of the fieldwork is drawn, I move deeper into discussing the diverse data collection techniques I deployed in the field – structured and semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and the shooting of a documentary that comes attached to this thesis. I thus describe how I planned the use of some of these data collection techniques before beginning fieldwork, while others were the outcome of a series of unexpected conditions that I had to deal during my fieldwork. I close the chapter with reflections on the main limitations of my study and the major ethical issues that I dealt with.

Chapter three provides the pre-EU history of the two fishing communities. In particular, I look at the maritime pasts of both Lampedusa and Fuerteventura, and at

the structure of local fishery as it was organized through time. First, I describe Lampedusa's past as a safe port for people navigating the stretch of Mediterranean between Sicily and North Africa. I then plot the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century transformation of the island into an agricultural colony before finally turning to fishery following the Second World War, when Lampedusa became known as the '*mackerel* island' because of its flourishing bluefish canning industry. As for Fuerteventura, I review the island's ancient agricultural past, outlining how the Canary Islands were turned into a hub for the trade of slaves, goods and fish between Africa, Latin America and Spain. Describing how the local population remained somehow at the margins of these major transformations, I then explain how Fuerteventura's economy centred for centuries on subsistence agriculture and pastoralism – a development quite different to that in Lampedusa. The chapter concludes by bringing the discussion to the 20<sup>th</sup> century where Fuerteventura was turned into a tourist destination and a centre for the production and export of tomatoes – especially in the port village of Gran Tarajal where I conducted my fieldwork. In this way, I provide a view of everyday life on the two islands before they became part of the EU in order to better understand the changes brought by the local implementation of Communitarian governance.

In chapter four, I concentrate on the European governance of fishery. Since the 1958 Treaty of Rome, fish were included among those goods regulated within the frame of the CAP. In this first phase of Communitarian management of fishery, the EU subsidized, either directly or indirectly, the expansion and modernisation of the European fishing fleet. With several big industrial vessels being built and launched all over Europe, local small-scale fishers who had hardly left their islands before, embarked on huge fishing vessels that went fishing all over the ocean and which took the Islanders away from their families and communities for consecutive months. In the 1980s, many European industrial fishing firms started hiring a non-European

cheaper workforce to labour on their vessels or they started operating from outside the EU. Here, most of Lampedusa and Fuerteventura's fishers returned to their islands after having earned substantial amounts of money. While they finally had the financial resources to buy themselves a boat and go fishing as captains, following decades of industrial (over-)fishing, they found their fishing grounds extremely impoverished.

As EU subsidies increased the productivity of the European fishing fleet, this soon led to the decline of several commercial fish stocks, and with the ensuing introduction of the first CFP in 1983, European authorities started concentrating on tackling overfishing. As I explain in chapter five, since the 1990s, the CFP's structural policies began financing the reduction of the number of vessels for professional fishery, small-scale fishery included, turning EU policies into one of the major incentives for fishermen to abandon their profession and reinvest subsidies into tourism-related enterprises. The last section of this chapter introduces the CFP's conservation policies as they gained centrality within the frame of Communitarian governance of fishery. Because of their design, conservation measures also turned into one of the main obstacles for professional small-scale fishers to keep their work activity profitable and environmentally sustainable - especially in the case of Lampedusa, which had a less organized fishing industry compared to Fuerteventura.

In chapter six I move to focus on the European external border in Lampedusa. I start with a view of the island's marginality as unrelated to the local implementation of any EU policy. In this way, it became easier to appreciate the changes that the establishment of Europe's border generated there. Following an initial and detailed genealogy of this border as it was marked in the middle of the Mediterranean, I describe how the EU external border worked both at sea and on the island. I examine border functions in Lampedusa and its surrounding seawaters to show how they



operated and how locals – and in particular fishers – interacted with them. Finally, I move my attention to the mediatisation of the island as it became possibly the most iconic spot of the European external border and EU migration policies. The permanent staging of migrants' emergencies from the tiny island was in fact a major and pervasive element of Lampedusans' everyday experience of the border, as it also profoundly reformulated islanders' self-perception.

After mapping the major transformations that EU policies had on fishery and the management of the border, in chapter seven I explore how the sociocultural fabrics of these two fishing communities were transformed. Following a description of how today the two fisheries worked and were organized, I analyse locals' responses to the steering constraints of the EU governance by discussing the reasons that led fishers in Lampedusa and Gran Tarajal to react so differently to the decades-long Communitarian governance. If today in Lampedusa small-scale fishery seemed destined to disappear, in Gran Tarajal, thanks to a highly organized fishermen's association, the local fishery had reached substantial economic as well as environmental sustainability. As I highlight by comparing the two cases, the reasons for such diverging trajectories could be found in the history, economy and sociocultural fabrics of these two European marginal port villages. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a close look at the major and most significant EU-driven transformations of Lampedusa's sociocultural fabric as the fishing Mediterranean island of the past had turned into today's touristic destination at the core of Europe's outer border.



## 2. INVESTIGATING THE EU FROM A MARITIME PERSPECTIVE

*'...the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea...'* (Foucault, 1997: 336)

Focusing on the ground-level study of the working of two specific European Union (EU) policies –the Common Fishery Policy (CFP) and the European external border management – and the outcomes they produced on two small-scale fishing island communities, in this first chapter I provide a theoretical framework and an introduction to both policies and the two islands that are the object of my study.

Yet, before discussing my theoretical framework for a sociology of the EU, it is imperative to discuss the central aspect of my fieldwork – the maritime element. Moreover, as no clear or exhaustive definition of what the EU is exists, I clarify how and why throughout my analysis I understand this constantly transforming institutional construct as a multi-level system of governance. As such, since my focus is on individuals and local communities inhabiting the margins of Europe, I explain why I examine their interaction with two major Communitarian policies through a governmentality lens, and across multiple marginalities. Given the countless areas of European policymaking and the complexity characterizing EU regulatory frameworks (Kellow and Zito, 2002), I thus specify the main characteristics of the two policy areas I selected. Finally, I provide some geographical as well as demographical descriptions of the two islands, accompanied by some introductory data concerning the two small-scale fisheries I concentrated upon.

### 2.1 Entering an underexplored ground of social enquiry

In the globalized era of liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000) where over 90 per cent of world trade travels by boat (Valentine et al., 2013), the sea is central in shaping human life on dryland. Despite this, the maritime environment 'remains generally a stranger to contemporary sociology' (Cocco, 2013: 5). Put in other words, 'social sciences haven't constructed a strong rudder to navigate the *big blue*' (Brstilo, 2013: 27). Although a variety of sociological and anthropological works concentrate on maritime communities (Gillis, 2004; Gillis, 2012; Horden and Purcell, 2010; Steinberg, 2013; Steinberg, 2001; Malinowski, 1948; Acheson, 1981) the sea remains often perceived and imagined as a space where only limited social life takes place, representing the unexperienced and unknown for those whose social lives are grounded on dryland (Schmitt, 1997). However, seawaters directly structure everyday life for a multitude of individuals such as fishers, sailors, seafarers, coastal communities, and islanders for instance. For those living close to the sea and often earning a living from it, social life exists and is structured and constructed over and around the maritime element: the sea is 'a real, experienced social arena' (Steinberg, 2013: 156). Seawaters are the location of social interaction for those crossing them, living from them, and experiencing them on a daily basis (Ben-Yehoyada, 2011). Spending life on and at sea implies a specific maritime understanding and experience of the interaction between dryland and the sea (Thompson et al., 1983). This is one in which the shores separating the safe dryland from the perilous seawaters blurs, and it is thus formulated and understood by individuals in a specific maritime way.

Putting the maritime element at the centre of analysis contributes to pushing the spatial limits of sociology outside the land-space, beyond the coastline and across it (Ballinger, 2013; Ballinger, 2006). In this way, studying fishers implicitly de-constructs 'the images of a neat separation between the sea and the land. [From fishers' eyes] the sea might be understood as a real social and lived space' (Cocco, 2013: 17). For

fishers, the complex interplays of land and maritime social and physical environments is not necessarily perceived and interiorized as a dichotomy but, rather, as continuous, and ensuing social life develops and structures across it accordingly. Evaluating the local effects of EU policies on fishing communities means moving the maritime element to the centre as it unavoidably influences fishers' adaptation to the steering of EU governing technologies (Deleuze, 2002).

## **2.2. The EU as a system of multi-level governance and governmentality**

Approaching the study of the effects that a certain political entity produces on individuals, the first analytical step is to frame or at least indicatively define what the political organisation under examination is. Concerning the EU, this is certainly not an easy task, as confirmed by the enormous body of literature providing multiple and, at times, contrasting views. It is in fact not uncommon to perceive the EU as a sort of institutional labyrinth (Cronin, 2013). Visions over the EU diversify according to the observed policy area(s) and how Communitarian institutions design, approve, reject and/or amend specific rules and directives. As if this was not complicated enough, the EU has also transformed over time according to various treaties and agreements, expanding and deepening its areas of intervention, relying on new European agencies and including an increasing number of member states.

Given this picture, looking at the EU as a system of multi-level governance might facilitate the task of assessing the effects that Communitarian rules, directives and regulations have for the lives of individuals inhabiting the European space (Hooghe and Marks, 2001). Analysing the EU from a specific multi-level governance angle allows framing the European policies and regulations as a system of dispersed levels and mechanisms of authority according to overlapping jurisdictions that involve

'actors and institutions operating at different territorial scales' (Shore, 2011, 296). In other words, this perspective involves the blurring of distinctions between the national, the regional, the local and the European levels so as to view each of these levels of governance concurring inside the same economic, social and political project (Marks et al., 1996).

Shifting the focus on European citizens, the concept of governmentality developed by Foucault (1979) becomes extremely significant as it explains EU governance rationalities by highlighting the ways in which governance applies and works on individuals by shaping their practices of self-government and, with them, their everyday lives. Developing from the notion of governance (Rose, 1999), from the governmentality perspective 'the concept of government is broader than management by the state' (Mitchell, 2006: 389). It refers to the governing of populations by means of multiple institutions, strategies and technologies, and it ranges between the government of others and the government of the self. Different from viewing states' sovereignty as a system of authority exerted over a specific territory, governmentality sees individual citizens' strategies of self-government to be constructed alongside and according to dominant governing rationalities. Here, the governed individual is not simply governed: indeed, s/he governs her/himself (Foucault, 1982) in a circular relation, where government and subjects mutually constitute each other (Mitchell, 2006). Governmentality thus helps to understand EU governance rationalities as entrenched in the ways governed individuals are ruled (Nadesan, 2008; Walters and Haahr, 2001: 5).

As a consequence, my analysis focuses on the study of the ground-level effects of the local implementation of EU regulations and norms at two levels. First, I consider EU political and governing technologies as they were played out locally, on the

ground. Second, I analyse the ways individuals interacted with and made sense of these governing technologies through their daily experiences, conducts and interpretations. Through doing this, it became possible to grasp elements of governing rationalities as they were eventually interiorized, challenged or adapted to by individuals (Barysh et al., 2008). From this angle it becomes clear that the governmentality concept provides the ability to move the analysis downward –from the EU to fishers – as well as upwards – from fishers to the EU. Consequently, the daily lives of individuals became the core of my analytical interests (Larner, 2000; O'Malley, 1996; Frankel, 1997) and they allow me to bring to light the actual processes by which governmental logics operated (Read, 2009).

Next, I describe and analyse the two EU policies under examination in my research in order to offer an initial overview of how they were structured through time.

### **2.3. The CFP and the European external border management**

Here I offer a top-down outlook of both the CFP and the European external border management, discussing how both policies must be considered as well-established European governance frameworks, designed in Brussels and implemented locally by a variety of actors and institutions.

#### *2.3.1. The CFP: historical development and main regulatory frameworks*

The CFP constitutes one of the oldest areas of the direct implementation of Communitarian governance. Today fishery is one of the economic sectors most strictly regulated and largely subsidised by the EU. Elaborated within a time span covering more than 50 years of European history, this regulative framework includes more than

700 sets of norms (Lutchman et al., 2009). Even if the CFP officially substituted national fishery policies across the 1970s and the 1980s (Lequesne, 2004), the first steps towards a European coordinated policy in the area of fishery were already activated in 1957 within the broader frame of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). With fish included among agricultural goods, fish production and markets began being regulated at the European level when Communitarian institutions started addressing European fishers' activities inside as well as outside the seawaters (Karagiannakos, 1995). Indeed, since its embryonic stages, EU fishery governance regulated diverse branches of the fishing industry, making the CFP a well-established and pervasive European regulative frame for the whole European fishing industry and market.

Initially, the explicit goals of the policy were twofold. On the one hand, to increase the productivity of the European fishing fleet through technological development and the rationalisation of the use of and access to marine resources. On the other hand, several other measures developed in order to maintain stable fish market prices and ensure a reasonable living standard for agricultural and fishing communities as well as fair prices and availability of supplies for consumers (Karagiannakos, 1995). In practice, since its initial steps, the CFP worked on multiple levels of the activity of fishing, the fish market, the living standards of fishers, and the conservation of fishing resources. When the official CFP appeared first as separate from the CAP in 1983, it explicitly included all these four integrated strands of the fishing industry (Holden, 1994).

Since then, the CFP passed through four main reforms determining a progressive extension and transformation of EU direct competences on fishing activities, with the policy focus shifting towards conservation policies in order to counter-balance the rapid decrease of several commercial fish stocks all over European seawaters



(Karagiannakos, 1995). Thus within the regulative measures that the EU introduced with the 1983 CFP, the principle of the total allowable catches (TACs) as a system of quotas for fish stocks that each European fishery is allowed to fish per year, represented the main innovation (Franchino and Rahming, 2003; Mansfield, 2004).

Less than ten years later, in 1992, the first reformed CFP emphasised the relation within member states' fleets' productivity on the one side, and the available fishing opportunities on the other. The new key concept of 'fishing effort' was formulated, combining a series of technical parameters concerning the vessel's engine power and the length of the hull, as well as the fishing gears: the function of this index was in fact to limit and then regulate the time fishing boats could spend at sea. Moreover, the rationalisation of the European fleet began with the implementation of the second structural policy that aimed to reduce the impact of EU fisheries on already declining fishing stocks. While Communitarian financial aid had supported for decades the building of new vessels and the renewal of existing ones, with the second wave of structural policies, the greater portion of financial flows started addressing the progressive reduction of the fishing fleet by economically assisting those who decided to dismantle their old vessels and/or revoke their professional fishing licenses (Lequesne, 2004).

Another key element introduced with this first reform of the CFP was the construction of the European fishing fleet's two major categories: small-scale artisanal and big-scale industrial fisheries. From a regulative perspective, the difference between these two fleets varies amongst member states as it is based on a complex calculation whose parameters include the length of the vessel's hull, its engine power, the gear used to fish, and the geographic area where the vessel works. The European Parliament 'recognises the importance of small-scale fisheries but does not provide a

definition [of them]' (Macfadyen et al., 2011: 20). Yet, in line with the 1992 recommendations, the 'Council Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006 on the [European Fishery Fund – EFF] - specifies small-scale fishery as 'vessels in small-scale coastal fisheries being less than [12] meters long and not using towed gear' (Macfadyen et al., 2011: 14). Thus although only approximately – as Communitarian sizes were applied differently depending on each member state fishing fleet's main features - small-scale coastal fishing include vessels shorter than 12 meters operating in inshore areas - within 12 miles from the coastline (Martín, 2012; Karagiannakos, 1995). On the other hand, all other boats – longer than 12 meters and fishing beyond the 12 miles limit – are classed as industrial fishing vessels.

In practice, small-scale fishery is a labour-intensive fishery that uses 'relatively small crafts (if any) and little capital and equipment per person-on-board. Most often family-owned, [it is] commercial or for subsistence' (FAO, 2014e). Industrial fishery on the other hand, is 'capital-intensive [and uses] relatively large vessels with a high degree of mechanisation and that normally have [...] high production capacity' (FAO, 2014f). Despite these differences, structural policies were applied equally to both industrial and small-scale fishing vessels.

Ten years later, with the 2002 reform of the CFP Communitarian regulative effort, policy shifted consistently towards the development of more effective – and pervasive - conservation policies meant to protect the future as well as the present of European seas (Lutchman et al., 2009). First, the TACs system, until then designed on a yearly basis, was reformulated into a multi-annual plan so that fishers could organise better their mid-term fishing strategies. At the same time, although financed and regulated by the EU, the responsibility for controlling the structural policy of reduction of the European fishing (over-)capacity was given to member states so that they could work

more closely with their respective national fisheries. An initial – and mostly formal – regionalisation of fishery governance thus began in the early 2000s through the creation of Regional Advisory Councils – RACs – to involve stakeholders at the European level through constant meetings for all the parties to exchange ideas and projects while cooperating in the development and implementation of the CFP (Gray and Hatchard, 2003). This timid shift towards an increasing regionalisation of the CFP represented instead a major concern for the following and last reform that entered into force since January 2014 - subsequent to my fieldwork.

Both CFP's structural and conservation regulations and strategies –the main areas of Communitarian intervention within the management of European fisheries – were thus transformed through time. However, as I have said, these were not the only EU competences within the CFP. Concerning EU regulation of the fish-markets, Communitarian measures aimed at determining the market price of fish and the quantities of it coming to market. Moreover, within the frame of guiding principles of the EU Common Market, duties to trade fish products among member states were abolished (Leigh, 1983; Lequesne, 2004). Finally, another area of CFP's intervention that was significant for peripheral fisheries – like those that are the basis of this study - was the exclusive competence of the EU to sign international fishing agreements with third-countries. Agreeing to negotiate as a single – European - polity, member states delegated to European institutions their powers to negotiate bi-lateral fishery agreements with non-EU member states in order to establish any dialogue from a much stronger standpoint (Lequesne, 2004).

Summarizing this complex policy frame, the CFP can be seen to operate across four main areas: limitation of the environmental impact of fishing for the conservation of sea resources; structural policies for a more efficient management of the European

fishing fleet; Communitarian organisation of the market; and relations with third countries (Raakjær, 2009). Yet, through the years, the CFP developed into a very complex and, according to many, incoherent policy whose implementation developed through a variety of institutional actors – at the European, national, regional and local levels - regulating almost every aspect of fishing and its related economic activities - as summarized in the table below (Table 2.1).

<b>CFP REFORMS</b>	<b>REFORMS' PRIORITIES &amp; (INNOVATIONS)</b>	<b>CFP AREAS OF INTERVENTION</b>
<b>1958 (CAP)</b>	Modernisation of the fleet & increase its productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishing activity and fish market</li> <li>• Fishermen living standard</li> <li>• Conservation Policies</li> <li>• Relation with non-EU third countries</li> </ul>
<b>1983</b>	Harmonisation & standardisation EU fisheries (TACs)	
<b>1992</b>	Fishing fleet efficiency (structural policies)	
<b>2002</b>	Conservative policies & regionalisation (fishing fleet reduction & RACs)	
<b>2014</b>	Conservation policies, further regionalisation & the socio-cultural value of fishery	

**Table 2.1:** CFP reforms, their focus and the most significant innovation introduced as well as the main areas of policy intervention over the last 60 years

The existing literature depicts the CFP as highly politicised and underpinning significant social damages within EU fishing communities in terms of both unemployment and impoverishment (Cooper, 1999). Within the crucial distinction between small- and big-scale fisheries, critics see the CFP as inadequate and unable to cope with the most concrete needs of the numerous EU local fishing communities. The policy's most criticized incoherencies seem to have served for years the interests of European industrial fisheries. Generally, EU fishers perceive the policy as a set of ever-changing rules and an unnecessary complication of the already intricate working

of fishery and the fish markets, not allowing planning any long-term strategy – including effective conservation policies (Daw, 2005; Daw and Gray, 2004; Cooper, 1999).

What is of interest for my study are thus the small-scale fisheries, as, arguably, it was this group that was suffering the major effects of the CFP. European – as well as non-European - small-scale fishing communities are indeed little socio-cultural realities pushed into a permanent struggle to not disappear, crushed as they are by the more competitive industrial fisheries who irreversibly impoverish the fishing grounds of small fishers (Festing, 1977; Lövin, 2012). It is not just the case of fishing communities moving increasingly away from fishery as a profession - and often towards the most secure, less tiring and profitable tourist sector (Jentoft et al., 2009). Rather, coastal communities are socio-cultural environments in which small-scale fishing does not represent only the main local economic activity and resource: rather, fisheries play an important role beyond economy, being also a central element for socio-cultural identification (Thompson et al., 1983; Festing, 1977; Raakjær, 2009). Thus I argue that small-scale fisheries are likely to experience more directly – and profoundly - the marks of the effects of EU governance.

### *2.3.2. European external border management: historical development and major regulatory frameworks*

European external border management developed through an apparently more consistent route than the CFP (Wolf, 2008; Neal, 2009; Van Houtum and Pijpers, 2007). Since the signing of the Schengen agreement in 1985, five member states - Belgium, France, Germany, Luxemburg and the Netherlands - of what was then the European Economic Community (EEC) - approved the dismantling of internal borders

while simultaneously demarcating an external edge to create an inner zone of free movement of people, goods and capital. Later, in 1990, the Schengen Implementation Agreement, signed by the same five countries, enforced the former pact. The arrangement defined the main areas of intervention and the policy's main goals: harmonisation of the national policies on visa and the rights of non-Europeans; international police cooperation and information exchange; and creation of the Schengen Information System (SIS) to archive and share information of non-EU citizens present in the Schengen territory. Since then, the space of free movement of people expanded into an integrated system developed inside the frame of a common immigration and asylum policy that is shared today by 26 European countries (Warwick, 2008; Rigo, 2007).

Accordingly, internal national boundaries progressively disappeared so that European citizens - whose European citizenship was formalized with the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht – started inhabiting a new political and borderless space and community whose external boundaries needed to be established (Eder, 2006; Kostakopoulou, 2005; Shaw, 1998; Ugur, 1995). In other words, through this process of progressive national de-territorialisation, the EU itself became a territorial unit defined by a clear boundary (Walters and Haahr, 2005; Tesfahuney, 1998), where, after 'the opening of the internal borders of the EU, the political and policy attention shifted more and more, and swiftly so, to the protection of the external borders of the EU' (Van Houtum, 2010: 960). In 2002, as international politics increasingly securitized following the tragedy of 9/11 in New York, the European Commission (EC) explicitly remarked on the significance of this external boundary as necessary to guarantee European security as well as to boost 'the citizen's sense of belonging to a shared area and destiny' (EC, 2002: 2).

In practice, such an external border was, to some degree, delocalized, fragmented and multiplied into several territorial as well as non-territorial border functions, within a wider project aiming at regulating the access of non-EU citizens to the Schengen space of free movement of people (Cuttitta, 2007; Mezzadra, 2004; Bigo and Guild, 2004; Andrijasevic, 2006). Thus by progressively including an increasing number of European citizens, the European citizenship project was, in fact, based simultaneously on a selective exclusion of non-Europeans. Such an exclusive dimension also took form through the creation of a geographical external boundary isolating Europe from the East and the South: a line descending from Finland to Cyprus, passing after that through Gibraltar, to then move down to reach and surround the Canary Islands (Tsianos and Karakayali, 2010) – see Figure 2.1.



**Figure 2.1:** An indicative line corresponding to the European external border including Lampedusa and Fuerteventura (@ Google Map - elaborated by the author)

As it stands today, the norms related to the Schengen agreement represent an essential part of the communitarian body of law that any candidate country must incorporate in order to access the EU – the Schengen *aquis*. As I have said, Europe’s

external border governance relies on a complex interplay of various technologies and border functions scattered inside as well as outside the European territory, making its frontiers into a system of barriers rather than a geographically linear border. However, EU efforts consistently concentrated around the consolidation of the traditional national territorial borders when coinciding with the external edge of the EU (Geddes, 2005). Indeed, given the nature of the Schengen space of free movement of people, once a third-country national gains the right to reside even in the most detached and marginal spot of this area, s/he gains the right to circulate in the whole area of the EU (Black, 1996). Consequently, a big part of the surveillance and control activities that were previously carried out at the borders of every Schengen member state had come to accumulate along the external boundary. Peripheral EU member states thus became central for determining migrants' strategies to enter Europe: they transformed into the gates through which to access the entire Schengen territory (Orsini and Schiavon, 2009).

While EU borders relocated previously national borders, EU border policies also extended beyond the EU itself. Indeed, a broad range of diverse projects are financed and organized by the EU and its member states with EU neighbouring countries such as Libya, Tunisia and Morocco, with the aim of externalizing the control of migratory trajectories outside the territory of the EU. Given this complex border system, those migrants and asylum seekers unable to get a Schengen visa remain with few options other than perilous and illegal trajectories to reach Europe. As a direct outcome, undocumented border crossing started concentrating on limited, remote and more accessible portions of the external EU boundary (Cuttitta, 2007). With this border regime in place, the vast majority of undocumented border crossing to enter the EU



appears to happen by land,<sup>2</sup> as in the case of the Greek border with Turkey and the Spanish one with Morocco – with the two enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla attracting third-country nationals willing to enter the EU by crossing its border(s) without the required documents. However, also during this time, much more dangerous sea routes including those connecting Lampedusa and Fuerteventura respectively with North and Northwest Africa, started being crossed by undocumented migrants and asylum seekers (Orsini and Schiavon, 2009; Pastore et al., 2006; de Haas, 2008). This is a development that has come under increasing media interest worldwide (Friese, 2012).

The EU response to these migratory pressures was articulated into a quasi-militarisation of the frontier (Giorgi and Pinkus, 2006; Barrero and de Witte, 2007; Paoletti, 2011) and, in 2004, by the creation of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of member states – FRONTEX (Neal, 2009). Within such a frame, border areas in both the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, as well as those enclosing the seawaters surrounding Lampedusa and Fuerteventura, became the ground to test European external sea-border patrolling missions coordinated by FRONTEX, which was also in charge of the training and financial support of member states' police and army forces involved in border control (Spijkerboer, 2007; Carrera, 2007). Alongside this increasing securitisation of the frontier, numerous migrant detention centres were opened over the whole European space and particularly along the external border, in order to temporarily detain migrants and thus to control their movements (Tsianos and Karakayali, 2010).

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<sup>2</sup> 'Although official data are lacking because of the clandestine nature of these crossings, the largest part of undocumented residents [in the EU consists] either of persons who have crossed the land (and not the sea) borders irregularly or (to a much greater extent) of persons who have entered EU territory legally with a valid visa, and then overstayed its expiry date' (Cuttitta, 2014: 206)

These transformations had a profound impact on border communities. As for small-scale fishers, the boundaries of territorial waters as the spatial limits for their fishing activities were increasingly militarized and securitized, crossed as they are by migrants' boats and rescue boats, as well as by patrolling forces. Despite it developing later than the CFP, the European external management is by no doubt a well-established and a core body of EU legislation. When concentrating on isolated communities living along it, the local effects of such a frontier become extremely visible. Yet, the scope of locating this study at the border of Europe is not limited to analysing the working of the EU external border management on the ground. As I explain in the following section, the border here worked also as a privileged viewpoint from where to observe the European governance system and consider how it affected ordinary European citizens' daily lives.

#### **2.4. The centrality of Europe's edges**

Studying the local impact that EU governance has on individuals by locating the investigation at the geographical, political, sociocultural and/or economic margins of Europe facilitates the investigative effort. Marginal populations are expected to be particularly affected by EU policies as they are designed at and for the centre. Accordingly, individual and community's interactions with governance's structures are expected to be more visible at the margins of the polity – the EU - than they are at the core of it. Moreover, trying to understand the nature of EU governance from a bottom-up angle, making the margins visible can aid better understanding of what is contained inside of them.

It is the search for this specific border perspective that pushed me to locate this study along and across multiple marginalities (Sharp, 2009). First, fishery constitutes

a marginal European economic sector (Cooper, 1999). Yet, within the context of EU fishery, small-scale artisanal fisheries – as different from big-scale industrial fisheries – are those experiencing major economic difficulties given the sector's substantial marginality within the frame of EU policymaking on fishery (Jentoft et al., 1998).

Both islands that are the object of this study are located at the margins of the EU and, more precisely, along its external border: a useful and valid geopolitical location from a governmental perspective. Indeed, one of governance's 'essential technical means [are] apparatuses of security' (Foucault, 1991: 102) and the external border of the Schengen space of free movement of people is certainly one of the – if not *the* – major security apparatus within the frame of the EU multi-level system of governance. Thus, from a governmental angle, Europe's border certainly constitutes a privileged space from where to look at the EU. What happens at the margins – or peripheries – is fundamental in shaping what is generally understood as the centre. To locate myself at the border – or the margin - becomes then an operational choice and a favourite viewpoint, 'a point *d'entrée* [...] to better understand the nature of the entity - the European Union itself - that the internal and external border delineate' (Warwick, 2008: 5).

Before moving to the discussion of the data collection techniques that I used during my investigation, I first outline necessary background information about the two islands in order to help better locate my fieldwork. I start from Lampedusa since I focused my analysis mainly there. Then I will move to Fuerteventura and the island's main fishing port of Gran Tarajal.

## 2.5. Introduction to the islands and their local fishing industries

Here I provide key information concerning the islands' geographies and their demography. I also outline a schematic view of the local fisheries.

### 2.5.1. *Lampedusa: a rock in the middle of the Sicilian channel*

Lampedusans often call their island 'the rock'. This tiny Italian atoll appears as an isolated piece of land emerging from the middle of the Sicilian channel – the breach of open seas linking the Southern coast of Sicily with Tunisia and Libya. Lampedusa is almost 26 square kilometres and it is the major island of the archipelago of the Pelagie that includes Linosa<sup>3</sup> and the desert atoll of Lampione.<sup>4</sup> All 6.299 registered residents live in Porto Lampedusa, the only village on the island.

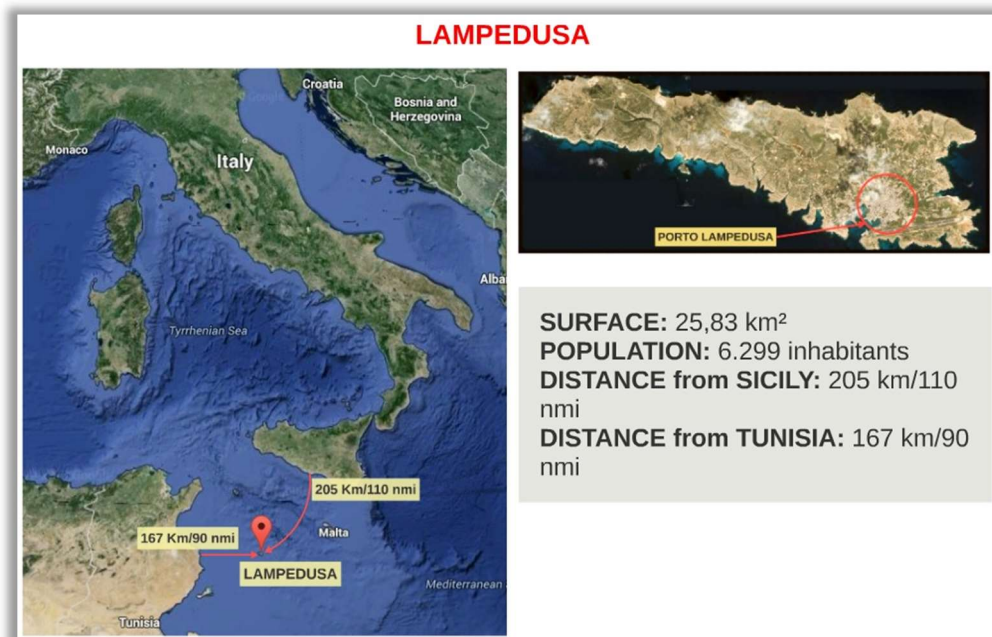
Geologically part of the African continent, Lampedusa is much closer to the coasts of Tunisia than it is to Sicily - as its closest Italian territory besides the tiny island of Pantelleria.<sup>5</sup> The Sicilian port town of Porto Empedocle is 205 kilometres – 110 nautical miles - north from Lampedusa. Yet, the island is only 167 kilometres away from the Tunisian port of Ras Kaboudja. Figure 2.2 below provides a visualisation of Lampedusa's main geographic and demographic features

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<sup>3</sup> Located 57.5 kilometres – 21 nautical miles - north, inhabited by less than 500 inhabitants living over an area of five square kilometres.

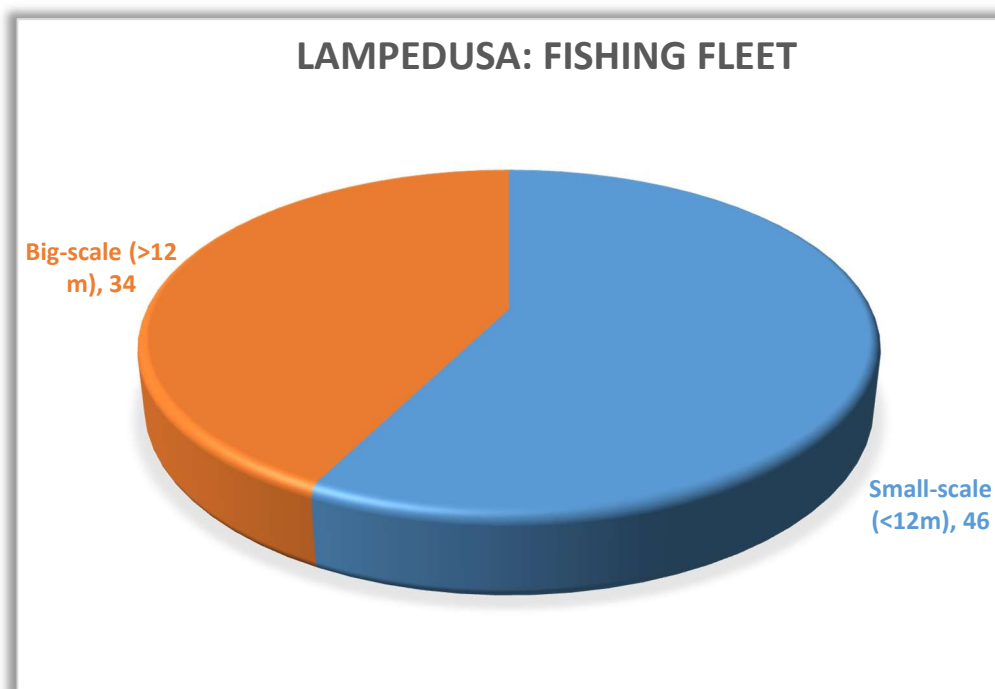
<sup>4</sup> Located 18.5 kilometres – ten nautical miles - southwest, it covers an area of one square kilometre.

<sup>5</sup> Located 159 kilometres – 86 nautical miles - west, counting more than seven thousands and 500 inhabitants living over an area of 83 square kilometres.



**Figure 2.2:** Lampedusa distances from mainland Sicily and Tunisia, population and surface (@ Google Map - elaborated by the author)

*Local fishery:* as for the rest of Sicilian fisheries, in Lampedusa the majority of local vessels were relatively small. According to the 12 meters long vessel's hull threshold, there were several small-scale fishing vessels for artisanal fishery operating in Lampedusa. When I conducted my fieldwork there, of those vessels equipped with a professional fishing license, 80 were matriculated in Lampedusa and 46 of these were shorter than 12 meters — see Chart 2.1. In terms of fishing techniques, the vast majority of vessels used set-longlines and hand- or pole-lines. Only three vessels fished with nets such as set-gillnets. Four other boats used purse seine as their main fishing gear. On the other hand, almost all big-scale fishing vessels operating locally used towed nets such as bottom otter trawls which are those seen as most heavily affecting fish stocks and sea bottoms (Pauly et al., 2002).



**Chart 2.1:** Officially registered local big-scale and small-scale fishing vessels operating in Lampedusa (data of the European Fishing Fleet Register - EFR<sup>6</sup> - crossed with the numbers I collected locally)

Similarly to what happened to the rest of Mediterranean small fishing ports, the local fishery in Lampedusa was significantly segmented in terms of both vessel size and fishing techniques.

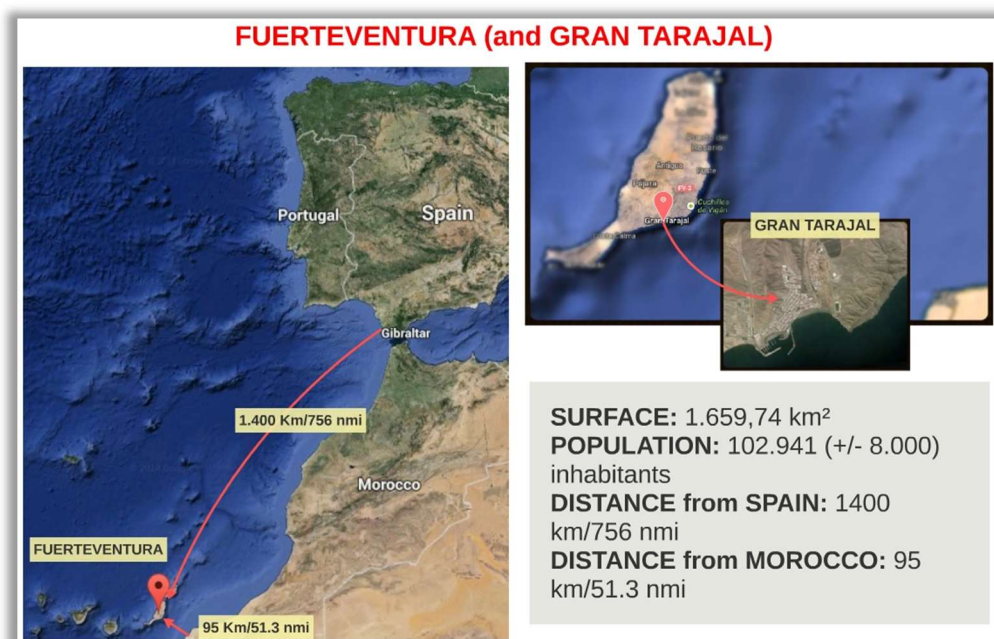
### 2.5.2. *Fuerteventura: a Spanish piece of Saharan desert off the coasts of Morocco and Western Sahara*

The Spanish island where I developed the second part of my fieldwork is much bigger than Lampedusa, covering an area of 1,655 square kilometres, inhabited by an overall population of more than 100,000 people. On the island I concentrated my data collection in the fishing village of Gran Tarajal. With a population of little more than

<sup>6</sup> Accessible online (<http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/fleet/index.cfm>) this register managed by the DG MARE of the European Commission is a database including all the fishing vessels flying any EU member state flag that, according to CFP provisions, are obliged to register.

8,000 inhabitants, this was indeed the island's biggest fishing community and the closest port to the Moroccan and Western Saharan coasts (González Rodríguez, 2004).

Geographically, the nearest continental Spanish and European land is situated 1,400 kilometres – 756 nautical miles – north of Fuerteventura - see Figure 2.3. Although the island is geologically separated from the African continent, Fuerteventura is just 95 kilometres – 51 nautical miles - west from the Western Saharan coastal town of Tarfaya (Morales Matos, 2001).



**Figure 2.3:** Fuerteventura and Gran Tarajal's distances from mainland Spain and Morocco, population and surface (@ Google Map - elaborated by the author)

*Local Fishery:* out of the three fishing villages on the island – Morro Jable, Gran Tarajal and Corralejo from south to north– Gran Tarajal was the most important one – in terms of both the fleet size and its productivity. Differently from Lampedusa, its local fishery was somewhat homogeneous, as often happens for Atlantic fisheries: given to the size of the catches indeed, fishermen harvest a minor number of species so that they tend to use similar fishing gears. In Gran Tarajal - as well as on the rest of the

island - no big-scale industrial fishing vessel operated: all 41 locally registered vessels were small-scale ones and they exclusively used set-longlines.

Both Lampedusa and Fuerteventura are located at the geographical periphery of Europe, much closer to the African continent than they are to their corresponding mainland. Inhabited by a few thousands of people, both the port villages of Porto Lampedusa and Gran Tarajal's small-scale fisheries counted on less than 50 vessels each. However, as I later describe, and as it appears from the data concerning the distribution of fishing gears, the organisation of the two fisheries differed profoundly.

#### **2.4. Conclusion**

Governance theory structures my study of the ground-level effects that EU policies produced on individuals. Given the specificity of this particular investigation - one focusing on fishermen and two detached island communities -the geographical as well as sociocultural maritime element is a central feature of my analysis as far as it played a pivotal role in constructing fishers' daily lives, as well as the pre-EU histories of the two islands. In these terms, then, my fieldwork involved providing centrality to a relatively underexplored field – or, paradoxically, to 'ground' my enquiry in the sea, so as to bring to light the major features characterizing social life for the coastal and island communities living at as well as from the sea.

In addressing EU policies and individuals simultaneously from a ground/sea-level perspective, my goal is to observe the Communitarian governance system where EU rules and regulations encounter ordinary citizens inhabiting the European space. From this angle, governmentality provides a useful theoretical tool that enabled me to draw together micro and macro dimensions of life in the EU and call individual citizens into the picture simultaneously as both subjects and agents of the EU governance project,



highlighting how specific governance system(s) steer individuals' (in-)actions as much as those same governing rationalities were in fact reframed and/or adapted on the ground.

In approaching the EU from this top-down-bottom-up angle, the geographical as well as socio-political margins of the EU are turned central and seen as constituting the rupture of the European governance space as it differentiates from the outside of itself – revealing most visibly its nature. Yet, on the other hand, this bottom-up look allowed me to focus on communities and individuals exposed to the changes generated from the major and distant political project that is the EU. Now, before moving to the discussion of the data, I present the array of techniques I deployed to collect data over more than one year of fieldwork.



