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| David Frantz. Lorenzo Market between Diversity and Mutation. 2003, pp.23. halshs-00559887

**HAL Id: halshs-00559887**

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# **Lorenzo Market between Diversity and Mutation**

David Frantz

NOTA DI LAVORO 69.2003

**JULY 2003**

KNOW – Knowledge, Technology, Human Capital

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# **Lorenzo Market between Diversity and Mutation**

## **Summary**

The aim of this paper is to investigate the relationship between the diversity of groups of workers and the local division of labour in the San Lorenzo Market, Florence, Italy. This empirical research may help distinguish the demographic, migratory and occupational patterns of the workers in accordance with their national origin. It shows that geographical origin is the key to the differences, specialisations and oppositions between the Florentines and the various groups of migrants on the one hand, and between these immigrant groups on the other hand. It shows too the mutation made by the conflict between global dynamics and a local labour market.

**Keywords:** San Lorenzo Market, Immigrant workers, Diversity, Local division of labour, Migratory trajectories

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## **Lorenzo Market between diversity and mutation**

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### Abstract

The aim of this paper is to investigate the relationship between the diversity of groups of workers and the local division of labour in the San Lorenzo Market, Florence, Italy. This empirical research may help distinguish the demographic, migratory and occupational patterns of the workers in accordance with their national origin. It shows that geographical origin is the key to the differences, specialisations and oppositions between the Florentines and the various groups of migrants on the one hand, and between these immigrant groups on the other hand. It shows too the mutation made by the conflict between global dynamics and a local labour market.

Key-words : San Lorenzo Market, immigrant workers, diversity, local division of labour, migratory trajectories

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Since the last quarter of the twentieth century, deep changes have taken place in the social structure of the towns of western and southern Europe. As a result of globalization and the new international division of labour, international migrations have increased in volume as much as they diversified in the composition of population (BRIBOSIA, REA, 2002). This migratory shift presents various characteristics according to economic and juridical context of the States,

the regions and the host towns, and according to the diversity of forms, migratory process, actors, motivations at the root of the migrations (ARANGO, 2000 ; CASTLES, 2000).

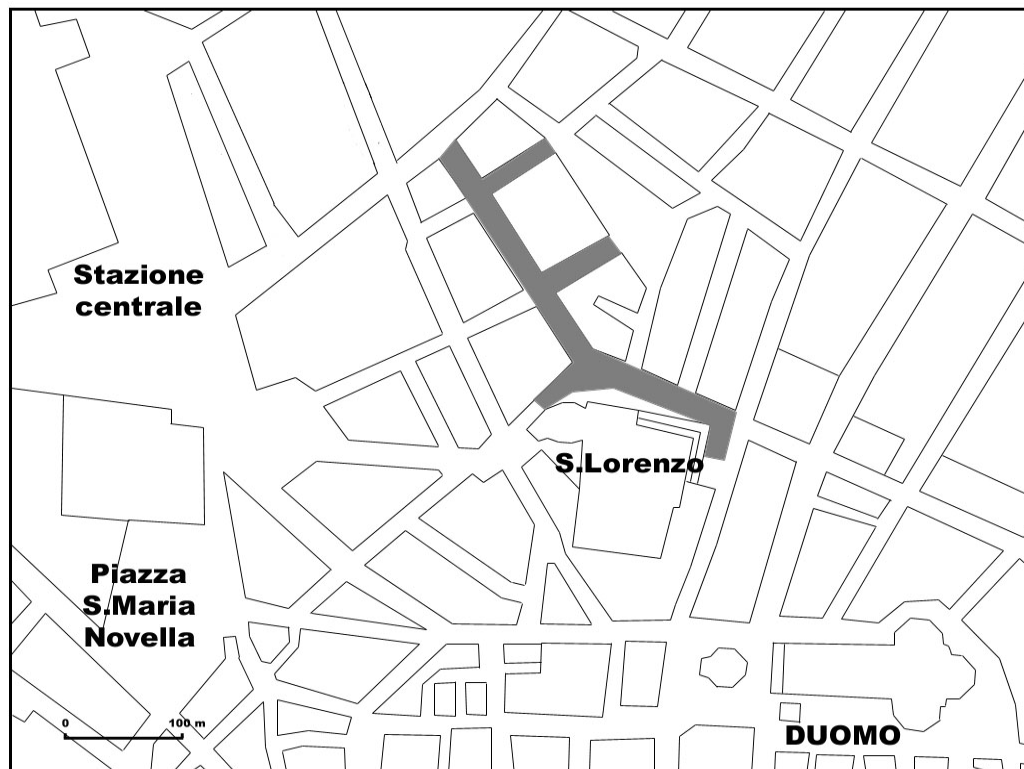
In the case of Italy, as in other southern European countries, mass immigration from underdeveloped countries is a relatively recent phenomenon. It started above all from the Seventies, when the typical postfordist transformations of the western economies had already taken place and the States implemented more restrictive immigration policies (QUASSOLI, 1999). From the population census of 1991, immigration in Italy started to be taken into consideration by the national authorities. Immigrants entered the informal sphere of the national economy, more in a process of continuity than innovation of the national economic organisation (AMBROSINI, 1999 ; MINGIONE, 1999 ; QUASSOLI, 1999 ; REYNERI, 1998). The main question is : what are the relationships between the type of migration and labour ? Does the diversity of immigrants involve new labour relationships ?

This study is based on an investigation carried out in San Lorenzo Market, in downtown Florence, Italy. The empirical results are not necessarily general, but deal with the relationship on a small scale of localised labour market and international mobility. However, we expect to raise interesting questions about the relationship between the diversity of the migrants and a specific labour market.

The question is first to distinguish demographic, migratory and occupational typologies in accordance with their national origin, and to analyse their labour relationships in this specific public working place. We will then try to determine to what extent these new populations participate in the mutation in this localised market labour. The main hypothesis is that the diversity of the geographical origins of these workers and the types of migrants, are key-elements of the differences, specialisations and contrasts between the Florentines/Italians and the migrant groups on the one hand, and between the immigrant groups themselves on the other hand.

San Lorenzo Market is a permanent tourist market located in Downtown Florence (see map). At the time of the survey, carried out during the summer of 1999, there were 200 mobile stalls. Half of them sold leather goods (jackets, belts, portfolios, handbags and travel bags), and one-third clothes (other than leather : tee-shirts, second hand clothes), to thousands of tourists who visited that city of art and history ; the remainder of the mobile stalls displayed a variety of articles (trinkets, scarves, sun glasses, etc.) which constituted a secondary trade in comparison to leather goods. 233 people were approached, essentially business owners and employees working at the stalls. 183 (78,5 %) accepted to answer the questionnaire about their demographic, migratory and occupational situation.

The results of the investigation reflect only one aspect of the San Lorenzo Market at a given time. The fluidity of some workers during the investigation and working days only allows us to draw a conjunctural picture of the Market. However, this empirical picture is interesting because it is unique : it analyses very mobile populations who are not included in official statistics, at a given time and a given place, in a specific localised labour market.



Localisation of San Lorenzo Market in Downtown Florence

## WORKERS IN THE MARKET : DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL PATTERNS

The diversity of the origins of the workers is important in the San Lorenzo Market. Two-thirds of the workers (120) when questioned state that they are foreigners. Italians are thus a minority (one-third) ; they are mainly Florentines (up to 80 %) (table 1).

A great number of foreigners works at the Market because a work permit is not required. This makes the Market a haven for immigrants : firstly, it offers employment to those people in search of work and, secondly, it represents the only economic opportunity for them.

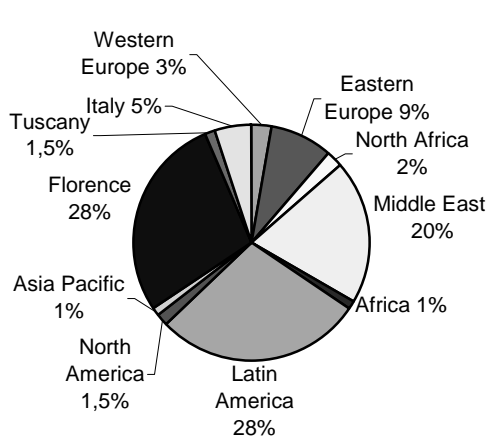


Table 1 : Geographical origin of the workers

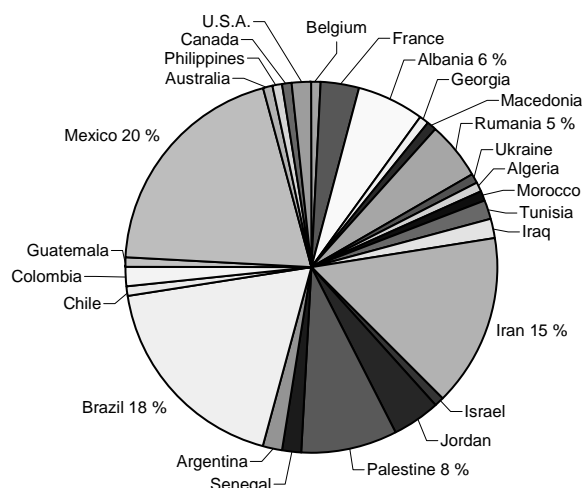


Table 2 : Origin of the immigrant workers

Contrary to what might be expected, the immigrant groups most present at the Market do not come from regions of close geographic proximity (North Africa and Eastern Europe). In fact, the most important proportion of migrants originate from Latin America (table 2) : the 52 Latin-Americans represent 43 % of the totality of foreigners, and 28 % of the total of workers interviewed. They are essentially Mexicans (24) and Brazilians (22) (see table 2). The second most represented are from the Middle East, i.e. Iranians (18) and Palestinians (10). The Eastern Europeans rank third, in particular Albanians (7) and Rumanians (6). Other foreign workers represent an important geographical dispersal (in spite of near total absence of North Africans and Eastern and Southern Asians).

This clear diversity of workers, indicated by their origin, however conceals results of similarities and differences between the groups. Florentines and immigrants are logically different, but they can present similarities by groups. In the same way, the immigrant groups can be very different according to certain criteria :

### Gender division (table 3)

San Lorenzo Market is predominantly a male labour market : There are two-thirds males to one-third females. The gender division of Florentines is similar, whereas globally for the foreign workers it is more dominated by males. On the other hand, among the most important groups of immigrant workers, Mexicans are distinguishable from the other populations with male domination.

In fact, Latin-American females record the highest ratio (41 %) of women in the Market, especially with the Mexicans females (28 %). Florentine females represent 30 % of females. As a matter of fact, the Middle Eastern group is



characterized at the same time by a large proportion of males at the Market (28 %) and by the largest gender division (like the Eastern European nationals) : only among the Middle Eastern nationals, Iranians count 15 males (83 %) and 3 females (17 %), and the nationals of the other countries are all males. Only Mexicans, with 3 /4 of females (18), and ¼ of males (6), does not comply with the masculinisation of the immigrant population.