### 3. METHODOLOGY: APPROCHING COMPLEXITY IN THE FIELD

*'Are you a biologist or a journalist?'* (Mariano, Lampedusan fish trader);  
*'Actually, I am a sociologist'* (Me); *'A what?'* (Mariano)

In this chapter I chart the data collection techniques I used in my fieldwork, which included ethnographic and participant observations, structured and semi-structured interviews, focus groups, informal talks and the filming of a documentary. I describe how I identified and approached more than 55 stakeholders on the islands and at the European Union (EU) institutional level, both in Brussels and Warsaw. I then discuss the qualitative data collection techniques that I employed, with a view to introduce an understanding of the physical spaces where my fieldwork took place and my level of engagement with informants. The chapter ends with a description of the main challenges encountered in the field, together with a critical account of the strategies I implemented to overcome them and an overview of the main limitations and ethical issues characterizing this study.

#### 3.1. Collecting data for a multi-layered investigation

My investigation gathered two main sets of data. First, I analysed the working of both the Common Fishery Policy (CFP) and the European external border management 'on the ground', and I examined how EU provisions translated onto the territories of and seawater surrounding the two islands. Parallel to these sets of data, I also analysed whether and how the diverse ground-level manifestations of EU governing technologies had any tangible impact on local fishermen's everyday life. At this level, observations and questions focused individual experiences and narratives rather than specific or significant facts and events or official sets of data. As I will discuss, to gather data among and across these two analytical levels, I addressed stakeholders from very different social and spatial settings.

### 3.1.1. *The socio-spatial dimensions of a multi-sited study*

Over the 12 months I spent in Lampedusa and Fuerteventura between September 2012 and July 2013 and then later in September of 2014, I collected data from more than 50 individuals. As a multi-sited ethnography, I expanded my observations at several relevant social and spatial levels (Marcus, 1995). In order to provide an effective overview of how I conducted the investigation across these various field(s), I have divided this section of the chapter into three major parts, tracing the research process as it concretely took place at various European, regional and local levels.

*The EU level:* before my participant observation in Lampedusa and Fuerteventura I conducted preliminary investigative work in Brussels. For example, In May 2012, I attended a public hearing for the reform of the CFP, organized by the European Parliament Fishery Committee - EPFC.<sup>7</sup> For the occasion, Members of the European Parliament - MEPs, European Commissioners of the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries – DG MARE, representatives of European fishermen and fishing vessel owners associations and fishing industries, as well as national institutional stakeholders, met to discuss the CFP reform that entered into force in January 2014. Here I was able to observe how these actors negotiated at the EU level while also increasing my familiarity with the main issues and priorities concerning the policy. Additionally, when I had finished my fieldwork on the Islands in July 2013 and, following a lecture that I delivered in Krakow, I joined an official visit to the FRONTEX headquarters in the Polish capital of Warsaw. I also continued to collect data following my main period of fieldwork by participating at relevant meetings, seminars and conferences, and by getting in touch with local policy experts and EU policy makers.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/pech/home.html> [Accessed on May 03, 2015]

*The regional level:* before my fieldwork in Lampedusa, I also spent almost one month at the University of Palermo officially enrolled as an Erasmus visiting student in the Faculty of Political Science. As for Fuerteventura, at the beginning of my stay in the Canary Islands archipelago, I spent a few days at the Political Sciences and the Anthropology departments of the University of la Laguna on the island of Tenerife.

In both these academic centres I interviewed a number of local experts who came to be valuable gatekeepers, providing me several contacts on both islands. Furthermore, while residing in Lampedusa, I flew back to Palermo twice and, meeting with fellow local academics, I revised in-depth the data I had collected.

*The Island level:* I collected most of my data on the islands. In Lampedusa I resided continuously for over six months between October 2012 and March 2013, and, after this, I went back to the island on three occasions. The first of these latter visits was in April of 2013 to film part of the documentary I produced about the island which I worked on together with Lorenzo Sibiriu - a friend and movie director. I returned again to Lampedusa in July to take part in a local movie festival *LampedusaInFestival*<sup>8</sup> organized by the local association *Askavusa*<sup>9</sup>, as I did again one year later in September 2014 when I helped organize the sixth edition of that same festival. As for Fuerteventura, I was only once on the island where I resided in the fishing village of Gran Tarajal for three months between April and late June 2013.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.lampedusainfestival.com/> [Accessed on July 04, 2014]

<sup>9</sup> The name of this local grassroots cultural association *Askavusa* comes directly from Lampedusan dialect and literally means “barefoot”. Appearing in 2009, following locals’ protests in defence of migrants’ rights, this association aims to drive the attention of locals as well as national, European and international public opinions towards the condition of migrants in their countries of origin, as well as on the transit countries they cross before reaching Lampedusa.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there were multiple reasons why I concentrated most of my data collection in Lampedusa. As I was looking at both the CFP and the management of the European external border, before approaching the islands I was already aware of the major salience that this second European policy had in Lampedusa compared to Fuerteventura. As for 2012, if Lampedusa had never stopped serving the EU institution as the border island *par excellence*, boat migrants' arrivals to Fuerteventura and, in general, to the Canary Islands, had massively decreased since 2006 to almost a stop. As the biggest migrant detention centre of Spain, against a maximum capacity of more than 1,000 detainees, the Fuerteventura holding centre of El Mattoral closed down at the beginning of 2012 (Godenau and López-Sala, 2013). From this perspective then, when I started my investigation, Fuerteventura was somehow less 'at the border' than Lampedusa. Moreover, from a practical point of view, at the end of the first six months in Lampedusa, I had already collected very rich and detailed information. Consequently, I felt that to undertake a similar investigative effort in Fuerteventura would have led to an excessive accumulation of data. I thus decided to develop the fieldwork in Fuerteventura as a largely comparative one where the data from the Spanish island concentrated mostly – if not exclusively – on the local impact of the implementation of CFP provisions. This was done in order to provide me with a better understanding about what was happening in Lampedusa.

Working at these different levels and in different sites, I accessed relevant individuals from diverse professional as well as social environments, which is described in the next section.

### 3.1.2. Stakeholders: a composite landscape

Here I divide interviewees into four groups, in light of their major function in relation to the policy areas I was investigating: institutional actors, members of the civil society, workers of the local fishing-related industry, and actual fishers. Yet, several of the stakeholders who provided me information could be included in two or more of these indicative categories.

*Local Institutions:* this group was composed of members of relevant local, regional, national or European institutions – e.g. coastguard and law enforcement officials, the local mayor or the provincial authority on fishery, and MEPs, for instance. In Lampedusa I interviewed and gathered data from the mayor, the vice-mayor, two former mayors, the municipal assessor for fishery and the one for local migrants' integration and first assistance policies, the only employee of the local Marine Reserve, a former member of the coastguard, and other law enforcement officials. In Fuerteventura, I interviewed the provincial councillor for fishery and agriculture as well as a member of the regional police for fishery. In Brussels I exchanged ideas and impressions with the former vice-president<sup>10</sup> of the EPCF and members of his cabinet. Following my fieldwork, I was also in touch with several experts working in Brussels who were in close contact with EU policymakers. Moreover, in Warsaw in July, 2013, I had a short but extremely informative short interview with a FRONTEX spokesperson.<sup>11</sup>

Depending on each stakeholder's specific institutional role(s), I gathered official accounts over the policymaking process and the more technical aspects of the local

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/97020/GUIDO\\_MILANA\\_home.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/97020/GUIDO_MILANA_home.html) [Accessed on May 02, 2014]

<sup>11</sup> <http://frontex.europa.eu/contact> [Accessed on May 02, 2014]

implementation of the policies under examination, collecting at the same time available official documents and reports. Although my intention was to address members of this group with structured interviews, due to contingent and unexpected situations – such as, for example, the Coastguard and law enforcement officials in Lampedusa refusing any official and recorded interview - I often resorted to the use of informal talks. Unable to access the high commands as almost all of them were unwilling to pass me any information, I approached their subordinates in public spaces other than the police or Coastguard stations - such as Lampedusa's bars and squares – and I observed officials' everyday interactions with the rest of the population.

*Local Civil Society:* differently from Fuerteventura where I had only few contacts with members of the local, national or international civil society, in Lampedusa I collected information from the local priest, a British artist and activist working on the island, a local historian curator of the only historic archive of Lampedusa, and members of the *Askavusa* association. The main goal of my gathering data from members of the civil society was to open up official narratives (Steinmetz, 1992). Since not one member of this group refused to answer my queries, I collected this data through structured interviews, with questions that were to an extent symmetric with the ones I asked institutional actors. I also gathered data through ethnographic observations in order to better appreciate how different activists permeated the local sociocultural and political landscape.

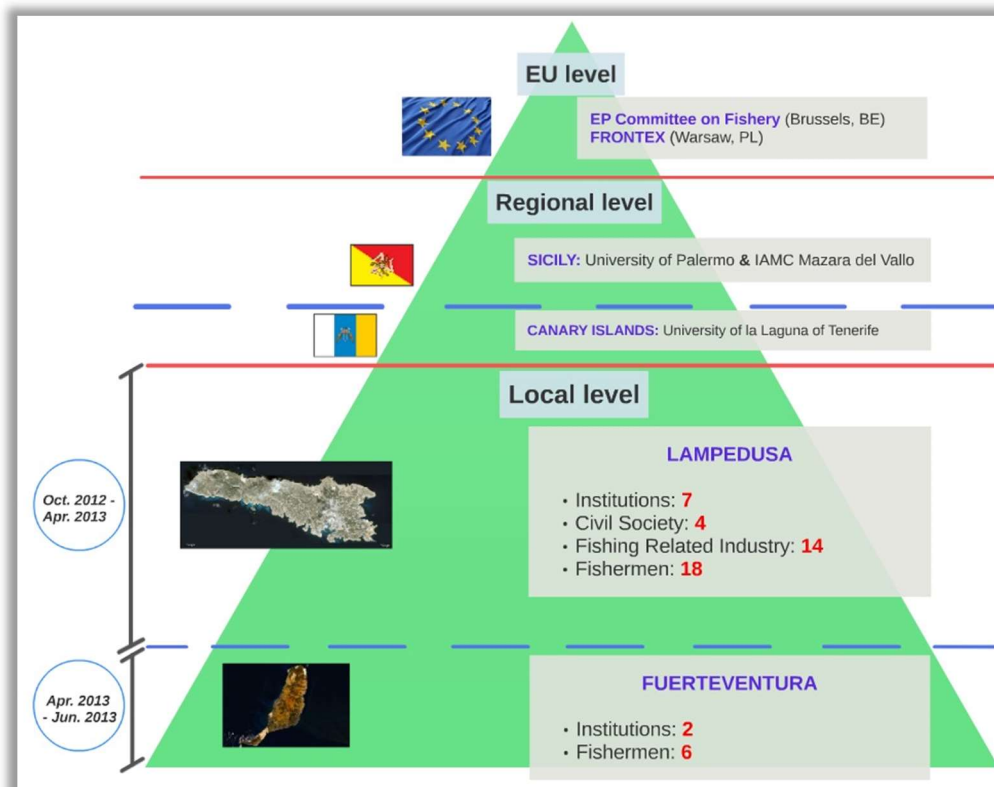
*Local Fishing-Related Industry:* I interviewed 14 individuals in Lampedusa involved in the local fishing-related industry. I interviewed four employees – two active and two retired – of the local bluefish canning industry, and the owner of one of the two factories still operating on the island. I also interviewed the employee and the owner



of a local fish warehouse, the retired owner of that same warehouse, a bankrupted fish trader, a retired shipwright, and the owner of the only local aquaculture enterprise and one of his employees. Last but not least, I also interviewed the owner of a local fish restaurant and his son and business partner.

I treated the stakeholders from this group as fishers and did not limit my analysis exclusively to the mere local implementation of specific European normative provisions. Rather, I tried to deepen my gaze in order to grasp life histories and personal feelings or impressions over the most significant local socio-cultural transformations experienced by islanders over the recent decades of European integration. This is why I used life history interviews (Thompson, 1978) accompanied by several semi-structured interviews, focus groups and participant observations. All of this was accompanied by countless informal conversations.

*Local Fishermen:* in Lampedusa I collected data by directly involving 18 fishermen – two from an industrial fishery and 16 artisanal fishermen. As for Fuerteventura, I only gathered information from six small-scale artisanal fishermen. Since they constituted the core group of informants within my investigation on both islands, personal accounts and narratives were explored in depth. As for interviewees from the fishing-related industry, data collection techniques varied between life history and semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant and ethnographic observations and informal talks. I thus spent the major part of fieldwork on the islands with fishers, trying to be present, as much as I could, in the individual's everyday lives. Figure 3.1 visualises these various stakeholders that were involved in my fieldwork.



**Figure 3.1:** A visual summary of the main research locations (Graphic elaboration of the author).

Addressing relevant individuals from all of these very diverse professional, as well as social environments, I used of a variety of qualitative data collection techniques which I describe in the next section.

### 3.1.3. *Disentangling a set of qualitative research strategies*

While in the field, I used a series of data collection technique according to the specific investigative purposes related to the governance level I was looking at, as well as depending on the individuals I was addressing with my questions and observations. Below I list the qualitative data collection techniques I deployed and I specify how and where I used them, and I explain the reasons that pushed me to choose these rather than other techniques.

*Structured interviews:* since my main concern was to gather data concerning specific technical aspects of policy implementation, my structured interviews with 14 individuals from the institutional and civil-society level focused on the more operational aspects of the CFP and the management of the European external border at the sea. My goal was to get descriptive information and figures – e.g. the organisational structure of local fishery, the management of boat migrants' arrivals, the working of local facilities assigned to their reception, migrants' identification and assistance and such like. I aimed to collect comparable data – or individual accounts - on certain policy-related issues, in order to get a more as accurate a picture as possible '[...] across the entire field of potential viewpoints' (Pawson, 1996: 298). Given the sensitivity of most of the issues I discussed with interviewees – e.g. migrant rescuing operations at sea – there were often contradictions between official and non-official accounts which worked as a key source of data.

With almost all structured interviews I was able to record the talks. However, I mixed this technique with much less formal investigative strategies so as to avoid limiting the range of information within the boundaries of my research agenda (Birks et al., 2007). For instance, once interviews ended I visibly turned off the recorder to create an artificial rupture between two distinct parts of the same talk. In this way, formal interviews were commonly followed by a final and more friendly and informal talk. Here I hoped that informal conversations might provide me with more confidential information that was less structured by my set questions and recording technology. This often led to broadening my understanding about areas of policy implementation that I was not otherwise aware of. Since these sort of post-interview talks never lasted very long, I was able to take relatively accurate notes afterwards.

*Semi-structured interviews:* here I addressed individuals from both the local fishing-related industry as well as fishers themselves. Semi-structured interviews were aimed at discussing a series of issues I had planned beforehand, while leaving the interviewees with a great degree of freedom to talk. Similar to structured interviews, I intended to gather vital information over precise dynamics concerning local fisheries and the interactions of fishers with the workings of the border at sea. During the initial weeks of my fieldwork in Lampedusa I accumulated basic knowledge on fishery, which involved rudimentary notions that fishers often took for granted. Indeed, when I arrived in Lampedusa, I had very little knowledge regarding actual fishing or the technicalities related to it that were crucial in order to comprehend the fishers' social reality. On the other hand, I also used these interviews to drive my knowledge towards the most relevant local issues (Gubrium and Holstein, 2001; Grady, 1998; Birks et al, 2007).

In general, I tried to organize meetings in places familiar to the interviewees themselves, such as their working places – fishermen's tool sheds, the fish canning factory, the fishermen's association or their fishing vessels pier (see Plates 3.1 to 3.6) - or any public space where they would regularly go – Plate 3.7. This helped informants feel comfortable, while allowing me to have a direct look at those physical spaces where my participants spent most of their daily lives. On other occasions, however, I could not decide where interviews took place: rather, the interviewees decided where to take me.



**Plate 3.1:** The exterior of one of the Lampedusa fishermen's tools shed. Carlo, the youngest artisanal fishermen of the island, is arming the purse seine net during a winter day of bad sea conditions (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu - elaborated by the author)



**Plate 3.2:** The interior of Giovanni's tool shed. He was the oldest local fishermen. Other retired colleagues played cards while he sat at the bottom of the barrack, waiting for one of the several interviews we had (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu - elaborated by the author)



**Plate 3.3:** The interior of one of the two Lampedusa's fish canning industries, with employees – all women apart from one man - peeling boiled *mackerel* before putting them under oil (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu - elaborated by the author)



**Plate 3.4:** The interior of Lampedusa fishermen's association: the president – Piero - is standing helping the two fishermen in front of him to manage some bureaucracy (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu - elaborated by the author)



**Plate 3.5:** Canopy of Gran Tarajal fishermen's association. Jorge, a local active fishermen and a member of the local fishermen association – leaning against the roof pillar - speaks with older retired fishermen (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu - elaborated by the author)



**Plate 3.6:** Jorge, interviewed on the Gran Tarajal fishing vessels' pier (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu - elaborated by the author)



**Plate 3.7:** Francesca – one of the employees of the only aquaculture plant in Lampedusa – interviewed in the main road of Porto Lampedusa (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu - elaborated by the author)

*Ethnographic & Participant observation:* here I collected some of the most significant data (Brewer, 2000). The information I was able to gather constituted key material that I would discuss later with interviewees, and which I used in order to check what they told me beforehand. This is why this ‘relatively intense, prolonged interaction [...] and first-hand involvement in the relevant activities of [the interviewees’] lives’ (Levine et al., 1980: 38) turned itself very quickly into a core source of information.

When I first arrived in Lampedusa, the first tangible opportunity I had to get in touch with local fishermen followed my encounter with Mariano, the owner of one of the two fish warehouses located in the old port – Plate 3.8.





**Plate 3.8:** The exterior of Mariano's fish warehouse (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu - elaborated by the author)

Although he soon invited me to visit his own workplace to get in touch with as many fishers I could, I did not want to appear – and be – excessively intrusive. Thus I proposed to Mariano that he allow me to help him with some of his workload in order to make myself simultaneously more comfortable and more visible, while, hopefully, gaining the fishers' trust. Consequently, the first few times I went to the warehouse I helped Mariano moving ice and fish boxes and unloaded fishing vessels – and I kept doing that occasionally throughout my fieldwork on the island. Quickly, fishers asked either me or Mariano who I was –and I could then introduce myself and my investigation. During this time I also observed the many activities taking place in the warehouse. Indeed, my participation turned out to be an effective way to grasp fundamental information while also merging myself into the observed context (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994; Sandelowski, 2000). Later, during the last weeks of my stay in Lampedusa, I also embarked twice to go fishing. On both occasions we remained for more than 12 hours at sea at more than 20 nautical miles off the island (see Plate 3.11). Both times I helped less with the workload that in fact requires a greater degree of experience and risk, compared to working in a warehouse – but

there was, of course, no other way I could observe social life at sea other than going fishing.

During my participant observation I carried out approximately seven to eight hours of ethnographic observation per day along the islands' port piers - Plates 3.9 and 3.10 - in the local public spaces most frequented by the interviewees – such as local bars or the main squares of the villages – or inside fishers' tools sheds. In these environments I took notes while either there, or once away from the location in which observations took place. However, in such small islands and villages, ethnographic observation never really stopped, even during what I considered to be my free time. Spending time with local friends around the island, I could not avoid observing what was happening around me.



**Plate 3.9:** Fishermen changing their fishing nets along the port pier of Lampedusa (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu - elaborated by the author)



**Plate 3.10:** Gran Tarajal port pier (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu - elaborated by the author)



**Plate 3.11:** Fishermen Mario and Pietro fishing 20 miles South of Lampedusa (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu - elaborated by the author)

*Informal talks:* I addressed fishers, law enforcement and/or Coastguard officials, employees of the local fish canning industry, local politicians and almost everyone that participated in the investigation, in informal as well as formal talks. This enabled me to gather what was sometimes confidential data that I would have not been able to access otherwise. Indeed, some of the issues I dealt with during several interviews regarded either illegal conducts related to fishing, as well as possible fundamental

rights violations related to the working of the border at sea. Informal talks became the only way to gather such sensitive data. Moreover, as I have said, informal talks also served to often check and countercheck that information that I collected through more formal interviews.

Although there was generally no formal structure to these conversations, I was often able to at least partly drive talks so that I could cover specific issues that I wanted to discuss. Following these conversations I took notes when finding - or making - myself alone.

*Focus groups:* in Lampedusa I conducted two focus groups. The first time, I was with the members of the crew of the first fishing vessel I concentrated my research on in Lampedusa. I opted for this specific strategy simply because I could not get an individual interview with any of them. This was largely because this group were not properly Lampedusan fishers, having arrived there from Porto Empedocle - the closest Sicilian seaport - for six months a year to access the local richer fishing grounds. Since they slept and lived on their vessels, it was literally impossible to find them alone for a quiet and long talk. Soon I realized that my only option was a group meeting.

Something similar happened when I interviewed a worker at Lampedusa's fish canning industry at a friend's place while she was having her hair tended to. My hope was that before or after the hairdressing, we would have had the opportunity of spending some time alone for an interview. However, after a few minutes, I was in the room chatting with her while my friend - and hairdresser - was still there - and his mother appeared as well. Since she was a retired worker of the same local fish canning industry, soon what I wanted to be a pre-interview talk became an informal focus group where everyone - including my friend - actively participated in the discussion.

The first interview with the fishing vessel's crew took place over lunch, at one of the fishermen's house – Plates 3.12 and 3.13. The other – as I said – took place at my friend's place – Plate 3.14. In both cases I was able to record our long informal talks, while I could also observe group interactions. Moreover, on both occasions, the film maker - Lorenzo - and his two cameras, accompanied me. As I did not want the presence of the two cameras to interfere excessively with the situation, for the two focus groups we placed them at the margins – often the corner – of the room and left them there so that interviewees – and us – soon forgot their presence. Obviously, all interviewees already knew Lorenzo and felt comfortable having him in the room.



**Plate 3.12:** The house where the focus group interview with the fishing vessel's crew took place (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu elaborated by the author)



**Plate 3.13:** A scene from the actual focus group interview with the fishermen crew (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu elaborated by the author)



**Plate 3.14:** A scene from the actual focus group interview with the two women from Lampedusa's fish canning industry (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu elaborated by the author)

*Documentary film shooting:* while on both islands I also conducted numerous filmed interviews for the shooting of a documentary.<sup>12</sup> The major concerns related to the

<sup>12</sup> 'Once the sea was covered with water. European fisheries at the edge' - <http://borrachalavida.wix.com/oscvv> [Accessed on April 21, 2015]

filming of these interviews derived from the several investigative risks associated with taking a camera and another person to interviews. However, besides these worries, the camera soon became an opportunity leading to further interviews and data.

The project of the documentary moved initially from my wish to produce a visual document of the research able to reach a wider public than an exclusively academic one. However, the presence of two cameras and a filmmaker could have had the risk of affecting the intimacy of conversations. In light of this, we organized interviews in front of the camera only after having already spent more than one month on the islands, and we limited the first shootings to landscape framings only. In such a way we tried to not be too intrusive, while at the same time we also wanted to make the camera, Lorenzo and the documentary somehow increasingly visible, so that locals began to get both familiar with and curious about them. In this way, we artificially stressed and created a distinction between my research work and the documentary. I was the one interviewing and getting in touch with people, so far that I carried out individually each and every task related to the research. At the same time, people who were getting to know me were also seeing me around the island with a friend and a camera. When questioned about this, I always presented the documentary as a parallel but separate project so that I could highlight the distinction. Thanks to these initial moves, we almost immediately gained locals' curiosity. Soon, the presence of Lorenzo and the camera begun to be perceived as less and less intrusive and further interviews with the same subjects were finally possible – another opportunity for me to countercheck interviewees' answers (Ruby et al., 2001).

Thus, despite the several difficulties related to the intrusion of a camera and a filmmaker to my fieldwork, my feeling was that this did not significantly distort the validity of my investigative endeavour. Filmed interviews took place separately from those I organized exclusively for my study, but the link for an online version of the

documentary is attached to the thesis – and it can be used as an alternative source of data and narrative about the Island (Barbash and Taylor, 1997; Morawska, 1996).

Although I have discussed each data collection technique separately, in the field I very often merged them together. Moreover, if on the one hand I planned to use most of these strategies before moving to the islands, I also opted for some of them because of contextual and practical situations that I encountered in the field. Table 3.2 – presents my various data collection techniques in relation to the groups of stakeholders that I addressed in the field. On a minor note, I must clarify here that despite the relatively substantial number of people I addressed in my fieldwork, as frequently happens for ethnographies, throughout the thesis there are a number of excerpts from a smaller number of ‘key informants’. After all, using informal data collection techniques, I could only record a limited number of interviews.

ADDRESSED GROUPS	DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES	
<b>Institution</b>	Structured Interviews, <i>Informal Talks</i> , Ethnographic & Participant Observations	
<b>Civil Society</b>	Structured Interviews	
<b>Fishing-Related Industry</b>	Semi-structured Interviews, <i>Informal Talks</i> , Ethnographic & <i>Participant Observations</i> , <i>Focus Groups</i>	Documentary Shooting
<b>Fishery</b>	Semi-structured Interviews, Informal Talks, Ethnographic & <i>Participant Observations</i> , <i>Focus Groups</i>	

**Table 3.2:** Data collection techniques used on the field, for the diverse groups of stakeholders I addressed. Unplanned-in-advance research techniques in italics and underscored



Before moving to the core discussion of the data, I describe the several challenges I encountered on the islands in terms of data collection and the strategies I deployed to overcome them – often turning these challenges into investigative opportunities.

### **3.2. Rethinking data collection techniques**

Here I map the most significant epistemological barriers that obliged me to rethink data collection techniques throughout my fieldwork, together with a description of the strategies I implemented in order to overcome them. Most of these difficulties refer exclusively to Lampedusa. In addition to the fact that Lampedusa was the island where I spent most of the months of my fieldwork, the local community in Lampedusa seemed to experience greater tensions than any I could detect in Fuerteventura.

#### *3.2.1. 'Yes we live on the border but please, do not ask us about it!'*

As one of the most direct manifestations of the Lampedusa's centrality within the building and showing of the European external border, a major complication I encountered in Lampedusa derived from the intrusive academic and media presence on the island - to which I was also, of course, participating. Such an unusual condition for an isolated and tiny population interfered intensely with locals' attitudes towards those coming to the isle to carry on investigations of any sort – more or less indifferently from them being journalists, activists or academics. When I landed on the island there were already several other researchers/activists/Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) members: all of them working on local boat-migrant related issues. Yet, such intrusive attention was interpreted by the islanders as neglecting their own experience, which understandably provoked some annoyance and reluctance to answer those asking about the European external border and boat-migrants. I immediately realized that I had to distinguish myself from the rest of

researchers in Lampedusa so that I would be more likely to be welcomed by locals. When I landed on the island, this was a main concern: to avoid being seen as yet another researcher studying the workings of the European external border in Lampedusa, as this would have surely reduced the quality of data that I could collect on the island.

In light of these initial worries, over the first weeks I intentionally avoided addressing local migrant-related issues with potential interviewees. Rather, my first talks and contacts concentrated exclusively around the impact of the CFP on the local fishery, allowing me to overcome, to some degree, the initial distrust that my questions may have generated. Although this was not quite the case – as the border was central for my analysis – I knew that was only a temporary arrangement for me to improve the quality of my investigation. In fact, since I knew that I was going to pass the winter on the island, I was also aware that I could come back to discuss with the same interviewees migration-related issues once I had gained people's trust and when most of the journalists and other researchers had left the island. In fact, when winter came and sea conditions worsened, boat-migrants' arrivals dramatically decreased and so did the salience of the island for the national and international media and academic communities. This provided a more reasonable time for me to then be talking to the communities about issues related to the border.

### *3.2.2. One sea, several worlds: local fishery as a segmented reality*

Another technical concern regarded fishers' contradictory accounts of specific events. What I found confusing were the several inconsistent accounts told by the same individual. This puzzling phenomenon made it difficult to obtain a consistent picture of how specific local dynamics actually took place. Yet it also constituted a form of data itself, as it reflected a series of distinctive features of the world of the fishery.

Besides the fact that people may often hold quite contradictory and capricious views of the reality they live in, small local fishing communities are often characterized by a high degree of segmentation, both in terms of individual and group interests – for instance, based on different approaches to fishing (Jacobs et al., 2001).

Moreover, for those fishers who pass a long time on the sea, the sea was often framed as their exclusive space, as if there was no way for non-fishermen to really understand it. Such an elitist perspective was challenged by my questions and curiosity, even more so when touching upon sensitive topics such as illegal fishing, or dangerous situations experienced at sea. Thus, during the initial months in Lampedusa, fishers' reaction to my sometimes-thorny queries was often to try to confuse me even more, in an attempt to somehow keep me away from their sea (Festing, 1977) – and their knowledge. It has to be understood that the Sicilian channel and, in particular, that part of sea with Lampedusa in the middle, was a space crossed by several international illicit activities – drug trafficking, smuggling, human trafficking, and weapons smuggling for instance– with many actors involved – not least Sicilian and other regional mafias (Aronowitz, 2001; Ben-Yehoyada, 2011). Moreover, the fishery itself was a work activity characterized by a high degree of illegality (Agnew et al., 2009). Consequently, fishers would unlikely be sincere with me, in our initial interactions at least.

This was a situation that I did not find in Fuerteventura, where there seemed to be much less to hide about what was happening in the sea. Also, the local fishery was much more organized and monitored in Fuerteventura than it was in Lampedusa, so that a much smaller degree of illegal activities characterized the local professional fishers' work environment.

Moreover, it must also be considered that artisanal fishery is a varied job sector where apparently very similar fishing vessels fish diverse species by using different

fishing techniques, in various areas of the sea and at different times of the day and the year. This meant that, despite the fact that fishing vessels often looked similar amongst themselves while anchored along the piers, fishermen experienced very different work realities, consequently producing partly diverse accounts of life at sea.

The contradictory narratives that I heard often complicated my initial understanding of the most basic dynamics characterizing the complex reality of the fishery I was observing and analyzing for the first time in my life. However, aiming to overcome these confusing discrepancies, while also considering them as a central set of data, I took the chance of asking very similar questions and discussed the same issue from diverse angles, more and more often with the same person and in different contexts: informally at the bar, at the fish warehouse, being alone or among other fishermen, and then more formally during the interviews. I used these repeat interviews as ‘a strategy to enhance the level of comfort of the participants and therefore the breadth and depth of the information provided by them’ (Birks et al., 2007: 152). I had turned the segmented and sometimes contradictory dimension of life on the island into an opportunity to deepen and refine my investigation over time, while simultaneously building my understanding of fishers’ daily lives and experiences in light of those very contradictions.

### *3.2.3. Opening the study: how to include women participants*

As expected, on both islands, work on board fishing vessels was a male-only job sector: in other words, I could not meet any woman who actually embarked as part of any of the fishing crews I addressed. When Lampedusa’s fish canning industry started rapidly declining in the 1990s – as I discuss in the next chapters – women began losing their jobs in the local fishing industry (Taranto, 2012). Thus, in order to recognize the broader community on the island, in Lampedusa I interviewed workers of the two

canning industries still operating, together with others who were forced to leave this sector when most local factories had closed down. As for Gran Tarajal, I failed to include women, given that the local fishermen's association I worked with was exclusively male. Apart from the association's secretary, on the island women were largely excluded from the sector (see also De la Paz, 2012).

While I was able to turn many of these difficulties into opportunities to refine and deepen my collection of data, as I explain in the following section, there were also a series of other limitations that I could not overcome.

### **3.3. The limits of the investigation**

The most important limitations of my study refer to the investigative challenges outlined above. The scarce cooperation of both the Coastguard and the other law enforcement officials in Lampedusa entailed a series of further obstructions to my data collection. The obstinate refusals of the local high commands to collaborate – and to allow any of their subordinates to do so – was partly circumvented by addressing officials with informal talks or conducting ethnographic observations. However, the institutional unwillingness to collaborate also meant that I was not able to get official permission to embark on professional fishing vessels. Nevertheless, in the last weeks of my stay in the island I finally went fishing twice - with no permit and thus at my own risk. Yet, the non-collaborative attitude of the authorities nonetheless limited my access to official documents and reports such as, for instance, those regarding local fishers' main recorded misconducts.

### 3.3.1. *Ethical concerns*

I obtained consent for the interviews verbally. As for informal talks, before gathering any data I made sure the interlocutor was aware of the purposes of my presence on the islands and thus of my research. However, I also gathered information by listening to other people's conversations, for example, a group of police officers spending their free time on one of Lampedusa's beaches. On that occasion, I heard sensitive information regarding forthcoming departures of migrants' boats from the Libyan coasts. This data represented a key information source to understand better the workings of the border around Lampedusa. However, it was also a form of "stolen" data, but, due to non-cooperation from the authorities, I simply could not gather this data in any other way.

Furthermore, the impossibility to get any permit to embark on professional fishing vessels generated a further ethical concern. I had to decline the invitations of professional fishermen that wanted to take me aboard without a permit. This was, to my understanding, an excessive risk for them to take as they could be fined for having me aboard. Consequently, the only possibility remaining for me to observe fishers at work was to go on fishing vessels that went fishing illegally. During winter, when the bad sea conditions allowed only few days of fishing per month, professional fishermen often claimed unemployment benefit, self-reporting that they were no longer fishing. However, when the weather allowed, they fished illegally with leisure boats and by not declaring their catches. By embarking with them I gained insights into both illegal and professional fishing at once – both dimensions of the same job reality I was observing. However, I was also aware that my presence on the vessel was at the same time facilitating their illegal activity so far that, by having me aboard helping with their fishing, they could embark more catch without running any actual legal risk while at the sea. Indeed, recreational fishing vessels – what these vessels officially claimed to

be – could legally embark up to five kilograms of catch per person on board. Nevertheless, I decided to go for the collection of data anyway, being convinced that those transgressive conducts I was observing would have taken place in any case, with or without me on board the vessel.

As a result of these concerns, I avoid using the actual names of interviewees and participants that I saw and observed conducting illegal activities. Moreover, besides asking for verbal consent, I also asked if interviewees wanted their names to be explicitly included in the thesis. Consequently, individuals' names reported throughout the text are both actual and pseudonyms. However it is clear that in such tiny locations as the villages where I conducted my study, contextual data could lead locals to understand who many interviewees really were. When similar conditions applied, asking for verbal consent to the interviewees (Power, 1989; Moore, 1993) I also made clear to them that by allowing me to use the interviewees' data, I was also automatically disclosing his/her very identity to locals – no matter whether or not I faked his/her name.

By using such a varied and articulated set of data collection techniques, I had access to a significant amount of in-depth information. From this base, the following chapters analyse how European governance had changed the fishers' lives in both Lampedusa and Fuerteventura, starting by introducing the history of both overseas territories up until they became part of the EU.





#### 4. LIFE BEFORE THE EU

*'There were mountains of fish on the pavement, on the street, inside the factory. And my mum would yell, "Take the fish! Bring it here!"'* (Maria, retired worker of the bluefish canning industry in Lampedusa)

Before exploring how the European Union (EU) changed everyday life on both islands I will locate these two remote European territories historically, providing a brief overview of the history of the local fisheries in Fuerteventura and Lampedusa. My account of the history of Lampedusa ends when, in the 1970s, the initial pillars of the Common Fishery Policy - CFP, such as the establishment of a common market for European fish and the first structural policies, were introduced (da Conceição-Heldt, 2004). My pre-EU-history of Fuerteventura ends later, when Spain joined the EU in the 1980s. Given that the major focus of my study is on Lampedusa, I provide more historical data about this island compared to Fuerteventura.

##### 4.1. Lampedusa: an island in the middle of the Mediterranean

Due to institutional neglect, no relevant official archives exist today on Lampedusa. When I asked for official documents on the Italian island, institutional as well as non-institutional actors repeated that all archives were burnt in a series of fires. The following overview of the history of the island thus mixes data from the few texts and documents I collected, either on the island or outside of it – mainly at the University of Palermo – and also from the oral histories that locals shared with me.

One major source of this data came from Nino, a 63 year-old architect from Naples, who owned a private gallery in Lampedusa, and who was the son of a Lampedusan seaman. Given his passion for his ancestors' island, for more than 40 years Nino had collected historical objects or documents relating to Lampedusa. When he retired as

an architect in 2007, he decided to open a small gallery and establish the Historical Archive of the Lampedusa Cultural Association, which counted more than 50 members in 2012. Since the first time we met, Nino repeatedly told me that if it was not for him and a few others, there would have remained no trace of the past of the island. The archive is a sort of permanent library and a gallery where Nino exhibited historical photos and images of Lampedusa, screened historical videos about the island and sold artistic souvenirs. Carefully taking off from below his desk a showcase containing a small silver coin with the inscription of a *tuna*, he told me:

There is evidence that already during the fourth century B.C., Greeks established on Lampedusa where they coined currency like this one... Later... in 994 AD the Saracens governed the island: according to a census of the time, islanders were all Muslims... I am talking of about 1,000 people that, supposedly, were living off fishing and agriculture.

As discovered by the English archaeologist Thomas Ashby (1911) during his two day visit of the island in 1909, local tracks of human settlements dated back to the Neolithic period (Radi, 1972; Leighton, 1999). Lampedusa's location always made the island both a natural safe port of refuge as well as a strategic outpost in the middle of the Mediterranean. The Pelagic archipelago, whose major island is Lampedusa, also became a battle ground, and a land for corsairs interested in disrupting and making profits out of the trade between North Africa and Sicily. After the island became a Bourbon possession in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it transformed into the target for the famous Turkish corsair Dragut, whose stronghold was in the Tunisian town of Mahdia - the closest North African port to Lampedusa (Formentini, 1999).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Bernardo Sanvisente, the first governor of Lampedusa, wrote: 'there is unquestionable evidence that the island was inhabited by several ancient peoples. [...] Here we found Sicilian [...] Arabic, Turkish, Venetian, French and Maltese coins' (Taranto, 2012: 5). It is not by chance that the most important religious site on

the island is the sanctuary of Our Lady of Porto Salvo, the Preserver of all the people of the sea. The sanctuary is nothing more than a cave, already in use in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, that worked as an interreligious space shared by both Muslims and Christians. Following centuries under many diverse dominations, in 1843, the Bourbons who, at that time, ruled the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, finally took full command of Lampedusa. Bernardo Sanvisente arrived on the island that same year with the intention to make Lampedusa an agricultural colony: soon he started to bring people there – 90 men and 30 women – mostly peasants and artisans, with the promise of plots of land to cultivate (Mancini, 1978). However, in 1860 Italy was unified and the Spanish had to leave.

In 1872, under the control of the Italian kingdom, the island became a penal colony. Given the isolation of Lampedusa, detainees could spend the daytime moving freely on the island and socialising with locals. As one of the first actions taken by Italian authorities over the local population, they revoked the islanders' land property rights that they had been granted by the Bourbons. Consequently, locals' life conditions started deteriorating immediately and the scarcely successful agricultural history of Lampedusa soon ended (Taranto, 2012). However, around 15 years later, the fishing history of Lampedusa began when, in 1887, a fisherman from Trapani – a fishing town in the north west of Sicily – discovered a school of sponges just off the shores of the island. Chronicles from the following years speak of tens of Greek, Turkish, Tunisian and Sicilian surface-supplied divers and wooden sailing fishing vessels – *trabbàcoli* (see Plate 4.1) - moving to Lampedusa to start fishing the valuable catch. The few wealthy Lampedusans bought their own smaller vessels and also started fishing sponges to sell them in the busy markets of the North of Italy (Mancini, 1978; Taranto, 2012).



**Plate 4.1:** Disused Trabbàcoli in Lampedusa's old port beach (Roghi, 1954)

In 1888, other shoals were found in the waters surrounding the smallest of the three islands of the archipelago, the uninhabited rock of Lampione. Other vessels, especially from Greece and Dalmatia – corresponding to today's southern Croatia – soon joined. Besides the actual fishing, plenty of islanders were employed on land to treat raw sponges and transform them into marketable goods. The economy of Lampedusa began to flourish at an unprecedented speed. Nevertheless, Italian authorities continued to neglect the archipelago and Lampedusa, pushing its booming industry away from the islands. The lack of a telegraphic cable connecting the archipelago to mainland Sicily encouraged sponge fishing entrepreneurs to move southward and base their activities in what is today the Tunisian coast town of Sfax, but which was then part of the Ottoman Empire (Mancini, 1978). At the time, in light of the Italian-Tunisian friendship and the trade and navigation agreement of 1868, Sicilian fishers had full rights to fish in Tunisian waters and use the country's ports and beaches without any licence. In fact, given that thousands of Italians – and in

particular Sicilians – lived in Tunisia and fished from there, the agreement provided them free access to fish resources in Tunisian waters. Then, in 1881, following the French invasion of North Africa, Tunisia, Italy and France renewed the treaty that continued to operate until Mussolini's regime declared war on France in 1940 (Medici, 1991; Messina, 1993).

Giovanni was 86 years-old and possibly the most respected fisherman and captain of the island. He remembered these times:

What I can tell you about the fishing of sponges does not come from my direct memories: I was just a little kid by then. However, also my father owned one of these wooden sailing fishing vessels they used for sponges... Locals used to go fish in Tunisia, in Sfax: there were many Lampedusans based there... Depending on the conditions of the sea, we spent entire weeks and months in the Sfax lagoon... Nevertheless, we overfished our sponges so that it became much harder to find them, while many of us started working from Tunisia: later, they invented the artificial sponges and we had no more market to sell natural ones.

Soon the fishing of sponges declined and Lampedusa had to look for alternative sources of income. Meanwhile, if on the one hand the island experienced the neglect of national as well as regional authorities, Lampedusa never really stopped playing a national strategic role for mainland Italy, functioning as an open-air jail. At the end of the First World War, political prisoners were detained on Lampedusa (Procacci, 2006) and, during Mussolini's regime, the number of political prisoners on the island increased (Ebner, 2011).

Professor Giovanni Fragapane, a 78 year-old Lampedusan, was the mayor of the island between 1983 and 1993. He had worked as fisherman, then as a local secondary school professor and, later he became a well-known painter with exhibitions across Italy. When he invited me to his place for a talk, he explained the fascist past of Lampedusa:

For more than 70 years, prisoners of any sort – mainly political ones – were sent to Lampedusa and confined here... Prisoners on the island could move freely during the day and I remember that there was close interaction with locals.

[There were no problems among detainees and islanders:] maybe someone of us learned to read and write, since also intellectuals were confined here... Even Gramsci had to come to Lampedusa before he was finally assigned to the island of Ustica.

The substantial lack of infrastructure on the island confirmed the Lampedusans' marginality within the frame of Italian politics but, at the same time, Lampedusa had maintained a strategic value for the government in Rome to house political dissidents. The strategic use of the island by the national authorities became even more prominent during the Second World War when Lampedusa was quickly militarized with more than 4,000 soldiers and a variety of military facilities being placed there.

In the immediate post-war period, Lampedusa suffered the enormous damages brought by the war and Lampedusans continued feeling neglected by the Italian authorities. Life in the island again became very difficult. The land had been impoverished by one decade of intensive farming and deforestation, and it could no longer provide enough food for locals to live a comfortable life. Moreover, the open sea surrounding Lampedusa was too rough to fish with the locals' small fishing vessels for the whole year.

However, besides the many sponges in Lampedusa's waters, it was clear to everyone that Lampedusa's seawaters were also extremely rich in fish and, in particular, bluefish. During the decades when sponge fishing represented by far the most valuable and, consequently, the main fishery of the island, occasional bluefish fishing – especially of *round sardinella* – had also contributed to local sustenance. Yet, these could only be fished when the sea conditions were stable, as with good sea conditions, locals who did not embark on the big sponge-fishing sailing fishing vessels would use their small boats to fish for the abundant shoals of bluefish surrounding the island. Local women would salt the catches on land, and salted fish provided basic nutrition for islanders over the lean winter months, while the surplus was sold in the

rest of Italy - mostly the north of Italy – travelling on board the big wooden sailing boats that transported sponges to the mainland. Giovanni explained:

The first fishery on Lampedusa was *round sardinella* fishing. [When the sponge fishing boomed we] kept fishing the *round sardinella* as well as other species of bluefish: we salted the catches and what we did not consume on the island was taken to Trieste with the big sailing sponge fishing vessels from there. They sailed across the Sicilian Channel first and then the Adriatic.... A very rich man from Trieste, Mister Lusic, owned that ruined warehouse that you can see on the other side of the port: there he salted the fish that then he took to Trieste.

Once the war and sponges had ended, some of the richer families from outside the island who had been fishing sponges sensed the new possible profit: the bluefish catch. Soon, tens of steam fishing vessels began reaching Lampedusa. Nino explained:

Although locals from decades made up their diet also relying on the abundant bluefish found even into the port waters, it was as if all of a sudden people discovered that Lampedusa was rich in bluefish - especially *mackerel*... It was during the years following the end of the Second World War when tens of engine-driven vessels reached the island from all over Italy and mainly from Trieste: fishermen fished here and then they navigated to mainland Sicily – especially to Catania – where they sold their catches. Then, they returned to Lampedusa.

Giovanni remembered these vessels coming from outside. Once again, given their difficult economic situation, locals could not afford to buy large vessels like these. He continued:

Initially – or, at least, since when I remember – there were a few fishing steamboats... We were not used to see these kind of boats coming here to fish. They weighted some 200 tons and they were made of steel!

Lampedusa had begun a new chapter of local economic development, but also a new kind of socio cultural history: the island was becoming ‘The *Mackerel* Island’ (Roghi, 1954).

#### 4.1.1 Lampedusa ‘The Mackerel Island’<sup>13</sup>

The legacy of this Lampedusa, whose economy was entirely devoted to the fishing and canning of bluefish, was still very much vivid and present on the island. This was the Lampedusa that preceded the European accession of Italy. In 1954, the popular Italian journalist and diver, Gianni Roghi (1954: 56), wrote:

If God had not created *mackerel* [...] Lampedusa would not exist. To say it better, only the island of Lampedusa would exist [but not Lampedusans]: it would be just a flat surface high over the sea as an immense slab lacking of any tree or rivulet. Nevertheless, there would certainly not be the village and its 4,000 inhabitants.

Less than one decade after the Second World War, Lampedusa had already transformed and its economy started to grow. As soon as the first big and new engine-powered fishing vessels reached the island and started to fish the abundant bluefish, canning factories appeared on Lampedusa. Celona and Camparetto (2009: 119) say that across the 1960s and 1970s, 25 canning factories operated on the island. Their main products were ‘oily *mackerels*, salty *anchovies* and *sardines* [...]’. Giovanni remembers more than 50 factories working on the island in the 1950s.

In November 2012, I interviewed Vincenzo, the owner and manager of the only aquaculture plant on the island - *Acquacultura Lampedusa Ltd.* Before Vincenzo started investing in aquaculture he used to work in the family business that was one of the most important local canning factories. He told me:

The island economy relied entirely on the canning industry. Imagine that there were six to seven factories... three of which were quite well structured, while the others were basically run by families.

The number and nature of canning industries active in Lampedusa differs, probably due to the fact that numerous families ran factories informally inside garages or their homes and sold their cans to other local established firms. Thus, it is very difficult to

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<sup>13</sup> The expression appears in Italian as the title of an article of 1954 written by the Italian journalist and diver Gianni Roghi after he went back from a visit on the island (Roghi, 1954).



get any precise figure: however, what it is important is that such an industry provided jobs for many islanders for decades.

In January 2013 I met Maria and Angelina, two workers – one of whom was retired - of the island's canning industry, both in their early sixties. I was visiting a friend who ran an informal business as hairdresser at his home. Maria was there for her haircut while my friend's mother, Angelina, joined us unexpectedly. They were both very keen to tell me about their lives spent working at the canning factories:

*Angelina:* I used to go working in the canning factories when I was a kid. I worked in a factory of a man from Trapani.

*Maria:* I remember as well when, as kids, we had to go helping our mothers, taking off the heads the *anchovies*...

*Angelina:* Fishermen brought their catches while kids took them to the mothers using a small piece of wood that the bosses gave us... By then every man of the island went fishing!

*Maria:* During the good season, they went fishing every day. Catches were always available. There was even too much fish at times. Fishers went fishing on the evenings, and the following morning they returned back to land where they sold all the fish they had on board of their vessels.

The local canning industry was flourishing, employing almost the entirety of the local population. Not only were men busy all over the good season fishing bluefish, throughout the same months, local women also worked full-time in the canning industries, together with their children. This is Giancarlo, a local retired fisherman:

Bluefish provided jobs for the whole island and to entire families – and I am talking of families counting seven to ten kids each. Mothers used to leave home with their kids to go to the factories all together to can the catches. There were those who took fish's heads away, those that put fish into the cans, and those who filled them with olive oil.

The picture Giancarlo provides about the local canning industry was partial, and, in fact, fishing on the island was more complex and not limited to oily *mackerel*. As we have seen, local industries canned also great quantities of salty *anchovies* and *sardines*. This, according to Angelina and Maria, is how it would work:

*Angelina*: Our mothers... took fishes' and interiors away. Then they put *anchovies* into the cans in layers: one layer of *anchovies* and one of salt. Once they filled the whole can, they closed it... As for *mackerels*, once they took off the fishes' heads they put fish into crates... they washed them, they boiled them and then fish had to be left cooling down for some hours.

*Maria*: Once the fish was cold, women begun to take off the fillets and put them into the cans. This stage of the manufacturing used to happen at around three in the morning. After all the cans were ready, it was enough to pour olive oil and seal them.

According to Enzo – a local fisherman and assessor for Lampedusa's fishery - fishermen and industries on the island coordinated their works: when there was too much catch, fishers stopped fishing to allow industries to can the fish. At this time, it seems that the seawaters surrounding Lampedusa were perceived as a bottomless pit providing an endless supply of bluefish. Vincenzo explained:

It was spectacular when... boats came back from fishing... They had catches everywhere... and they navigated with their decks at the water level [- see Plate 4.2.] The island lived exclusively out of these fishes: I remember as if it was yesterday when my father bought 120 tons of *mackerel*. It is an enormous quantity of catch that we could not boil using our six industrial boilers... Unfortunately, there were no freezing facilities on the island so that we had to boil the fish before it went bad. Therefore, we decided to salt half of the catches and to oil the remaining 60 tons... I do remember mountains of fish over the docks.

Just like for the canning entrepreneurs, vessel owners came mainly from outside the island: however, non-islanders needed locals on board with their knowledge of the island's seawaters – and the cheap price of their workforce – in order to successfully exploit the island's resources. Giovanni explained:



**Plate 4.2:** One of the overloaded small boats with which Lampedusa's fishermen brought back to land their catches (Roghi, 1954)

Up to the 1950s we had boats for fishing by lamplight: there was no mechanical gear and we both rowed and sailed since they had no engine... When... these boats began to disappear, what we call *ciancioli* [actual purse seine fishing boat] substituted them: it was still fishing, but it was a mechanized fishery. It was not anymore the manual *lampara* fishing.

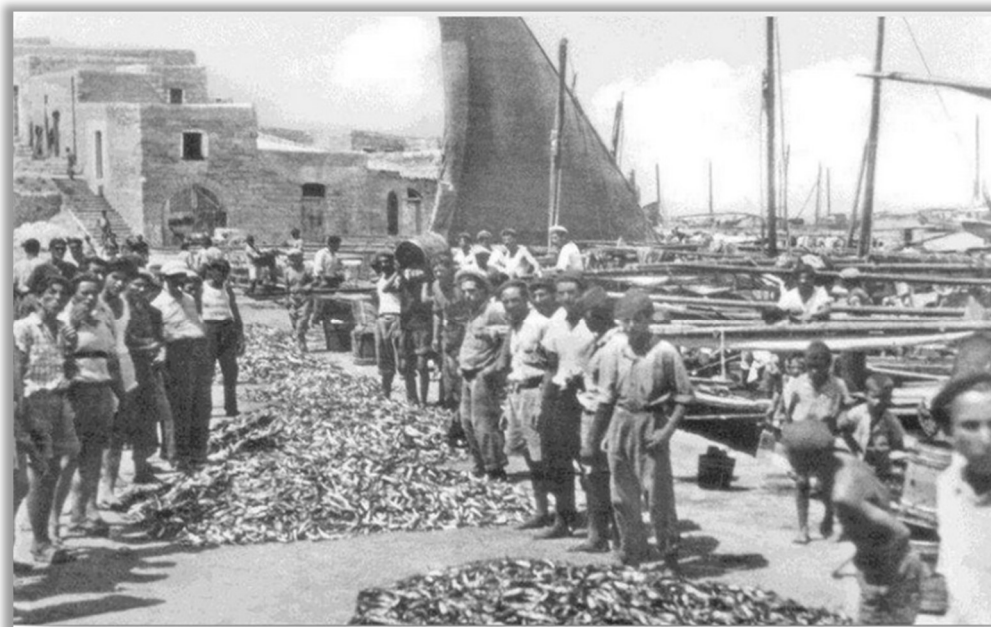
The old vessels owned by locals could only work with very calm sea conditions.

Another of the oldest local fishers, Nicola, explained what it was like to go fishing with these boats:

We used to fish with our rowboats: these small vessels had four oars. We went fishing even around Lampione [the third island of the archipelago located 18 nautical miles – 33 kilometres – west from Lampedusa]. Later, when the lamp fishing boats came, they had eight oars.

Engine powered purse seine vessels, by requiring less workforce aboard, could also go fishing more often. Given the dimension of their hulls, they could also stay longer at sea and they could fish in more adverse sea conditions. Up to 20 men worked on board these vessels. They were the captain, an engineer, a lead fisherman and the rest of the fishers. Once the vessels returned to the island, they started selling their catches.

Trade happened along the docks and in front of several of the canning industries that were disposed along the shores of the port (see Plate 4.3). The selling of fish represented one of the most important daily activities of the island. Vincenzo remembers that morning ritual:



**Plate 4.3:** Catches disposed along the docks of Lampedusa's old port. On the right lower corner of the photo, it is possible to spot also children apparently busy (Roghi, 1954)

There was a market on the island [between the 1950s and the 1970s]. Every morning the fish auction took place along the dock! The auctioneer stood on the platform while fishers remained on board of their boat, just below the dock and their fish displayed there. They showed their fish crates: this was not really to show the quality of the catches... It was rather about showing the size of *mackerels* - whether they were large or small - because that was what made a difference... Indeed, at that time we used five kilogram cans [as the] minimum size. Around the 1960s, we worked also with cans of one-fifth – 200 grams – as well as of 500 grams. However, not all of us entrepreneurs had the machinery to seal cans of these sizes. Thus when catches abounded you normally went for *mackerels* of the right size to fit the five kilograms cans.

As I have said, the selling of catches was possibly the most important moment of the day for fishers: good peddling meant more money throughout the year. Once the industrialist paid them for their catches, the members of the fishing vessel's crew

divided the earnings. This happened according to a very articulated but well-established system (Roghi, 1954).

After a few weeks spent on Lampedusa, while trying to gather a detailed historical account of Lampedusa's fishery, I went to visit 90 year-old Graziella. Considered by many on the island as the local living historical archive, I went to collect at least some of her memories. She came from a relatively rich local family and she described to me how money from catches of bluefish was divided among fishers and lead fishermen:

Those women working in the canning industries came from poor families or, at least, they were not rich. The others like me worked as bookkeepers. I used to work for my father who owned a fishing vessel. I had to cash up for everything concerning the vessels and its workers: I transferred money to pay fishers' welfare... It was not so easy to keep everything right: the captain took one part, while the other 15 fishers got one 15<sup>th</sup> each. The point is that depending on each fisher's experience and task on board, I had to vary the value of each 15<sup>th</sup>.

Once the vessels' operational costs were subtracted from the sale, half of the remaining money went to the captain who, given the small size of Lampedusa's vessels, often corresponded to the vessel owner. The rest was divided equally among the remaining members of the crew, applying some slight variation for those four fishers undertaking the most complex operations (Brignone, 1971). Only a few contested this well-established system that was in use for decades. Fishermen were more than literally "on the same boat" and they knew that if they did not fish enough, none - including the captain - would have had any decent gain (Roghi, 1954).

Once the oily and salty fish had been canned, industrials sent the cans to the rest of Italy and, as for sponges, they tended to be sent to the north of the country. However, despite its flourishing canning industry, Italian authorities continued to neglect Lampedusa. For example, electricity only reached the island in 1951 with the building of a local power station. This allowed the installation of an icemaker machine of extreme importance to conserve the catches. However, until the late 1960s, the

island had no drainage system, schools or hospital, and the ship connecting Lampedusa to the rest of Sicily came only twice a week (Taranto, 2012). Following locals' protests against their perception of government disengagement with the island, in 1966 the Italian Ministry of the Interior came to Lampedusa and, in the following year, the island was provided with both telephone and television connections. Finally, in 1968 the local airport was built and inaugurated (Mancini, 1978). This was the beginning of a new chapter of the island's history and of the destiny of its fishery: as much faster and reliable connections with the mainland were now available, tourists started to discover Lampedusa as a possible holiday destination. The island economy started transforming accordingly as an increasing number of fishing vessel and canning industry owners began building new tourist facilities, rather than keep investing in the local fishery sector.

#### **4.2. Fuerteventura: a piece of Sahara between Americas and the 'best [fishing ground] in the universe'<sup>14</sup>**

Fuerteventura was first colonised by North Africans approximately 2,000 years ago (González-Reimers et al., 2001). Later, According to Cruz (2005), Mediterranean civilisations preceding the Roman Empire, and African peoples living around the Niger River, as well as in the Fouta Jallon and Ivory Coast, would fish the Saharan shoal just 60 to 80 kilometres off of Fuerteventura. Around the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Spanish, together with other European powers of the time – such as the Portuguese – reached the archipelago. The islands and, especially, Fuerteventura as the closest to the African coast, were of interest to the newcomers for a variety of reasons: the first, but not the only, being its rich source of fish. Following the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the full

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<sup>14</sup> Galindo, J. A. (2005) *The History of the Discovery and Conquest of the Canary Islands*. London: Elibron Classic.

conquest of the archipelago by the Spanish crown, the islands started to serve as a hub for the Spanish trade in slaves and goods between Africa and America. To undertake the long Atlantic crossings, a supply of local fish was essential. By being relatively cheap, salty fish constituted a valuable nutrient capable of not spoiling for weeks and months at sea (Kurlansky, 1998). At that time, for most Europeans, the Saharan shoal dividing the island of Fuerteventura from mainland Africa constituted possibly the richest fishing ground they had ever found (Santana Pérez, 2012).

As a consequence, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, catches coming from this extremely rich fish ground became fundamental to the archipelago's economy in order to provide nutrient-rich salty fish to enable travel to other Spanish colonies in Latin America (Cruz, 2005; Guerra, 2002). Fuerteventura itself, however, did not benefit much from this new economic development. Contemporarily, Las Palmas of Gran Canary and Santa Cruz of Tenerife were by far the main economic centres of the archipelago. Despite Fuerteventura's geography, those staying in Fuerteventura lived mostly in the centre of the island, far from the sea. Hidden in land among the dry hills and extinct volcanos, locals made their living from goats and agriculture, protecting themselves from the frequent incursions of pirates coming from the African coast (Encinas, 1979).

More than one century later in 1764, the English mariner George Glas (1976) wrote that the sea dividing Fuerteventura from mainland Africa was certainly the richest of the universe. He also provided a detailed description of the local fishery and of how it used to work: if ship owners provided vessels, salt and food provisions, fishers had to bring their own lines, hooks, and fishing tools. As for Mediterranean fisheries – and similar to what I have described for Lampedusa - fishers, boat owners and captains divided the profits according to previously established criteria. At that time, locals went fishing on small sailing boats made of wood which were shorter than five meters

and equipped only with a small triangular sail. Remaining close to the coast, they easily fished *groupers* and other species nowadays considered high value. Fuerteventura's fishery was certainly among the poorest of the archipelago. Most of the island's fishers diversified their sources of sustenance to such a point where many of them could in fact be considered as peasants: consequently, the time they spent at sea was limited (Glas, 1976).

Moving forward to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after centuries of relative neglect, the Spanish Bourbon rulers decided to invest in the archipelago and begin to build the first ports. After centuries of domination, the islands could only count on the myriad of natural bays and refuges scattered along their coasts. Despite the centrality that ports had for such an archipelago whose main function for the Spanish distant authority was to serve as a hub for trade and fishery, port facilities were not built before, mainly for two reasons. On a very practical level, the crown had scarce resources for building them. Moreover, the presence of ports would have exposed the archipelago to pirate raids. Nevertheless, Gran Canary and Tenerife got their first ports in 1851, and the other islands waited until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yet, in 1852, the Bourbons declared the main ports – natural as well as artificial - of the seven islands – including the one of Porto del Rosario in Fuerteventura – free ports - generating a transformation that many see as giving birth to the contemporary Canary Islands from both an economic and a social point of view (Perdomo, 2002).

When in 1862 the treaty on trade between Morocco and Spain ratified the full exploitation rights of the Spanish on the Saharan shoal, once again Fuerteventura benefited only marginally from the advantages deriving from the fishing activity taking place just in front of the island's shores. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, fishery in the archipelago did grow to include 80 vessels, providing jobs for 170 families (Bas



et al., 1995). As for the past, once the internal demand for fish was satisfied, all the remaining catches were salted. Given the substantial lack of infrastructure, Fuerteventura's fishers could only access the internal market and they struggled to reach the interior of the island where most people lived (Cruz, 2005). Even when the Spanish Crown began subsidizing fishery at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, local fishers – from both Fuerteventura and the entire archipelago – received very little benefit. In fact, financial transfers from the central state were set mostly to satisfy the need of mainland Spanish fisheries obliged to move southwards to fish after their access to the North American fishing grounds of Newfoundland became increasingly difficult (Lear, 1998).

Besides the many fishing vessels coming from mainland Spain, for decades the Canary Islands' fisheries already had to compete in their seawaters with other European fishing fleets, and mainly the French whose colonies were present on the opposite African coast (Cruz, 2005). At the same time, other Europeans also started to fish on the Saharan shoal. It was thanks to these newcomers that the local fishing-related industry began moving away from the production of salty fish and towards the more remunerative and growing trend for canning. Furthermore, during the two World Wars, due to the militarisation of European seas, other European fishing vessels, unable to operate on their usual fishing grounds, moved southwards towards the famously rich Saharan sea (Cruz, 2005). At this point, apart from the two main port towns situated at the two major islands of the archipelago, the other islands continued to experience significant deprivation and hardship. Consequently, Islanders started to look westwards - and the sea dividing them from the Americas became a bridge - a vast extension of dangerous seawaters unifying the archipelago with a possibility for a new and more comfortable life.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many locals left the archipelago through two major emigrations coinciding with the two World Wars. First, within the first 25 years of the century, 154,000 locals left the islands by boats directed to Cuba and, later, between 1945 and 1965, another 140,000 islanders went to Venezuela (Guerra, 2002). Most of these people emigrated to escape economic insecurity, the violence of the Spanish Civil War, and the political persecutions of Franco's regime (Antón, 2005). Relying on seasonal winds, islanders – in particular fishermen and their families - used their tiny vessels to cross the entire Atlantic in very perilous journeys that could last more than one month (Figueroa, 1984).

At the end of the Second World War, up to the 1970s, Gran Tarajal's fishery - one of the major fisheries in the island – was just a minor local economic sector employing just a few people. Alvaro explained:

Some 50 years ago, there were four or five boats here. My uncle owned one of them... You do not have to imagine anything like a fishing vessel: they were small wood rowboats of about five meters... and [fishers] used to own them... At that time, we normally went fishing alone: at the most, we took one more fisher on-board... We used to load the boat with catches quite quickly: to find fish was not the problem. The problem was that there was no market on the island... This island was poor and very little people lived here... We went fishing *red mullet*, and *tuna*. We also fished *lobsters* and we did not sell them. There was no way to sell *lobsters*! We used them to fish: they literally worked for us as baits.

Economic conditions on the island did not change until 1956 when, coinciding with the Suez channel crisis, most of the world's traffic from Asia to Europe changed route. Here, ships had to circumnavigate Africa so that the Canary Islands' main ports – such as Las Palmas of Gran Canary and Santa Cruz of Tenerife – transformed to become core European commercial hubs. It was at that time when these two port cities expanded to an unprecedented size (Perdomo, 2002). Then, thanks to the first vessels capable of processing and freezing their catches on-board, between 1964 and 1975, the world's fishery boomed. Local plants for the salting of fish closed down and others

for the canning of oily catches started to operate on several of the archipelago's islands, including on Fuerteventura. Their main markets were now in Asia and Africa (Rodríguez, 2002). When the Fuerteventura airport began to work for civil purposes in 1967, catches from the island's artisanal fishery increased, since local fishers could finally transport their fish by air to Las Palmas of Gran Canary and Santa Cruz of Tenerife (Arbelo, 1994).

Yet for many of the villages located along Fuerteventura's shores, fishery remained mainly a sustenance activity. The little portion of the catches exported from the island were dried or salted (Rodríguez, 2002). By the 1970s, authorities registered eight industrial fishing vessels and 63 artisanal fishing boats operating on the island. The fleet was distributed across three port towns where today the three islands' fishermen associations are based: Corralejo, Gran Tarajal and Jandia. If most non-recorded fishers on the island lived a more peasant-based lifestyle in which they alternated their activities to occasionally go fishing, 211 men were nonetheless recorded as professional fishermen in 1970. Considering that Fuerteventura's shores contained the richest fishing ground of the region, the local fleet was, though, clearly insignificant in commercial terms. This was even more so considering that the island was located at the crossroads of two of the major world fishing ports of the time - Las Palmas of Gran Canary and Arrecife of Lanzarote. Moreover, despite the very small number of vessels and fishers active in Fuerteventura, internal fish consumption was insufficient to maintain their livelihoods. For example, in comparison to the 1,400 tons of fish unloaded each year on the island by the local fishing fleet, locals' consumption never exceeded 200 tons a year (Cabrera, 1970).

As for Gran Tarajal, this small fishing community located in the south of the island and just in front of the Saharan shoal, experienced economic conditions similar to the

rest of the island. While I was in Fuerteventura, I would spend a few hours a day under the shadow of the canopy off the local fishermen association's main building, a few meters away from the docks and the fishing vessels. That was a sort of gathering point, especially for elder and retired local fishers, who would spend their days close to the sea and the fishing vessels, observing the work of the other fishermen.

Alvaro was 63 years-old and still an active local fisher. When I asked him how fishing in Fuerteventura changed compared to how it was when he started, he said:

Before [between 40 to 50 years ago] things here were completely different: there was so much fish and too little market to sell it that we fished just about 50 kilograms per day. Often, at the end of the days, we had to throw some of the catches away since we were not able to sell them and there were only few fridges on the island.

On the island there was a limited and somewhat unorganized internal market. The market was small, and it was very hard to physically reach the villages of the interior.

As Juan, a 59 year old local fisher, told me:

Decades ago, it was sufficient to spend the morning at sea to get more than enough fish to sell... It was frequent to return on land before noon with 60 to 70 kilograms of catches... We definitely stopped fishing when we saw that we had too much of it... On the island, a donkey driver used to pass from village to village to load no more than 50 kilograms of catches and take them to the villages of the interior of the island, where most people used to live.

What can be seen is that most people in Gran Tarajal did not live entirely from fishing. Despite the little rainfall on this desert island, for centuries Fuerteventura lived off agriculture. Indeed, in the immediate post Second World War, Gran Tarajal's notables – mainly land owners – founded the first agricultural cooperative of the island. Initially they produced alfalfa, eggs and goat cheese and exported them to Las Palmas. From 1949 the cooperative began exporting tomatoes to mainland Spain and since then the production and export of these fruit became the main economic activity of the village, attracting a workforce from all over the island. By the mid-1960s, the cooperative started to export tomatoes further abroad where the packaging required

an even larger workforce, and Gran Tarajal consequently became the economic centre of the island (Suaréz, 2007).

Given the booming tomato industry, Gran Tarajal's fishery remained at the margins of the local economy. Yet the economic situation for its local fishers worsened in the late 1970s due to the political developments taking place on the African coast facing Fuerteventura. First, in 1973 the Moroccan state unilaterally extended the limits of its Exclusive Economic Zone – EEZ - up to 70 miles off its coasts, *de facto* reducing the fishing grounds accessible by Fuerteventura's fishermen (Rodríguez, 2002). Second, in 1975, Spain decolonized today's Western Sahara, a territory that was under Spanish administration since 1884 and that was immediately occupied by its bordering countries, Mauritania and Morocco, as soon as the Spanish left (Jensen, 2012). Taking advantage of the unstable situation, after Mauritania had withdrawn its own claims, Morocco's king Hassan II organised the so-called 'Green March' to assert the kingdom's claims over the area. Despite the United Nations' attempt to settle the situation through a referendum, a few weeks after the march was over the Spanish king announced the trilateral conference of Madrid where Mauritania, Morocco and Spain would decide the future of Western Sahara. On that occasion all participants agreed to divide the region into two administrations governed by Morocco and Mauritania.

An important aspect of this agreement directly affected Fuerteventura's fishery. Spain gave up its fishing rights to the Saharan sea in exchange for 35 per cent of the 'interest in Fosbucraa, the [700] million dollars Saharan phosphate industry' (Frank, 1976: 716). Since 1977, then, Morocco decided not to sign any long-term fishing agreements with Spain and, rather, opted for temporary and provisional arrangements renewed each year according to changing conditions. This

automatically produced uncertainty for the whole Canary Islands' fishing sector, including Fuerteventura. On top of the already precarious situation, the Moroccan Navy begun to violently seize Spanish vessels found fishing on the Saharan shoal (Molina and Rey, 2002; Larramendi, 1997).

Fishers in Gran Tarajal remembered this major transformation very well: the seawaters where they had fished for generations became suddenly inaccessible:

To go fishing *sardines* you need similar boats to the ones you use to fish *tuna*: they are just smaller vessels, but very similar overall... Between here and Africa is full of *sardines* and consider that you need just six hours of navigation in order to reach the other shore. It was very easy to get to the other side and everyone went there to fish. Often, when we arrived to the fishing ground, five to six vessels were already fishing there. However, there was no problem sharing space and catches since there was more than enough fish for everyone... We used part of the catch to produce fishmeal. Then, we packaged and froze the other portion of these three to four tons of *sardines* we normally got fishing in the Saharan shoal. These frozen *sardines* went to the canning factory of Puerto del Rosario. The discard of the transformation – mainly fish heads – became fishmeal as well. Nevertheless, when it became impossible to go fishing out here, the only canning factory of the island almost immediately bankrupted... At least 800 people worked there, seasonally: they also used to work with *tuna*! Today if you go fishing to Africa they fine you and seize the vessel... If they catch you and if the ship owner is on board, they send him to jail. Those treaties represent a dark page of the history of this island: they created enormous problems for us. Across the late 1970s and the 1980s, if Moroccan Coastguard or army caught you at sea in front of Gran Tarajal, no matter whether or not you were in international waters, they just took you and your boat... Now, we paid 1,200 Euros every three months in order to fish there. Last time I went to El-Aaiún... I paid 600 Euros to dock my vessel for half a day. (Juan)

In the lead-up to European integration, the situation for local fishers on Fuerteventura was certainly not an easy or flourishing one. Besides the increasingly stringent limitations to fish on what was for centuries their main fishing ground, Fuerteventura's fishermen struggled for several other internal (and partly also external) reasons. For example, a report about the primary economic sector on Fuerteventura preceding the accession of Spain to the EU describes the condition of the island's fishery as characterized by a substantial organisational anarchy (Hormiga, 1992). Since 1986, the local fishermen's association could count on a 600 square

meter warehouse with a freezing room and a fridge truck. However, none of these facilities worked until the early 1990s, since no electric connection was available. The main fishing gear used by local fishers were fish-traps or, alternatively, longlines. Intermediaries monopolized the market: they used to wait for fishers on the beach at their return from the sea in order to buy their catches. While professional fishermen struggled to survive economically, given the very low prices offered by intermediaries, they also had to unfairly compete on the local market with recreational fishermen. At the same time, they suffered the quick decline of several local fish stocks endangered by the growing number of big industrial fishing vessels – European as well as non-European – fishing illegally within the 12 miles limits of territorial waters or just outside of them (Hormiga, 1992).

#### **4.3. Conclusion**

Since the finding of schools of sponges, the seawaters surrounding Lampedusa constituted the islanders' major source of subsistence. As for Fuerteventura, the islanders' relation with the sea was not so comparably intense, since their local economy centred more on agriculture and livestock. If, on the Italian island, fishery constituted the core economy, in Gran Tarajal fishers contributed only marginally to the local wealth. The significance of fishing on the two islands thus constituted different aspects of the sociocultural as well as economic fabric of their local communities. Yet, what fishers from Fuerteventura and Lampedusa had in common was their intense relationship with their neighbouring African coast – Tunisia and Western Sahara. Moreover, as inhabitants of very detached territories, both communities experienced first-hand the authorities' recognition of the geostrategic value of their islands, combined with a substantial neglect towards islanders. Since

the islands had become part of Italy and Spain, the two countries exploited the geography of Lampedusa and Fuerteventura for internal as well as geostrategic political goals – i.e. with political detention in Lampedusa, or as a hub for Spanish colonial exploitation of the Atlantic for Fuerteventura. Simultaneously, however, national institutions did not consider the local populations, barely providing them with the most basic services and infrastructures.

In the next three chapters I explore how the arrival of the EU brought a new chapter to the lives of the islanders, transforming the working of local fisheries, the fishers' individualities, their relations with and use of the sea, as well as the sociocultural fabrics of the two communities. In the next chapter I begin to describe the working of European governing technologies in order to illustrate how the communities and individuals adapted to them. I outline the effects that EU governance on fishery had produced on the two islands even before the CFP entered officially into force, when European fisheries and fish markets were regulated under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).



## 5. - THEN THE EU CAME: THE EXPANSION, INDUSTRIALISATION AND MODERNISATION OF THE EUROPEAN FISHING FLEET.

*'Before there was plenty of fish but we could not afford buying the nets to fish. Once we could finally buy the nets, there was no more fish left'*  
(Giovanni, retired fisherman and captain in Lampedusa)

As soon as big European fishing boats built with EU taxpayers' money had reached the Canary Islands in the 1970s, Communitarian rules on fishery started having an impact on Fuerteventura's small-scale fishery, long before the Spanish accession to the EU. Similarly, European norms, regulations and – most importantly – subsidies for fishery were applied in Italy almost three decades before the Common Fishery Policy (CFP) entered into force in the early 1980s. According to the Common Agricultural Policy's (CAP) provisions, which included fish among the agricultural products, since the 1950s, Communitarian subsidies began to support the European fishing industry, including the vessel owners whose boats had began reaching Lampedusa in significant numbers by that time. Despite the different timing and the dissimilar economic and sociocultural contexts experienced by the two fisheries, when EU governance reached the islands, the CFP produced very similar pressures for the small-scale fishers on both Lampedusa and Fuerteventura.

In this chapter I discuss how the first generation of Communitarian rules and directives concerning fishery were implemented locally and show how they had eventually re-shaped local fishers' daily lives. I focus on the initial phase of European management where fishery was regulated within the frame of the CAP. Thus I examine the impact of the initial wave of EU subsidies for the modernisation of the European fishing fleet that started in the late 1950s to end in the 1980s because of increasing environmental concerns. I concentrate on those small-scale fishers who temporarily

left their islands to embark on big industrial fishing vessels on the promise of very good salaries, and who returned to Lampedusa and Fuerteventura years later to invest their wages and work independently. Yet, I concurrently analyse the local outcomes of the unprecedented exploitation of local fishing grounds consequent to the increasing industrialisation and commercialisation of fishery taking place in those decades. In order to produce a single European and comparative narrative, for this chapter I mix data from the two islands.

### **5.1. Fish as an agricultural good and the first Structural Policies: the time of subsidized bigger, faster and more productive vessels**

The post Second World War subsidized expansion of the European commercial fishing fleet constitutes possibly the first significant change that the EU brought to the lives of European small-scale fishers on the islands. European financial aid boosted the industrialisation of fisheries and produced several implications for both the health of traditional fishing grounds and the economy of European small-scale fisheries (Bo, 2010).

As Communitarian financial support combined with the availability of several technological developments capable of substantially enhance the productivity of fishing vessels, EU subsidies provided the financial means to produce the fastest growth in catches ever recorded in Europe (De Sombre and Barkin, 2011). When all norms and regulations applying to agricultural products were extended to include fisheries' goods in 1958, the EU set up financial schemes to improve fisheries' productivity by optimizing the use of the means of production – fishers' labour force, vessels, fishing equipment and available maritime resources. Financial support was distributed to ensure fishers' fair living standards and to stabilise fish markets so as to

ensure both the availability of supplies and reasonable prices for consumers (Long and Curran, 2000). Monetary transactions were managed through the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF)<sup>15</sup> and they addressed the European fishing industry at many levels: supporting the building of new vessels and the upgrade of existing ones; discounting taxes from fuel and keeping catches out of the market to guarantee fishers' minimum selling prices (Hatcher, 2000). As the CFP did not yet exist, Europe's biggest fishing countries, such as Italy, (De Sombre and Barkin, 2011) received Communitarian direct subsidies for among the 13 to 20 per cent of the overall value of the landed catches (Flaaten and Wallis, 2000). Simultaneously, European financial aid to the fishing sector took a number of other indirect forms of funding - for instance, in the building or maintenance of harbours, the payment of fishing rights to third countries, or the costs related to negotiate these agreements (Lövin, 2012; Stone, 1997). As fishery became economically attractive, many people and communities were incorporated into this maritime economy and industry that had come to rely on vessels of an unprecedented fishing power (Khalilian et al., 2010).

During the 1970s, in preparation for the official introduction of the CFP in 1983, the EU issued the first structural policy for fishery alongside the establishment of a common market for fishing products (da Conceição-Heldt, 2004). With this transforming regulative framework, financial aid was distributed to reduce the exceeding European fishing capacity by restructuring and modernizing the fishing fleet of each member state. On top of these direct subsidies to refurbish existing vessels, other subsidies distorted the functioning of the EU fish market as they increased the selling value of products for fishers, creating and maintaining maritime resource

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<sup>15</sup> The EAGGF is a 'Community's agricultural support fund' (Hatcher, 2000: 129)

overexploitation, while keeping European consumer demand high thanks to artificially reduced selling prices (Markus, 2010). In line with the most obvious economic rules, the combination of all these subsidies had the effect of enhancing, again, the European fishing fleet's overcapacity. After more than 20 years of EU taxpayers' direct and indirect subsidies, European fisheries had thus become increasingly commercialized and industrialized with a predictable knock-on effect to fish supplies, degrading their habitat and numbers. As I discuss, both the expansion of European industrial fisheries and their negative effects in terms of available fish stocks generated a variety of consequences for the small-scale fishers on the two islands.

#### 5.1.1. *Big- vs. Small-scale fisheries: two different ways of life*

The modernisation of the European fishing fleet enhanced the mechanisation of fishery, reducing the number of fishers necessary to operate vessels. At the same time, the expansion of the fleet meant that the number of vessels increased so that fishers losing their job in one vessel had the opportunity of being hired on board new vessels. According to Giovanni, since the 1950s, EU subsidies helped generating the conditions for Lampedusan fishers to leave their island:

Until the 1950s there were a 100 boats for *lampara fishing* in Lampedusa... All Lampedusans used to work on those boats that needed a lot of workforce to operate... When... purse seine vessels started substituting *lampara net* fishing boats, things changed, even though we continued to catch *mackerels*: now everything was mechanized... and vessel owners needed less workforce... Thus many Lampedusans left the island and went to other Italian major port towns such as Rimini or Fiumicino.

If many Lampedusans left, during the 1960s, besides working in the local bluefish catching and canning industry, local fishers would also work aboard the numerous big trawlers that came to the island, mostly from mainland Sicily, to access the local rich fishing grounds. Some worked on board these vessels for the whole year while the

majority embarked exclusively when the bluefish season ended in the winter months. Since the 1970s, however, while the local small-scale fishing industry was still flourishing, many Lampedusans moved towards another type of fishery that took them away from the island for months on end: oceanic fishing.

Giuseppe was a professional fisher in his early fifties. Together with his younger brother, Carlo, he owned and worked on the only purse seine fishing vessel remaining on the island – the *Nardina*.<sup>16</sup> This is the story of how his work changed from local to oceanic fishing:

I am a fisher since I was 14. Actually, I was even younger when I began: I used to go fishing with my father when I was a kid. Then, as soon as I got my fishing permit, I embarked on one of those big commercial vessels who used to come here some 40 to 35 years ago... We went fishing to Senegal, Guinea and even the US. The Amoruso family from Bari owned those vessels: they used to work here since the 1950s. Then, when in the 1970s they built even bigger vessels, they started go for oceanic fishing.

Giuseppe was 14 years old in 1975 when, thanks to the second big wave of EU subsidies preceding the introduction of the CFP, Italian consortiums, as well as vessel owners, were able to build and launch several new fishing vessels (Cataudella and Spagnolo, 2011). In the early 1970s the EU transferred about 150 million of the European Currency Unit – ECU (comparable to present day Euros) – in subsidies for the modernisation and renewal of the European fishing fleet (Hatcher, 2000). In those same years many Lampedusan fishers left local fishing and embarked on new and bigger vessels passing by the island heading towards the Atlantic. The majority of the owners of these big vessels who all came from outside Lampedusa were also the owners of those smaller vessels for industrial fishing operating on the island for years. That is why they trusted local fishers and wanted to have them on board. What

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<sup>16</sup>[http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/fleet/index.cfm?method=Search.DetailSearchSimple&event\\_key=21575501&search\\_type=advanced&search\\_id=2403](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/fleet/index.cfm?method=Search.DetailSearchSimple&event_key=21575501&search_type=advanced&search_id=2403) [Accessed on September 30, 2013]

convinced Lampedusans to leave their island for the Atlantic adventure were the very good salaries offered. Antonio explained:

It was at the beginning of the 1970s and I was in my thirties when I embarked on one of those big vessels... It was a 72 meter long ship... and we went fishing off the coast of West Africa first, and then westwards towards America... The reason why [we] went fishing on board of those vessels was that they paid us much more than what we were used to be paid on the island. Besides, that was the easiest way to leave Lampedusa, at least for a while.

Antonio was 84 years old, and a retired Lampedusan fisher who had worked on the Gabriella C, a bottom trawler that, according to the European Fishing Fleet Register<sup>17</sup> – EFR, was constructed in 1971, thanks to several European subsidies. It subsequently entered into service in 1973 with a licence for oceanic fishing and an engine of more than 1,000 horsepower.<sup>18</sup> When this and other similar vessels started passing by Lampedusa to hire local fishers, the bluefish canning industry was still flourishing and the island served as a platform in the middle of the Mediterranean to access the richest fishing grounds in the area. In a conversation between Antonio and Antonino, a Lampedusan freelancer who was filming our talk for one of his reportages from the island, Antonio explained this situation further:

*Antonio:* You just had to know someone on board of one of those big vessels who went fishing to ‘Morocco’<sup>19</sup> or you just had to go to the port and wait for the next vessel. It was a normal thing! We embarked here, we crossed the Gibraltar strait and we were on the Atlantic.

*Antonino:* I assume you had to leave your family for long time.

*Antonio:* yes, that was possibly the harsher side of the story. You had to stay months away from almost everyone important for you. Family, friends, neighbours. Luckily we were almost never alone: there was always at least one or more Lampedusans aboard.