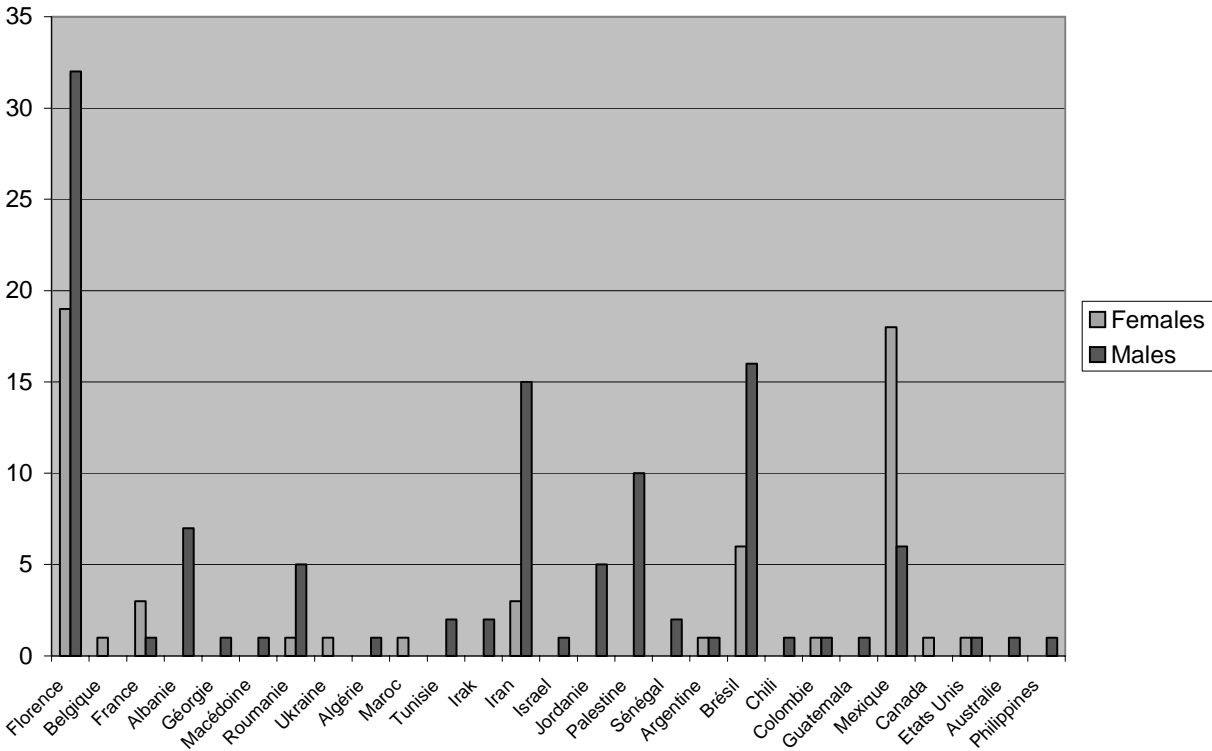


Table 3 : Gender division by origin

Age division

If all age groups within the working age are represented at the Market, with most workers in their prime, we observe in this age division the common difference between Florentines and immigrants with an internal division for the latter (table 4). Florentine workers are represented in all the age groups and especially among the older, whereas foreign workers are generally younger (in particular Mexican women and Eastern European nationals). As females are generally younger than males, immigrant females are similar - e.g. Mexican women who combine youth and femininity - except Iranian females.

However, the Middle Eastern nationals are distinguishable from the common rule because they are more numerous among the 30-34 band and the 40-44 year old band ; this is due to two groups with dissimilar age structures : Iranians with a compact group of workers between 40 and 44, and the Palestinians all aged between 20 and 35. This Iranians' particularity is due to their migration history.

Division by training : a dual structure

In general, the workers of San Lorenzo Market have high levels of training : 37 % have university degree, and 16 % have higher academic qualifications. But the highest qualified workers are represented more among the foreign workers, whereas the Florentine training degree structure (with all Tuscans and Italians) is low and moderate (table 5).

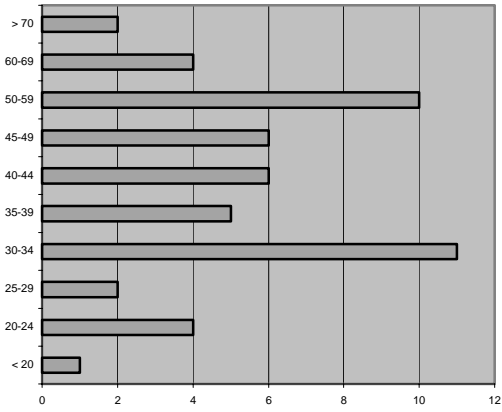
In opposition to this, the Latin-American workers present a moderate and high degree structure : 28 % are highly qualified, 27 % went to University or to secondary schools. The Middle Eastern nationals are also highly qualified. The Iranians are the most educated with 50 % of them having been to University and 44 % being highly qualified. Eastern European nationals have a moderate to high type structure.

We can especially notice that there is no gender polarisation by academic qualification in the immigrant populations, whereas this is not the case for the Florentines/Italians.

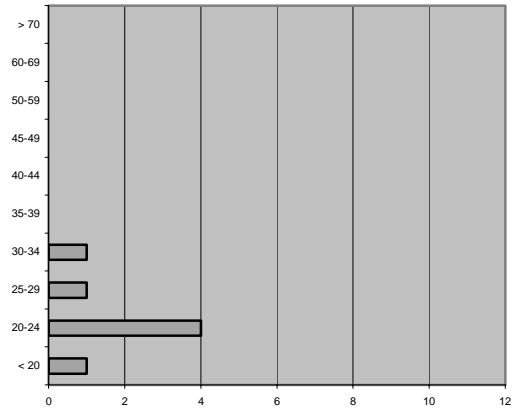
### Social extraction

The occupation of the workers' fathers, which enlightens us on their social extraction, assists us to ascertain if they have a privileged relationship with the selling activity. For the Florentines, occupational and social "heritage" is very important, firstly in the succession of the mobile stall, even concerning the social proximity of the selling : the enrolment concerns above all the traditional minor bourgeoisie (craftsmen, shopkeepers), an important historical block in the social division of Florence, as in most places in Italy. This social proximity with the world of trading and selling is also important for the other groups of workers (Brazilians, Iranians, Romanians). They are not immigrant populations coming from the poorest social background of their country. We are certainly in the presence of immigrants of relatively well-to-do origins, generally from the traditional and recent "minor bourgeoisie". This is notable of the Mexican women who are characterized by a higher social extraction than the other groups.