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<sup>17</sup> “The Community Fishing Fleet Register [...] is an essential tool to implement and monitor the Common Fisheries Policy. The Fleet Register is a database where all the fishing vessels flying the flag of a Member State have to be registered in accordance with Community legislation” (EC, 2014)

<sup>18</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/fleet/index.cfm?method=Search.DetailSearchSimple&event\\_key=21414790&search\\_type=simple&search\\_id=5905](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/fleet/index.cfm?method=Search.DetailSearchSimple&event_key=21414790&search_type=simple&search_id=5905) [Accessed on March 21, 2014]

<sup>19</sup> When Lampedusans fishers refer to oceanic fishing, most of them say that they went fishing to ‘Morocco’ meaning any place beyond the Gibraltar strait.

Initially, Italian captains with little or no experience of the Atlantic tended not to push themselves further than the stretch of sea dividing Western Sahara and the Canary Islands. Vito, a 72 year-old Lampedusan, worked all his life as captain of one of these oceanic vessels when he moved to the major Italian fishing port of Viareggio during the 1960s:

Initially we went fishing in West Africa: we were not pioneers on this kind of fishery. There was plenty of other European vessels out there... We used to fish off Morocco and then down towards Mauritania and Senegal: usually we unloaded our catches in the port of Las Palmas of Gran Canary... At that time... we always had some Spanish fisher aboard since they were a much less expensive workforce than Italian fishers and they knew that sea. It was very easy to hire them when we docked there.

Many fishers in Gran Tarajal also knew the stories of those Italian fishing vessels that came fishing there. Like Alvaro – a fisher from the Spanish port town - some even worked aboard one or more of them. As he told me:

Many of us embarked on those huge fishing vessels... We used to go to fish to Africa as well as in North America, remaining at sea for weeks and months: it was very good money... Here [in Gran Tarajal] big fishing boats... used to anchor just a few meters off the [beach] and then two or more of their fishers went on dryland and hired locals with the promise of very good salaries like we had never heard before on this island.

During the 1970s numerous fishers on both the islands abandoned local fisheries and embarked on large-scale industrial fishing vessels. Yet such a shift meant a dramatic transformation of fishers' daily lives and labour conditions. Small-scale fishery worked in a dramatically different way than commercial fishing. First, vessels had no facilities to process fish on board. Second, vessels took at the most four to five fishers when using the more labour-demanding fishing gears. More importantly however, small-scale fishers spent only a few consecutive hours out at sea. Alvaro continued:

We stay just one day at sea. The Bask fishers that have their vessel anchored at the end of the pier used to go fishing in the south of the island and remain at sea at least two or three days... However, I do prefer my way: I like to feel home every day I can... On the other hand, I can see their point since they are young

and where they go fishing there is plenty to catch! [However, I am sure that] if they had experienced what we had to pass through on those big commercial vessels some 30 years ago, they would love to come back home every time they can!

Despite the individual costs in terms of family and community ties, to embark on these fishing journeys became common and relatively simple to achieve for islanders. Industrialised oceanic fishing meant some detachment from the island and loved ones: those who left and those who remained ended up inhabiting 'largely separate worlds, in which husbands and wives build separate sets of ties, loyalties and activities' (Symes and Philipson, 2001: 167). Fishers' prolonged absences from both Gran Tarajal and Lampedusa put to test strong community ties based on mutual assistance and reciprocity which had previously been highly necessary in order to endure life on the islands (Kilpatrick and Falk, 2003; Wellman and Wortley, 1990).

In addition to detachment from the islands, for many, a job aboard a big industrial fishing vessel was not about the fishing. It rather resembled working in a factory:

[Inside] those big vessels you are doing a completely different job than fishing! You do not need to understand anything about the sea to fish with one of those floating factories. It is all mechanical and you are just one among many: you stay the whole day in the same position, doing the same thing over and over. (*Alvaro*)

These big vessels had about three decks and work was organized vertically from the captain inside his cockpit. Three decks below, the fishers were busy putting fish boxes inside the huge refrigerating rooms at the bottom of the hull. Most fishers remained working at each level for weeks: only a few – as the captain or the board engineer – moved across the various levels. In between the top and the bottom of this chain, there were those managing fishing nets and, one deck below, those selecting, weighing and packing the catches. At each of these levels, fishers experienced diverse working and living conditions from one another, and thus received diverse salaries. According to Vito, internal mobility was based on experience and the captain's own



discretion. Several Lampedusans, as well as fishers from Gran Tarajal, began their careers as commercial fishers working in the refrigerating rooms. Tonino was a 49 years-old professional fisher working in Lampedusa. This is how he described his career fishing in the Atlantic:

I barely saw the sea during that crossing since I had to stay below deck cartooning all catches... I hated that life: we had to work down there with no natural light, wrapped by the waves, sleeping two hours per day in some berth that even a dog would have refused... After we were at sea for a few months we could take a flight to come back here and stay home for a couple of weeks: obviously, the vessel owner paid for it.

Oceanic fishing was discussed by the islanders as a hard and tough life. Fishers had to contend with homesickness and the feeling of having been hired as fishers to be used as workers for big fishing companies. Almost none of the skills that the fishers had learned at sea were of any use on board of the giant fishing machines (Ward and Hindmarsh, 2006). Consequently, the fishers soon became interchangeable with the infinitely cheaper African and Latin American workforce. As Vito pointed out, with the European workforce being replaced with cheaper non-European workers, soon fishers from both islands started being left on dry land:

In the 1990s I was in charge of a boat whose fishers were almost all Africans... We worked exactly in the same way we did when fishers were first Italian [mostly Lampedusans] and then Spanish... Jobs on board were divided in the same way... In the 1990s two levels below deck we had only Africans working: 20 years before they were all adolescents from Lampedusa!

Initially, during the second half of the 1980s, Spanish fishers - mostly from the Canary Islands – had started to replace Italian ones. Then, Africans coming mostly from Mauritania, Senegal and Morocco started to take the place of Spanish fishers. Part of this trend was also a result of the obligation to hire local workforces which was established by EU fishing agreements with these countries – as a compensation for the (over)exploitation of national fishing resources (Carneiro, 2011). Yet, during the 1990s, most owners of oceanic fishing vessels changed the flags on their boats so as

to benefit from open registration schemes – also known as the ‘flag of convenience’ – and registered their boats where it was most convenient in terms of both lower taxation and more lax fishing regulations (De Sombre, 2005).

By then, however, many fishers from either Fuerteventura or Lampedusa had returned home with considerable sums of money. This is Tonino’s account of how Lampedusans returned to their island:

Since the end of the 1980s big vessel owners realized that instead of having only ten Latin American fishers aboard, they could make the whole crew out of them... Soon we all lost our jobs but after years spent working and with our salaries almost intact – on board there were very little expenses - we all returned to the island full of money.

As fishers had saved considerable sums of money while working on industrial fishing vessels, they tended to use this to come back to the island and buy their own small boats. In doing this, in Lampedusa many fishers became captains, while in Gran Tarajal they could finally get rid of their tiny rowboats and buy themselves new and better fishing vessels. In other words, after experiencing the hardships of working aboard industrial fishing vessels, many fishers returned to small-scale fishery. After all, fishing as a way of life is an occupational sector that is somehow hard to leave (Trimble and Johnson, 2013; Pita et al., 2010), and on these islands it was engrained in their culture. Moreover, as my participants’ biographies reveal, most locals had been fishing since they were very young, having almost no access to formal education at all. If, on the one hand, they had accumulated substantial fishing expertise over the years, at the same time they had little if nothing else than fishing skills to offer to potential employers. In addition, and similar to several other coastal communities (Dickey and Theodossiou, 2006), when Lampedusa and Gran Tarajal’s fishers returned to their islands in the early 1990s, few other occupational options were available locally.

However, after decades of the expansion of increasingly productive fishing vessels, fish stocks had been depleted. Local fish stock depletion did not spare the two islands' fishing grounds. Indeed, while many fishers left the isles, others remained working there on extremely productive vessels coming from outside of both Fuerteventura and Lampedusa. Moreover, most of those locals who already owned a vessel – or more than one – decided to remain on the islands and make use of European and national subsidies to modernize their boats, inevitably pushing the local small-scale fishery into a more commercial version of itself. Those fishers returning home after years spent fishing away from their islands thus found their local waters severely impoverished of fish.

#### 5.1.2. *Only one is overfishing*

As I have said, in contrast to big-scale fishery, small-scale fishers stayed at sea for no longer than a few consecutive hours or days and they depended completely on weather conditions. Indeed, given the reduced size of their vessels and the limited power of their engines, small vessels relied on almost perfect sea conditions to operate.

Francesco, a 57 year-old captain, was among the first fishers I met in Lampedusa. He was from Porto Empedocle, and each year he moved to fish in Lampedusa between May and October with his nine meter long fishing vessel *Nuovo Ligure*.<sup>20</sup> He explained the limitations on his work during wintertime:

As for September, we could only work eight days. In October we worked the first four days of the month, then we had to stop for other 15 days and we went back fishing for two consecutive days. That was it for the whole month. As for

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<sup>20</sup>[http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/fleet/index.cfm?method=Search.DetailSearchSimple&event\\_key=21669217&search\\_type=advanced&search\\_id=2403](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/fleet/index.cfm?method=Search.DetailSearchSimple&event_key=21669217&search_type=advanced&search_id=2403) [Accessed on March 12, 2015]

[November] we could only work one day so far, and half a month has already gone.

Although extreme weather conditions could also stop industrial fishing vessels operating, the working of small-scale fisheries depended entirely on the conditions of the sea. On both islands the situation was even more serious since they were in the middle of the open sea. Besides the dangers and the difficulties handling the vessels, when the sea is not calm, to remain at sea can become also a waste of time and money:

If you fish with lines as we are doing now and the sea is not calm, or is calming down, you will have to deal with too many underwater streams... Once we get over the rock where we want to fish, then we must calculate where to position the vessel in order to make the weight falling the closest possible to the rock. [If the sea is rough] this calculation becomes much harder since you have stronger streams that move your line away from the spot. (*Tonino*)

Despite the limits of small-scale fishery to go fishing within all sea conditions, while subsidizing the expansion of the industrial fishing fleet, EU subsidies had also financed the technological upgrade or refurbishment of smaller boats in order to optimise their fishing productivity. This financial assistance, combined with the availability, on a large scale, first of sonars - allowing fishers to literally scan the sea below their vessels and spot rocks where fish eat and hide, as well as fish shoals in the middle of the water column – and later of the Global Positioning System (GPS) radically changed fishing, allowing fishers to return with unprecedented ease and precision to good fishing grounds. Although it is clear that fishing vessel owners would have installed these technologies with or without the financial assistance of the EU, subsidies significantly helped many of them to cover the costs of buying these devices. Indeed, Communitarian financial aid compensated up to 50 per cent of the entire costs on condition that another five to 25 per cent was covered by member states (Hatcher, 2000).

Consequently, by the late 1980s, European fishing vessels of any size were becoming more powerful, fishing gears more mechanized and more productive, and fishers started relying on technologies capable of dramatically facilitating their work. The depletion of fish stocks quickened, making it harder for fishers to find good catches. At the same time, however, upgraded and refurbished vessels permitted fishing with an unprecedented efficiency. This activated a sort of vicious circle where fishers could access more fishing grounds to counterbalance the economic consequences of the depletion of fish stocks, while at the same time accelerating the reduction of available fish stocks.

As European industrial fisheries modernized and expanded, GPS and sonar increased the productivity of small vessels, transforming small-scale fishing into a commercial version of itself and a much easier job than it was before:

Fishing remains fishing but today you have many more instruments helping you... Today if you throw a nail into the water you can find it the day after! All these instruments take you right to the place... Fishing today is another sort of job than the one I experienced... Now you can go fishing with your eyes closed! Now you can see under the water. As I told you today, once the sea was covered with water: now [with] these instruments [they] uncovered the sea. (*Giovanni*)

Scientific studies have widely demonstrated the huge destructive potentials of intensive and large-scale fisheries (Clover, 2004; Sloan, 2003; Lövin, 2012). Nevertheless, small-scale fishery with contemporary technologies can also overfish, although, of course, their productivity is infinitely lower than industrial and commercial vessels.

Alfonso was the captain of an 11 meter long fishing vessel, *Sara*,<sup>21</sup> registered in Porto Empedocle. Even though he never worked aboard any industrial vessels, he made a clear and meaningful distinction between small- and big-scale fisheries:

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<sup>21</sup>[http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/fleet/index.cfm?method=Search.DetailSearchSimple&event\\_key=22970799&search\\_type=advanced&search\\_id=1114](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/fleet/index.cfm?method=Search.DetailSearchSimple&event_key=22970799&search_type=advanced&search_id=1114) [Accessed on January 02, 2015]

Small-scale fishing lives out of fishing 'small'. Is it not obvious? Say, for instance, that I catch 500 kilograms of *tuna* in my best summer. [At the same time, industrial vessels] catch 50,000 kilograms in one go, in one night... Therefore, it is like saying that one big commercial vessel catches more than a whole fleet of small-scale vessels... It is like, one year worth of my fishing is nowhere near a single one [day worth of industrial fishing].

Commercial fishing, by its very nature, is '[...] characterized by a boom-and-bust cycle of development [expanding] to new regions [...] until stocks of the target species are depleted [to then] move to a new species in the region, or to new region [...] and the pattern repeats' (De Sombre and Barkin, 2011: 25-26). On the contrary, small-scale fishers, the vast majority of whom return on dryland daily, cannot approach fishing in the same way. They can, in fact, access just a relatively limited range of different fish species and number of fishing grounds, so that if they want to survive they have a primary interest in taking care of fishes and will try to not over-exploit them. Thus, if it remains questionable whether industrial fishing vessels alone caused the depletion of fish stocks or, if they had done this in combination with small-scale fishing boats as well, it is at the same time clear that big vessels have an infinitely greater impact on fish stocks. Within this picture, European regulations and financial instruments contributed substantially towards the improvement of the European fishing fleets' ability to overfish, and, as we have partly already seen, this, in turn, changed the lives of fishers on Gran Tarajal and Lampedusa.

## **5.2. – Conclusion**

In the early stages of the Communitarian management of fishery, European fisheries started receiving subsidies to modernize existing vessels and build new ones. The outcomes of these subsidies were soon experienced by Lampedusan fishers. The increasingly mechanized vessels that went fishing in Lampedusa to access the local rich fishing grounds required much less workforce than they used to, in order to

operate. While fewer jobs became available on the island, more opportunities appeared in other and more industrialized Italian fishing ports, as it was there where new vessels were eventually launched. There is little surprise then if across the 1950s and the 1960s, numerous Lampedusans left their island and went looking for jobs in the industrial fishing fleets harboured in the major Italian fishing ports – such as Fiumicino near Rome, Rimini in the northern Adriatic coast, or Viareggio in Tuscany.

Yet, as soon as the EU launched its first structural policies on fishery in the 1970s, big vessels for industrial oceanic fishing started passing by the tiny Italian island and hired several local fishers. Again, islanders left Lampedusa while fishers' jobs transformed and were significantly deskilled when working aboard these floating factories. When Italian and other European subsidised vessels reached the Canary Islands, everyday life had begun transforming in Fuerteventura and Gran Tarajal as well. Less than a decade later, however, industrial fishing vessel owners found it more convenient to delocalize their activities outside the EU, or to hire cheaper non-European workers rather than European ones. Fishers from both islands started progressively losing their well remunerated jobs and thus returned to Lampedusa and Fuerteventura. Once back on their islands, when those small-scale fishers who had left reinvested the good salaries they had saved during their oceanic fishing campaigns and had turned themselves into fishing vessel owners and captains, they found local fishing grounds severely impoverished by decades of overfishing.

As I discuss in the next chapter, it was over that same period that, following the introduction of the 1983 CFP, conservation of fish resources was prioritized by the EU, and a series of measures to limit the impact of European fisheries were introduced. These limitations had controversially extended almost equally to both small- and big-

scale fisheries, in spite of their very different contribution to depleting European commercial fish stocks.



## 6. – THE CFP AND THE SEA: THE ENVIROMENTALIST TURN

*'I cannot understand this policy: actually, no one can understand it... It is a strange policy of the feast today, famine tomorrow'* (Juan Ramon, fisherman and president of the Fishermen Association of Gran Tarajal)

In the late 1980s, scientific and environmental alarms concerning the effects of industrial fishing gained momentum. Over the previous years, European politics apparently resisted reacting and adjusting the Common Fishery Policy's (CFP) provisions to scientific advisors' repeated warnings (Daw and Gray, 2004). Nevertheless, facing increasing public concern, the 1992 reform of the CFP concentrated on conservation – at least on paper - which translated into a series of limitations on fishing grounds and into a completely new set of structural policies. This reformed set of Communitarian measures endeavoured to remedy the serious imbalance between fleet productivity and catch potential. However, in both Lampedusa and Fuerteventura, European management produced a number of rather contradictory outcomes, with professional small-scale fishers turning increasingly into tourist operators but also into illegal fishermen, further endangering both the health of local fishing grounds and the economic sustainability of the local professional fishery.

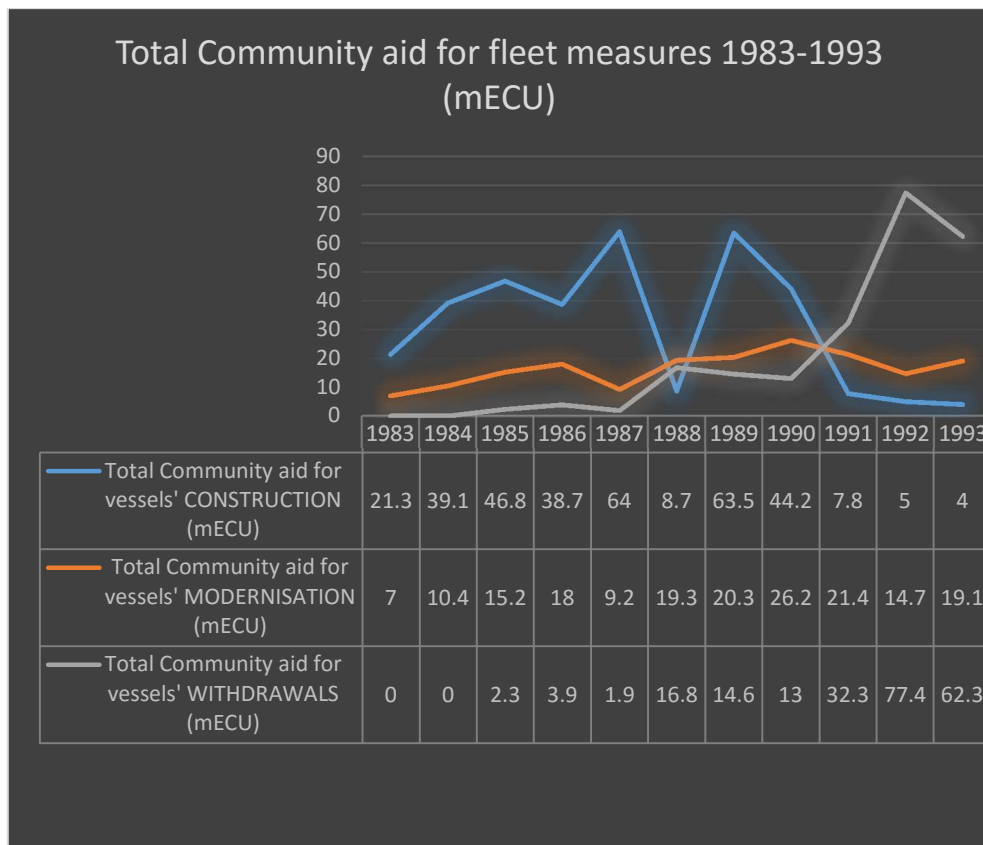
My following discussion of the local effects of the CFP is divided into two major sections, corresponding to the policy's main areas of intervention on small-scale fishery as they developed chronologically. First, I start by focusing on the second wave of EU structural policies set in response to increasing environmental concerns and which aimed at the progressive reduction of the European fishing fleet. Second, I conclude the analysis by concentrating on another series of the CFP's conservation strategies as they gained relevance since the 1990s to limit fishers' access to the sea.

These were a complex system of quota and bans concerning specific fish species, combined with technical measures to limit the impact and use of determined fishing gears and techniques.

Similar to the previous chapter, I mix data collected from both Lampedusa's and Fuerteventura's fishermen as EU policies activated very similar dynamics on the two islands.

### **6.1. - CFP structural policies: turning everything upside-down**

The first remedy that the 1983 CFP advocated was to reduce the size of the Community fleet and alleviate the social impact of industrial fishing practices (Ulecia, 2014). Fisheries were introduced 'into the Structural Funds [with] its own financial instrument [to] provide financial support for fisheries-dependent areas' whose main job sector was seen as having to be narrowed (Semrau, 2015). This shift constituted possibly one of the CFP's most criticised programmes. After years of public expenditure to enhance the European fishing fleet's productivity, subsidies now aimed at reducing the fleet by financially aiding 'the scrapping or laying-up of vessels' (Long and Curran, 2000: 29). The explicit goal of the policy was to financially support fishers' mobility towards new and diversified economic activity in coastal regions. With EU policymakers increasingly focused on designing and implementing effective conservation policies, the allocation of resources within the structural policies were literally turned upside down: European taxpayers' money once spent to support the modernisation and expansion of the fleet was readdressed to finance the dismantling and reduction of that same fleet (see Chart 5).



**Chart 6.1:** Distribution of Community aid (in millions of ECU) for the EU fishing fleet between 1983 and 1993 (in Hatcher, 2000: 134. Elaborated by the author)

The overturning of the CFP's structural policies was completed with the 2002 reform when the EU stopped financing the construction of new vessels. Later, since 2004, subsidies for the modernisation of existing fishing boats were restricted to the installation of on board safety devices (Markus, 2010). Moreover, additional funding compensated the reduction of the number of existing professional fishing licenses through buyback programmes, simultaneously limiting the issuing of new permits (Guyader et al., 2004).

Concerning the dismantling of vessels, payments varied proportionally on the basis of the vessel's tonnage and age, whereby the owners of the bigger and older vessels received major compensations to dismantle their boats. This Communitarian support scheme worked to make it more attractive for fishermen to opt for the subsidies to

dismantle their vessel and which withdrew their professional fishing license, rather than selling them to potential new fishers. Combining these subsidies with a limit on the issuing of new professional fishing licenses and the buyback programmes, CFP structural policies became simultaneously the main obstacles for newcomers to access professional fishery and the major incentive for elder fishermen to abandon their activity.

In line with the policy goals, this new generation of EU structural policies on fishery contributed to turning the islands' economies from fishery to tourism through transforming professional fishers into tourist entrepreneurs. Yet, contrary to the expected outcomes, this set of structural policies had also jeopardised the economic and environmental sustainability of small-scale fisheries in both Lampedusa and Gran Tarajal.

#### *6.1.1. To fish or to cash in?*

I met Francisco at the local fishermen association's restaurant on one of the first days of my stay in Gran Tarajal. He served me and, seeing me alone at the table, soon started talking to me. I explained to him why I was there, and he told me:

I was a professional fisherman until I decided to give up with fishery last year... It was not what I really wanted to do: however, I took the final decision when the government announced that there were new subsidies for decommissioning fishing vessels and withdraw professional fishing licenses. As I said, it was not an easy choice but given my age I decided to step out... What convinced me was money! I loved going fishing, but I needed some financial stability.

I had heard similar stories several other times when I was in Lampedusa. Many fishers there admitted that the only reason they had left fishing was the sizable amounts of money offered to them to dismantle their vessels and/or withdraw their licenses.

Besides still being an active captain, Nicola – who was 79 years-old - also owned a restaurant. When I met him he was busy assembling his own wicker-made *fishing pots* (see Plate 6.1).

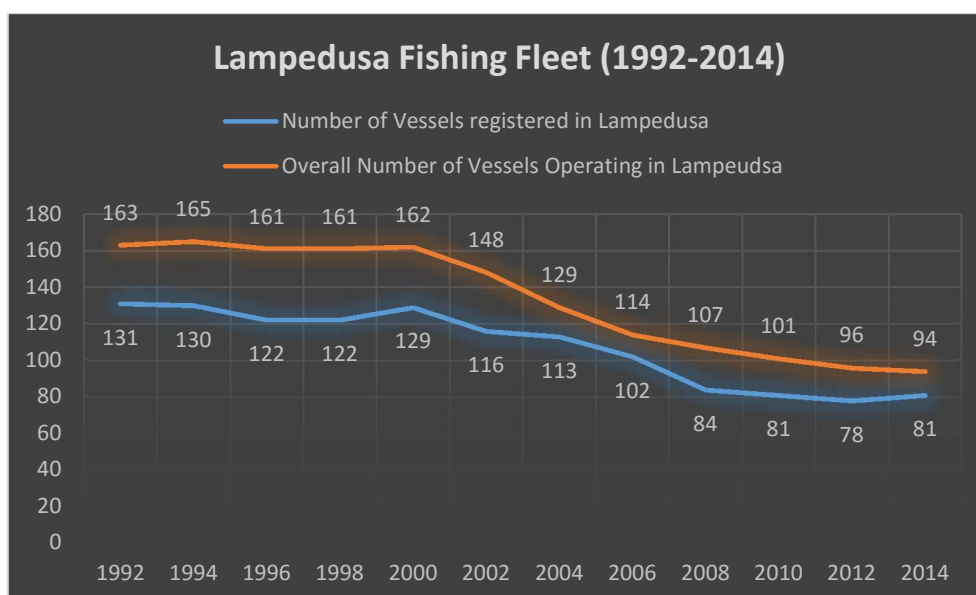


**Plate 6.1:** Nicola working on his fishing pots (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu elaborated by the author)

I asked him whether he had ever thought of giving up with fishery to get the EU compensation:

Look, I could have done it more times: however, I did not. Fishing is my life and the job I love the most... Yet, here in the island, many scrapped their vessels and several others are waiting the authorities to issue the next call for subsidies to scrap their own boats... I do not think it is an easy choice for a fisher, believe me! At the same time, however, it is also an opportunity that you cannot miss: who knows if [the EU] will change policy once more?

Despite a number of stalwarts like Nicola, analysis of the European Fishing Fleet Register's (EFFR) aggregate data on Lampedusa's fishing fleet highlights a constant and substantial contraction of the local fleet since the early 1990s (see Chart 6.2).

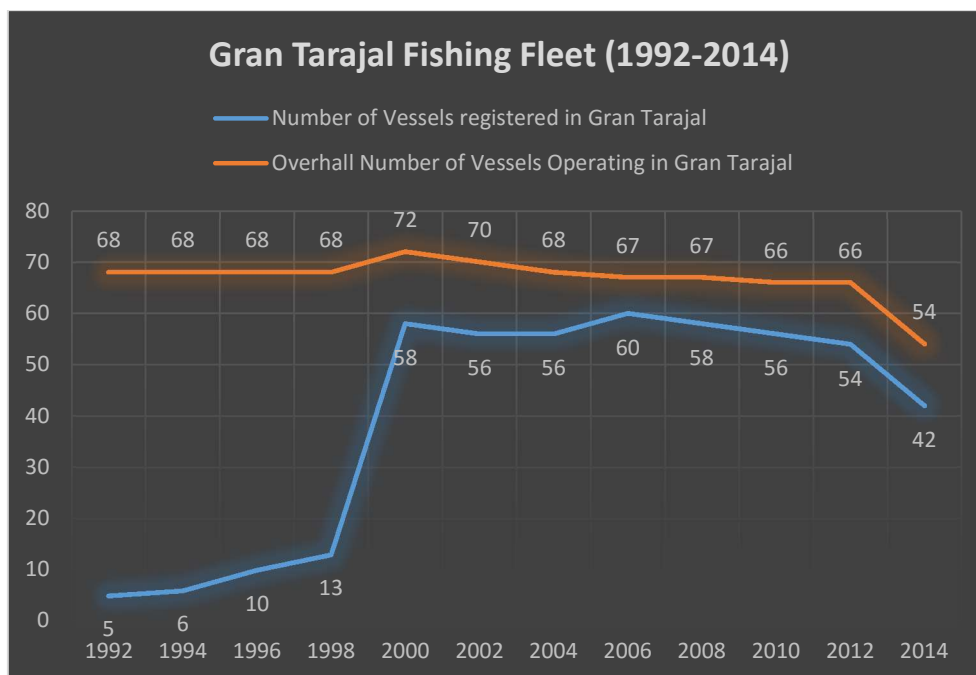


**Chart 6.2:** Evolution of Lampedusa's fishing fleet (Elaboration of the author: data from the EFR<sup>22</sup>)

Piero – a professional fisher and the president of Lampedusa's fishing vessels owners association - confirmed that these trends were directly related to CFP's structural policies for fishery. According to him, the vast majority of the files they dealt with at the association concerned alternatively the subsidized scrapping of vessels or professional fishing licenses' withdrawal.

Yet, for Gran Tarajal, the trend looked, at least initially, different to that of Lampedusa, as the local fleet of small-scale fishing vessels did increase significantly across the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, only to start decreasing in the following years (see Chart 6.3).

<sup>22</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/fleet/index.cfm> [Accessed on July 24, 2014]



**Chart 6.3:** Evolution of Gran Tarajal's fishing fleet (Elaboration of the author: data from the EFFR<sup>23</sup>)

This partly unexpected trend emerged largely as a result of the initiative of a local fisherman – Juan Ramon – supported by the provincial authority for fishery and agriculture. Since the early 1990s they had very efficiently organized Gran Tarajal's Fishermen Association so that, given the greater profits, an increasing number of local fishers had incorporated and regularized themselves.

Nevertheless, what fishers in both islands highlighted was that many of those fishers who received compensations from the EU for scrapping their vessels and/or withdrawing their licenses, had actually reinvested the money to buy new vessels and kept fishing as recreational fishers. This outcome was exactly the opposite to the expected goals of the policy in terms of diminishing the fishing fleet in order to reduce the overall fishing effort: small-scale vessel owners who decided to scrap their boats had registered their new vessels for recreational fishery and then went fishing to sell

<sup>23</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/fleet/index.cfm> [Accessed on July 24, 2014]

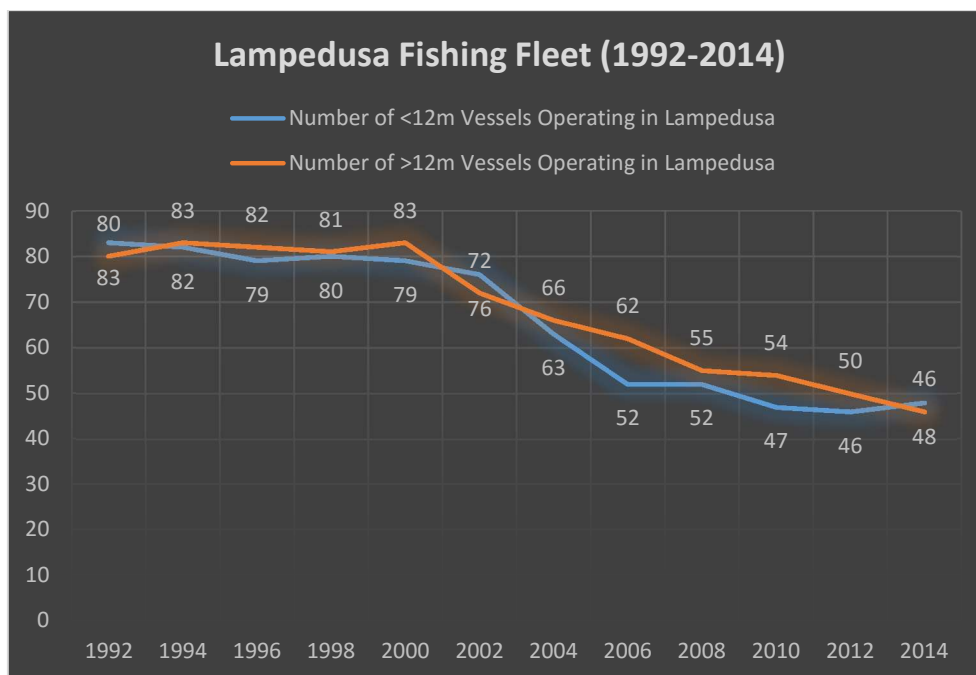
their catches illegally. The post-1992 CFP structural policies had thus produced a number of unintended and unpredicted outcomes at the micro level of the two islands, the major effect being its ineffective reduction of the number of boats and fishers that actually went fishing. Rather, the policies effectively financed the transfer of professional small-scale fishers into the much less regulated – and monitored – recreational fishing sector. While this transformation was broadly in line with the EU/policy intentions to increase tourism on the islands, the policy had little effect on over-fishing. At the same time, several large-scale vessel owners who had benefited from much greater subsidies to withdraw their licenses or dismantle their vessels – given the size of their boats and the value of their fishing permits – used the money to simply change the flag of their vessel or to directly buy a new vessel abroad. As they started operating outside of the EU under much laxer fishing rules and then imported their catches in the European market anyway, the fishing pressure on commercial fish stocks remained the same – or it had even increased (Popescu, 2010; Mulvad and Thurston, 2010).

These contradictory policy outcomes must be framed within a further incongruity characterising the second wave of CFP structural policies. These extremely expansive structural policies were aimed at counterbalancing industrial fishery's depletion of fish stocks. Yet they were extended indifferently to also include small-scale fisheries leading *de facto* to a similar reduction of both fisheries, (see Chart 6.4) regardless of small-scale fishery being a relatively sustainable fishery and a major source of employment on the islands – which was also the case in most European coastal communities.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> In Gran Tarajal a similar comparison was impossible since the local port did not harbour fishing vessels longer than 12 meters – or at least they were not recorded on the EFR between 1992 and 2014.





**Chart 6.4:** Numbers of Lampedusa's small-scale (<12m) and big-scale (>12m) fishing fleets, 1992-2014 (Elaboration of the author: data from the EFFR<sup>25</sup>)

For these reasons, if small-scale fishers willing to abandon professional fishing saw in these subsidies a possibility to increase their financial assets, potential as well as actual professional small-scale fishers perceived this Communitarian financial aid as unjust and dangerous. Jorge, a 38 year old fisher from Gran Tarajal, emphasized the effects of the second wave of EU structural policies for fishery:

I was very lucky to find and buy my boat three years ago. Indeed, the EU pays fishermen crazy prices to dismantle their vessels or withdraw their professional fishing licenses... However, to become a professional fisherman you must practice for at least three years on board. Then, how am I supposed to practice if there are no new vessels available? Furthermore, if you are lucky to find your spot on an existing vessel, the day you want to buy your own boat and become a captain if you find any vessel on sale you pay it much more than its market price. The EU is somehow competing with you to 'buy' that same vessel for unreasonable prices in order to dismantle it! I paid for my vessel [see Plate 6.2] 38,000 Euros while, according to everyone else here, at regular market prices it should have been at least 10,000 Euros cheaper.

<sup>25</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/fleet/index.cfm> [Accessed on January 12, 2014]



**Plate 6.2:** Jorge's fishing vessel *Fuerte Marejada* (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu elaborated by the author)

Juan Ramon confirmed Jorge's view:

For fishers is very hard to start their profession simply because there are no fishing licences and vessels available. I am telling you this because here more fishers can come if we agree on the fishing rules! What does not make any sense is that with the justification of protecting marine resources [authorities pay to] withdraw licences for professional fishing... while at the same time they issue... thousands of licences for recreational fishing... If they would stop with this nonsense policy here we could be at least the double than we are... There could be 100 fishing vessels operating – vessels that are anyhow already operating, although illegally.

On a more superficial level, the reduction of the European fishing fleet may appear like a policy success so far in that, according to data, the European fishing fleet decreased substantially over more than 20 years of subsidies. Nevertheless, if we look at the reduction of the EU fishing capacity, data contradicts the expected outcome: between 2000 and 2006, against more than one billion Euros invested by the EU to reduce the fleet, registered fishing capacity increased on average by three per cent (Cataudella and Spagnolo, 2011). Besides, it must be considered that such data does not count unrecorded catches introduced illegally into the market by the booming European recreational fishing sector. Looking at the local effects that these structural

funds produced in Gran Tarajal and Lampedusa, they had further endangered fish stocks and generated unpredictable economic, social and cultural effects.

#### *6.1.2. From Fishery to tourism: chronicle of a profound transformation*

Across the 1990s and the 2000s the fisheries on Lampedusa and Fuerteventura experienced a series of major transformations. EU rules and directives certainly played a role and worked as a major factor pushing the islands' economies towards tourism. No doubt the construction of airport facilities completed on both islands at the end of the 1960s was also crucial for such an economic turn. However, tourism remained a relatively marginal economy on both islands until the 1990s (Wood, 1993; Santana Talavera et al., 2010; Arbelo, 1994). Moreover, it is clear, neither Lampedusa nor Fuerteventura were isolated from the global world where similar economic shifts from production to a consumption economies had already taken place or were taking place in those decades (Harvey, 1990). Yet even those global transformations were likely to have been activated or encouraged by these specific EU policies.

Caloggero is a retired shipwright from Lampedusa who had lived and worked for almost 20 years in the port-town of Fiumicino, near Rome, before returning to his island in the 1980s. This is what he told me about this process:

Tourism grew thanks to the many entrepreneurs that left fishery. The beginning of this process coincides with the building of the airport on the island. However, during the initial years there were only a few tourists but of course the local industry kept growing since then... In 1982 the situation had already changed: you could see new faces on the island during summer and people – mainly from outside Lampedusa - started building the first hotels and tourist villages... Since then tourism started progressively substituting fishery with many moving from one sector to the other. Fishers started renting rooms to tourists... As soon as they got money, and especially after they came back from 'Morocco', most of them built flats and small houses and new rooms up to today when we could offer 25,000 beds [for tourists] on the island.

At the end of the 1970s, the tourist sector employed between eight and ten per cent of Lampedusa's total working population but the local fishing industry employed 70 per cent (Mancini, 1978). Indeed, even by 1993 when 'The Independent' travel journalist Stephen Wood visited the island, he documented a local economy still largely centred on fishery with only 15 per cent of locals employed in the tourist industry (Wood, 1993). As Caloggero points out above, in the beginning, the island's tourist industry was monopolized by non-islanders: structures to host tourists such as hotels and residences were relatively big and required the investment of capital that only few, if any, islanders owned. However, since the 1990s, a series of complex and interrelated dynamics facilitated a substantial shift in the local workforce from fishing towards the tourist industry. With local fish stocks declining, canning factories began struggling to access the same amounts of catches. On top of this situation, with the European accession of Portugal and Spain at the end of the 1980s, cheaper bluefish caught by fisheries from the two Iberian countries started overwhelming the European markets – including the Italian one. Sicilian and Lampedusan canning industries started opting for cheaper raw materials and fishers in Lampedusa became progressively uncompetitive and unable to sell their catches. Professor Giovanni Fragapane explained:

In 1992 I was the mayor of [Lampedusa]: that year my fellow citizens began sensing the first side-effects of the European Common Market... They organized their first strike ever and... they came to the city hall and threw hundreds of kilograms of *mackerels* and *sardines* in front of the door and inside the building. I do not blame them for what happened that day since they could not understand the reasons of what was going on! Since a few years and increasingly in the last months, they struggled to sell their catches... It took a while [up until the late 1990s] for local fishers to understand that the canning industry had to slowly close down.

Francesca - the 35 year-old daughter of a retired local fish trader, worked for her father until he closed down his activity. Since then she worked at the island's only

aquaculture plant. Although she was only 12 in 1992, she remembered the fishers' strike clearly:

*Mackerel* were all over the place... Fishers were protesting because they could sell less and less of their catches. It took a while but finally they understood that it was because the market was filled with much cheaper catches coming mainly from Spain... Sicilian canning industries found it more convenient transforming frozen and cheaper fish coming from the Iberian Peninsula.

With cheaper bluefish entering the Italian market from abroad, Lampedusa's canning entrepreneurs were increasingly excluded from the market as they had to deal with greater shipping costs for frozen fish to reach the island, compared to their Sicilian competitors. Soon, they found themselves with few opportunities other than to transform their canning factories into tourist facilities. As Angelina, a former worker of the canning industry, told me:

I used to work for the *Maggiore* family who owned a canning industry. When they decided to stop their activities they made some ten holiday apartments out of their factory.

Unavoidably, local workers - the women working in the factories or the men who went fishing - had to start looking for other sources of income. Yet, as several fishers in Lampedusa had returned from oceanic fishery with considerable capital, many reinvested this through buying a boat and/or a holiday house for tourists. The EU subsidies to scrap vessels and withdraw licences had heightened this progressive shift away from fishery and towards the opening of several family-run tourist activities:

My understanding of what happened here to fishery and why so many left it for the tourist sector is simple: everyone realized that in order to earn a living there was another much easier and more profitable option than fishing. [Thus,] everyone left fishing... People here faced two options: either they invested more in fishery and get the fleet and the facilities to make local fishery survive and flourish, or they had to stop fishing professionally and invest on tourism... It is clear as the impoverishment of the sea played a role as well: however, here that we can access some of the richest fishing grounds of the Mediterranean, there were surely the margins for fishery to survive. Besides, the fact that everyone keeps fishing illegally demonstrates that there was and there is enough fish to make a well-organized fishery profitable... Since tourism boomed over the last ten to 15 years, maybe also for a lack of imagination, everyone thought that the only and easier option available was tourism...

Subsidies to scrap vessels certainly helped creating such unnatural opposition between fishery and tourism, as if instead of developing them together, one sector – tourism - had to substitute the other – professional fishery... Fishers bought many of those small boats for tourism that you can see in the port with the money they received scrapping their vessels: today they use them to take tourists around the island during summer, and to go fishing illegally during winter. (*Francesca*)

As for this progressive shift from a production to a consumption economy, it was as if several elements combined and, at the same time, favoured each other in determining the collapse of Lampedusa's fishing industry. The decline of the local canning industry can be seen as both the cause and the consequence of this economic shift. Even fish stocks' depletion does not explain alone the move away from what was once a flourishing industry providing employment to an entire island. Within this picture, EU subsidies had accelerated and triggered the transformation before the 1990s by quickening fish stock depletion, and later by economically subsidizing fishers' abandonment of professional fishery.

Similar to what happened in Lampedusa, in Fuerteventura the tourist industry had also developed, initially thanks to investors coming from outside the island across the late 1970s and the 1980s. Since then, the local tourist industry continued to grow until the first decade of the 2000s (Santana Talavera, 2010). The development of the tourist industry passed through a number of stages and, from the 1990s, the number of hotel rooms available multiplied ten times compared to previous years, with a significant growth of small holiday apartments built and owned by locals (González Morales et al., 2012). Like in Lampedusa, the development of the tourist industry in Fuerteventura was thus initiated by major investments coming from outside the island, but this had later been supplemented with a number of small tourist facilities owned by the islanders.

When Gran Tarajal's fishers returned from oceanic fishing and, later, when they could access subsidies to scrap their vessels and/or withdraw their licenses, they

finally had the financial opportunity to take a share of this expanding and profitable industry. This shift away from professional fishery was so dramatic that it reached a point in the 1990s when the local fishery risked losing a generation of fishers and, with it, hundreds of years of accumulated practical knowledge (Ruddle, 2000). Professor Agustin Santana Talavera of the University of la Laguna of Tenerife, who I met during my first week in the Canary Islands archipelago, studied Fuerteventura's small-scale fisheries for decades. He told me:

During the 1990s the huge demand of workforce from the construction sector related to the tourist industry combined with the several fishing vessels owners who decided to dismantle their vessels to access EU subsidies, and pushed many fishers to leave professional fishery. There was the concrete risk of losing one generation of fishermen.

Over no more than two decades many islanders who earned a living from the sea left professional fishing and found an occupation in the booming tourist industry. Rapidly, family based tourist activities – holiday apartments and houses, and small restaurants - developed on both islands. Yet on both islands, buildings grew without responding to any regulation. Giuseppina Nicolini, the actual Mayor of Lampedusa, was seriously concerned with this issue:

Politics on this island has lived out of illegality for years. They exchanged votes for illegal permits to build... Imagine that there is no town plan on the island... It was a weird run to occupy as much space as possible, were you had to run back to your friend, neighbour, relative: if he or she could make it then I could make it as well! A proper race to destroy this very fragile natural environment.

As for the initial large resort hotels in Fuerteventura, extensive illegal building mutated the morphology of the islands, as well as social relations within small local communities. Individuals began struggling with each other to occupy their (is-)lands and build one or more holiday houses for tourists. Yet, as noted above, while the tourist industries boomed, the exploitation of sea resources did not end: fishers got their recreational fishing licenses and remained at sea.

*6.1.3. From professional fishery to illegal fishing: increasing unfair competition and decreasing economic and environmental sustainability*

Although the EU lacks any detailed definition of recreational fishery, with specifications varying across member states, the European Commission (EC) describes recreational fishery as any fishing activity conducted without a commercial end. Fishing gears allowed on board of recreational boats and other specifications are instead regulated at the national level. In Italy, recreational fishers are exclusively allowed to fish with lines and they can land a maximum of five kilograms of fish per person on board. As for Spain, the same two specifications applied and they combined with a series of other more articulated restrictions that varied according to fish species (Pawson et al., 2008).

Despite the Communitarian obligation to not make any commercial profit out of recreational fish catches, my fieldwork revealed that this was not always the case. Indeed, most recreational fishers in Gran Tarajal and Lampedusa sold their catches. By operating under more lax regulations and restrictions and a cheaper taxation regime, recreational fishers had thus become the professional small-scale fishers' major competitors, whereby their illegal catches competed unfairly with professional fishers' ones. Moreover, as recreational fishers were not obliged to complete a logbook,<sup>26</sup> unlike professional fishers, they had no obligation of any sort to register the weight of catches, the species they fished, the fishing gear they used, the areas where they were fished or the amount of hours they spent at sea (Gerritsen and

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<sup>26</sup> An important section of the CFP is concerned with control technologies and strategies to monitor the European professional fishing fleet through collecting detailed data on fishing activities 'at every point along the production chain [to prove] that the fish was caught legally [according to] standards [that apply] to all fishing activities in EU waters' (EC, 2014a). According to EU norms, the logbook is imposed on all captains of vessels longer than ten meters as an essential tool for the implementation of effective control strategies.



Lordan, 2010). It was thus very difficult to control and monitor the activities of recreational fishers.

When I was working in Mariano's fish warehouse, as long as I did not know who had a professional fishing licence and who did not, I found it problematic to distinguish between who landed legal or illegal catches. Yet, Sandro – Mariano's father – did not express any worry when indicating to me who was fishing legally and who was not. As he explained:

This man who had just landed those fish boxes [two of *squid* and one of *greater amberjack*] owned a big vessel of ten tonnes with three other fellows... [However] they could not agree on anything and decided to scrap their vessel to get the compensation and let their 13 fishers [become] unemployed. Now each of the four of them has his own boat: they take tourists around the island during summer, while in winter... they go fishing with a smaller boat and with a bit of *squid* and a bit of *greater amberjacks* they make their 50 to 60 Euros per day.

In Lampedusa, professional fishers sold their catches in the same places that recreational fishers did. Moreover, those who were professional fishers during summer often became recreational ones during winter. For example, Giorgio, a Lampedusan professional big-scale fisher and member of the Fishing Vessel Owners Association in Lampedusa, told me:

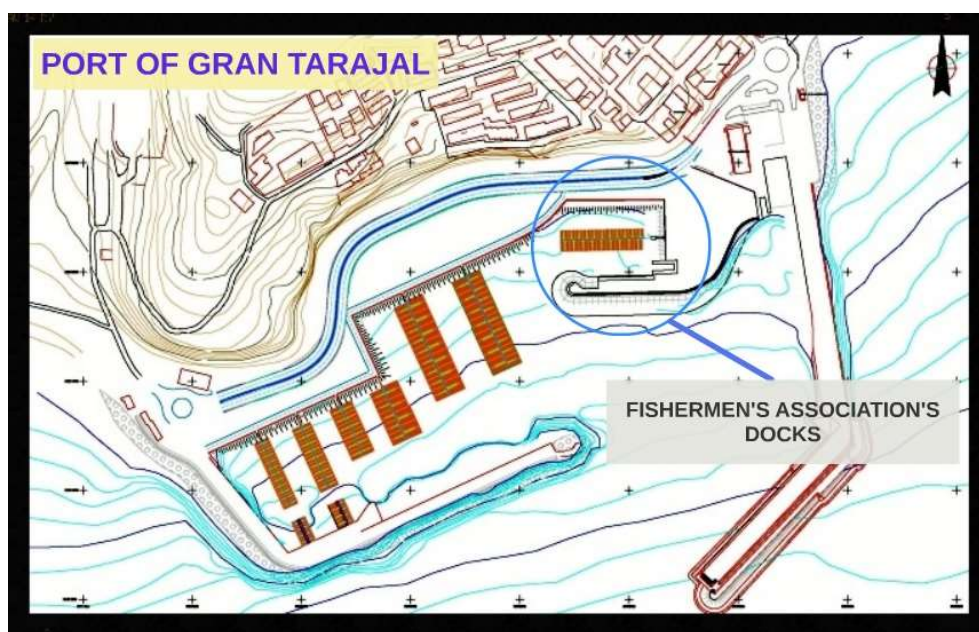
Many people on the island take their vessels out of water during winter and apply for unemployment benefits. However... none of them really stop fishing... They keep going with some other boat or they embark with a friend... Our vessel [the *Andrea Doria*<sup>27</sup>] is too big so that we would spend too much for taking it out of water... The only thing that remains for us to do [in winter] is to go fishing illegally every time there is good weather, with the other small boat we have! With the big vessel it is not worth going fishing for a few hours,<sup>28</sup> while with the small one we just go fishing at a couple of miles from the island.

<sup>27</sup>[http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/fleet/index.cfm?method=Search.DetailSearchSimple&event\\_key=21642467&search\\_type=advanced&search\\_id=4342](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/fleet/index.cfm?method=Search.DetailSearchSimple&event_key=21642467&search_type=advanced&search_id=4342) [Accessed on September 21, 2014]

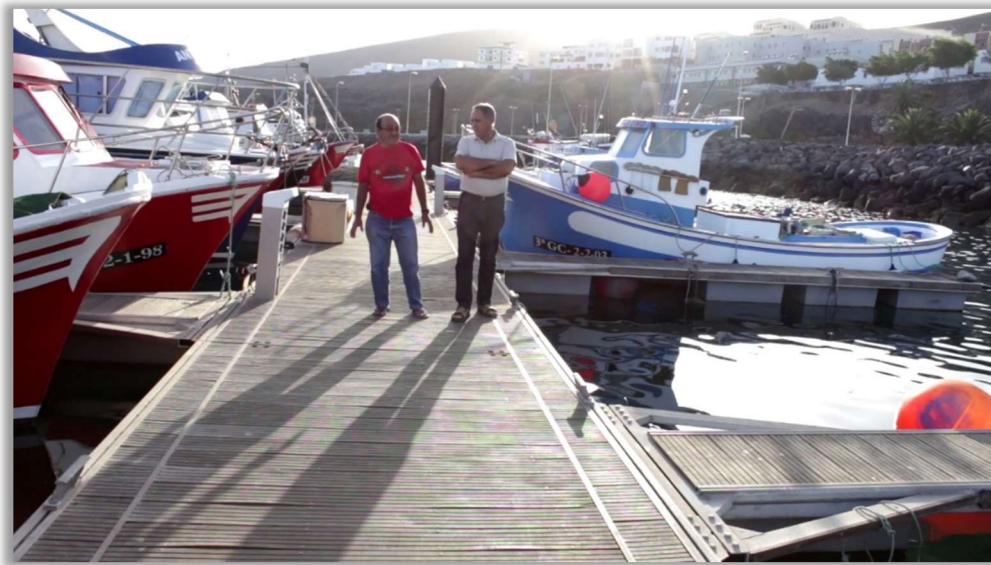
<sup>28</sup> Giorgio and his brother's vessel was a 15 meter long trawler that could not face bad sea conditions for too long, so that in winter they preferred to go fishing with the other boat they owned.

As can be seen, the situation in Gran Tarajal resembled that of Lampedusa, with a contracting professional fishery, a booming recreational fishery, and plenty of catches sold illegally. However, although recreational and professional fisheries competed for the same local market – especially restaurants and hotels – on Gran Tarajal the realities of recreational and professional fisheries were markedly separated. On dry land, for a variety of reasons that were mostly dependent on the organisation and structure of the local Fishermen’s Association, professional fishers did not share their work environment with recreational ones. As for the commercialisation of the catches, this also had to pass exclusively through the Fishermen’s Association.

Spatially speaking, all professional fishing vessels were harboured on a separate – and dedicated – section of the port, away from the rest of docks (see Plate 6.3 and 6.4). Moreover, as the Gran Tarajal Fishermen’s Association directly managed the selling of catches, illegal catches had to be sold through other channels. Additionally, due to the latitude of Fuerteventura, sea conditions did not change dramatically through the seasons, so that local professional fishers could fish throughout the year.



**Plate 6.3:** Map of Gran Tarajal port and the area where fishers exclusively harbour (image of the Provincial Government of Fuerteventura elaborated by the author)



**Plate 6.4:** Gran Tarajal fishermen's docks (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu elaborated by the author)

Notwithstanding such a separation, many of those fishing illegally in the Spanish island were retired professional fishers. Juan explained:

Here the problem is that there are too many fishermen that go fishing with no licence. Better: they only have the licence for recreational fishery... They fish like us, if not more than us. I want to tell you something more: many of them were professional fishermen before... They normally sell their catches to restaurants or hotels that already asked for their fish... They are becoming our main competitors here on the island - since they have less expenses, they sell their catches for much cheaper prices.

If illegal fishers were not retired fishers, they were effectively potential professional fishers who could not find their way into professional fishing. The economic consequences of the unfair competition from recreational fishery was seen as devastating for the professional small-scale fisheries:

The problem for us is not really the lack of fish: in fact, I would not say that there is less fish now than there was one or two decades ago... Our major problem is illegal fishing that competes with us for the same local market... Here, as in many other Italian small ports, recreational fishers' catches are sold in the same boxes as our fish is sold: they put them together. Fish traders register all the catches in the same invoice and that is it! Since recreational fishers sell their

catches at much cheaper prices... we have to reduce our selling prices as well... I am not necessarily referring to those retired fishermen with their little boats that go fishing to get their 50 Euros a day that help them to survive... I refer to those with powerful boats that made illegal fishing their own profession... Authorities do not do anything to them, and they rather come and control us. (Francesco)

When selling their catches, recreational fishers impacted upon small-scale fisheries at three levels: they unfairly competed within the same market; they competed for the same maritime resources, and, by using heavily impacting fishing gears to fish in forbidden areas and periods of the year, recreational fishers' activities were seen to be the major cause of small-scale fishery target species depletion (Post et al., 2011; Coleman et al., 2004).

Miguel, of the Fishery Control Unit of the Provincial Government in Gran Tarajal, stressed that it was much simpler for recreational fishers to act illegally compared to professional small-scale fishermen:

Here in Gran Tarajal there are almost no violations perpetuated by professional fishermen. On the other hand you have plenty of illicit conducts concerning the recreational fishing sector... They fish where it is forbidden; they fish prohibited species; they fish during the biological bans: they basically undermine all conservation policies in place.

Official data on illegal fishing confirm – and worsen – the situation Miguel and other fishers described to me. A recent assessment of unreported landings for Spain highlights that 36 per cent of unreported landings came from recreational fishers. Then, another 32 per cent correspond to the black market – where, again, recreational fishers got most of the share. Another 17 per cent was unloaded by those fishermen fishing for sustenance. Professional fishers' unreported catches thus amounted to two per cent of the total amount of illegal landings (Bellido Millán et al., 2014). Similar data apply for the Mediterranean (Tuleda, 2004).

This is not to say that before EU regulations on fishery, local fishers did not engage in any illicit fishing activity. What seems to be the case however, is that the CFP's

inconsistencies and uneven distribution of the costs of its implementation – conservation policies hit most severely the economy of relatively sustainable small-scale fisheries – constitute fishers' main rationale for conducting illegal activities at sea:

The problem is that fishers complaining today [about] the unfair competition of recreational fishers, tomorrow will be fishing illegally with a recreational fishing license once they will have withdrawn their professional license. If things remain as they are now, this is what everyone will end up doing. Today you are damaged by recreational fishers. Tomorrow you will be [a recreational fisher] selling illegally your catches... I bet that when there will be the next round of subsidies to stop fishing, those whose application will succeed will turn into recreational fishers! (*Piero*)

The second generation of EU structural policies for fishery, aimed at preserving maritime living resources, had thus produced quite the opposite effect of endangering coastal environments and the economy of local professional small-scale fisheries.

Although small-scale fishers provided for almost half of the entire workforce employed in the European fishing industry, EU policymakers seem unaware of such inconsistent situations facilitated by Communitarian regulations. When I attended the public hearing for the reform of the CFP organized by the European Parliament Fishery Committee (EPFC), during his speech to the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and members of the EC, Alberico Simioli of the *Legacoop Pesca Campania*<sup>29</sup> denounced the damages that recreational fisheries had caused to small-scale professional ones. Yet when I approached him at the end of the hearing, he resignedly told me that it was not the first time they had denounced the situation: yet no decision was taken to do anything about it so far. Indeed, the EC's green paper for the 2009 reform of the CFP mentions recreational fishery only once, equating it – and the need to protect it – with small-scale fishery: 'Fisheries with their large share of small- and

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<sup>29</sup> The Legacoop Pesca Campania is the league of fishermen cooperatives of the Italian region of Campania- [http://www.legacoopcampania.it/?page\\_id=55546](http://www.legacoopcampania.it/?page_id=55546) [Accessed on June 02, 2013]

medium-sized companies play an important role in the social fabric and the cultural identity of many of Europe's coastal regions. [...] It is therefore essential to secure a future for coastal, small-scale, and recreational fishermen' (EC, 2009: 14). Although structural policies certainly helped, providing fishers with financial opportunities to diversify their sources of income, engage in tourism, and allow them to continue to own boats and thus continue to 'play an important role in the social fabric and cultural identity' of the islands, they also further endangered the health of European seawaters. In other words, the setting of subsidies to scrap vessels or withdraw professional fishing licences did not exactly correspond with the approach that EU professional small-scale fishers would recommend. The same applied for a series of other key conservation policies implemented within the frame of the CFP.

## **6.2. Conservation Policies and the privatisation of the sea**

As for the shift in the structural policies that I have described, through the years the CFP increasingly concentrated on conservation policies (Karagiannakos, 1995). The first Communitarian attempt to regulate and limit the access to European fish resources dates back to 1983, with the introduction of the Total Allowable Catches system (TACs). This complex system of quotas was designed to limit member states' catches per fish species, based on scientific elaboration of data on commercial fish landings (Franchino and Rahming, 2003; Mansfield, 2004). In 1992, the first reformed CFP introduced the key concept of 'fishing effort' as an index combining several vessels' technical parameters – such as the engine power, the length of the hull and the main fishing gear. This was in order to balance national fleets' productivity on the one side, and the available fishing opportunities on the other. In 1998 a list of minimum sizes of marine organisms was introduced with the Council Regulation

850/98<sup>30</sup> while, with the 2002 reform of the CFP, policymakers introduced and explicitly prioritized further conservation policies to protect European marine ecosystems (Lutchman et al., 2009). The TACs system combined with the ban to fish specific and endangered fish species, while the EC developed a series of technical conservation measures aimed at limiting the impact or the use of determined fishing gears and techniques (Long and Curran, 2000).

As for the second wave of structural policies, their conservation elements had most severely affected small-scale fishers rather than their commercial and industrial colleagues. In the next section, I thus analyse the local impacts of the TACs on small-scale fisheries, before examining how local fishers made sense of these limitations in the light of their interactions with non-EU fisheries operating just off the 12 miles of territorial waters surrounding the two islands.

#### 6.2.1. *The unjust distribution of quotas*

The TACs system consisted of a regime of quotas to limit the landings – and thus the catching – of specific endangered fish species. Imposed to tackle the damages produced by overfishing, this complex system was meant to regulate the access of European fisheries to maritime resources, and it was set periodically on the basis of scientific evaluations exchanged among EU countries (EC, 2014b). Once quotas are established at the EU level and distributed nationally, single member states allocate them to national fisheries in the form of individual shares for either vessels' owners or fishing consortiums and cooperatives. Those receiving quotas own them and are

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<sup>30</sup><http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014PC0265&from=EN>  
[Accessed on February 3, 2015]

entitled to use or sell them to other national stakeholders (Cataudella and Spagnolo, 2011).

Here, I will limit my analysis to *Bluefin tuna*, since it is the only species whose fishing was also regulated through quotas on the Mediterranean - and thus in Lampedusa as well (EC, 2010). In particular, it was the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic *Tuna* (ICCAT) that was responsible for the conservation of *tuna* and which transmits quotas to the EU. In its turn, the EU then distributed these nationally. During an interview with the Fuerteventura province's ministry for fishery, Rita Diaz Hernandez,<sup>31</sup> she expressed her full concern regarding the TACs system:

A recent example of the damages that the TACs system can produce on local fisheries regards *Bluefin tuna*. This is an island whose fisheries historically benefited from and were organized around the passages of *Bluefin tuna*... This year the central government assigned a maximum quota of 25 tons of *tuna* to the whole archipelago... Meanwhile, big vessels from mainland Spain come here to fish their quota of *tuna*: this is madness.

There were two major problems upon which small-scale fishers lamented in relation to the distribution of the right to access *tuna* fishing. First, they felt they were again paying the price for the damages that someone else – the industrial fishery – had produced. Second – and most importantly – almost everyone I spoke to emphasized the fact that quotas too often remained in the hands of the biggest and more powerful and influential actors of the European fishing industry: those big vessels who had depleted the stock. As Juan Ramon told me:

They introduced the quota system and since then we are not allowed to catch any *tuna* or, depending on whether or not you get your quota, you can only catch a certain amount of it. But, the right question should be: who owns these quotas? Big vessels and consortiums have the quotas since they can buy them. They are the same that depleted the stocks and that generated the conditions that pushed authorities to introduce these limitations... Believing in politicians' good faith, this looks like a schizophrenic policy. There is no doubt that this

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<sup>31</sup>[http://www.cabildofuer.es/portal/p\\_46\\_final\\_Distribuidor\\_3.jsp?seccion=s\\_fdes\\_d4\\_v1.jsp&codbusqueda=199&language=es&codResi=1&codMenuPN=1&codMenuSN=4&codMenu=217&layout=p\\_46\\_final\\_Distribuidor\\_3.jsp](http://www.cabildofuer.es/portal/p_46_final_Distribuidor_3.jsp?seccion=s_fdes_d4_v1.jsp&codbusqueda=199&language=es&codResi=1&codMenuPN=1&codMenuSN=4&codMenu=217&layout=p_46_final_Distribuidor_3.jsp) [Accessed on June 23, 2014]



system is wrong since [those] who pay the major costs are always inshore fishermen who did not generate the problem.

Once distributed individually at the national level, quotas went, in the vast majority, to big fishing enterprises who held enough capital to buy them. Given their limited access to capital, small-scale fishermen's associations will unlikely take the risk of investing in the quotas. To not catch enough *tuna* would have compromised the entire association's financial stability. Besides, many lamented that there seemed to be numerous inconsistencies within how quotas were set and what they actually experienced at sea. Rather than mirroring the state of local fish stocks and fisheries, TACs were seen as distributed on the basis of political compromises. Juan Ramon continued:

This year the Canary Islands had a 25 ton quota of *Bluefin tuna*. This obviously does not make any sense since in the archipelago 600 vessels do *tuna* fishing. As for the Mediterranean, the EU gave to Spain 700 tons of quota. However, you must consider that Spain has much less *tuna* fishing vessels in the Mediterranean.

Bluefin tuna pass yearly in the seawaters surrounding both islands and constitutes one of the most valuable catches for small-scale fisheries. Given the average weight of this species – single *tunas* can weigh 3-500 kilograms - and the value given to parts of its flesh – such as the belly that can be sold for up to 200 Euros per kilogram – *Bluefin tuna* certainly represents by far the best possible catch for small fishers (see Table 6.1).

FISH SPECIES	PRICE PER KG	AVERAGE WEIGHT	AVERAGE WHOLESALE PRICE PER FISH
Red Snapper	14€	5/20kg	70/280€
Grouper	10€	5/20kg	50/200€
Greater Amberjack	8€	8/15kg	64/120€
Swordfish	10€	110/140kg	1100/1400€
Bluefin Tuna	5€	3/400kg	1500/2000€

**Table 6.1:** Most common fished species in Lampedusa with the corresponding indicative average wholesale prices per kg for 2012, the indicative average weight of catches and the indicative average wholesale price per fish for 2012 (data elaborated by the author as they were collected through participant observation and interviews in Lampedusa)

Consequently, inshore fishers perceived TACs as highly costly limitations that negatively impacted the economic sustainability of their job. Yet, since fishers perceived this set of regulations as unjust, the authority of the EU was de-legitimised, making it easier for them to morally circumvent its rules (cf. Tyler, 2006). Around midday of one of the many days I spent at Mariano's warehouse, when there was almost no one else around, he took me to a side door of his shop. When he opened the door, I could only see frozen *tuna*. They were tens of big *Bluefin tuna* and they were stored into a sort of clandestine refrigerating room just one door from his warehouse. Taking me there, he wanted to demonstrate to me that fishers kept fishing *tuna*, either voluntarily or as by-catch when, for instance, fishing *swordfish* with longlines, and that local authorities were complicit with fishermen:

Here people keep fishing *tuna* while authorities turn a blind eye to them. The same happens in mainland Sicily where I had been working for the last five years... The Coastguard let them fish: actually, most of the time they do not even have the money to get gas on their patrolling boats and eventually follow them. When fishers return on dryland, the Coastguard control their catches and vessels either randomly or because some other fish trader told them to go and check those vessels. [When they find *tuna*] fishers are convicted and fined, while the Coastguard seize the catch. At this point – and that is why you can find a lot of *tuna* in any of the warehouses on this island – often [the Coastguard illegally] sell the *tuna* to either the traders who informed them or to the fish

trader that corrupted them... They obviously do not throw *tuna* away so that it keeps circulating, although it is sold at lower prices since it is [an] illegal catch. (Francesca)

It is clear that the CFP's provisions were ineffective in terms of improving the environmental sustainability of local fishery, while at the same time severely undermining the economic performance of professional small-scale fishing. Facing economic insecurity and scarce – or corrupt - law enforcement, in Lampedusa, the fishers very easily acted against the law, although recreational fishers were more involved, since they did have to run the risk of seeing their expensive professional fishing licence suspended or revoked. Deviation from the CFP legal restrictions was also buttressed by fishers' direct knowledge of the sea: on both islands fishers repeatedly emphasized that the *Bluefin tuna* stock was always quick to recover from over-fishing. The fishers' first-hand practical experience of the sea and its fish was utilised here as a reason to contest the legitimacy of EU impositions. Effectively, they denied that they were harming *tuna* stocks (cf. Sykes and Matza, 1957). This denial was made even simpler, considering that *tuna* was often caught as by-catch when using longlines. Here, the fishers could not help but catch tuna – and they could thus deny their intention. Denial was made even easier as local fishers constantly encountered non-European fishers catching as many *tunas* as they wanted in international waters.

#### 6.2.2. *Fish do not stop at the border: conservation policies do*

Countless non-European industrial fishing vessels operated daily out of the 12 miles of both Italian and Spanish territorial waters. Frequently, these non-European fishers used techniques and gears forbidden aboard of Communitarian vessels. Enzo expressed his anger about this:

Even if we agreed with European regulation and every one of us complied with them... we cannot feel any commitment to them. Every day we see Tunisian... fishers catching *tunas* just a few hundreds of meters away from us! We are told not to fish *tuna* because otherwise the stock will collapse: at the same time, Tunisian fishers catch the same *tunas* we would catch, and then they sell them in Italy and the rest of Europe... If we have to stop because of any environmental concern, then they should stop as well: am I wrong?

Fishers' experiences at sea undermined the CFP provisions' legitimacy once more.

Within the frame of EU policy-making on fishery, third-countries' commitment to maritime conservation policies constituted one of the major issues on the table.

Indeed, in order to preserve migratory fish stocks from collapsing, the application of conservation policies must necessarily transcend the limits of territorial waters.

However, several factors undermined the EU and member states' negotiating power.

Neighbouring countries such as, for instance, Tunisia and Morocco, felt themselves legitimated to not comply with any EU conservation policy after European fishing

fleets had overfished for decades on their waters. For these groups, it was seen as their turn to make profits out of their seas (Feidi, 1998):

It does not make any sense to stop people fishing a certain fish if you allow someone else to fish it 100 meters southern. Fish do not stop at the border... I cannot see how [EU] institutions can claim that these policies aim at preserving the species... It seems rather a development policy for Tunisia and North Africa in general so that they can grow a local strong fishing sector that might work as an economic driver for the region. (*Francesca*)

Although Francesca was not familiar with academic literature on the topic, given her first-hand knowledge of the Sicilian and Tunisian fishing industries, she pretty much framed the issue as most specialists do (see De Sombre and Barkin, 2011; Acheampong, 1997; Papaconstantinou and Farrugio, 1999). The fishing sector in Tunisia was literally booming, and their main market was Europe. The problem concerning the geographical as well as operational limits of conservation policies was that there was little point implementing them on migratory fish stocks if the effort did not come from every national stakeholder, including non-European countries. As for other areas of the CFP, this inconsistency unavoidably undermined not only the

effects that the policy might aim to produce, but its legitimacy from the perspectives of fishers who experienced, at their own expense, all of CFP's contradictions and paradoxes.

### **6.3. - Conclusion**

Since the introduction of the CFP, EU governance of fishery kept directly and profoundly influencing small-scale professional fishers' everyday life on both islands. With the second wave of structural policies designed to reduce the environmental damages produced by the previous modernisation and expansion of the European fleet, the pouring of professional fishers into the tourist industry was accelerated. EU subsidies combined with the increasing operational costs of professional fishery consequent to the implementation of CFP's conservation policies, pushing professional fishers away from their profession and into illegal fishing and the tourist sector, further jeopardizing the economic and environmental sustainability of local professional fisheries.

Yet, while the EU's inconsistent and scarcely effective regulations lost legitimacy, both the recreational fishing and tourism industry developed on the two islands within a frame of diffuse illegality. At sea, illegality endangered local maritime ecosystems, invalidating conservation policies implemented by law-abiding professional fishers, further reducing the profitability of professional fishery and increasing its operational costs. In this way, a vicious circle was activated, leading more professional small-scale fishers to opt out and turn toward illegal fishing, further marginalizing professional small-scale fishery.

While European management of fishery had already contributed significantly in transforming the lives of small-scale fishers and the sociocultural and economic fabric

of their communities, across the end of the 1980s and the 1990s, Lampedusa started being turned into an outpost of the European external border, producing further and profound alterations of everyday life on the island, which is the subject of the next chapter.

## 7. LIVING THE BORDER

*'Welcome to Death Island'* (Gill, 2013)

Europe's external border replaced a pre-existing boundary that Lampedusans had transgressed for decades - and continued to transgress (Andreas, 2000; Walters, 2006). Since the late 1990s, when Europe's outer border moved to the middle of the Mediterranean, border management was structured in Lampedusa through the European Union (EU) authorities' strategic use of the island and their simultaneous neglect for the concerns of the population inhabiting it. The border is an expansive and massive machinery, permanently working from the island and in its surrounding seawaters. Yet, in Lampedusa, even the most basic welfare services and facilities were lacking. On top of this tension, despite the huge political and media attention about the island as 'the quintessential embodiment of the Euro-African migration and border regime' (Cuttitta, 2014: 199), islanders' voices remained marginal within the production and reproduction of the border narrative surrounding Lampedusa. In this sense, the EU external border was put into operation, regardless of Lampedusans' everyday life (Boelpaep, 2013). Yet, locals, especially fishers, interacted frequently with the border apparatus established on and around their island.

The working of the EU border impacted on Lampedusans' everyday lives mainly at two levels. First, islanders dealt with the multiple concrete manifestations of the border and its management on the ground such as migrant detention centres, patrolling boats, radars and so like – what can be called 'border functions' (Szary and Giraut, 2015). At a second and more discursive level, there were a number of local effects related to the island's increased visibility – or centrality - within the media, of political and academic representations of Europe's border and migration regimes. As

Cuttitta (2014) puts it, both these components structure Lampedusa's *borderness* as the condition of being at the border, which results from Lampedusa's geography, combined with a series of policies, practices and discourses developed in and around the island; a set of processes that can be called *borderization* (Cuttitta, 2012: 25).

In this chapter I explore these two dimensions of Lampedusa's *borderness*. Before doing so, in order to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the *borderization* processes at play, I discuss how Lampedusans had experienced a form of marginality unrelated to specific EU policies. Further to this introductory section, I begin with the analysis of the most tangible mechanics of Europe's outer border 'on the ground', examining how Lampedusian small-scale fishers interacted with it, and took part in its functioning and management. I then move to an examination of Lampedusa's mediated centrality within national and European narratives about the border, charting the effects of such disproportionate attention on the small and once isolated population.

### **7.1. On Lampedusa's *borderness*: inhabiting the margins of Italy**

Cuttitta (2014: 197) highlights that not 'only most Italians but also many other EU citizens immediately link Lampedusa with keywords like 'irregular migration' and 'migrant boats''. Yet, to live on the quintessential *loci* of Europe's border regime is simply a part of the islanders' experience of *borderness*. Being at the border does not refer necessarily or exclusively to migration and border policies *per se*. Everyday life on small detached islands may encompass frequent experiences of isolation and marginality (Royle, 2008; Burholt et al., 2013). Isolation, as a common condition of being at the margins of any territorial unit, might refer to the perception of geographical distance from 'the rest', or to structural difficulties in accessing stable



supplies of goods. To live in the middle of the open sea often implies difficult communications and travel from and to the closest mainland. To inhabit the geographical peripheries, in this sense, is experienced at a variety of levels (Buhalis, 1999). As for Lampedusa, marginality refers, for instance, to the precarious and unreliable ferry connection or to the lack of adequate hospital or school facilities on the island. In relation to Lampedusans' everyday lives, marginality was not only multidimensional, but also extremely significant.

#### *7.1.1. Experienced marginality*

One of the major dimensions of Lampedusans' experienced marginality related to the limited connections of the island with Sicily. This is not something that one may realize at first glance: on paper, the almost 6,000 officially registered Lampedusans count on one ferry to Porto Empedocle and two flights to Palermo per day all over the year, plus a series of extra connections – with further flights and a hydrofoil – during summer. However, once I was on the island, I realized myself how hard and costly it was for islanders to reach Sicily. At the same time, I appreciated that these connections with the mainland performed a fundamental role in ensuring stability on the detached island. If, for fishers, the ferry constituted the only means to access fish markets and sell their catches, the ferry was also the only way for islanders to get basic goods otherwise not available in Lampedusa. Given the relatively limited size of the Lampedusan fishing vessels, boat owners would need special permission to cross the often-rough stretch of sea dividing the island with mainland Sicily. Additionally, the aircraft connecting the island with Palermo was not suitable to transport any goods - having no licence to load anything else than passengers and their luggage (Plate 7.1).



**Plate 7.1:** Lampedusa's Alitalia aircraft in 2014 (@ Francesca del Volgo - elaborated by the author)

Given the deteriorated working conditions of the ferry that had almost 30 years of service, it covered the distance with Sicily over nearly half a day when it took the chance of crossing the sea. Mariano, the fish trader who allowed me to work inside his fish warehouse, elaborated on some of the problems that islanders faced when relying on the ferry:

I do not know whether the ferry will come the following day until late in the evening. I call the ferry company every day around nine in the evening, two hours before departure, so that I will know whether the ferry will arrive here the following morning! Therefore, when fishers go fishing I do not know whether I will be able to send their catches to the market the following day... While time passes, catches lose most of their value, even though I had already paid the fishers.

During my stay on the island, the ferry arrived on average two or three times per week although, due to sea conditions, once it did not come for 20 consecutive days. According to Mariano, fish traders were losing most out of these frequent and unpredictable disruptions. Yet, at the same time, fish traders often used the awkward

ferry connection as a justification to lower the price of catches they paid to local fishers. Prolonged severe weather conditions could also lead to the lack of adequate food provisions for the Lampedusan population. Since islanders had abandoned agriculture and farming when the archipelago's economy turned primarily to tourism, goods from outside the island had become a necessity.<sup>32</sup>

As both the ferry company and the airline were funded by substantial public subsidies to cover their connections to the island, many islanders saw these deficiencies as a result of Italian institutional failure:

The ferry and the aircraft are for us the only connections to the rest of Italy. They operate thanks to [a] huge amount of state subsidies and... authorities should be in charge of checking whether the companies benefiting from them provide the services: the territorial continuity<sup>33</sup> is a constitutional principle and our basic right. (*Enzo*)

The lack of adequate hospital and school facilities constituted another sign of the island's marginality and was a source of major anxiety for islanders. Expectant mothers had to fly to Palermo at their own expense to give birth, while the local elementary school was evacuated during October 2013 due to the risk of collapse because of its deteriorated structure. Although these manifestations of the island's marginality had little to do with EU policies or the establishment of the EU border in Lampedusa, they tended to exacerbate locals' relation to those authorities that had established the Schengen external border there. The day-to-day deprivations experienced on Lampedusa contrasted with the substantial financial capital invested in the island to keep the border fully functioning. This contradiction had framed

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<sup>32</sup> Until the 1980s, meat came from cows farmed in the neighbouring island of Linosa and were butchered in the two slaughterhouses of Lampedusa. Moreover, the interior of Lampedusa was cultivated, and the products of the island's canning industry guaranteed a safe provision of food always available for locals in case of prolonged isolation (Mancini, 1978).

<sup>33</sup> The principle of territorial continuity derives from citizens' right to access the same social and economic opportunities. As a mere economic activity, transportation guarantees also the essential right of mobility as required by Article 16 of the Italian constitution, regardless of where citizens reside.

Lampedusans' understanding, experience and perception of the EU external border and its management in Lampedusa, a border whose functioning I now analyse in detail.

## **7.2. On Lampedusa's *borderness*: inhabiting the margins of the EU.**

With Italy joining the Schengen space of free movement of people in 1997, Lampedusa became part of the EU external border (DG Home Affairs, 2014; Friese, 2008). However, as Caloggero – a retired Lampedusan shipwright - told me, migrants' arrivals in Lampedusa had begun earlier:

Around 1993 young Tunisians on board of some old wreck reached the island. There were no officials controlling them and most boat-migrants did not know that they had landed on such an isolated rock... Often they asked us where the train station was... As soon as they discovered that they had reached just half of their journey, they purchased a ferry ticket and went to Sicily: no one checked their passports.

Migrants' boats had thus crossed this strait of sea before Europe's external border moved southwards to the middle of the Sicilian channel. At this time, Italian authorities would largely overlook arrivals, and the boat migrant phenomenon went generally unnoticed by the media (Cuttitta, 2014). What changed with the Schengen space of free movement of people encompassing Lampedusa was that arrivals started to be perceived and managed differently. With the Italian normative frame on migration adjusting to the European one, and an ensuing increased number of undocumented migrants' border crossings that were detected, securitisation replaced the previous *laissez faire* and improvised approach (Léonard, 2011; Van Houtum and Pijper, 2007).

Paola, the personal assistant to Lampedusa's mayor, a lawyer and the owner of a bed and breakfast on the island, remembered this shift:

Once authorities started to organize themselves to deal with the issue – for instance with the opening of the first detention centre at the airport – the strategy aimed at separating the phenomenon from locals. Authorities' strategy was to hide all they could hide from the eyes of Lampedusans. As soon as migrants arrived on dry land, a bus took them to the centre and they disappeared from [the] islanders' sight.

With the introduction of the Immigration Act 40/1998<sup>34</sup> Italian legislators adjusted the national rules to Schengen parameters (Finotelli and Sciortino, 2009). Now migrants had to be detained - and hidden from islanders. New detention facilities were built, and old military facilities were converted to house migrants or they were being used on the island to detain newcomers (Tsianos and Karakayali, 2010). Alongside this, several European external sea-border patrolling missions coordinated by FRONTEX were launched from the island (Spijkerboer, 2007; Carrera, 2007; Giorgi and Pinkus, 2006; Barrero and de Witte, 2007; Paoletti, 2011). As the Warsaw based European agency started managing the operations carried out around the island by different member states' navies and armies, the EU border regime in Lampedusa also became structured through a quasi-militarisation of the island and the seawaters surrounding it.

Europe's external frontier in Lampedusa had, however, developed as an unstable and multi layered apparatus. Not only was the functioning of the border transformed through time, but it was also continually re-structured as a vast maritime and land area, relying on the use of diverse and integrated surveillance and defence devices with the involvement of several actors. To understand how border functions were introduced and fashioned through time, below I distinguish between the maritime and the (is)land border.

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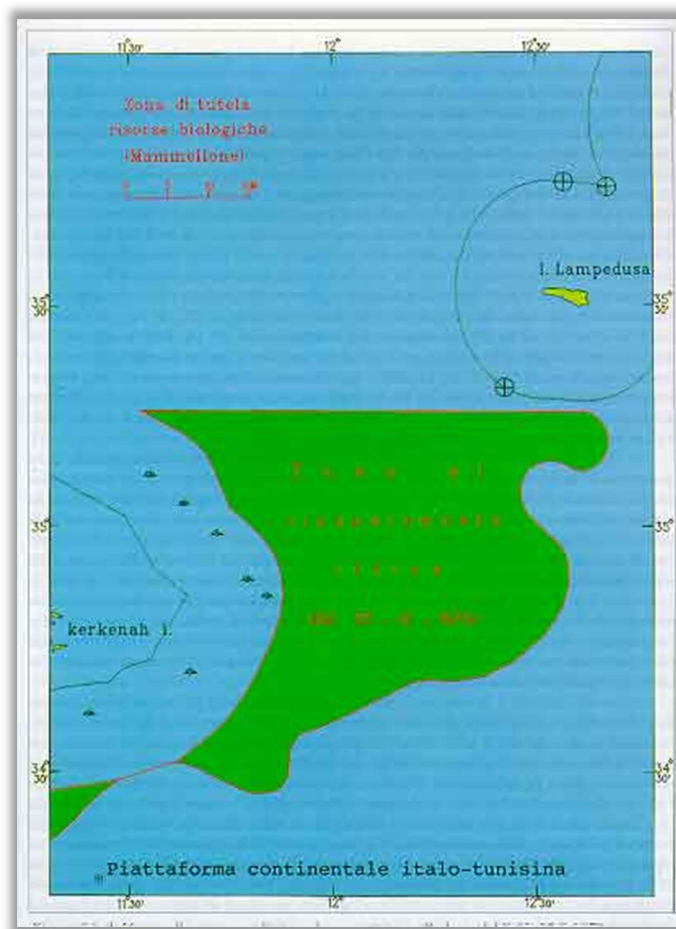
<sup>34</sup> <http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/98040l.htm> [Accessed on July 23, 2015]

### 7.2.1. *The EU border at sea*

Before focusing on the border dividing Lampedusa and the EU from North Africa, I analyse briefly how this frontier was traced onto the sea. As I have explained, Lampedusans and especially fishers, constantly crossed the seawaters separating Tunisia and Italy. However, following Tunisian independence, this situation changed alongside the mutating relations between Italy and the EU on the one side, and Tunisia on the other.