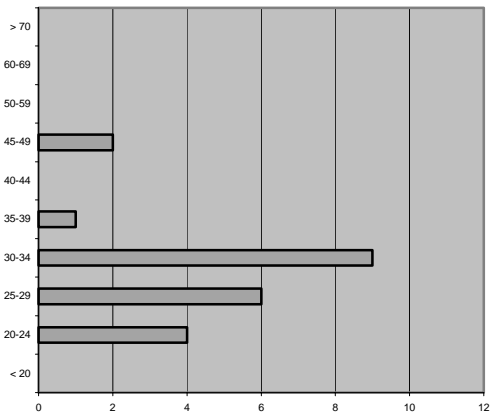
Florence



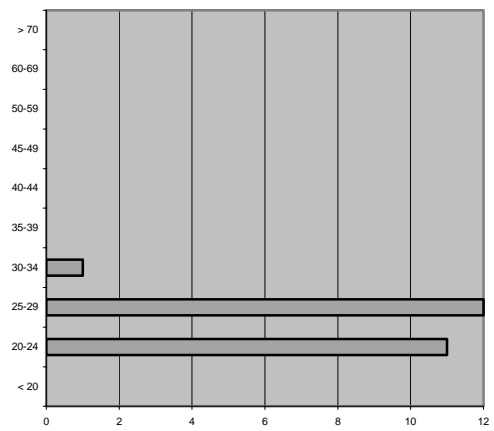
Albania



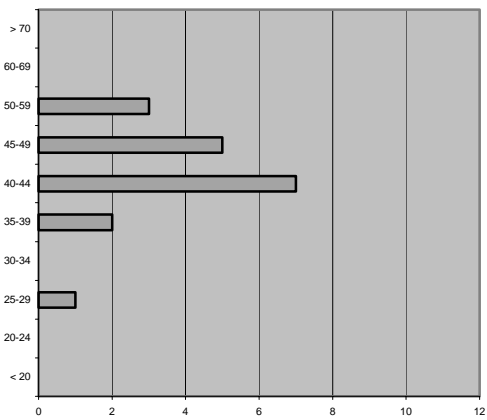
Brazil



Mexico



Iran



Palestine

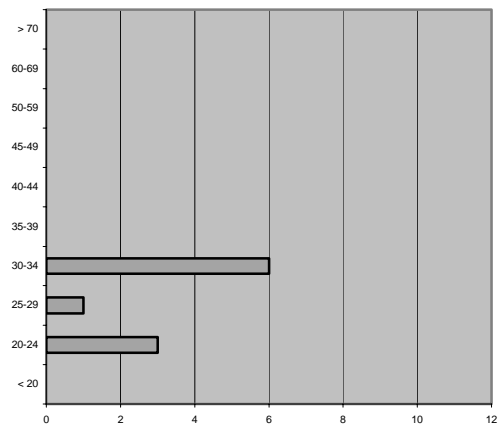


Table 4 : Age division of the workers

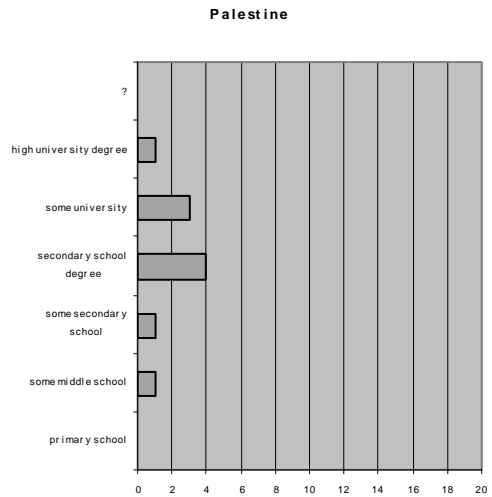
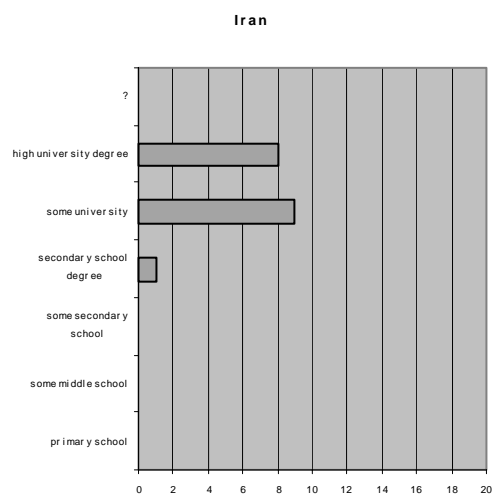
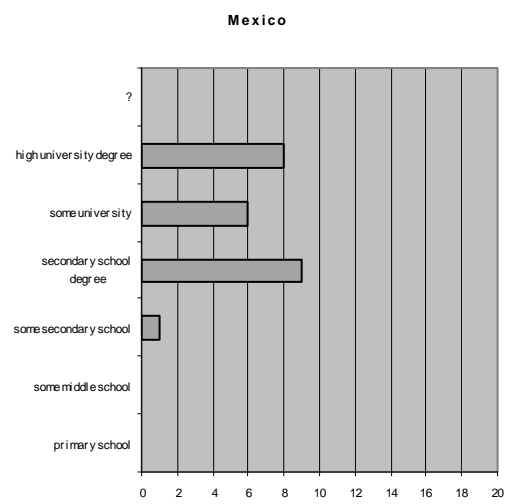
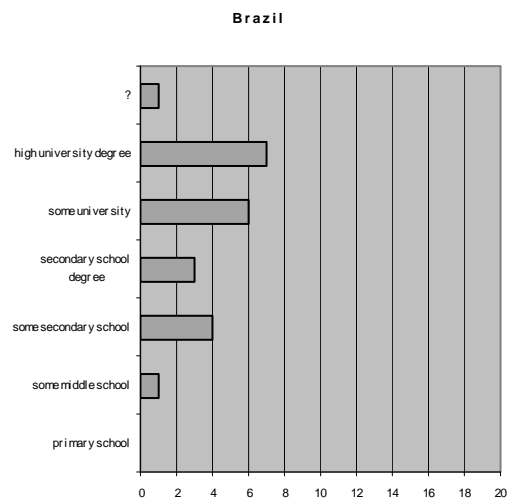
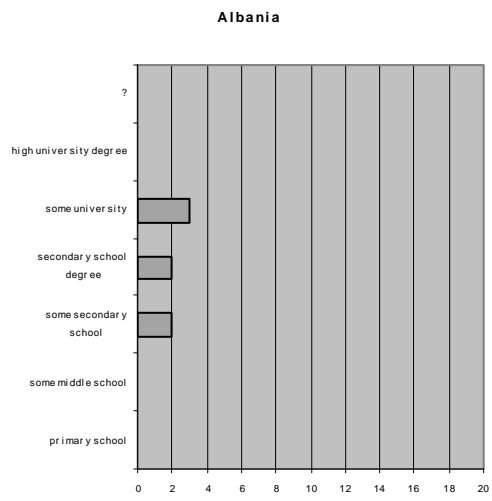
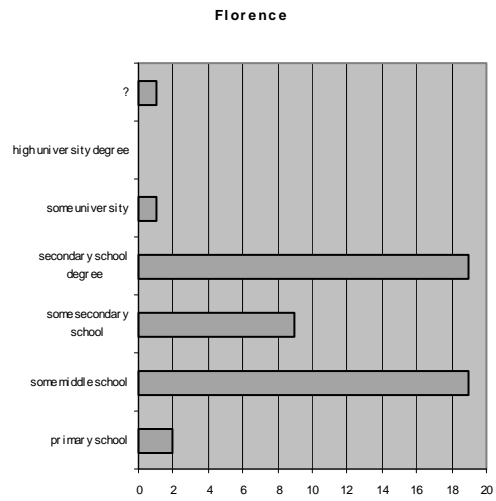


Table 5 : Level of training by groups of workers

## Socio-demographic similarities and differences

The comparison by the four socio-demographic criteria chosen (gender, age, training, social extraction), between groups of workers by their national origin, indicates an heterogeneity of situations. Similarities, differences and contrasts determine the diversity of groups, on one hand between Florentines and immigrants, on the other hand among these immigrant groups.