#### *Contested Waters*

In 1951, following Tunisia's freedom from the French colonists, a bilateral agreement between the Tunisian government and France provided that the area of the *Mammellone* (see Map 7.1) would become a Tunisian exclusive fishing area. This decision constituted a legal precedent in the field of international law of the sea. As Chevalier, (2005: 45) argued:



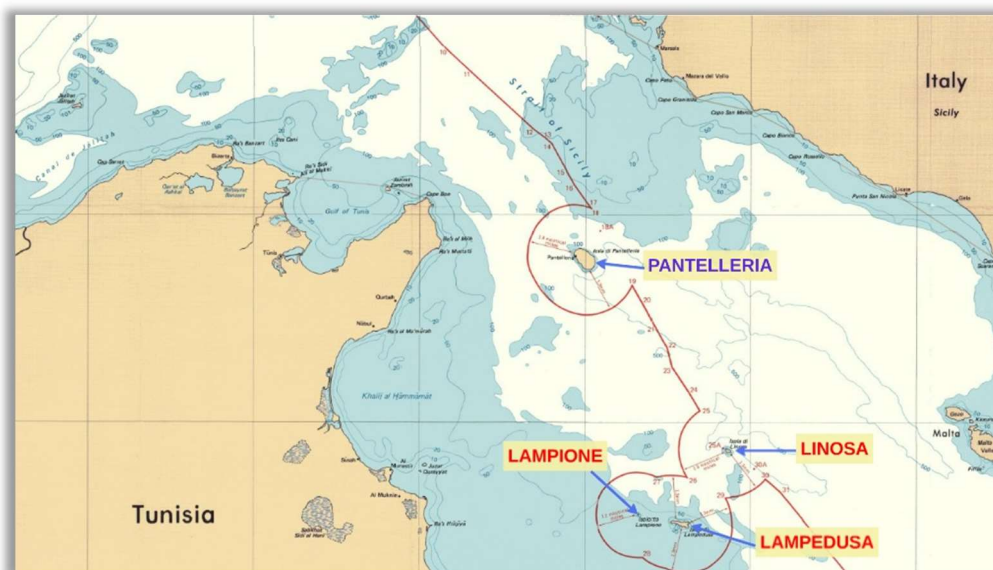
**Map 7.1:** The area of the “Mammellone” coloured in green (@Italian Navy)<sup>35</sup>

Because of the shallow waters in the region, the external limit of this fishing zone is a line, the points of which are located, in certain cases, as far away as [75 nautical miles] from the Tunisian coast, and only [15 nautical miles] from the Italian island of Lampedusa. The Tunisian fishing zone encompasses the rich bank called “*Il Mammellone*”, which has traditionally been exploited by Italian fishermen, and is considered as an area of the high seas by Italy.

However, following the ratification of the agreement, Italian fishing vessels were allowed to keep fishing in Tunisian waters thanks to compensations passed by the Italian government to its Tunisian counterpart – which can be seen as a form of indirect subsidy for Italian fisheries who operated there (Lövin, 2012; Stone, 1997).

<sup>35</sup><http://www.marina.difesa.it/cosa-facciamo/operazioni-in-corso/Pagine/vigilanza-pesca.aspx> [Accessed on April 23, 2014]

Later, in 1971, in another exception to international maritime spatial planning, Italy agreed to trace the median line delimiting the Italian and Tunisian continental shelves without taking into account the presence of both the Pelagic archipelago or the island of Pantelleria as base points to calculate the equidistance amongst the Italian and Tunisian shores (Karl, 1977). For this reason, the line was drawn a few miles off the archipelago. This is why today this boundary literally surrounds the Pelagic islands (see Map 7.2). Later, in 1979, when the last fishing agreement between Italy and Tunisia was not renewed, Italian fishers lost the preferential access to fish inside Tunisia's self-proclaimed territorial waters. As soon as Tunisian forces started patrolling their territorial waters and catching Italian vessels, Lampedusa's fishers experienced for the first time the maritime border in their southern seas.



**Map 7.2:** Median line dividing the Italian and Tunisian continental shelves (@ U.S. Department of State (1980) - elaborated by the author)<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup><http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/58822.pdf> [Accessed on November 13, 2014]



Following the Tunisian refusal to prolong the agreements, the Italian authorities established the *Mammellone* as a protected no-fishing high-sea area<sup>37</sup> for the breeding of fish. With the excuse of monitoring Italian fishing vessels and prohibiting them from fishing, the Italian Navy launched the Fishing Surveillance Operation – that was still in operation during my fieldwork – and which began patrolling the sea south from Lampedusa with two ships (Marina Militare, 2014). While the situation concerning the *Mammellone* later stabilized, from 1998, corresponding with the establishment of the EU external border in Lampedusa, Italy and Tunisia signed three bilateral agreements on border patrol, economic aid and development programmes (Coslovi, 2007).

Since then, the relation between Tunisian and Italian – and Lampedusan – fishers around the border was progressively turned upside down. Indeed, over the last 20 years, that sea once crossed by Lampedusans to access the richer, calmer and warmer Tunisian waters, turned into a fishing ground for the increasingly competitive Tunisian fishery:

More than ten years passed since Tunisians started to come fishing on our waters: they... come in groups of five to ten boats and they fish especially around the island of Lampione where the limits of our territorial waters are closer. They go fishing in groups of five to six vessels, and incessantly occupy fishing grounds... Italian authorities do simply nothing to protect our interests.  
(Enzo)

Giacomo, a 30 year old former official of the island's Coastguard echoed this:

Tunisian vessels entered the island's waters when I was still working for the Coastguard... The most we did was to push them out of the limits of our waters. You can easily imagine how busy we are here with all the migrants we rescue: we cannot spend our days controlling the waters around Lampione. Not to mention the fact that, although technically speaking we must seize Tunisian vessels and their catches, there has always been a general understanding that

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<sup>37</sup> Continental shelves determine national exploitation rights only for those resources contained below the bottom of the sea. Since Italy did not fully recognize the Tunisian and French agreement of 1951, from the Italian government's perspective, Tunisia could only claim exclusive fishing rights over its territorial waters and not beyond 12 nautical miles from their coasts – and certainly not over the *Mammellone* (Monteforte, 2014).

we did not have to bother them excessively: this was at least what commanders told us.

As a by-product of these processes, Lampedusans experienced marginality at sea, with fishers feeling somehow overlooked within a major geopolitical matter between the EU, Italy and Tunisia. Nonetheless, Lampedusans continued to cross the border to fish illegally in Tunisian waters –a frequent activity on the island. As I will show, the EU border apparatus made up of complex surveillance and rescuing systems focussed their enforcement almost exclusively on migrant boats, and not on local fishers. Indeed, they often relied on the cooperation of fishers in order to help them with their task.

### *Schengen at sea*

The contemporary maritime EU border is enforced by complex electronic surveillance devices, big navy ships, drones and helicopters, intelligence deployed in the North African coast, Coastguard's boats, radars, law enforcement officials and more. This border covers a vast area of hundreds of square nautical miles through which some migrants' boats are first detected and then intercepted and rescued, and, at times, illegally pushed back towards Africa (Cuttitta, 2006; Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013). Consequently, to provide any meaningful analysis of how the EU external border intersected with Lampedusan fishers' daily lives, it is necessary to disentangle this complex and multi-layered border, also paying attention to how its management was transformed through the years.

Since 2006<sup>38</sup> the first patrolling and rescuing missions coordinated by FRONTEX and the Italian Navy moved southwards, several miles away from the limits of the Italian Search and Rescue Area (SAR)<sup>39</sup> - see Map 7.3.



**Map 7.3:** Light blue demarcates the limits of the Italian SAR, while the red line indicates the unilaterally declared boundaries of the Maltese SAR (Malamocco, 2009 - elaborated by the author)<sup>40</sup>

Initially, migrants only occasionally encountered Lampedusa and landed there during their journey to Italy. With the EU management of the border, however, boat migrants started being detected and rescued many miles away from Lampedusa but were then taken to the island. Here, Lampedusa began to be transformed into an

<sup>38</sup><http://frontex.europa.eu/operations/archive-of-operations/GULRIV> [Accessed on July 23, 2015]

<sup>39</sup> 'The humanitarian law of the sea dealing with Search and Rescue is covered by various maritime laws [...] and traditions, which are put into practice by various actors [...] The coastal states [...] have a leading role in realizing and implementing the regime [...] They are responsible for distress communication and co-ordination in their area of responsibility (SAR area) and for the rescue of persons in distress at sea around their coasts [...] The international SAR regime relies on the naval security forces or the coast guards of the coastal states [...] on the commitment of all seamen to the longstanding maritime tradition to rescue people in distress [...] All vessels at sea, including private commercial vessels, are part of the SAR system and have a duty to rescue.' (Klepp, 2011)

<sup>40</sup><https://geograficamente.wordpress.com/2009/04/20/profughi-leuropa-che-deve-affrontare-unita-lemergenza-umanitaria-del-sud-del-mondo/> [Accessed on May 23, 2014]

offshore platform for EU authorities to canalize, filter, detain and eventually deport migrants before they could reach mainland Sicily (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2012).

Border forces relied on four major sources of information to locate migrants' boats. As I heard first-hand from law enforcement officers in what Lampedusans called 'the police beach', patrolling forces often received intelligence directly from the North African shores so that they knew whether and from which areas migrants were undertaking their journey. Once migrants' boats were at sea, patrolling forces increasingly then relied on information collected using surveillance technologies such as radars and drones monitoring the channel (Hayes, et al. 2014). Often, however, both patrolling forces and civilians navigating south of Lampedusa saw migrants' boats and provided coordinates to rescuing forces and/or they directly intervened. More recently, migrants had started launching direct requests for assistance using satellite phones (Léonard, 2011). This is what the captain of the *Carabinieri* in Lampedusa, Salvatore, explained me before he asked me to turn off the recorder:

Today what happens most frequently is that migrants send their SOS [to] Father Zerai<sup>41</sup> in Rome: they call him with a satellite phone and prove their location so that he can call the Coastguard and someone from here intervene. However, also fishermen often spot first migrants' boats in distress and call for rescue.

Rescuing operations tended to take place at a substantial number of nautical miles from the island. However, at times and depending also on migrants' strategies and tactics to cross the border, migrant vessels reached the island undetected. This happened countless times during 2011 when, following the revolution in Tunisia and, later, the civil war in Libya, thousands left the coasts of North Africa heading to Europe by boat, via Sicily and Lampedusa (see Plate 7.2).

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<sup>41</sup> 'Father Mussie Zerai [...] leads a Rome-based refugee charity' (Van Reisen et al., 2014: 180)



**Plate 7.2:** One of the several migrants' boats that reached the coasts of Lampedusa in 2011 (@ Nino Taranto)

With the fall of the Ben Ali and Gadhafi governments, Tunisian and Libyan patrolling of their own coast and maritime border on behalf of the EU stopped (Boubakri, 2004). As Paola told me:

In 2011 the situation returned somehow to the past, with boat after boat landing directly in Lampedusa: the majority of vessels entered autonomously [into] the port. Authorities could just not patrol the border effectively since too many migrants' vessels arrived.

The memories of that year were still very much vivid in Lampedusan fishers' minds.

Nicola described to me the difficulties that local fishers had to face in 2011:

In 2011, you could not go half mile off the island when you had to stop and rescue some migrants' boat: they all went to Lampedusa. If you were able to make your way across the crowd at the port and leave the pier with your vessel, you just had to stop [a] few hundreds of meters later to assist rescuing this or that migrants' boat... It was impossible to work!

Soon after the 2011 crisis ended in September of that same year, with the reactivation of the bilateral migration and border management agreements in place

before the Tunisian revolution, the border progressively returned to operating at high sea (Ufheil-Somers, 2011). For instance, when I was on the island, rescuing operations took place largely inside Libyan waters. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 2013, however, the border moved again back to the island just for one tragic day when more than 360 migrants died on a capsized boat less than one mile from the island (Orsini et al., 2014).

Looking at the EU external border from the surface of the seawaters surrounding Lampedusa, it can be seen that the external edge of the Schengen space of free movement of people actually covered an enormous maritime area corresponding to the entire Sicilian channel, with a number of border functions distributed at variable distances from the island's shores. While at sea, therefore, Lampedusan fishers interacted either actively or passively with the functioning of the border. These interactions generated a variety of major ethical concerns for local fishers.

### *Sea ethic at stake*

Legally speaking, Lampedusan fishers were involved in the management of the Italian SAR – as was anyone else navigating in that area (Malamocco, 2009). International maritime legal requirements and traditions encouraged fishers to rescue anyone in distress at sea.<sup>42</sup> However, around Lampedusa, maritime law conflicted with national legal provisions concerning undocumented border crossing. Indeed, in line with the law of the sea, if fishers rescued people in distress at sea in either territorial or international waters, they should have been protected against any legal consequence

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<sup>42</sup> The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS Convention) provides that: 'Every State shall require the master of a ship flying its flag [...] (a) to render assistance to any person found at sea in danger of being lost; (b) to proceed with all possible speed to the rescue of persons in distress, if informed of their need of assistance, in so far as such action may reasonably be expected of him.' (Watch the Med, 2015)

on dry land. In reality, however, if fishermen decided to take migrants on board their vessels, they became caught up in long and costly criminal proceedings for their apparent favouring of illegal immigration. Although these proceeds often ended with acquittals, they nevertheless lasted for years and entailed substantial legal expenses (Vassallo Paleologo, 2007; Salamone, 2011). Giovanni explained:

When you see someone in need of assistance in the middle of the sea you must stop and help... Initially many of us helped and took the risk of carrying on very dangerous operations: it is never easy or safe to transfer people from one boat to another in the middle of the sea, especially when boats are overcrowded and the sea is not calm. Either boat can very easily capsize... Today, however, if you rescue a boat migrant you will deal with serious legal and economic consequences on dry land: those fishers who had rescued migrants at sea had to answer authorities' interrogation... running the risk of being incriminated for favouring illegal immigration... Meanwhile, officials seize your vessel at least for a couple of days to carry inspections on board of it, since illegal immigration became a crime... Nowadays fishers do not rescue migrants at sea anymore: they do not want to get into trouble. Authorities treat us as if we were traffickers... Fishers have to escape from their responsibilities because they are afraid of the legal consequences of saving someone's life.

In 2009, under the so called 'security package', the then Italian Ministry of Home Affairs introduced legislation that made unauthorized presence in the country a crime (Ambrosini, 2011; Triandafyllidou and Ambrosini, 2011). Since then, providing support to migrants entering the territory of the country – no matter whether they were risking their lives – exposed fishers to the danger of being incriminated for being involved in illegal immigration.<sup>43</sup>

The functioning of Europe's external border thus challenged the most basic rules of navigation and mutual support, excluding boat migrants in the name of their 'unclear and undefined status that threaten our interests' (Van Houtum and Boedeltje, 2009: 227). In effect, the contravention of the traditional law and norms of the sea with regard to rescuing people in danger had dehumanised boat migrants,

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<sup>43</sup> Despite the Italian government's abrogation of the law in May 2014, the new normative would not apply before December 2015.

suggesting that they were somehow not human and thus not protected by seafaring norms. The fishers of Lampedusa thus carefully avoided migrants and prevented them from boarding their boats— unless the Coastguard asked them to do so. Enzo explained this situation:

When you spot some migrants' boat in distress, you stop, call the Coastguard... and wait until someone comes. You take off your nets from the water and try to stay close to boat-migrants, passing them what you have on board: water, food and so on. What you do not have to do is to take anyone on board of your vessel.

According to several fishers, rescuing operations of this kind were extremely frustrating. Fishers felt themselves helpless to assist, especially when the conditions of migrants' vessels were precarious. Such operations were time consuming and costly to the fishers' work at sea. This was the case especially for small-scale fishers during the bad season, when they went fishing only for a few days per month: once the fishers were at sea they were reluctant to lose the entire fishing day and the money spent for fuel and baits to rescue yet another migrant boat. Although no one was explicit regarding the avoidance of rescuing operations, they mentioned it on several occasions, referring to acquaintances or friends working on other vessels, rather than to their own direct experiences. For instance, Giuseppe said:

Fishers on this island are on the frontline: it is as if a war was fought just off from our island's shores... We are, the fishermen, among those rescuing the victims of such unjust and uneven war... However, people must understand that... we need to work here and we are not the Red Cross. I have always helped anyone I found in distress out at sea. However, I heard that sometimes, some of us prefer to turn their head to the other side... I do not approve what they do but I understand them. Besides the possible and negative legal consequences of rescuing migrants, you must also consider that every time you try to help people at sea you lose a lot of time – hours – and money!

Given the high frequency with which Lampedusa's fishers met migrants' boats at sea, the fishers had got progressively accustomed to the situation, but their maritime ethic succumbed to more economic and formal legal calculations. The seafarers' logic of mutual assistance and reciprocity - developed over centuries as necessary for



enduring an extreme geographic context such as the sea – had been altered to apply differently, depending on the individual who was in need of help or assistance. At the basis of this selective – or exclusive – attitude, was a complex set of normative provisions applying to migrants and the security discourse surrounding them, combined with the actual working of the border on the sea around Lampedusa. Boat migrants had become the exception to the law and ethics of the sea, as if they were inside the water but already behind the bars of the detention centres. Here, their humanity was denied in favour of EU security, they had become deemed the ‘human waste’ of our globalized time with which no European should come into contact (Agamben, 2003; Bauman, 2004).

Seen from this angle, the EU external border regime at sea entailed three major conditions for fishers to commit crimes of obedience (Kelman and Hamilton, 1989). Fishers felt themselves institutionally authorized not to rescue migrants, and this had become a routinized (in-)activity. Moreover, the dehumanisation of migrants was supported by institutional discourses and laws concerning them, as well as by the frequent practice of leaving migrants starving and dying at sea. Third, these conditions, furthermore, had spun a web of ‘pluralistic ignorance’ (Thiel 2014) amongst the fishers who, by rarely discussing these controversial issues amongst one another, assumed that every other fisher on the island would do the same.

Pluralistic ignorance became even more relevant concerning possibly one of the grimmest experiences that Lampedusa’s fishers dealt with in the seawaters surrounding their island. When fishing south from Lampedusa, it was not at all rare to catch migrants’ bodies or parts of them in local fishermen’s fishing nets. When this happened, fishers were again forced to decide what to do in light of the financial costs related to taking bodies on dry land. To publicize these sorts of events might

negatively affect the image of the local fish and fishing industry, attracting the dissatisfaction of other fishers. Yet, if fishers decided to announce their ‘catches’ to the authorities – as they should have done according to the law - they would have to immediately return to dry land, jettison all their catches and leave their vessels to authorities for at least two days so that they could conduct their inspections.

This dynamic produced two main outcomes for fishers. On the one hand, they facilitated a further degradation and dehumanisation of boat-migrants. On the other, such a situation led to a dramatic change of fishers’ perceptions of their workplace – the sea. Mimmo explained:

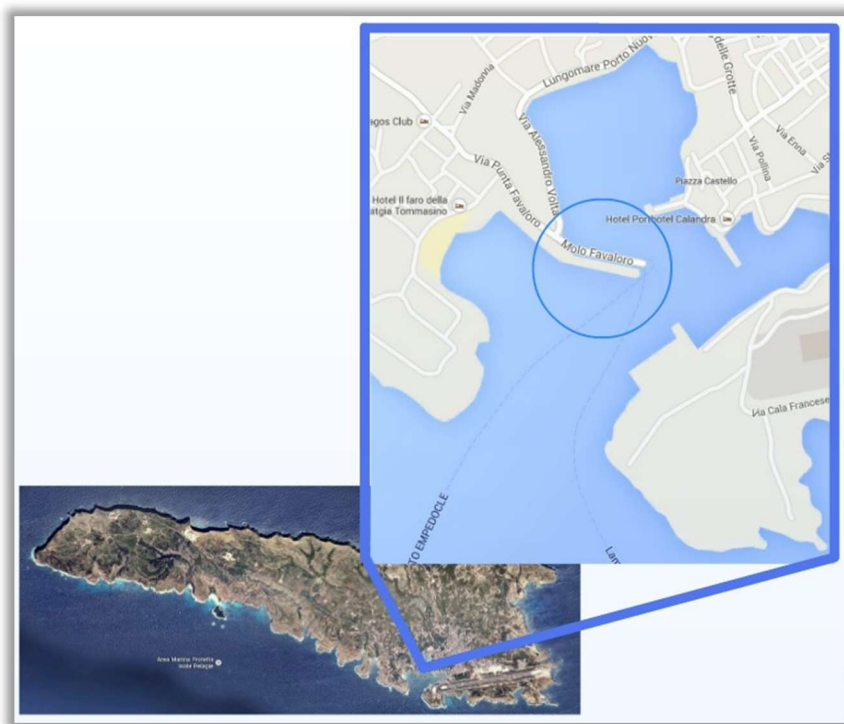
I have to admit that I do not like going fishing to earn a living. However, if there was a moment of the fishing day that I always enjoyed that was the night guard. When we remain at sea for a couple of days, by night one of us remains awake while the other three sleep. When the sea was calm, I really loved to remain alone on the deck surrounded by the darkness of the sea. Now I do not enjoy night guards anymore... I would rather say that they became what I hate the most of going fishing here in Lampedusa. I am afraid of migrants. What do I do if I fish a body when all the others are asleep? What happens if I spot a migrant boat?

Independent of these dynamics juxtaposing fishers’ economic and legal evaluations to the obligation of rescuing migrants at sea or taking their bodies back to dry land, fishers nevertheless performed a key role in the management of Europe’s external border at sea. They were often those that first spotted migrants in distress and who called the rescue forces to intervene. However, the same could not be said concerning the workings of the EU external border on the (is)land.

### **7.3. The EU border on the (is)land**

Once rescued by the Coastguard, migrants were taken to Lampedusa while, in most cases, their vessels were left adrift. On the island, they were landed at the *Favarolo* quay, named by islanders as the ‘migrants’ quay’ (see Figure 7.1 and Plate 7.3). There,

migrants were disembarked (Plate 7.4) and received first aid (Plate 7.5). Dead bodies on the other hand were lain on the ground and put into into black mortuary bags, to be taken later to the island cemetery (Plate 7.6).



**Figure 7.1:** The Favarolo quay of Lampedusa's port closed to the public for the exclusive use of border enforcement agencies and health workers (@ Google Map - elaborated by the author)



**Plate 7.3:** Coastguard boat approaching the quay. One of the Italian Navy patrolling the border is visible up on the right corner, out of the port in 2012 (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu)



**Plate 7.4:** The Coastguard patrolling and rescuing boat, disembarking migrants in 2012 (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu)



**Plate 7.5:** Migrants walking towards the bus after the first health check in 2012 (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu)



**Plate 7.6:** Mortuary bags and operators surrounding them in 2012 (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu - elaborated by the author)

After migrants received the first medical check and treatments on the quay, they were moved to a bus owned by the private company *Lampedusa Accoglienza* – today

substituted by the brotherhood *Misericordia*<sup>44</sup> - which held the sole responsibility of the internal management of the island's migrant holding centre. Then, the bus transported migrants to the local holding centre, escorted by the *Carabinieri's* cars. Police forces regulated the access to the gated quay so that the disembarkation procedure took place in an area almost invisible for Lampedusans unless they positioned themselves from a specific spot of the port, on the opposite side of the quay.

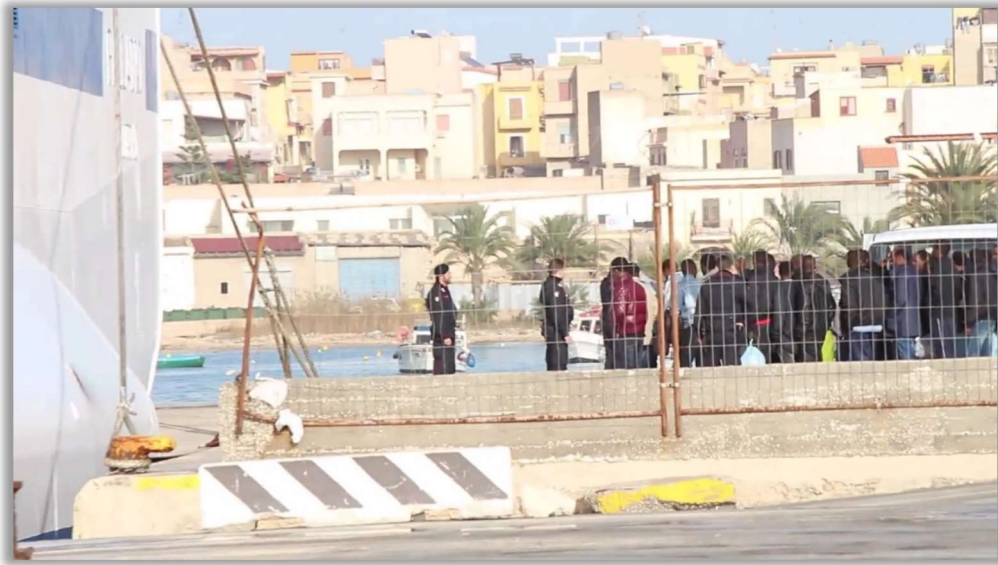
At almost the other extremity of the border on the island, there was the ferry quay where migrants were taken to be deported to mainland Sicily, and where authorities disposed them in lines within a fenced area where they were made to sit until the ferry arrived (see Plate 7.7 and 7.8).



**Plate 7.7:** Migrants sitting in the fenced area of the ferry quay, waiting for the ferry to arrive in 2012 (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu - elaborated by the author)

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<sup>44</sup> The *Misericordia* brotherhood includes a variety of Catholic associations. This organisation manages several other migrant detention centres in Italy and 'the volume of funds paid by the Ministry of Interior [for these services is] made dependent on both the number of detainees and the number of days spent by each of them in [detention]' (Cuttitta, 2014: 203)



**Plate 7.8:** Migrants standing in the fenced area of the ferry quay, waiting to enter the ferry in 2012 (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu - elaborated by the author)

Although behind fences and surrounded by uniforms, migrants now became visible to islanders. Once the ferry harboured, migrants waited for the disembarking of people and goods, and they embarked before the islanders, accompanied by several *Carabinieri* officers. The procedure unavoidably delayed the ferry that was so central to island life. Simone, a local retired fish trader, explained:

It is already ten in the morning and we are still waiting for migrants to get all on board of the ferry. Can you see how many officers accompany them? I bet the ferry will not leave before two hours, so that it will sum up to four hours of delay.

Although at times migrants were not taken to Sicily as they were rather deported back to North Africa with direct flights from the island, after their arrival all migrants remained in detention in Lampedusa.

### 7.3.1. *Migrants' detention on the (is-)land: historical development and main features*

Since the 1990s, the detention of undocumented migrants and asylum seekers became an increasingly common practice in Europe (Welch and Schuster, 2005). Migrants' detention in Lampedusa started in 1998. As for the border at sea, migrants' detention on the (is-)land was transformed through time, both regarding the physical spaces where it took place, as well as considering the management of detainees. At the beginning, authorities opened a gated camp for the migrants' temporary stay - inside the area of Lampedusa's airport (Monzini, 2008) - which had a maximum capacity of almost 200 individuals. Once detained, migrants were not allowed to exit the centre. After authorities and medical teams had checked each person, direct flights would transfer migrants to mainland Sicily within a few days (Gatti, 2005). In 2004, the centre – and with it the whole island – went for the first time under the lens of national as well as European media attention as a result of two developments related to the border. First, when 'Italian authorities expelled more than [1,000] undocumented migrants to Libya [directly from the island] on military and civil airplanes' (Andrijasevic, 2010: 147), the complaints of several NGOs led to the European Parliament and the European Court of Human Rights' condemnation of Italian authorities, saying that the expulsions violated the principle of *non-refoulement*.<sup>45</sup> Second, the inhuman conditions of migrants' detention on the island had also raised objections by the same two EU institutions and the continental media (Andrijasevic, 2010).

Following these scandals, the Italian authorities began planning the construction of a new migrant centre built in the inner valley of *Contrada Imbriacola*, the building

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<sup>45</sup> 'The *non-refoulement* principle has been reaffirmed by the EU as the cornerstone of refugee protection. It prohibits the forcible return of anyone to a territory where they would be at risk of persecution. [...] (mentioned in article 19§2 of the European Charter)' (Andrijasevic, 2010: 149).

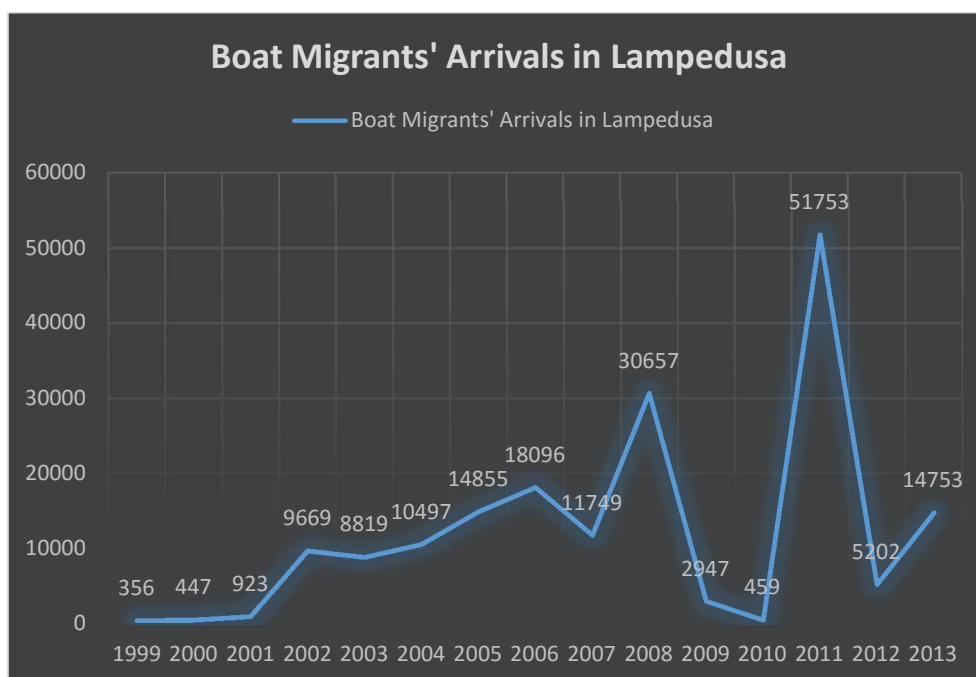


of which started in 2007. This bigger facility –primarily used for medical checks and identification, had a maximum capacity of almost 400, and up to more than 800 people in case of ‘emergency’. When I first arrived in Lampedusa in October 2012, the centre of *Contrada Imrbiacola* was still the only facility used to detain migrants on the island. Nevertheless, between 2007 and 2012, a number of other local premises also served temporarily as migrant and asylum seeker holding centres.

In 2009, the Italian government announced the opening of another identification and deportation centre in the westernmost corner of Lampedusa, inside the abandoned United States (US) Coastguard station and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation’s (NATO) barrack Loran. Once informed about this project, locals started protesting against the prospect of what they saw as the island beginning to be transformed into a sort of contemporary penal colony. Indeed, in first aid and reception centres, by law, migrants’ detention could last for a maximum of four days before they were transferred into identification and deportation centres. Yet in identification and deportation centres, detention could last for months. Rallies began in late January of that year and culminated when 1,300 migrants exited the – clearly overcrowded - centre of *Contrada Imbriacola* and joined Lampedusan protesters. Surprisingly, following media and political attention, within two days of the protests, Italian authorities turned the centre of *Contrada Imbriacola* into an identification and deportation centre, with the Loran base being transformed into an identification and first aid facility. Obviously, this had little effect on the tensions rising on the island, and they eventually increased. Migrants began a hunger strike until February 19, and they set fire to an entire wing of the centre of *Contrada Imbriacola*. The Italian government’s response to protesters’ demands – both migrants and Lampedusans - was to abandon the idea of using the Loran barrack for detention. Yet during those same days, the national parliament approved an extension of detention for

undocumented migrants for up to 18 months as the maximum possible holding period recommended by EU directives (Leerkes and Broeders, 2010).

At the same time, thanks to the cooperation of the Libyan authorities within the frame of the Italian and Libyan friendship agreement, push back manoeuvres were moved out to the sea where boat migrants detected in proximity of the Libyan waters were deported back to Libya - again in violation of the principle of *non-refoulement*. With Libyan authorities also engaged in patrolling their shores, in the second half of 2009, arrivals on Lampedusa dropped to reach a low point in 2010 (see Chart 7.1). As a result, for that year, the migrants' detention centre was closed.



**Chart 7.1:** Boat migrants landing in Lampedusa by year (data of the Italian Ministry of the Interior (Cuttitta, 2012: 26) elaborated by the author)

Nonetheless, since the beginning of 2011, Lampedusa began to face its most difficult year in relation to the EU border, with migrant detention expanding over the whole island. In mid-January, immediately after the Tunisian president, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, fled Tunisia to escape the unfolding revolution, boat-migrants quickly arrived

in Lampedusa (Lotan et al., 2011). At the beginning of February, there were already 1,500 Tunisians officially registered on the island. In the following weeks arrivals increased steadily, reaching a peak during March when boat-migrants began to outnumber Lampedusa's residents. Later in the same month, when rumours spread that the Italian government was planning to organize a refugee camp on the island, islanders immediately occupied the old port in order to block authorities unloading tents from the ferry, concurrently denouncing the inhumane conditions in which young Tunisians had been kept. Lampedusans feared that the island was becoming an open-air concentration camp. Resembling what had happened in 2009, local protesters stood alongside the boat migrants.<sup>46</sup> The situation was inflamed when the island's population doubled to reach almost 15,000 locals, migrants and Italian law enforcement personnel, and indispensable supplies such as drinkable water began to run out. Despite this, the number of boat migrants retained in Lampedusa continued to increase. New arrivals to the island exceeded those that the authorities had evacuated to mainland Sicily. For many Lampedusans this was seen a deliberate choice of the Italian government.

Indeed, it was not the first time that a large number of migrants had reached Lampedusa. In 2008, more than 30,000 boat migrants passed by the island but, here, they were fast deported to mainland Sicily without generating any serious concern for locals. However, the Italian government declared a state of emergency and asked for financial and logistical support from the EU, while leaving migrants to sleep in the open air over the area surrounding the island's old port (see Plates 7.9 to 7.11).

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<sup>46</sup> *La Collina della Vergogna. L'informazione in emergenza. Lampedusa.* Dir. Antonino Maggiore. Libera Espressione. 20012.



**Plate 7.9:** Migrants sitting on the ferry quay in 2011 (@ Nino Taranto)



**Plate 7.10:** Migrants camping on the hill over the ferry quay in the old port of Lampedusa in 2011 (@ Nino Taranto)



**Plate 7.11:** Migrants' camp in the 'Palms beach' in Lampedusa's old port in 2011 (@ Nino Taranto)

While many migrants had to arrange their own makeshift shelters, some islanders spontaneously decided to make available their holiday homes and offered migrants accommodation in their own homes. As several fishers confirmed, during the first weeks and months of the 'emergency', Lampedusans provided migrants with the assistance that formal institutions had failed to make available. Facing what was becoming a humanitarian crisis, islanders opted for helping their 'brothers from Tunisia'<sup>47</sup> who continued to arrive each day, for weeks, and then months. It was for many a way to signal their subjective attachments to the population from the closest mainland, with which islanders – and fishers especially - had built ties for decades. For others, to host migrants was a way to avoid playing the authorities' game of attempting to project the images of a threatening invasion and emergency. Giuseppe reflected on this situation:

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<sup>47</sup> Caloggero.

They were everywhere. My family house is just over the port and, believe me, we could not leave them outside... they were too many, while they clearly needed someone to take care of them. Institutions left them to their destiny, as if they were beasts. My wife and I opened our house, we had meals with them and hosted some there and others here inside the tool shed... Many islanders made the same [decision]: people opened also their holiday's houses to Tunisians.

Lampedusans opened their houses to the undocumented individuals that political and media discourse had depicted as potentially dangerous criminals (Campesi, 2011).

Curiously, the dehumanisation of migrants that occurred at sea did not apply on land. Yet, in April 2011, the situation improved, as authorities started transferring migrants swiftly to mainland Sicily and the rest of Italy. At the same time, the government decided to reopen the migrant first aid and hospitality centre on Lampedusa. Incoming migrants were distributed between the centre and the former Loran barracks which had been reopened to host women and minors during the emergency – and no migrants remained sleeping in the open air. Nevertheless, given the ongoing media coverage of the events,<sup>48</sup> the 2011 tourist season began with around 80 per cent of cancellations, which had a significant financial impact on the local economy (Bartoli, 2012).

By the end of the summer, while tension continued to grow on the island due to the prospects of living through a winter without the earnings of the summer, migrant boat arrivals increased again with thousands of people fleeing Libya. In September, the Italian government announced that existing bilateral agreements had been re-

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<sup>48</sup> Among other major Italian media, during 2011 the *Corriere della Sera* titled 'Barricades in Lampedusa: "Six ships to empty the island"' on March 29 (Available online at: [http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2011/marzo/29/Barricate\\_Lampedusa\\_Sei\\_navi\\_per\\_co\\_8\\_110329037.shtml](http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2011/marzo/29/Barricate_Lampedusa_Sei_navi_per_co_8_110329037.shtml) [Accessed on July 23, 2015]) or 'Time bomb Lampedusa: assaults on trucks transporting food provisions' on March 26 (Available online at: [http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2011/marzo/26/Polveriera\\_Lampedusa\\_assalto\\_camion\\_de\\_l\\_co\\_8\\_110326023.shtml](http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2011/marzo/26/Polveriera_Lampedusa_assalto_camion_de_l_co_8_110326023.shtml) [Accessed on July 23, 2015]). Major international broadcaster such as the BBC titled one of its online article 'Italy's Lampedusa island hit by migrant crisis' on March 22 of that same year (Available online at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-12816340> [Accessed on July 23, 2015]).

established with the new Tunisian government and that authorities could now start deporting Tunisians back to their country directly from Lampedusa. Yet, on September 22, hundreds of Tunisians organized a rally to protest against the threat of being forcibly taken back to their country. After having protested along the streets of the island's small town, Tunisians gathered in front of one of the two gas stations of Lampedusa. Faced by the riot police, they threatened to explode a gas cylinder. At that point, the local population, already aggravated by the difficult year and worried about the economic consequences of a disastrous tourist season, came to feel threatened by those same people they had helped in the previous months. Surprisingly, here, many locals acted alongside the police by assaulting migrants and beating them with clubs and sticks (see Plate 7.12).



**Plate 7.12:** Al Jazeera English's images of the clashes at the gas station. While migrants escaped police forces by jumping down the wall of the gas station, islanders attacked them with rocks and clubs - right upper corner of the photo (@ YouTube<sup>49</sup> – elaborated by the author)

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DclCc0SRhlw> [Accessed on July 23, 2015]

Such a sudden shift in the islanders' attitude towards migrants appeared to be underpinned by a number of factors. Certainly, economic anxieties played a role, as well as the fact that for a number of months the migrants had disappeared from island life – closed, as they were, behind the fences of the migrant centre, possibly contributing to their dehumanisation. However, within one week, following the screening of these events all over the world by global media, no more migrants remained in Lampedusa. Lampedusa had become declared an 'unsafe landing place' by the Italian government, who moved to taking migrants directly from the sea to mainland Sicily. Here, the spatiality of migrants' detention on the island changed once again.

Throughout 2011, besides the migrants themselves, Lampedusa's fishers were the most affected by the emergency. This was particularly so for small-scale fishers who harboured in the old port. Given both the high frequency of arrivals and the large numbers of migrants and police occupying the quay, they were not able to work for most of the year. Piero explained:

To say the truth [in 2011] we were damaged more on land than at sea. After all, it was impossible to go fishing... We also had expensive damages all over the old port, in particular on the tool sheds [that] many of us opened to migrants to provide them with a place to sleep.

It is clear that, similarly to the border at sea whose function kept changing in line with changing EU directives, and whose operations moved incessantly back and forth from the island's shores, the migrants' border on the (is-)land also played out as a constantly transforming institutional apparatus. Even during the five months I lived in Lampedusa, the management of migrants' detention changed dramatically throughout.

Although the national legislation dictates that migrants must not leave the local holding centre and that detention in this type of centre cannot exceed the maximum



of four days, what happened in reality was that undocumented individuals arriving in Lampedusa remained in the centre for an average of three to four months – which was confirmed directly by ‘detained’ migrants I met on the island several times over the months I spent there. Yet, institutional failures did not stop there. In order to ease tensions inside the overcrowded detention facility, the authorities also tacitly allowed migrants to exit.

Daria, a lawyer and member of the international organisation *Save the Children*,<sup>50</sup> worked at the centre of *Contrada Imbriacola* assisting minors, and she told about the situation in the centres:

Here migrants – including minors – are illegally detained for months... Moreover, by law this should be a closed centre: however, in reality migrants exit from a gap in the back net surrounding the centre. In order to remain unaccountable for their illegal conducts, officials play a sort of trick... According to their accounts, when [the military who guarantee security inside the centre] see migrants crossing the net, soldiers call the police – despite their offices are at a few meters from each other - and tell them to go and look for those migrants who had left. Once police forces [who do not operate inside the centre] go looking for them, migrants are not anymore there. This is why, according to authorities, migrants escape controls.