In general, immigrants present a gender division (male domination) emphasized in comparison with the Florentines, whereas, conversely, the latter emphasizes the result (effect) of the proximity of social origin, among the traditional small bourgeoisie, with the advantage of heritage. On the other hand, there is an age opposition - immigrants are younger - and clear dichotomy in the level of training between natives and foreigners.

Between the groups of immigrant workers, if similarities are generally shared by gender (male domination), age (young people), qualifications (high) and social extraction (trade middle class), we distinguish clearly two groups : Iranians and Mexican women. Iranians are different from other immigrant groups by age (they are older) and by standards of qualifications because they are the highest qualified. Age is the only criterion common with the Florentines. Mexican women represent a more original group which is totally different from the Florentines and is distinguishable from the other immigrant groups by gender (femininity) and social extraction (higher extraction).

We notice the original feature of these two groups, and even their common difference, by the migration type and their labour relationship at the San Lorenzo Market.

## THE MIGRATORY PATHS OF THE IMMIGRANT WORKERS

The question of the migration of the foreign workers permits us to determine various features of the permanencies and mutations of the labour market at San Lorenzo. It also permits to distinguish the heterogeneity of the groups about their migratory path and project (table 6).

As a general rule, the largest proportion of the immigrant workers arrived recently : they are 62 % (75 people) arrived in Italy within the last 5 years. 19 % arrived in the course of last year. We notice especially that Latin-Americans (78 %) and mainly Mexican females (61 %) are characterized by the most important and the most recent flow. Globally, the immigrants proportionally decrease in relation with the duration of their presence in Italy. One exception : Iranians have been present in Italy for more than 20 years.

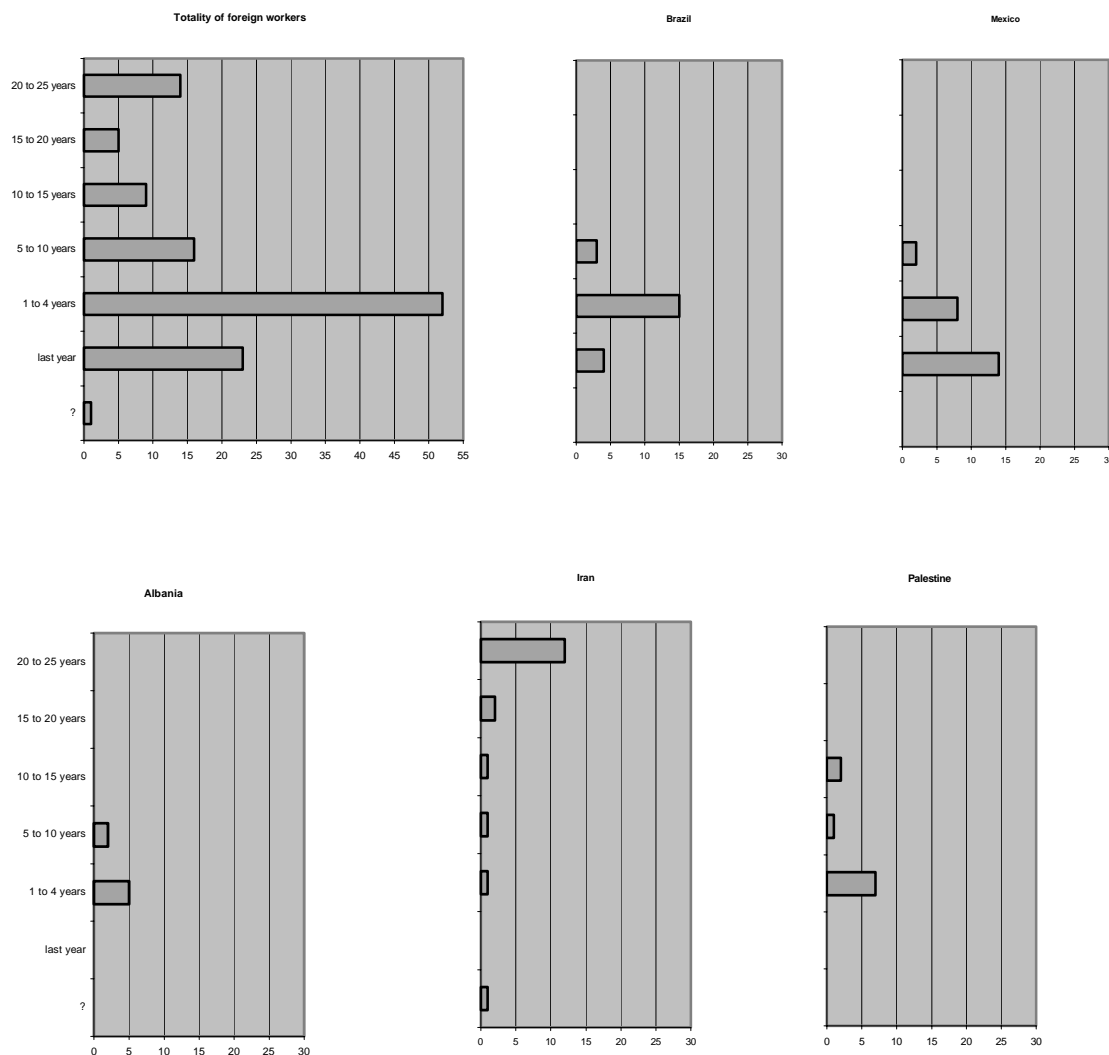


Table 6 : Presence in Italy

We notice the same structure concerning the immigrant presence at the San Lorenzo Market : it is very recent, with 68 % (82 people) who have been present for less than 5 years in this place of work, and even 32 % for less than one year. In the same way, the most numerous enrolments in the year concern Mexican women : they represent 44 % of the enrolled immigrants in the year. If the more recent enrolments are those of Latin-American origin (57 %), there is a shift which suggests a change in the flow of labour : Brazilians, and not Mexican women, are the most numerous amongst the immigrants whose presence in Florence is between one and five years. However we have to consider this hypothesis with caution : in the absence of quantitative diachronical survey, we cannot clearly state that there is a substitution in the flow of labour, data would be required on the mobility of the Brazilians. Besides, the Brazilians like Mexican women have benefited from a very short duration between their arrival in Italy and their entry into the Market.

Contrary to the Latin-Americans, the presence of Middle Eastern nationals into the Market is regular and older. Within this group, we have to distinguish

two populations whose migratory characteristics are very different : Palestinians above all have been present between one to four years, whereas Iranians give a regular feature to the regional group with their presence into the market between 5 and 30 years.

Regarding socio-demographic characteristics, the study of migratory paths indicates a strict difference between Mexican women and Iranians, the former with more recent immigration and an immediate integration into the Market, the latter with an older immigration and an integration more diffuse. These two groups give logics of diametrically opposite migration.

San Lorenzo Market is obviously subjected to a recent migratory specialisation that concerns more particularly the Latin-Americans. Their massive and recent rush, the short duration between their entry into Italy and their enrolment in the Market, raises the question of the link between this presence and the supply (choice of the employers for this type of population) or the demand (quantitative availability and special abilities) of labour. Our own experience permits us to make the hypothesis that there is a conjunction of opportunities privileging first the quantitative result of demand (push), because conditions of employment are very simple : one only has to have physical abilities for selling and speak a little English. Even if Latin-Americans are specially sought after by employers for their English, they are not the only group with this ability. In our opinion, the big demand for Latin-American labour into the Market is due to the fact that they are well considered ; in return, it provides an economic niche for this immigrant group.

Globally, studies and work are the foreign workers' main reasons for migration into Italy. However, the question of labour - migration for economic reason – is confronted by two obstacles, according to the people interviewed : the introduction into the labour market is sometimes concealed behind migration for re-establishing links with the family or for studying purposes, an excuse to avoid problems with the authorities.

Even if declarations are similar between immigrant groups, there are obviously differences of motivations according to the economic and political characteristics of the types of migrants. Mexican women and Iranians refer to studies as their reasons for migration even if historical conditions of migrations are different. Brazilians and East-Europeans refer to hunting for jobs, the Palestinians give both reasons. Western European and North American nationals, who are the least numerous, justify their migrations by personal decisions. Recent or old, economical, for studies purposes or political, the diversity of the types of migratory procedures result in a particular relationship to work in the San Lorenzo Market.

## DIVERSITY OF THE LABOUR FORCE

### National divisions of occupational status

As a rule, the workers into the Market are composed of 43 % owners and 57 % employees. There are a few workers whose status is ambiguous : their presence is due to various reasons (friends, family).

The labour division according to the origin of the workers follows the classical opposition between natives and immigrants (tables 7 and 8). More than half of the owners (56 %) are Florentines/Italians, whilst 82 % of the labour force are immigrants. Similarly, Florentines/Italians are at the top of the occupational hierarchy - 70 % of them are owners - while the immigrants represent the bulk of the labour force (72 % are employees).

Beyond the classical occupational division between native owners and immigrant employees, there is a division even among the categories of immigrants, which principally underlines the original feature of the Iranians compared to the situation of the other groups. Indeed, if 65 % of the foreign owners are Middle Eastern nationals, it is because 47 % are Iranians. Only Iranians number more owners than employees, and this important gap is 9 to 1. At the opposite end of the scale, more than half of the foreign employees (56 %) are Latin-Americans ; an important group whose arrival is recent into Italy and the Market, the Latin-Americans are, for 90 % of them, employees (the same phenomenon for the North Africans and Eastern Europeans).

### Gender division of work

The gender division of labour is enhanced in the socially highest professional category : business owners record 74 % males to 26 % females ; the proportion among the employees is 58 % to 42 %. The comparison of these proportions with the one of totality of the workers - 65 % / 35 % - indicate a “masculinisation” of the owners and a relative “feminization” of the employees.

Florentines and Middle Eastern nationals - mainly Iranians of which 14 of the 16 owners are males - contribute to the male preponderance of the business owners. For the category of the employees, this preponderance is a fact, mainly for the Middle Eastern and Eastern European nationals (the quasi-totality of employees are males), but it is relativised by the Latin-Americans : the Mexican women - three-quarters of the Mexican employees are women - and not Brazilians - that is the opposite proportion in favour of males – which contribute to feminization.



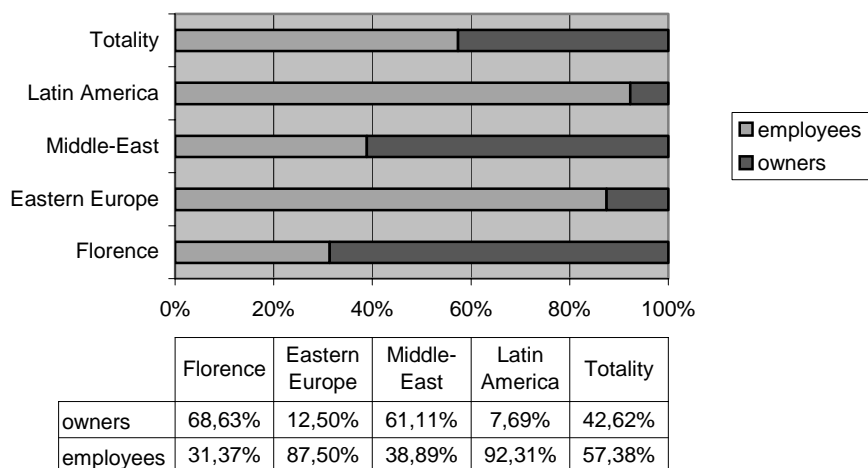
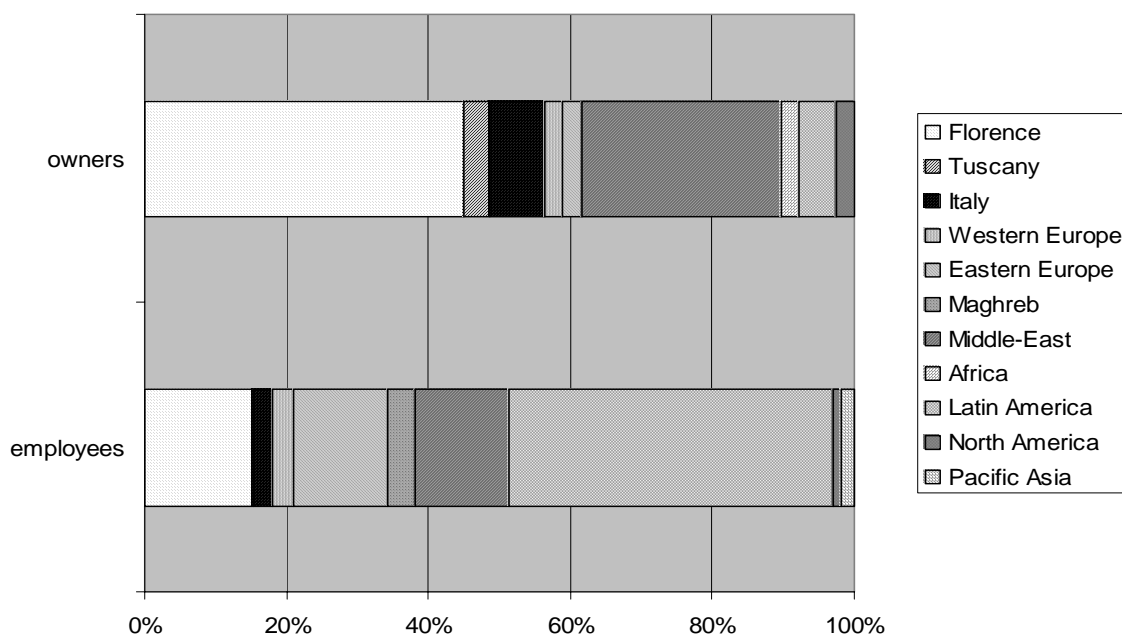