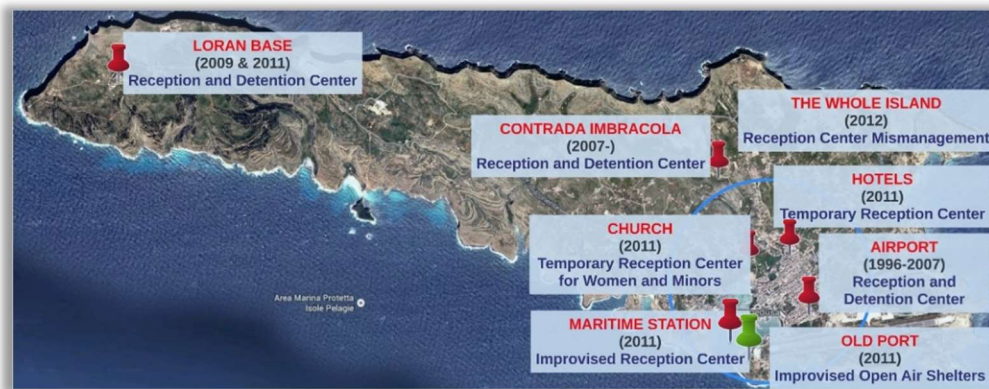
It can be seen that the Authorities denied their responsibilities to the migrants, presenting their unlawful conduct as unintentional, and making a strategic use of ignorance in which to hide their misdemeanour (Cohen, 2001; McGoey, 2007; Thiel, 2014). Law enforcement officials and soldiers’ complicit ‘blind eye’ was applied to morally allow their mismanagement of the migrant centre. Their conduct was both known and not known by law enforcement officials in light of a discursive denial of their responsibility that fitted with the organisational purposes of keeping migrants on the island, despite the centre being evidently – and illegally - overcrowded.

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<sup>50</sup> *Save the Children* is a US based international NGOs whose actions concentrate on minors all over the world.

With migrants relatively free to move around the island, during the first months of my stay in Lampedusa, the island had again become *de facto* an open-air detention camp that allowed interaction between the newcomers and the islanders. Indeed, during their wait to be processed, many migrants got in touch with locals. They passed their time walking along the port quays and the streets of the village, often sitting in the terraces of the local bars. They stayed there for hours, side-by-side with locals and those officials of the Coastguard, the navy or the police forces that had rescued them from the sea. The migrants became familiar faces for some, and disturbing visitors for others. As a result of the permeability of the centres, an informal economy developed, with migrants selling locals the cigarette packs they were provided with inside the centre. Many migrants also asked islanders to change any money they were able to bring with them through their journey. Without valid identity documents, migrants were not allowed to change their money themselves in any of the local banks. If many locals were happy to help, others made the migrants pay a commission for the money changing service. However, each day at around nine in the evening, a police van passed along the few main roads of the island's only village, picking up all migrants who had not already returned back to the centre. If they were seen to be involved in any unwanted activity outside the centre, they were sometimes punished for having left illegally, but otherwise, the police most usually turned a blind eye (Cohen, 2001).

Since migrants begun being detained on the island, detention took place in a number of locations including in the open air (see Figure 7.2).



**Figure 7.2:** The spatial and chronological disposition of migrants' detention in Lampedusa (@ Google Map - elaborated by the author)

Talking to islanders, I found that most locals were aware of the law enforcement officials' constant violations of the law dealing with detained migrants. The everyday experience of the EU external border management in Lampedusa implied frequent interactions with the state's routinized lawless activities as carried out 'in pursuit of the organisational goals of state agencies [and] tolerated for organisational reasons' (Green and Ward, 2004: 11). Such a common experience of unlawful institutional conducts had served to undermine the state and EU's legitimacy on the island, and it was often used as neutralisation for islanders to engage in illegal conduct themselves (Sykes and Matza, 1957). Paradoxically, then, for Lampedusans, their everyday interactions with the management of the EU external border challenged the criminalisation of migrants as it had been constructed by the Italian authorities (Barker, 2012). Migrants were at the same time imprisoned as dangerous individuals but illegally released by those same law enforcement officials in charge of controlling them.

The increased securitisation of both Lampedusa and its surrounding seawaters through intense securitisation policies and austere discourses had, in its actual reality

on the island, been entirely inconsistent and contradictory. Such contradictions and inconsistencies had complicated islanders' perception and experience of the border.

### *7.3.2. Living in a permanent state of war against an enemy that does not exist*

Since Lampedusa became one of the most infamous spaces of Europe's external border, one of the most visible transformations witnessed by islanders was the intense militarisation of both seawater and (is-)land. This was not the first time that Lampedusa had served military purposes however. Indeed, after playing an important role during the Second World War, since 1958 the island counted on its territory a weather and a telecommunication station operated by the Italian Air Force. Later, in 1972, a NATO radio station (Loran), serving as a US National Security Agency (NSA) base, was established in Lampedusa. However, due to the supposed Gaddafi missile attack to the base in 1986, US officials left Lampedusa and the station became another communication unit for the Italian Air Force that in 1993 established a further base in the island's airport (Black, 2000). Meanwhile, the Italian defence ministry had installed several military radar systems on the island. In other words, given the island's geography, Lampedusa had always constituted a strategic outpost and military base in the middle of the Mediterranean (Mazzeo, 2014).

Nevertheless, until the migrant 'emergency', the number of army officials on the island rarely exceeded a few tens of people and was thus largely irrelevant to island life. Moreover, there were almost no law enforcement agents within Lampedusa. Yet with Lampedusa becoming a central part of the European external border, militarisation accelerated and expanded quickly, and it was noted by islanders, such as Giovanni:

Here there have always been soldiers: the geography of Lampedusa makes this island an almost natural strategic outpost. How can you ever think not to have soldiers around here? Nevertheless, it seems to me that this presence is getting a little too intrusive. [During the crisis of] 2011 there were thousands of soldiers and police officers. Now, they are hundreds: we had never seen anything similar here in times of peace.

The National Air Force, the Army, the *Guardia di Finanza*, the Coastguard, the *Carabinieri* and other EU armies – all under the coordination of FRONTEX – now had many officers, facilities and vehicles on the island. These units relied on a series of technological devices such as rescue boats, helicopters and drones, and the various agencies shared their use co-ordinately within the frame of border patrolling operations (Capasso, 2014). Lampedusa's *borderness* was thus structured alongside the progressive merging of internal and external securitisation logic and practices, based on using defence and military apparatuses (Bigo, 2000; Balzacq, 2011). After all, Europe's outer border is located in a geopolitically important stretch of sea such of the Sicilian channel (Victor et al., 2006). Defence technological devices installed on and operating from the island to patrol the border thus also served military goals - such as during the 2011 multi-national military intervention in Libya. As Capasso (2014) argued,

Lampedusa has for decades been one the most important "eyes" of the USA and NATO on North Africa [...] aggressively projected against Gaddafi's Libya [...] Old and new conflicts in the Mediterranean and this very Triton<sup>51</sup> are reviving Lampedusa's role as the "primary port" of disembarkment [...] for migrants and asylum seekers. [Moreover, these conflicts] are already acting to reinforce national military operations on the island, with the arrival of new FRONTEX operators and the installation of ever more sophisticated radar and telecommunications centres, some of which are financed and made up by NATO.

Within the frame of this increasing securitisation of the island, several powerful radars were installed in Lampedusa (see Figure 7.3). As such, on the island, internal

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<sup>51</sup> Triton is the last FRONTEX operation launched from the island on November 1<sup>st</sup> 2014, deploying 'three open sea patrol vessels, two coastal patrol vessels, two coastal patrol boats, two aircraft, and one helicopter' (FRONTEX, 2015).

and external security logics blurred. The radars installed there served both for the working of the EU external border,<sup>52</sup> as well of the MARSUR project funded by the European Defence Agency ‘to enhance the exchange of data and information for the conduct of maritime [Common Security and Defence Strategy] CSDP-operations’ (EDA, 2012).



**Figure 7.3:** Approximate location of radars deployed to guard the EU external border in Lampedusa (@ Google Map - elaborated by the author)

It was confusing to see soldiers carrying out police work while it was also not clear whether law enforcement and their facilities on the island might also be serving military purposes. Uniforms seemed to have no distinction in the eyes of locals, as expressed by Sandro, Mariano’s father:

Over the last 20 years more and more police arrived on this island. Today it is like to be under siege. The Americans at the Loran barracks were less than 20 and came to the village only for a few hours a day. There were also a few Italian soldiers from the Air Force base but they also spent most of their time as

<sup>52</sup> [The] All Eyes 2013 [...] project [...] covered current developments in sensors and platforms, broadband communication and data fusion systems, as well as integrated system solutions for border surveillance. One of the main objectives was to connect the activities so that they can be of use in Frontex Joint Operations (sea and land). This project addressed the area of border surveillance and detection technologies, looking into the functionality, feasibility and capabilities of remotely piloted aircraft, radar and ground detection sensors as well as into the integration and exploitation of the data they collect with and within existing border control systems’ (FRONTEX, 2013: 67).

soldiers in their base. Now everyone is everywhere. The Police, *Carabinieri*, *Guardia di Finanza*, soldiers... Have you ever noticed how many helicopters and airplanes fly from the island's airport each day? It is an invasion!

Like other islanders, Sandro turns the narrative of the border in Lampedusa upside down. Seen from the island, police and army forces deployed there to defend Europe from migrant 'invasion' (de Haas, 2008) were not seen a protective presence. They were rather perceived as invading forces that had occupied the island and, using Francesca's expression, had 'polluted local landscapes' (see Plate 7.13 and 7.14).



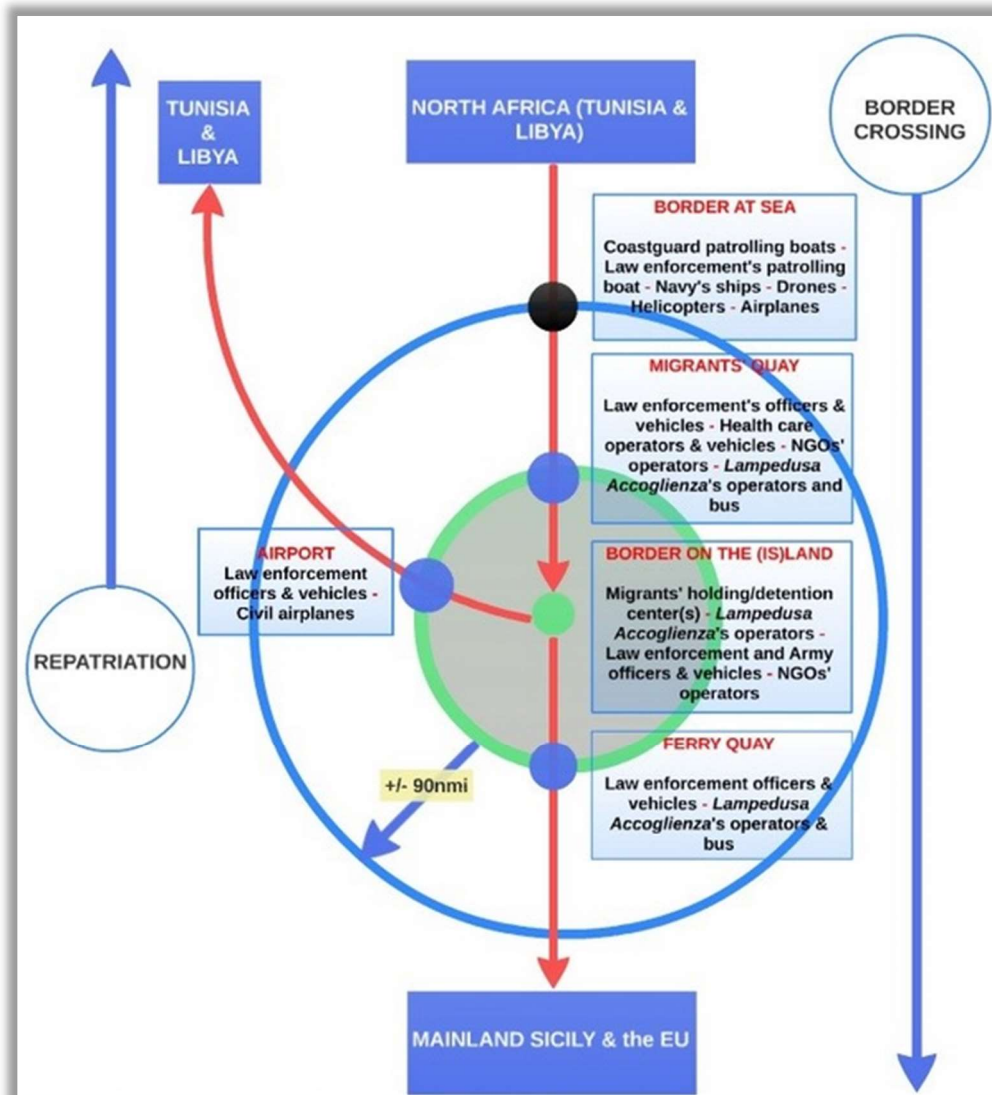
**Plate 7.13:** One of the radars of the Italian Air Force in 2014 (@ Francesca del Volgo)



**Plate 7.14:** One of the Italian Navy ship patrolling the border in 2013, in front of the island' port mouth in 2012 (@ Francesca del Volgo)

The EU external border was structured in Lampedusa as a complex and multi-layered apparatus whose functions spread over a vast maritime and land area. With the island and its massive seas at its core, border management of this area relied on hundreds of officials and their surveillance and defence devices. The border resembled a system of concentric circles (see Figure 7.4) which aimed to monitor, slow down and steer migration, rather than actually stopping it (Mezzadra and Neilson 2012).





**Figure 7.4:** Visual representation of the EU external border and its border functions as they spread over the island and the sea surrounding it

This border worked in parallel to everyday life on the island, constituting an intrusive apparatus that had reshaped Lampedusa's geographic and social landscape, and through steering migrants to the island, it had simultaneously, and paradoxically, de-securitized the Island. Curiously indeed, this increasing militarisation of the border on the island did not transfer into an increasing securitisation of everyday life in Lampedusa. Rather, quite the opposite had occurred.

#### 7.4. Securitizing the border by de-securitizing the island

In section 7.1 above, I introduced some non-EU related elements of Lampedusa's *borderness*. The ambivalent institutional management of Lampedusa and its inhabitants was confirmed by the gradual de-securitisation of life on the island as it developed in parallel with the increasing securitisation of Europe's border. The current mayor of Lampedusa, Giuseppina Nicolini, clearly summarized this inconsistent situation:

My only real priorities for this island are to fight illegal buildings and to provide my citizens with respectable education and healthcare facilities and services... The border here has led only to more police and journalists... Immigration on this island is deliberately highlighted to create a permanent state of emergency beyond which nothing else matters anymore.

The political use of Lampedusa resembled what can be defined as a formal – or discursive - centrality, since it seemed to have very little direct positive impact on the local population, and was matched by a distinct marginality found in the everyday lives of the islanders. Moreover, the progressive securitisation of the border in Lampedusa was coupled with the *de facto* de-securitisation (Roe, 2004) of several other domains of daily life on the island. Giuseppe explained:

Why do we have all these policemen and soldiers here, if in such a small community people keep building themselves their first, second and even a third house where they wish, irrespective of having any official permit? In addition, why then are they here if everyone fishes and sells their catches without any license to do so? How is it possible that here, where even ministers have come for their parades, we do not have a decent ferry connection to mainland Sicily?

The invasive and militarized border, brimming with defence devices installed on and around the island, as well as the hundreds of officials in uniform crowding Lampedusa's streets all over the year, were in Lampedusa in order to police migrants, while neglecting everything else happening there.

When accompanying Pietro and Tonino fishing, I was surprised at how both of them kept fishing without a professional fishing licence and how they had gone well

beyond the allowed maximum fishing distance from the island, despite the Coastguard repeatedly passing close to the vessel. At a certain point, for instance, we were stationed a few hundred meters from one of the navy ships patrolling the *Mammellone* as part of the Italian Fishing Surveillance Operation (see Plate 7.15). Pietro and Tonino did not move and kept fishing for almost one hour.



**Plate 7.15:** Italian Navy ship at a few hundreds of meters from Pietro's vessel, 20 miles south from Lampedusa in 2013 (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu - elaborated by the author)

When I asked why we were not moving, Pietro answered:

The Coastguard, the navy, the *Carabinieri* and the *Guardia di Finanza* are here to catch migrants: they do not care about us, unless they have very little to do that day... During winter however, we go fishing only with the good weather, which is when boat migrants attempt their journeys... When we go fishing, we are sure that all these [patrolling] forces will only care about boat migrants.

By securitising Europe's outer boundary in Lampedusa, the discursive mantle of a 'state of exception' (Agamben, 2003) and obfuscated legality (Mountz, 2011) extended all over the island and its surrounding seawaters. Yet, the hyper-securitized border not only contrasted with under-securitized life on the island, but it was also part of the origin of it. Paola explained in some detail:

I collected several proofs of the institutional commitment to suspend the rule of law in Lampedusa with the excuse of the border... Several individuals of the last municipal administration... committed serious irregularities during their mandate. [After years of protests] the provincial authority nominated an inspector with the power of resolving the local administration in case s/he detected any irregularity... After... more than two years of wait, the inspector finally published a report<sup>53</sup> denouncing several criminal conducts. However, she concluded the report with what... summarizes perfectly the relation between the machinery of the border and the rule of law on this island. I [will] read from the original document. 'Given that the administration demonstrated the ability of maintaining good relations and efficient cooperation with both national and Communitarian authorities while at the same time reassuring the local population during the serious emergency of 2011... I nominate a superintendent'. In other words, she did not take any decision – although she was entitled to – and [instead] nominated a superintendent [as] an unclear and unspecified legal figure... 'in order to remove the irregularities carried out by the administration'. I am a lawyer and I work for this public administration: for what I am concerned, the role of superintendent does not exist within the Italian legal system! The figure of the superintendent reminds me of the *White Man*<sup>54</sup> of the Tarantino's movie *Reservoir Dogs*: that man that you call when you need to clean up the traces of your criminal activities. To confirm the superintendent's exceptional function, over the two months he spent in Lampedusa, he did not take any single action against the former administration.

The document Paola refers to makes official what most interviewees said they experienced daily. The machinery of the border aiming at securitizing the European space had been also a prop from which to justify and generate the de-securitisation of the island. As national institutional actors resorted to a series of illicit practices to manage the border, a system of connivance with local institutions was generated. With local authorities involved in unlawful activities as well, a sort of equilibrium was created, where no institutional actor felt safe in denouncing the criminal activities of the other. The same logic seemed to apply for common citizens involved in a variety of illicit conducts – e.g. illegal fishing and illegal building.

Nonetheless, the EU border in Lampedusa was not made only of detention centre(s), officials and patrolling and surveillance technologies. A further invasive dimension of the island's *borderness* was embedded at a discursive level, related to

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<sup>53</sup> <http://www.scribd.com/doc/82861656/Commissariamento-Comune-di-Lampedusa-e-Linosa> [Accessed by the author on March 12, 2014]

<sup>54</sup> Contrary to what stated by Paola, the role is that of *Mr Wolf* in Trantino's movie *Pulp Fiction*.

the central role that Lampedusa played within the framework of media and political representation of EU border regime.

#### **7.4. The televised border: politics, media and the *borderization* of Lampedusa**

The presence of national and international media and political representatives was pervasive and intrusive in Lampedusa and it intensely shaped locals' everyday life. It was a major factor ensuing from Lampedusa's *borderization* and it was played out along two binary juxtapositions. The first combination opposed the centrality of the island within a media and political narrative of the border, to islanders' day-to-day experience of marginality in relation to the making up of such a narrative. The other combination was concerned with the apparently incompatible representations of the island as the most symbolic *loci* of implementation of Europe's border and migration regimes on the one side, and Lampedusa as the southernmost Italian tourist destination on the other (Cosenza, 2011).

This final section of the chapter analyses these two dichotomies in order to provide a comprehensive sense of how the island's centrality within media and political production and reproduction of the border affected islanders' lives and their perception and experience of Lampedusa.

##### *7.4.1. Living at the core of the media and political narrative of the border: televising the border by silencing islanders*

Since Europe's external border had landed in Lampedusa, the island was literally placed at the centre of a surreal media-political *panopticon* attracting to Lampedusan journalists, activists, artists and academics from all over the world - myself included.

It was an unusual situation for a population of just 6,000 inhabitants that until a few years ago had experienced significant isolation. Yet the EU border had produced a pervasive and ever-present consciousness amongst the locals of being the inhabitants of the frontier dividing Europe from Africa. Such intense mediatisation of Lampedusa had put locals under the global spotlight and produced a pressure for them to perform the border in line with the outside world's expectations.

A single episode on the island provides some illustration. In July 2013, for the first time, I saw the Lampedusa of the tourist season. One morning I went to visit Pietro on his vessel while he was waiting to embark tourists and take them around Lampedusa. Overnight, a group of Eritreans detained on the island decided to protest against the government and they had camped out in the church square, demanding immediate deportation to mainland Italy without fingerprinting.<sup>55</sup> While I was chatting with Pietro, the first tourists arrived for the tour. After the initial greetings, a woman lamented the presence of too many migrants in front of the church. She said she had seen them protesting in the morning news of the national public broadcaster *Rai 1*. She also added that her daughters in Milan had called her to check whether everything was fine on the island. At that point Pietro, who up to that moment had not mentioned the protests, acted as if he was seriously concerned and begun lamenting the hardships of living on an island 'permanently invaded by Africans'. He said immediately to his deckhand Gianfranco to go and check how things were going in the

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<sup>55</sup> The Dublin Convention establishes that asylum seekers must apply for asylum in the first EU member state where they arrive, that then becomes the only one where they will have the right to reside. Asylum seekers arriving on the island tend to refuse applying for asylum in Italy to move somewhere else in Europe and apply for asylum abroad. However, if their fingerprints are taken from authorities in Italy, then their data will be introduced in the Schengen Information System – SIS - and they will not be allowed to apply for asylum anywhere else than in Italy (Brouwer, 2004).

church square, while he kept complaining with the tourists about these newcomers and their disrespectful attitudes.

This event had surprised me. I could very clearly remember Pietro acting in a diametrically opposite way during winter when we were sitting at one of the village main road's bars on a late evening of November 2012. As used to happen every day around that time, the *Carabineiri's* van was around the island looking for migrants who had left the centre during the day. The van stopped a few meters from us and a police officer got out shouting aggressively at a group of young migrants who were walking a few meters from there. Apparently, the migrants could not make sense of what was happening and they hesitated to stop and reply until the police officer started running toward them with considerable aggression. At that point Pietro and some other Lampedusans who were sitting at the bar stood up and physically stopped the police officer, suggesting he had to act more respectfully with migrants. After all – they said - it was certainly not the migrants' responsibility if they were still on the island after they had arrived months before. Reminding Pietro of this previous event, he recognized his shift in attitude and admitted that what he was saying to tourists was meant to satisfy their expectations. It was not, as he told to me later, what he really thought. However, he added, tourists were customers and customers were always right.

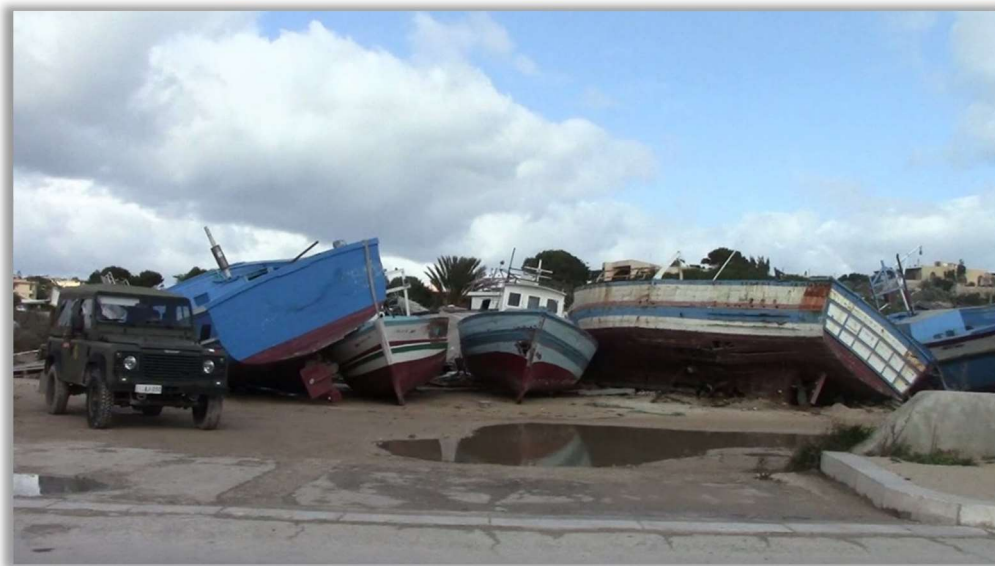
The paradox between Pietro's experience of the border – during winter – and Pietro's performing of it – during summer - mirrored the tension that islanders experienced as a result of the opposition between media and political mainstream representation of the island as today's icon of Europe's border and migration regimes, and islanders' substantial marginality within this process of progressive *borderization* of their island. The media had presented and represented Lampedusa to the rest of

the world through a lens that left little or no space for the islanders' voices or self-representation. Nonetheless, this intense representation of the island had gradually become hegemonic, whereby the island functioned as a stage for a global audience in which migrants and institutional actors – especially rescuing forces – were the main, if not the sole, characters of the plot. Lampedusans played just the role of background actors, only occasionally called into the scene or left outside of it, depending on media and political agendas. The islanders' limited part in representing their island to the outside world suppressed their full self-expression, and channelled their public actions somehow within the limits of mainstream and official narratives on Lampedusa. By leaving locals at its margins, the intense mediatisation of Lampedusa had put islanders under the global spotlight and produced a pressure for them to perform the border in line with the outside world's expectations (cf. Goffman, 1951).

As marginalized subjects whose voice was hardly heard, Lampedusans were, in this way, subjects and objects of the border (Maggio, 2007). Politicians of any rank, from the former president of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, to the president of the French party Front National, Marie Le Pen or the Italian prime ministers – from Silvio Berlusconi to Gianni Letta and Matteo Renzi – had all visited the island under the gaze of considerable media fanfare. The timing of these visits followed a regular path: they happened during or immediately after any border-related emergency and/or in the proximity of major electoral rounds. I was myself in Lampedusa when, on January 2013 – less than one month before the Italian general elections, the former president of the Italian senate, Livia Turco, visited the island with a delegation of candidates of the centre-left wing Democratic Party, of which she was a member. On that occasion, a colleague of the University of Palermo who was in touch with the island's mayor helped organize the visit and she asked me to take the candidate, Cécile Kyenge, around the island. Kyenge would soon become the first



black Italian minister in the following Letta government. My plans were to give her the opportunity to speak with islanders about their lives on the island and their experiences with boat-migrants and the border. After all, I thought it was already somewhat peculiar that it was me taking her around the island instead of an islander. However, I could not follow my programme. Cécile had her own plan for the visit. Instead, I made with her what, for many on the island, was 'the migrants' tour'. We went first to the local cemetery where tens of migrants are buried behind nameless, numbered gravestones. Then, on our way to the local migrant identification and first aid centre, we stopped at the 'cemetery of boats': a field where all migrants' boats were left to rot although they remained guarded by soldiers as *corpus delicti* (see Plate 7.16).



**Plate 7.16:** The graveyard of migrants' boat and a jeep of the Italian Navy guarding it to forbid anyone to enter in 2013 (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu - elaborated by the author)

Other than the mayor and the vice-mayor of the island, Cécile and the other political candidates had very little interaction with any Lampedusans. My impression was that they had used the island to project a certain political message to national

voters concerned with migrants and the migration regime. Later, during the afternoon, a short press conference open to the public was held at the island's City Hall. Again, the discussion concentrated on boat migrants, their stay on the island, and the need to find a solution for the identification and first aid centre's almost chronic overcrowding. Once candidates had finished their speeches in front of the few islanders and several cameras and journalists, a question and answer session lasted less than 20 minutes, after which the entire delegation left to catch the last flight leaving Lampedusa that day.

Sebastiano, a retired local fisher, attended the press conference with me. This was his view:

Do you understand what happens here? Politicians come before the elections and speak about solutions to the problems of Lampedusa. However, they do not spend a word about our real problems on this island. They all come here and spend good words regarding how the border and migrants' detention must be managed... However, over the last 20 years we could not see any significant change: the policy has been always the same. Militarisation and detention: that is it! Politicians come here exclusively to get some of the visibility that this island can provide: they promise everything they can or they cry for the deaths that their policies have generated, and then they leave. They come to speak to the cameras, not to us. We are invisible here. We do not count on this island: even migrants come before us!

In this game of visibility, played at the expense of both migrants and islanders, the media had also largely silenced or marginalized islanders' voices. Migrants, their arrivals on the island, the dangerous and heroic rescue operations, and the deaths of migrants, constituted the dominant material for newspapers and TVs in Lampedusa. The islanders were simply spectators in this border play (Cuttitta, 2014).

More than this, the islanders were witnesses to two parallel border spectacles in Lampedusa. One was the border that they witnessed and experienced every day first-hand on their island. The other was the one that islanders watched on television or read about in newspapers and on web pages. These two borders – the experienced

and the represented – did not, however, necessarily correspond. Within this situation, the marginal presence – if not the almost complete absence – of islanders' representations of the border in Lampedusa had a profound impact on the island community.

For such an isolated and small community, accounts of the island in national and international news and newspapers unavoidably become major topics for discussion (Greenlaw, 2002). Media narratives were a source of contested self-representation, producing tensions within the local community. Islanders were attracted to having the possibility of speaking to the entire world from the border stage established on their island, while at the same time they were effectively excluded from it. This discursive centrality had modified their self-perception and identity, making Lampedusa no longer a forgotten periphery but, rather, a televised centre. Yet beyond this discursive illusion, islanders experienced their marginality with respect to this discursive centrality. Lampedusans felt both attraction and revulsion for media and politics dispossessing them of their self-representation and remaking their identities. World broadcasters and politicians during 'their parades' on the island – as Lampedusans defined them - were at the same time the gatekeepers to the outside world and were seen by the islanders as massively distorting what was really happening on the island.

For a community whose economy had become almost completely based in tourism, (mis-)representations of their island constituted a major concern. Conversely, however, the intensely mediated *borderization* of Lampedusa, according to some, had made the island more attractive to tourists. This was Francesca's view:

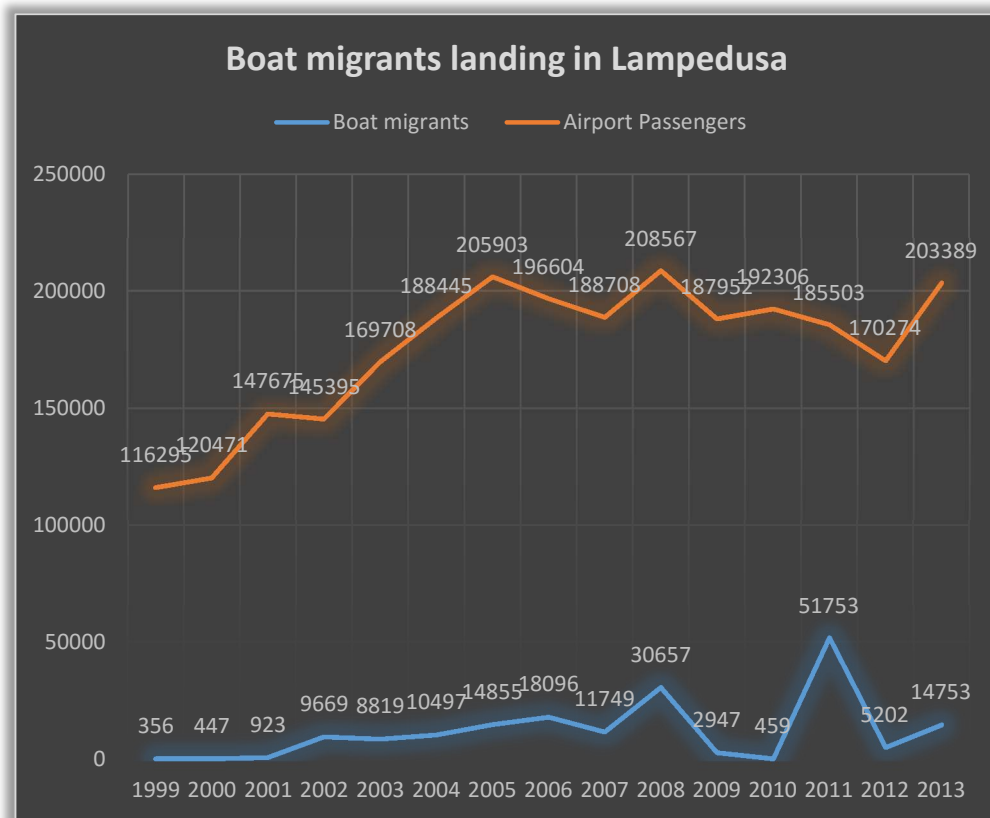
Contrary to what most people think, apart from [2011], tourism has grown incessantly since migrants started arriving here. Boat migrants made the name of Lampedusa becoming popular all over the world... Now everyone knows that this island exists.

From this angle, the *borderization* of Lampedusa had ‘the power of juxtaposing in a single real place different spaces and locations that are incompatible with each other’ (Foucault, 1997: 333). Lampedusa is the island of migrants’ deaths and of a chronic humanitarian crisis, while being at the same time a paradise tourist destination, and Lampedusans experienced this implicit tension daily, as the local priest Father Stefano pointed out :

The overwhelming media and political attention on Lampedusa... is an opportunity to make the name of this island known all over the world, while it is at the same time one of the most frustrating side-effects of the border since islanders have almost no voice or visibility within it.

Politicians used the island as a stage to project their views, programmes and promises about border and migration policies. Mainstream media played along with the political game and did little else than reproduce the institutional narrative of the border, setting the basis for and reinforcing the political exploitation of Lampedusa and its population. Within this situation, the iconic value of Lampedusa as the border island *par excellence* stands out. Surprisingly and almost inexplicably, by seeing the tiny island so frequently within the media, tourists somehow discovered it as a popular destination.

Looking at the island’s airport passenger traffic statistics, it could not be said that the migrants’ arrivals had fully negatively affected the island’s tourist industry. Quite to the contrary, they had contributed to turning Lampedusa into a mass tourism destination (see Chart 7.2). Moreover, the constant inflow of people going to the island because of the border – from journalists to soldiers, law enforcement officials, artists, academics and so like – had also helped keep tourist facilities busy all over the year, even outside the tourist season – generating what Friese (2012) defines as a ‘border economy’.



**Chart 7.2:** Boat migrants landing and airport passengers traffic in Lampedusa per year (data of the Italian Ministry of the Interior (in Cuttitta, 2012: 26) and the Italian Civil Aviation Authority,<sup>56</sup> elaborated by the author)

Too many times, I heard locals lamenting how the constant display of Lampedusa's *borderness* in the media did nothing other than damage the image of the island for potential tourism. Tourist destinations rely on ideal images projected to potential visitors, and, in Lampedusa, 'the border spectacle' complicated this relation (Cuttitta, 2012; De Genova, 2013). At the same time, however, most people in Lampedusa had experienced a significant growth of tourism since the EU border landed on their island (Cosenza, 2011).

<sup>56</sup> [http://www.enac.gov.it/la\\_comunicazione/pubblicazioni/index.html](http://www.enac.gov.it/la_comunicazione/pubblicazioni/index.html) [Accessed on April 3, 2015]

Since the island's economy had turned to tourism, several islanders had got wealthier. Thus the border spectacle that made the island known all over the world and, in a way, decisively contributed to boosting the local tourist economy, simultaneously exposed islanders to potential dramatic economic consequences and brought to light the fragility of an economy based almost exclusively on seasonal tourism. Islanders thus experienced a tension of benefiting from the visibility that came with the border, while suffering from misrepresentation and marginality.

As their island had become the centre by being the margin, the islanders' simultaneous centrality and marginality had blurred. Lampedusans way to the centre was for them to pass through their own marginalisation so that the island space generated a constant tension amongst two irreducible opposites.

#### **6.4. Conclusion**

The border in Lampedusa worked as a sort of parallel entity, developing and structuring on the island in a manner quite detached from the islanders themselves. The EU external border would have been imposed regardless of islanders and their daily lives. Thus with Europe's outer border conceived to target boat-migrants and securitize the EU southern maritime frontier, such complex and multi-layered security apparatus had the effect in Lampedusa of substantially de-securitizing everyday life on dry land as well as at sea. Yet, as we have seen, Lampedusans played a central role throughout the institutionally driven process of *borderization* of their island.

EU driven *borderization* significantly affected Lampedusans' lives. Border functions were distributed over a vast maritime area and on the island, constituting a complex apparatus with which Lampedusans interacted in various ways. These interactions were either active – i.e. when rescuing migrants at sea, or passive – i.e. when watching

as spectators the mediatization of their island. These interactions had pervasive impacts on islanders' perception and experience of the maritime and isolated land they inhabited. At sea, legal, economic and practical calculations had largely replaced the maritime ethic of mutual support. Similarly, life on the increasingly militarized island had framed the islanders' perception of being progressively marginalized on their own (is-)land.

The EU border produced a formal and discursive centrality matched by a real marginality in the everyday lives of the island's inhabitants. Today's Lampedusa represents an icon of the contemporary European border regime, and after two decades of intense *borderization*, it was as if Lampedusa had come to exist solely because of the EU external border established on it. Lampedusans had almost disappeared from the sight of non-islanders' gaze. The border became the dominant lens through which the world looked upon Lampedusa. This projected image had curiously boosted the local tourist economy by making the island known worldwide, while representing simultaneously what islanders perceived as the major threat for that same economy that had become central for most households.

As I discuss in the next chapter, these transformations of everyday life in Lampedusa, combined with the major changes that the CFP produced on the island, had deeply mutated the island's social fabric, fishers' individualities, and their perception and experience of the island's geography. Curiously, however, the outcomes of decades of Europeanisation of life in Lampedusa and Gran Tarajal, led to quite different results in terms of fishers' organisations on each island.





## 8. OF FISHERS AND THE EU

*'On the island, the change that I may have noticed is an economic one. With economics, the character of a people can change. The character of people does not change overnight after meeting a group of immigrants... It is not that someone changed us. Rather, it has been something that has changed us'* (Professor Fragapane)

The Common Fishery Policy (CFP) and the European external border management generated a variety of effects in Lampedusa and Fuerteventura. The implementation of rules, directives and regulations related to these two Communitarian policy frames activated several processes that transformed the local economic as well as sociocultural fabric on the islands and challenged the locals' ethics and self-understanding. However, despite being exposed to very similar EU policy steering, the final outcomes of decades of Europeanisation of the two fisheries differed significantly when I visited the islands. An analysis of how these differences developed allows for the bringing to the surface the limits of Communitarian governance as it does not necessarily end up in common outcomes when applying to different historical, social, economic and cultural settings. Watching European integration from this bottom-up angle, it becomes clear that EU governance needs to take account of the historical foundations that it sits on – or else Communitarian policies will have varied unintended outcomes.

This chapter begins by thus concentrating on the most significant transformations experienced by the two small-scale fisheries and shows how they organized differently and experienced diverse economic and environmental conditions. When I conducted my fieldwork, the professional small-scale fishery in Lampedusa was destined to slowly disappear as the island's economy turned completely to tourism. However, in Gran Tarajal, the organisation of the fishermen's association-led fishery

was to become environmentally sustainable and economically profitable, and had developed alongside the local tourist industry.

In the second part of this chapter I then use the Spanish case to better understand the transformations taking place in Lampedusa. The aim of comparing the two cases was to better identify those micro-dynamics characterizing the specific geographical, social, cultural, economic and historical island spaces through which EU governing technologies were applied, (Rose et al, 2009) which had led the two fisheries to organize so differently.

I conclude with an in-depth analysis of the transformations that the EU had activated in Lampedusa and which had led to a dramatic change in local sociocultural fabric. In this way, I finally demonstrate that the Europeanisation of the Italian island's maritime space mutated fishers' relation with and use of the sea surrounding Lampedusa in a series of unpredictable ways.

### ***8.1 Lampedusa: we fish until we die***

Today's fishery in Lampedusa was a relic of the flourishing fishing industry of the past. The youngest local professional fisher – Carlo – was in his forties and only two canning industries remained open on the island: one imported frozen bluefish from outside Lampedusa while the other worked about one month per year as it relied on locally caught bluefish. Arguably, EU governance produced several of the conditions for this profound transformation of the local economy to take place. Yet, Lampedusan fishers' inability to implement any coordinated strategy did not help them to successfully adapt the workings of local fishery to the transforming regulations and the decreasing volume of available fish stocks.

### 8.1.1. *A fishery without a market*

With the globalisation of fish markets (Swartz et al., 2010), the local canning industry declining and the increasing number of local fishers abandoning professional fishing, Lampedusa's fish market lost relevance, and fish traders from mainland Italy stopped buying fish directly on the island. During my fieldwork, all catches were sold to eight local wholesalers. According to my analysis and observations, these wholesalers took advantage of the fishers having to rely on them, and they colluded to set the prices they would pay. As Francesco stated:

Wholesalers are those who have ruined our job. They made the fish-market collapse promising better purchase prices to individual fishers. [However,] as soon as fish markets closed down they started paying our catches less and less... In small villages such as Porto Empedocle or Lampedusa, local fish traders can very easily meet and fix the prices so that fishers remain with no options than to accept what they offer them... Nowadays we all have our own trader. [With] a fish market on the island, there would be more competition to buy our catches and the prices would automatically increase.

When Francesco said that each fisher had his own wholesaler, he meant exactly the opposite. Indeed, given the power relations in place and the deteriorated economics of small-scale fishery, it was rather the traders who 'owned' the fishers.

I met the economist Pipitone who studied Sicilian fisheries at the Institute for Coastal Marine Environment of the Italian National Research Council (IAMC-CNR<sup>57</sup>) of Mazara del Vallo, where we had a long talk about Sicilian fishery. According to him, the relation between small-scale fishers and fish traders had a typical line of development in the region:

When small-scale fishers cannot access a proper fish market, they have to rely on middlemen or wholesalers. Automatically losing their negotiating and economic power, they become *de facto* employees of the wholesalers... Small-scale fishery by nature is not a stable business [as it] fluctuates according to

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<sup>57</sup><http://www.iamc.cnr.it/IAMC/home> [Accessed on July 19, 2015]

many variables such as the conditions of the sea and even fate. Fishers' incomes mirror such a trend and fluctuate as well... However, both vessels and fishing gears require constant maintenance so that fishers deal with fixed expenses... In bad times, fishers go into debt with fish traders as their closer commercial partners: wholesalers provide credits... that most probably fishers will not be able to pay back short-term. This is when fish traders start pretending portions of property rights of the fishing vessels for themselves. They do so until fishers pay them back or until they get the whole boat and fishers become – also on paper - their employees. Throughout this process, that can last years, fishers are obliged to sell their catches exclusively to this or that wholesaler.