Table 7 : Occupational structure by origin



	employees	owners
Pacific Asia	1,90%	0,00%
North America	0,95%	2,56%
Latin America	45,71%	5,13%
Africa	0,00%	2,56%
Middle-East	13,33%	28,21%
Maghreb	3,81%	0,00%
Eastern Europe	13,33%	2,56%
Western Europe	2,86%	2,56%
Italy	2,86%	7,69%
Tuscany	0,00%	3,85%
Florence	15,24%	44,87%

Table 8 : National groups of workers by occupational status

We can also consider the coexistence of three types of gender division of labour into the San Lorenzo Market. A common gender division of labour where males are more numerous for the owners and for the employees ; that is the case for the great majority of immigrant groups. The second type is an inverse division where females dominate : three-quarters of Mexicans are female employees (only one Mexican female is a business owner). The third type is a division where there are more male owners than female owners but more female employees than male employees : the group of Florentines/Italians is unique in this case.

### Social promotion within the Market

To investigate the type of social promotion which owners benefit from permits us to have a view on the economic and social stakes at work in the Market.

Contrary to what might be expected, for the Florentine owners, the access to owner status goes more through the capitalistic rule than the succession of family. The heritage of a mobile stall concerns only a minority of Florentine owners, the majority had to purchase one.

The possibility of access to property is different for the immigrant owners : while Florentine have started their business as owners almost immediately, foreign owners are more numerous in beginning as employees. Social promotion for the foreign owners took place generally inside the Market, after several years of labour in the same place of work.

Moreover, a comparison of the number of these ex-employee owners and the people still employed during the survey indicates that promotion does not concern all the immigrant groups : the most important promotion concerns the Iranians. This particularity is linked to the duration of the presence of this national group in Italy and in the Market.

### Recruitment and national groups

Despite the difficulties met in obtaining this information, we could determine specialisation of recruitment according to the national origins of the owners and the employees. The most evident is that most Florentine employees (75 %) have a Florentine owner.

The two main tendencies in recruitment at the San Lorenzo Market are self-recruitment - hiring of employees in the same nationality or from a geographically and culturally adjacent country - and eclecticism. The self-recruitment concerns firstly the Florentines, and also the Middle Eastern nationals ; however for this latter group, the occupational relationship is also Iranian owner / Middle East employees (notably Palestinians). The eclecticism

prevails for the other national groups, especially the Latin-Americans because most of them are employees and recruited by all types of owners.

### Multiculturalism, specialisation and selling leather goods

The national groups whose members do not sell leather goods are rare (tables 9 and 10). There is a national preference in selling the most traditional goods such as clothes, textile goods, Florentine craft, by Florentines. However leather goods, which are sold the most, are the most lucrative and do not follow a preference by nationality : everybody sells them. But there is a specialisation in selling leather goods by the foreigners : 62 % of the Latin-Americans, 69 % of the Middle Eastern nationals (79 % of the Iranians), 81 % of the Eastern Europeans are above all specialized in leather selling.

### Migratory projects and local integration

Florentines and Iranians, who represent the national groups dominated by owners, contemplate a long-term continuous selling activity at the San Lorenzo Market. The other national groups, mainly composed of employees, are characterized only by short-term strategies, between several months and several years. Therefore, migratory projects differ according to the origin of immigrant groups : the duration of their presence (only a few months for the Mexican females), the type of migratory project (studies for the Mexican females, work for Palestinians) and the returning home (so excluding Iranians and Albanians). It therefore depends on economical, political and social features of the type of migration for every national group.

Only three immigrant workers plan to settle down and purchase a mobile stall : one Palestinian and two Rumanians, all three young employees in the selling of leather goods. An important turnover of the labour force is affecting the San Lorenzo Market ; it is not only a perceivable phenomenon but also present in the mind of the employees. To work in the Market is often considered as a temporary job, a transitory situation while waiting to find a better job. The only occupational and social promotion of a group of immigrant workers – the Iranians -, results from their own community strategy.