The low profitability of small-scale fishers decreased their negotiating power with wholesalers, which in turn further decreased the professional fishery's lucrativeness. In Lampedusa, the negative effects of the lack of a proper fish market were worsened by a further variable: the island's geographic isolation – which meant economic isolation as well. Because of the indirect access to the wider Sicilian market, local wholesalers simply sold Lampedeusian fish to other wholesalers in Porto Empedocle who then transported them to Palermo and Catania's markets.

Traders in mainland Sicily play with the issue and lower their prices so that wholesalers in Lampedusa do the same with 'their' fishers... Often, traders in Porto Empedocle say that boxes got damaged during the journey from Lampedusa. Since there is no Lampedusan there to check, there is little space for contestation: they pay less, our wholesalers have to lower the price, and who loses the most is always the fisher... Everyone tries to take advantage of the other in a game where the weaker ones are by far the local small-scale fishers. (*Francesca*)

With no fish market on the island, the local tourist industry that developed alternatively – rather than complementarily – to small-scale fishery, was not sufficiently large to provide a big enough internal market to sell catches locally. On top of this, most local tourist facilities sold frozen fish coming from outside Lampedusa since it was cheaper than local fresh fish. Only few on the island tried to reverse such a paradoxical situation.

Gianni, a Lampedusan in his sixties, returned to the island after having worked for restaurants and hotels in the north of Italy. He had opened a restaurant that he ran together with his son, Bernardo. The restaurant was one of the two on the island

mentioned by the international organisation Slow Food,<sup>58</sup> that actively valorised and promoted the consumption of local products. The other was Nicola's restaurant.

Gianni explained his outlook:

Today we try to preserve the traditional food that until up to 30 years ago constituted the basis of the island's diet and economy. Every time that the only purse seine remained on the island - the *Nardina* – went for *mackerel* and *sardines* and sell them to other fishers as live bait, we buy as many fish boxes as we can... Today no one fishes bluefish here [also because] no restaurant or hotel offers bluefish to tourists. They rather offer all those more fashionable species such as *swordfish*, *grouper* and *amberjacks*. Fishers have to go much further away from the island to catch them while most of the times it is simply frozen fish coming from outside... After we got the recognition of Slow Food, more customers come to our restaurant to the extent that at times it becomes difficult to offer to the all of them bluefish... Think what could happen if all restaurants of the island would start operating as we do? There might be a new possibility for bluefish fishing in Lampedusa – at least in summer.

The lack of a local market had increased the economic difficulties that local fishers faced in Lampedusa. In particular, their impossibility to sell products to the highest bidder or to rely on a profitable internal market, made fishery on the island much less profitable than it could have been. In turn, low profits increased internal segmentation among the fishers, making it very difficult for the local fishing sector to organize and plan against the economic onslaught.

#### 8.1.2. *Low profits, substantial segmentation*

The absence of a fish market on the island lowered fishermen's profits and increased their dependency on subsidies, which had the unintended effect of decreasing fish stocks. If catches generated lower revenues, fishers would have to fish more, further lowering fishery's profitability, activating one of the many vicious circles negatively

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<sup>58</sup> 'Slow Food is a global, grassroots organization, founded in 1989 to prevent the disappearance of local food cultures and traditions, counteract the rise of fast life and combat people's dwindling interest in the food they eat, where it comes from and how our food choices affect the world around us' (Slow Food, 2015).

affecting Lampedusa's fishing sector. Although fishers are often seen as naturally inclined to overexploit fishes as open access resources, (Gordon, 1954) several fishermen in Lampedusa acknowledged the urgency of implementing effective conservation policies. However, they also recognised the impossibility to agree over any coordinated action, given their economic condition and ensuing competitiveness.

We all recognize the necessity to implement biological rest periods<sup>59</sup> systematically... They are possibly the best measures we can apply to let the fish stocks to breed, fishes to grow, and us to fish more. [Everyone] is very much aware of this. However, there is no way we can make them happen because there will always be this or that fisher who goes fishing despite the ban, being him either a recreational or a professional fisher... One of us going fishing invalidates the other fishers' effort to temporarily stop fishing. (*Piero*)

Beyond economic precariousness, this splitting up of local fishery was derived also from several other elements. Among them, there was fishery's dependency on subsidies. Such a dependency had framed the fishers' reliance on politics and consequent political nepotism, especially in a region whose political life had been historically characterized by widespread patronage, and on an island where fishery constituted for years the main – if not the only – local economic activity employing almost all islanders (Boissevain, 1966). Through time, fishers – and with them their families - affiliated themselves to this or that politician who had promised them access to subsidies. As subsidies remained in place, these affiliations lasted through time and created opposed factions within the same fishery, whilst also promoting corruption among local politicians.

On top of this already complicated situation, in contrast to the past, local small-scale fishers operated using a variety of fishing gears to fish in diverse parts of the island's waters and at different times of the day. As Nicola told me:

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<sup>59</sup> Biological rest periods are temporary bans of any fishing activity over a certain area or concerning a specific fleet. They are explicitly supported by the EU (EP, 2014) and managed, set and compensated at the regional or national levels.

We are less than 100 fishers and we cannot agree on anything... If we cannot find a common ground for claiming our rights, there will be no improvement of our conditions. [Everyone] has different interests and urgencies so far that everyone goes fishing in different areas, at different times of the day... If we decide to ban the fishing of, let say, *squid* over a certain time, then fishers living out of that fishing will feel themselves unjustly penalized compared to the others... On the other hand, each fisher does not necessarily know the main problematics other fishers deal with: this despite the fact that we all fish in the same waters or at a few miles one from the other.

Fishers' inability to find agreement lowered the profitability of fishery, and it often led to the market being overwhelmed with the same fish species, decreasing the price wholesalers would pay.

Mimmo worked aboard of Alfonso's vessel *Sara*. He told me his view about how fishers should organize:

The mistake most fishers do is clear to my eyes. If you go fishing and you are lucky enough to fish 50 boxes of catches, you should stop fishing and come back on dryland and sell your catches at the best price. You will sell your boxes for ten Euros each instead of risking to sell them at seven Euros. It is a very basic economic rule, I guess! Given professional fishers' actual relatively deprived economic condition and the unfair competition of recreational fishery, everyone is desperate to get the most out of the sea... If I do not fish 100 boxes of *red mullet* today, someone else would do that in my place!

The low profitability of the professional small-scale fishery combined with political patronage that had segmented Lampedusa's fishery into several factions, had restricted the fishers coming together to reach any collective agreement. This competitive and difficult economic situation meant more and more people leaving the profession. Young locals were not interested in joining the professional fishing fleet, and local small-scale professional fishery was starting to disappear. Surprisingly, however, facing very similar governing pressures, the fishers in Gran Tarajal had organized very differently and were able to turn small-scale fishery into an environmentally and economically sustainable industry.

## 8.2. *Gran Tarajal: we fish for living*

From the 1990s, Gran Tarajal's tiny fishery succeeded in setting and implementing effective self-management to protect the maritime ecosystems where they worked, while also guaranteeing the economic sustainability of their jobs. Through a variety of good practices based on 'behaviour-oriented corpuses of local' (Ruddle, 2000: 288) culture, the Gran Tarajal Fishermen's Association planned, implemented and enforced a series of conservation policies while constantly monitoring their outcomes. Juan Ramon who fished in Gran Tarajal since he was 16, explained me the emergence of the association:

I am the president of the Fishermen's Association of Gran Tarajal since August 1993: we have elections every four years. Soon, I will be in charge for 20 years. There are more or less 40 vessels' owners associated and we set fishing rules ourselves. Actually, we prohibited the use of trawlers, longlines and we heavily reduced the use of *fishing pots*: we prohibited them for eight years and now we only allow the use of a limited number of pots of a specific size, over limited areas and for just six months a year... Our main concerns regard European policies on professional fishery... Our decision to set up our own fishing regulations demonstrates primarily that fishers are the first interested in keeping the sea alive and, secondly, that fishers know better than anyone else the sea where they work. No one imposed us to regulate ourselves this way: but we did it anyway! It is an investment to grant ourselves a future.

Where Gran Tarajal fishers' regulations overlapped with existing EU norms, the fishermen's standards tended to be more restrictive than Communitarian ones. In particular, besides prohibiting a series of fishing gears whose use the CFP authorizes, minimum catch sizes set locally were bigger than those imposed by the EU.

Working in Gran Tarajal for generations, local fishers knew when to catch or rest local fish species. As Hugo – a 45 year old local fisher – pointed out:

We work here from many years and most of us grew up in Gran Tarajal: we started fishing with our fathers since we were kids. It is clear that no one better than us... knows when one fish must be caught or not. [Thus,] we have met several times, we negotiated a lot, and finally we decided to establish our own minimum sizes instead of those that authorities imposed us.



Rita Diaz Hernandez, the provincial councillor for fishers, further described local fishers' self-management:

Fuerteventura's fishermen associations... and especially the one of Gran Tarjal, have been pioneers regarding the protection of marine resources... They spontaneously introduced seasonal fishing bans for the first time on this island despite the fact that they were not compensated in any form by institutions... They did it anyway! Besides, they only use *lines*: a very selective fishing gear with low environmental impact.

In terms of environmental policies, fishermen in Gran Tarjal were positioned at the forefront. To reach today's level of organisation, the association's president played a central role that several on the island – both fishermen and concerned institutional actors – clearly recognized as important. Juan Ramon explained:

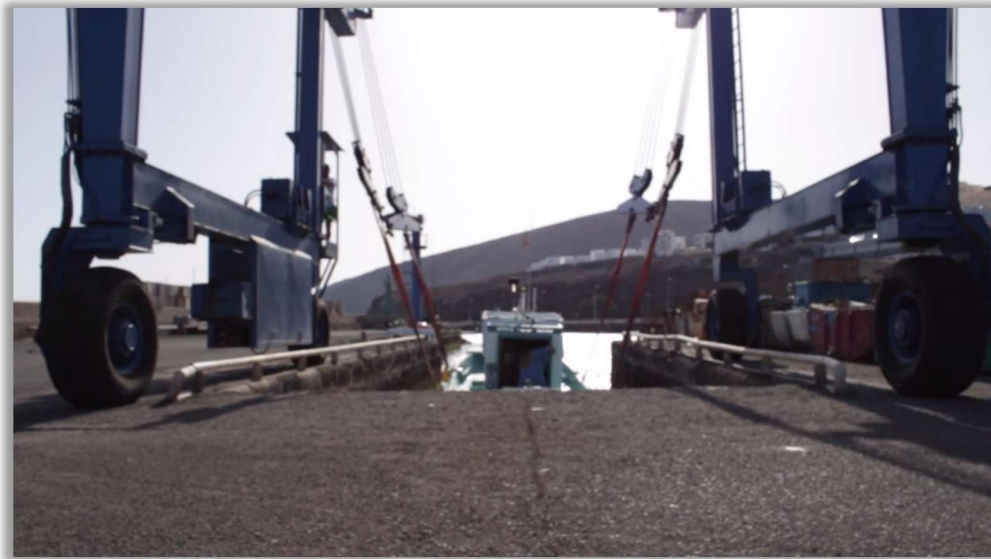
Legally speaking, the association already existed for many years: anyway, it really started to operate in 1993 when I took charge of it. At that time there was none of the facilities we have now: since then we created all the infrastructures you can see [from the dry dock to the icemaker machine]. This became possible thanks to a dramatic transformation that I promoted and that certainly constitutes the pillar of this association: in fact, we have ensured that gradually all our catches were sold exclusively through and by the association. Before each associate sold his own catches to fish traders at much lower prices... It was not easy for me to convince the others that it was better for the all of us to stay united and stop selling fish individually... Luckily, as soon as the first started to associate, the others realized how advantageous it was... Before, fish traders decided the price: today, we make our price and we reinvest the greater profits for our own use. Today fishermen do not have to worry for anything more than unloading their catches at the association once they come back on dryland: our employees will take care of the catches and all administrative issues.

The president of the Fishermen's Association of Gran Tarjal had subverted the traditional *modus operandi* of local small-scale fishery. At the time he began his struggle to transform the working of the local fishery, fishers used to commercialize the entirety of their catches through traders. The economic advantages of over 20 years of direct commercialisation of the catches spilled over to several other areas of fishers' daily activities, quickly taking Gran Tarjal's fishery away from an internal competitive market with low prices to a situation where the fishers cooperated and successfully organized an economic and environmentally sustainable fishery.

### 8.2.1. – *Gran Tarjal: sharing for competing*

Depending on the period of the year and the market's demand, the Fishermen's Association of Gran Tarjal fixed the price per kilogram of catches for each fish species they fished and traded. By selling catches directly, fishers renounced a small percentage of their profits equal for all members, which was reinvested in the association. These investments provided administrative assistance, facilities and equipment. The association also commercialized their catches by profiting from the association's fish shop and restaurant, while most of the fish were sold to one of the main supermarket chains on the island.

Having the opportunity to access a bigger internal market and efficiently exporting the surplus to the neighbouring islands, while benefiting from higher profits per catches, the association activated a virtuous circle. Indeed, through the association, Gran Tarjal's fishermen provided themselves with facilities that reduced operational costs and allowed for further investments. The most important of these were an ice machine, a new and up to date refrigerator truck to transport the catches, a gantry crane to take vessels in and out the water, and individual rooms to store fishing equipment (see Plates 8.1 to 8.3).



**Plate 8.1:** Gran Tarajal Fishermen Association's fishing vessels crane (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu elaborated by the author)



**Plate 8.2:** Gran Tarajal Fishermen Association's individual rooms to store fishing equipment (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu elaborated by the author)



**Plate 8.3:** Gran Tarajal Fishermen Association's refrigerator truck to transport the catches (@ Lorenzo Sibiriu elaborated by the author)

The association also had an office with two full-time employees to assist fishermen with bureaucratic issues, making their work much simpler and creating the conditions for the local fishery to become profitable. In turn, economic profitability facilitated the right circumstances to implement effective and more restrictive conservation policies that, in the long-term, had made the local fishery even more profitable and environmentally sustainable – at least when combined with effective policies to limit and control illegal activities of the local booming recreational fishing sector.

Pedro, a 53 year old fisher that I met at the association, provided me with an example of how local fishers regulated their activities:

In [April] we decided to establish a cap for individual catches: a maximum of 200 kilograms of fish each of us can catch per day... [April] is not a good period to sell fish since the market's demand is quite low. Thus, in order to not sell fish at a lower price than the usual, we prefer to leave it in the water and fish it later when prices will increase.

Although there was no obligation for fishermen to become members of the association, there were no professional fishermen not registered as members.

There is no obligation to join us... If you want to fish professionally without becoming one of our members you can do it: it is your own free choice. However, non-members will have to pay for the services we provide to our members... This is to say that you will have to buy your own ice, pay to use the crane, and so on. (*Juan Ramon*)

Gran Tarajal's Fishermen's Association's governance of the fishery was not questioned by any fishermen that were so hard to convince 20 years before, when the association began its action. Decisions were taken collectively, based on periodic meetings, while the many advantages deriving from being organized were shared equally among members. It was for these reasons that even those fishermen landing more catches did not complain about contributing more than others to the finances of the association. The individual advantages appeared to overcome the burdens of sharing. Alvaro, who was amongst the oldest active fishers in Gran Tarajal, explained:

I use to fish every day I can: this because I am one of the "old ones" who knows what real fishing is. Nowadays, I am almost the only one that goes fishing every day the sea allows... I know that, financially speaking, I am probably the one contributing the most to the association. However, I do not personally care: do you have any idea of how it was to be a fisherman here before this association started to work properly? It is still hard for me to think how easier the whole thing became. I do not have to bother myself anymore selling my catches... I do not pay to get my boat out of the water for the periodic maintenance... I do not buy even the ice anymore!

Several advantages derived from the adoption of the Gran Tarajal Fishermen's Association organisational model. Communal practices had increased the fishery's profitability for each fisher. Yet it is important to underline one last benefit produced by the organisational model applied by the Fishermen's Association of Gran Tarajal in reducing competition and increasing interdependence. Alvaro highlighted this:

Here we respect the rules... We work so close to each other that it would be very difficult to go unnoticed doing something unusual... How can I come back here after I have done something the association prohibits? There is no way no one will spot me: there is too much closeness and interdependence among us. Think for instance to unauthorized species: the only way we have to sell our fish is through the association, right? Then, the association does not sell illegal catches. Thus there is no way I can sell them unless I do it by myself. However, believe me, if I leave the association with a box of fish in the car, people here will spot me immediately.

In Gran Tarajal, local governance of fishery was developed by empowering local fishers in setting their own fishing rules. Such an organisational model was based on intense interdependence and cooperation that favoured the economic and environmental performances of the fishermen's association. Indeed, the working of Gran Tarajal's Fishermen's Association also created the conditions for effective – and completely inexpensive – informal social controls to be in place.

### **8.3. Same steer, different responses. How Lampedusa and Gran Tarajal's fisheries responded differently to European governance.**

The reasons why, despite very similar formal EU governance mechanisms, fishers on the two islands undertook these very different routes lie in the differences characterizing the history as well as the sociocultural and economic fabrics of Lampedusa and Gran Tarajal. In this section I confront the two case studies to highlight some of those local peculiarities that, by interacting with EU governance, produced such different outcomes on the two islands.

#### *8.3.1. When the EU gets local: the role of local society, economy, history and geography*

Contrary to the situation on the Italian island, when the first big fishing vessels for oceanic fishery reached Fuerteventura in the early 1970s, the island's core economic sector was not fishing, but agriculture. Although the maritime element played a central role in the organisation of everyday life, fishers and fishery contributed only marginally to structure Gran Tarajal's economy and local culture. At the core of Gran Tarajal's economic life was the production of tomatoes, which attracted a workforce

from all over the island (Suaréz, 2007). In Fuerteventura, to become a fisher did not necessarily constitute locals' favourite job prospects, and sailing and fishing skills were not an economic necessity.

In Lampedusa, instead, fishery did not represent just the core economy of the island: it also constituted the islanders' identity and self-perception. Bluefish fishing and canning determined the rhythm of the days, with men fishing overnight and women canning during daylight between April and September. Lampedusans perceived themselves as people of the sea as far as it was from the sea that they extracted their primary source of nourishment and labour. To become a good captain was the most prestigious achievement that young uneducated locals could aspire to, while being a fisher represented an almost unescapable option for local children (Greenlaw, 2002). Consequently, the increasing number of fishers that had left fishery for tourism generated much greater tensions in Lampedusa compared to Gran Tarajal, preventing Lampedusan fishers from organising collectively. Yet a series of other major differences characterized the economies of Lampedusa and Gran Tarajal when the first effects of Communitarian management of fishery started to be felt and experienced by fishers on the two island.

In Gran Tarajal, the economically successful story of the local cooperative of tomatoes producers provided possibly a model for local fishers (Suaréz, 2007). On the contrary, the flourishing of the mackerel industry in Lampedusa, as based on private enterprises and the (over-)exploitation of workers, provided a diametrically opposite labour organisation model of reference for Lampedusans. If fishers in Gran Tarajal had experienced first-hand the benefits of working as part of a cooperative - they would have probably been less keen to join Juan Ramon's project.

Besides, as Gran Tarajal's Fishermen's Association reached economic sustainability in the 1990s, fishery turned into a relatively attractive job option for local young while the tomato economy was still the mainstay of employment on the small port village. With the first tourist facilities built in both the north and south of the island rather than in Gran Tarajal, the Spanish port town turned only partially into a tourist spot. Moreover, as fishery constituted only a relatively marginal economy before, as well as after, the EU integration of Spain, the changing economy of Gran Tarajal did not so much break apart pre-existing communal practices. The shift towards tourism did not have the same impact in terms of altering the entire local sociocultural fabric as it had done so on the Italian island.

As for Lampedusa, indeed, as much as in the past, the fishing industry monopolized local economic and social life, and today no corner of the island remained untouched by intense touristification. For instance, the only village on the island developed and expanded where, in 2012, almost 60,000 tourists spent one or more nights on an island, counting not even 6,000 inhabitants (Contino, 2013). Tourist economy also took over the physical spaces of the local fishing industry, such as canning warehouses and fishers' tool sheds, as they were turned into holiday apartments or restaurants and bars. This dramatic development in Lampedusa might help to explain why Lampedusan fishers' were not able to organize local fishery in an environmentally and economically sustainable way.

Lampedusan fishers' strategies at sea seemed in fact to respond to the short-term calculation of profit-maximisation. This different time horizon applied by fishers on the two islands – as fishers in Gran Tarajal relied on long-term strategies of profit maximisation through the implementation of effective and restrictive conservation policies - was most likely an outcome of the rapid and pervasive touristification of



Lampedusa's economy. Since Lampedusa turned into a popular tourist destination, Lampedusan fishers made up their wages only partly through fishing. As fishing started playing only a relative role in securing a decent life for Lampedusans, islanders began taking less care of local stocks, since they could rely on the local tourist industry to earn a living. On the contrary, in Gran Tarajal, professional fishers who earned a good living from fishing, clearly cared more for the health of their only or main source of income.

Yet there were also geographical elements that played a role in addressing so differently islanders' responses to EU governance on the two fishing villages. Indeed, given the greater size of Fuerteventura compared to that of Lampedusa, and as the Spanish island could rely on more stable air and maritime connections with the other islands of the archipelago, fishers in Gran Tarajal could access a much larger market to sell their catches than Lampedusan fishers. Greater commercial possibilities certainly played a role in maintaining the profitability of fishery in Gran Tarajal, generating the conditions for local fishery to remain attractive to potential new fishers.

#### **8.4. From a fishing island in the middle of the Mediterranean to a tourist destination at the centre of Europe's outer border.**

What more than 50 years of the intense Europeanisation of Lampedusa and its fishery produced in Lampedusa was a substantial marginalisation of the traditional fishing and maritime culture of the island. Yet locals' transforming relationships with their sea, combined with the *borderization* of Lampedusa and its surrounding waters, had mutated islanders' perception of the geography of their island. I now outline the most significant features of this transformation.

One of the most important outcomes of EU governance on Lampedusa was that communal everyday practices had been replaced by much more atomized and competitive logics. When the Italian island counted on a relatively flourishing bluefish canning industry, although living conditions remained relatively deprived, 'none went to sleep hungry'.<sup>60</sup> Given the isolation of Lampedusa and the organisation and working of the local fishing industry, islanders relied on each other while working, as well as for coping with everyday life. During the months of bluefish fishing, canning factories and fishers worked synergistically so that they could maximize their production. As for winter, those that did not leave the island shared the relatively scarce available provisions. On the '*mackerel* island', then, Lampedusans lived a largely self-supportive and mostly communal way of life where they experienced, interiorized and produced the local labour market and economy. The difficulties of living an isolated life in the middle of the sea had obliged islanders to rely on each other (Enns, 2008).

Yet, professional fishers that used to work together as employees of the same fishing vessel owners, today competed among each other either individually or as part of smaller crews of up to three to four fishers. Although competition existed before the Italian island became part of the EU, as I have demonstrated, the CFP contributed to exacerbating individualistic attitudes in Lampedusa by transforming professional fishery from within. While Lampedusa was the '*mackerel* island', competitiveness and performance depended on collective efforts, either within the walls of the canning industries, or on board of the fishing vessels catching bluefish. Today's increased competition to catch fish is played out by single fishers or units of few individuals who often owned the vessels and relied on technology that not everyone was able to afford

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<sup>60</sup> Maria.

–instead of the fishing and sailing skills everyone could acquire through practice and experience.

However, it must be noted that such a change in the fabric of the Lampedusa community had begun already when fishers started leaving the island to work aboard of the big vessels for oceanic fishing. In contrast to when Lampedusan fishers remained in Tunisia for months before the bluefish fishing season, when islanders went fishing in the Atlantic, they could not take their families along. When fishers' international mobility from Lampedusa and Tunisia's shores (Friese, 2010) expanded westwards and transformed into a global and solitary venture that fishers undertook to access regular –and much higher – salaries, the island's community was drawn apart and islanders began less and less to rely on one another. Additionally, the inflow of money coming from the large salaries of those fishers working in the Atlantic had made winters much easier to overcome without relying on shared resources.

On dry land, the booming of the tourist industry and the ensuing illegal building of tourist residences had also reconfigured local economic – and then social – relations along competitive lines. Gianni highlighted this:

Differently from when everyone used to work in the canning industry, today we do not live anymore as a community: communal living does not exist anymore on this island. Today everyone made his or her own closed circle both economically as well as socially. You have your holiday apartment and you run it with your family or even individually - and that is it! Before there was only fishing and everyone was a fisherman as much as everyone needed fishermen to work. Today nothing remains of that communal spirit: it disappeared or transformed into something else.

A tension had emerged between the realities of fishing and tourism which distinguished the ethics of the sea from the competitiveness of tourism. Although the island's elders expressed substantial criticisms towards a younger generation that had abandoned fishery in favour of tourism, empirical data and observations suggest that it was the local elders themselves who had initiated this process by being the first to

invest in the tourism sector. There was thus not necessarily a generational element involved but, rather, the impossible coexistence between two partially incompatible value systems. As we have seen, growing from these initial investments, tourism on the island boomed throughout the 1990s and 2000s, and continued growing, ignoring most of the existing regulations, with those quickest to construct new buildings and collude with the local authorities becoming the most successful tourism entrepreneurs. In order to earn a living from tourism, islanders acted independently through competing for the tourist trade.

With this economic shift, the seafarers' norms of mutual assistance and reciprocity became almost obsolete in ensuring livelihood in the new context of a growing mass tourism industry. While fish represented a common factor of production that had unified the locals taking part in the process of its commodification – from fishing to canning - now tourists became the resource 'to catch' – facilitating the transformation of an enormous amount of cubic meters on the island into privately owned holiday accommodations. Hence, elder fishers' nostalgia for the fishing Lampedusa of the past resembled a sort of self-apology as elder fishers were in fact those who turned to tourism and left professional fishery. As much as they valorised the island's past values by criticizing the island's present 'ways of living', most of them knew that with the next round of subsidies they might have also decided to scrap their vessels and start fishing illegally – if they did not already do that in winter while receiving their unemployment benefits.

To add to these developments, the establishment and working of the European external border produced further tensions in Lampedusa and its surrounding seawaters. As I suggested in chapter seven, the functioning of the border at sea had challenged the fishers' maritime ethic, forcing them to rely on economic and judicial

cost-benefits calculations *vis-à-vis* the rescuing of boat migrants in distress or in the fishing of their bodies – or parts of them. While the maritime culture was eroded at sea, the mediatisation of Europe's border in Lampedusa and the centrality of the island within the national as well as European political arena, transformed life on dry land. Locals seem often to become actors in the spectacle of the border (Huysmans, 2000; De Genova, 2013; Cuttitta, 2014) permanently staged on their island, performing it so as to satisfy non-islanders expectations and often in opposition to what islanders experienced first-hand. Again, fishers' ethics and their empathy towards the shipwrecked was confronted by mainstream media and the political border narrative of migrants' securitisation. Accordingly, since Schengen expanded to include Lampedusa, islanders' experience and perception of the geography of their island transformed as well. In the minds of many Lampedusans, the Lampedusa located in the middle of Europe's border had progressively substituted the island located in the middle of the Mediterranean. To explain such a process, the symbolic events of 2011 represent a kind of ultimate watershed leaving behind the old communalistic fishing Lampedusa as a safe port and refuge for seamen in the middle of the Mediterranean, for the touristic but militarized island at the core of Europe's border of today.

Indeed, if on the one hand the cultural ties that bound the island with North Africa played a role pushing locals to assist Tunisian migrants during the early months of the year, following 2011, Tunisians in Lampedusa had become intrusive and dangerous neighbours. At the same time, it was as if sub-Saharan immigrants counterbalanced this rapid reversal and took the place of Tunisians in the 'heart of Lampedusans'. As an example, referring to the two migrants walking along the pier of the old port, from the door of his tool shed, Giuseppe told me:

I know that they are good guys: they must be Eritreans! Although I go to Tunisia often, in Lampedusa I only have issues with Tunisians. I have problems only with those who take the boats and come here thinking that they can do everything they want.

The attitude among many locals towards sub-Saharan migrants and asylum seekers on the island was semantically different from the empathy felt by many towards those Tunisians who reached Lampedusa during the first few months of 2011. The newcomers were no longer the island's geographical – and cultural - neighbours, with whom to share recent history - and to join in protesting against institutional failures. As Maria – a worker of the canning industry - and many others on the island told me, those reaching Lampedusa by boat were 'desperate people fleeing wars and deprivations'. After the screening of the violent scenes of September 2011, the islanders' relation with those strangers coming from the sea transformed into a sort of moral obligation rather than the expression of cultural vicinity. As Lampedusans became increasingly accustomed to performing the border, their relations with boat migrants transformed into a conscious exhibition of hospitality that islanders displayed to the outside world – rather than an emphatic reaction towards a suffering neighbour and human being. Locals' attitudes towards the newcomers changed from an everyday experience and cultural neighbour to a somewhat more detached and, at times, paternalistic attitude towards more culturally distant – or diverse - individuals.

Pushed to the margins of the island's economy and sociocultural milieu, many fishers turned the page: magically, Tunisians suddenly became the enemy, both on land and at sea. Within this border narrative, the death of Lampedusa's bluefish canning industry – and with it of the island's fishery - was not attributed to the actions of Lampedusa's fishers who had abandoned professional fishing for the more lucrative and less tiring tourism sector. Nor was it seen that the local professional fishery was under strain because of the many 'retired' fishers that continued to fish without

permits to the detriment of the few licensed fishermen remaining on the island. The blame, instead, was passed to Tunisian fishers that were scapegoated, as they provided a simpler and clearer target for anxieties than the complex social events I have described.

The EU border had thus exacerbated the dynamics of local sociocultural transformation that the CFP had begun to activate on the island. The working of the border provided the basis of local fisher's vocabulary of motives (Wright Mills, 1940) – the unfair and aggressive competition of Tunisian fishers – to justify their choice of abandoning fishing for the more lucrative tourist industry. Given these major transformations, it was of little surprise that the fishery on the Italian island was unable to organize and thus seemed destined to disappear.

### **8.5. Conclusion**

European integration had produced very similar pressures on the fishing communities of the two islands. Yet, the outcomes differed significantly between Lampedusa and Gran Tarajal. If on the Italian island, professional fishery's destiny was to disappear, in the Spanish fishing village, local fishers' good practices turned a fishery that 20 years ago was in the same conditions as contemporary fishery in Lampedusa, into a profitable and sustainable economic sector. Besides Juan Ramon's charisma and vision, the reason for such a successful story lay in the history, economy, society and geography of Gran Tarajal. As the president of the Spanish fishermen's association stressed, the local governance of their fishery had developed quite independent from any Communitarian regulation or directive.

As for Lampedusa, the dramatic marginalisation of fishery on an island whose economy was centred on the fishing industry up to less than 30 years ago, produced

a deep reconfiguration of the entire local sociocultural fabric. Tourist economy, as it developed in Lampedusa, produced almost inextricable tensions, with pre-existing value systems rooted into the fishing and Mediterranean past of the island. On top of this major economic and sociocultural transformation, the EU external border had exacerbated tensions and contributed to moving Lampedusans' self-perceived geography of their island from the middle of the Mediterranean into the core of Europe's outer border at sea.



## 8. CONCLUSION

Since the Italian and Spanish memberships of the European Union (EU), fishers' everyday lives in Lampedusa and Gran Tarajal had transformed profoundly. As I have shown, throughout more than five decades of Communitarian management of fishery and almost 20 years of intense *borderization* of Lampedusa, both islands' economies, cultures and society had changed dramatically. Surprisingly, however, the outcomes of these EU driven processes were very different in Lampedusa and Fuerteventura. I now summarize these changes and provide a reflection on the tensions that EU governance had produced in Lampedusa, and on the role that ground-level sociologies of the EU must play within the frame of European studies. I conclude with a final note on governmentality, as it was an extremely helpful tool in discerning the processes by which governmental logics operated, but only a limited one to explain all the changes that EU integration had brought to the islands.

The first wave of European subsidies to fishery in the late 1950s started challenging the cohesion of Lampedusa's local community. Due to the increasing mechanisation of fishery and the expansion of industrial fisheries, over the 1960s, many Lampedusans – fishers included – left their island and emigrated to bigger Italian fishing ports. In the 1970s, with the introduction of the structural policies that preceded the Common Fishery Policy (CFP) of 1983, more islanders continued to leave both Lampedusa and Gran Tarajal. Fishers who had rarely – if ever - left their families and friends before, begun to embark on vessels for oceanic fishing and left their island for months to go fishing in the high seas. While these fishers experienced a new and global mobility and the simultaneous deskilling of their profession, local community ties started being undermined by these prolonged absences and the inflow of capital

coming from the high wages that fishers earned on board of the oceanic fishing vessels.

When these fishers returned to their islands in the early 1990s, they invested locally what they had earned during the long fishing campaigns. Many fishers who had never owned a boat finally turned themselves into vessel owners and captains. As both islands' small-scale fishing fleets were updated and became more productive than ever before, the local artisanal small-scale fisheries of the past effectively became commercial versions of themselves and local fishers begun competing for much smaller amounts of catches. At the time, local fish stocks had already been overfished for decades and had decreased significantly.

Counting on more productive fisheries, but much impoverished fishing grounds, with the CFP that, since 1983, increasingly focused on conservation policies, small-scale fisheries on the two islands lost further profitability. Limitations in fishers' access to maritime resources were designed and implemented almost indiscriminately on small- and big-scale fisheries – even though the former had only marginally, if not insignificantly, overfished, compared to their industrial counterparts. While these measures increased small-scale fishery operational costs, the 1992 structural policies made it even more attractive for fishers to leave their profession. As the EU begun subsidizing the dismantling of existing vessels and the withdrawal of professional fishing licenses, both islands' fisheries experienced a pouring of previously professional fishers into the then booming local tourist industry. However, even though subsidies aimed at decreasing the exploitation of maritime resources, observations in Lampedusa and Gran Tarajal suggest a rather different view. On the islands, many of those who dismantled their vessels and/or withdrew their licenses bought themselves a new boat and went fishing illegally - introducing their catches in

the local markets – and turning themselves into the small-scale fishers' main commercial competitors, as well as further endangering the health of local fishing grounds. Hence, in spite of the CFP's official goals of ensuring an 'environmentally, economically and socially sustainable' (EC, 2015) fishery, up until the 1990s, the CFP had produced rather the opposite effect in Lampedusa and Gran Tarajal. Communitarian governance made professional small-scale fishing more expensive and it *de facto* activated a series of vicious circles that pushed even more professional fishers to leave their legal, regulated and monitored work activity, leading to considerable overfishing in local waters.

However, thanks to the initiative of Juan Ramon and the organisational structure of the Fishermen's Association of Gran Tarajal, such negative loops were at least partly broken in the small Spanish port town. As local fishers had set a series of good practices that they developed autonomously from any EU regulation, the present and future of their local professional small-scale fishery was safeguarded. Yet, in Lampedusa, with the local fishery experiencing profound segmentation, the most negative and unpredicted outcomes of EU governance of fishery had prevailed on local fishers' ability to organize themselves and turn their fishery into a profitable and sustainable one.

The shift of the local fishing economy towards tourism had in fact produced much greater tensions on the Italian island than on the Spanish one. While Lampedusa was the '*mackerel* island', fishing was at the core of Lampedusans' identity: consequently, the transformation of the local economy implied a much deeper alteration of local culture and of islanders' self-perception. Moreover, in contrast to Gran Tarajal, whose local economy was still partly centred on the tomato production, the development of the tourist industry in Lampedusa was extremely pervasive for locals and especially

fishers. On the Italian island, the tourist industry took over even the physical spaces of the local fishing industry as they were transformed into touristic facilities.

What remained of the old fishing industry in Lampedusa when I visited it was largely symbolic, as it mainly served to attract tourists by projecting the image of a typical Mediterranean fishing island. Fishers' tool sheds, fish traders' warehouses and the canning industries scattered along the old port and made of pumice stones were abandoned or turned into restaurants or holiday houses and apartments. The small and coloured fishing vessels crowding the island's marina were used only during winter to go fishing. In summer, their main function was that of taking tourists around the island during most of what was the bluefish fishing season until a few decades previously. Only a few of Nicola's handmade fishing pots served for fishing: yet I often found them hanging on the walls of the dining rooms of the island's restaurants. Even fishers were not anymore professional fishers as most of them had become recreational fishers and tourist operators. As to seal the final transformation of the island economy – and with it, of the local sociocultural life - Lampedusa turned somehow into a sort of post-industrial symbolic fishing community rather than an actual one (cf. Featherstone, 1990).

On top of this already dramatic transformation, the establishment and management of the European external border on the Italian island and its surrounding seawaters exacerbated social changes and strains within the local community. While the seawaters and the island were progressively militarized by means of thousands of officers and a series of border surveillance and control apparatuses deployed there, Lampedusans paradoxically experienced the increasing de-securitisation of their everyday life and witnessed frequent institutional illicit conducts – all of which had undermined European and national institutions' legitimacy on the island. As life on

dry land was impacted by the establishment and the working of the European external border, fishers' perception and experience of local seawaters changed dramatically. Rescuing operations for boat migrants forced fishers to reconfigure the most basic principles of maritime ethics – such as rescuing people at sea – *vis-à-vis* legal and economic calculations. Moreover, at a more discursive level, since politics and media started staging a permanent migrant emergency from Lampedusa, tensions were aggravated. With Europe's outer border 'landing' in Lampedusa, this once isolated and self-sufficient community was progressively turned into the most symbolic and controversial *loci* of Europe's border regime, expropriating islanders of their own identity and self-representation. The rock that for centuries had served seafarers from all corners of the Mediterranean as a safe port - the Lampedusa located at a few hours sailing from the coasts of both North Africa and Sicily - was taken away from its sea to be placed at the core of the EU border and migration regimes.

European integration had thus contributed to the breaking up of historical and maritime communal practices in Lampedusa and had undermined islanders' traditional ways of living. In the minds of many islanders, the small Italian isle was displaced from the sea and the marginal geography in which it was located. Islanders adapted to this transformation and progressively abandoned their communal ways of living in favour of more individualized everyday practices. The old 'living alone together' – as islanders overcame their isolation by sharing resources – typical of life in small and detached communities, was gradually replaced by a 'living altogether alone', as the growing tourist economy pushed islanders to share little more than the soil of their island, over which they competed amongst each other for individual profit. Throughout this process, the relation of islanders to their historical neighbours in the Tunisian shore had also mutated, as Tunisians turned into the island fishery's demon – the cause of all problems.

The diverging trajectories experienced by these two European fisheries demonstrate the importance of developing a sociology of EU governance from a ground-level perspective, including the influence of the sea and the maritime cultural element. Looking at Communitarian governance from the everyday life of the islanders made it possible to bring to the surface the many ways through which individuals adapted to EU provisions or circumvented them, as well as providing a view on the most tangible strategies through which institutional actors and systems actually governed. If governing from a distance depends on the empirical realisation of governing technologies and the ways in which they are translated on the ground into actual choices and enactments, then a comprehensive understanding of governance must focus also on the ways institutional actors implement policies, and, ultimately, how ordinary citizens interact within these constraints.

The unexpected outcomes that EU policies generated in Lampedusa and Fuerteventura, as I have shown, can be seen as a key part of the machinery of European governance which was generated from and through it. Communitarian governance had a somewhat diffuse effect, only having limited impact depending on islanders' willingness to adapt or react to, as well as circumvent, governing technologies. As such, the many and unpredictable ways in which governing technologies and individuals played out on the ground must be included within the picture to comprehend what governance actually is and how it operates. Here, then, governmentality results being a valuable theoretical concept to deconstruct macro notions of governance, and it allows identification of the processes through which governance actually operates. Yet, pushing the study of governmentality towards individuals simultaneously challenges dominant understandings of governmentality itself.

In Lampedusa and Gran Tarajal, governmentality could indeed only partly explain the effects of EU governance in transforming everyday life. Governance and its technologies do not land in a sociocultural vacuum: rather the opposite. On both islands and their surrounding seawaters, governmentalities interacted with other forms of community and individual self-government, which developed and operated alongside, inside, and outside of them. The initiative of Juan Ramon and the organisation of Gran Tarajal's Fishermen's Association provided alternative forms of self-government for local fishers. Moreover, the Mediterranean historical geography of Lampedusa had also played a role in addressing islanders' initial reactions to the arrivals of thousands of Tunisians in 2011 – when islanders for months expressed their hospitality towards their historical maritime neighbours. On both islands, islanders had evaded scarcely legitimate Communitarian policies on fishery, to the extent that conservation policies had generated the conditions for fish stocks' overexploitation – rather than their protection. Governmentality thus works better as a sort of theoretical utensil for the study of the interactions between governance and the governed individuals, rather than as an encompassing explanatory framework for the analysis of the ways in which governance is produced and reproduced by people (Walters, 2011).

In terms of EU mechanisms of governance as they affected the two islands, what can be seen is that institutional commands from above had actually had numerous unintended consequences that served to contradict a number of the aims the EU. Yet, as I have demonstrated, the Europeanisation of everyday life in Lampedusa and Fuerteventura produced substantial transformations on the two islands. Seen from the eyes of fishers, the steering of European integration thus activated both pervasive and unintended but somewhat uncontrollable processes. From this maritime perspective, significant aspects of EU enterprise comes under question.





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