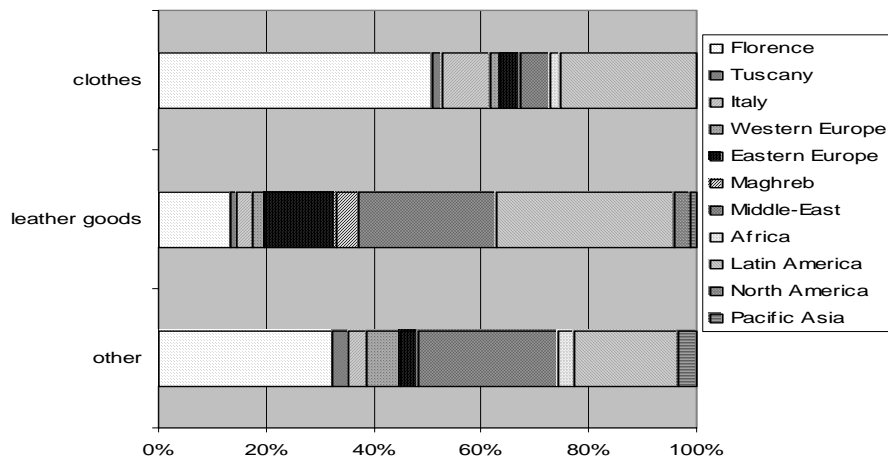


Table 9 : Origin of workers by sale of goods

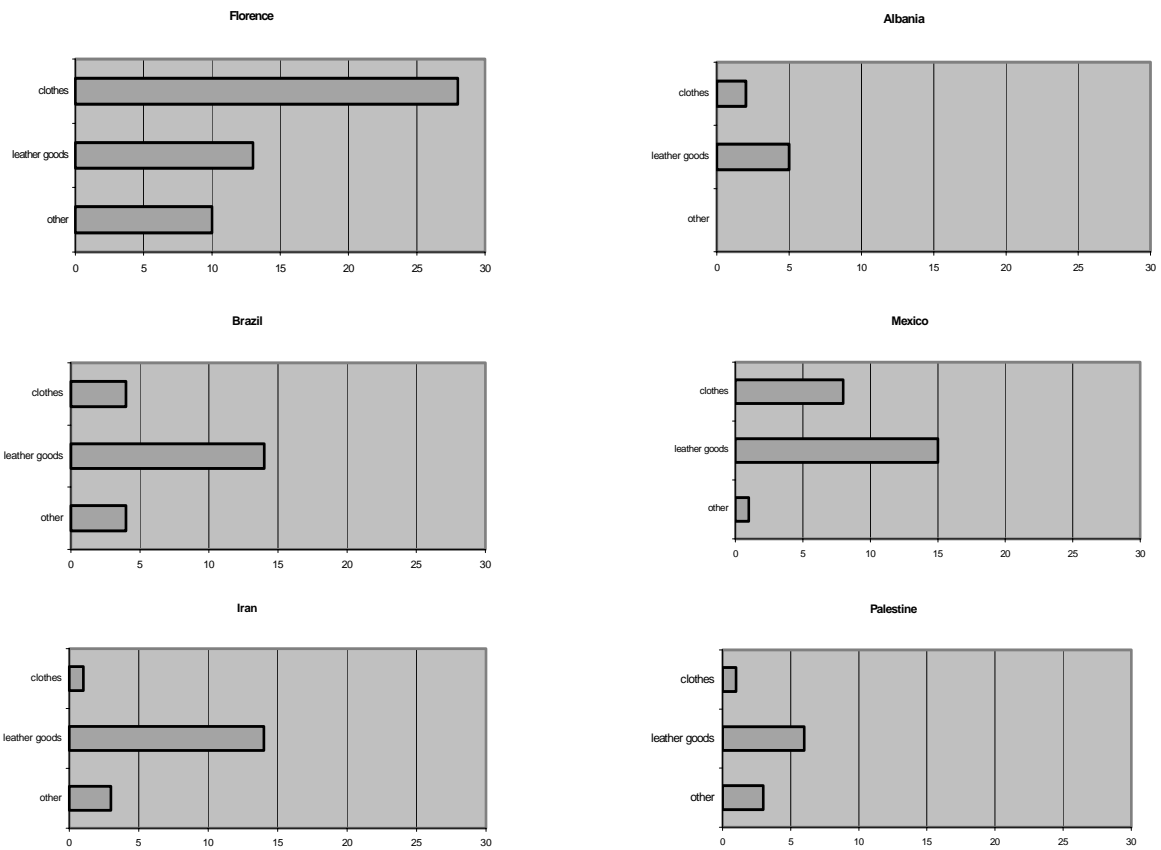


Table 10 : National preferences in the sale of goods

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS

It arises from the analysis of the socio-demographic, migratory and occupational characteristics, that the immigrant workers evidently do not represent an homogenous population. Differences observed of the Florentines/Italians permit to distinguish clearly the Iranians and Mexican women from the rest of the immigrants.

### The Iranians :

Most of the Iranians, males and females, came to Florence during the 70's to study, the majority to study Architecture and the Arts. They state they remained more to escape the war against Iraq (1980-1988) than because of the Islamic Revolution (1979). They have no plans to return to Iran, even in the medium range, especially because the children are born and go to school in Italy (SAINT-BLANCAT CH., 1990). They are overskilled, and their role in the Market does not correspond to their high standard of education. Trade was often the only possibility to get a job after university, either selling Persian rugs or sellers at San Lorenzo Market. The Iranians got seriously involved in selling leather goods (jackets, belts, handbags and travel bags) at the Market. They aimed at a dominating commercial position through the shops they already owned in the area. In that sense, this national group presents the most similarities, by their demographic and occupational features, with the Florentines. The Iranian group numbers the majority of business owners ; they represent a serious competition - and a substitution - for the Florentines. Their presence is due to an important economical, social and community investment written in the long range.

### The Mexican women (and the Brazilians) :

In total opposition with the Iranians, Mexicans represent the other original group in the San Lorenzo Market. They are the new arrivals and employed en masse : here a passport is not required. They are among the youngest populations at the Market, but contrary to the other foreign groups they are women, mostly students enrolled for several months or one year in private schools of Italian or Arts in Florence. For the majority, they originate from relatively well-to-do classes in their country. For several of them, Florence is only a stage before continuing their travels across Europe ; they are sought after at the San Lorenzo Market for their knowledge of English. They are a temporary labour force, conscious of their own situation : the Market provides a job opportunity (to pay their house rent).

The profile of the other group of Latin-Americans, the Brazilians, is more in accordance with the common features of the immigrant workers. Several remained in Florence and at the Market to earn their living and because they feel integrated in this open environment.

The Palestinians :

The Palestinians generally arrived more recently than the Iranians ; the political situation of these people mainly contributed to their international mobility. Nevertheless it seems that they are families from trading backgrounds, always in close contact with the Middle East and also the U.S.A. They are very mobile between the countries and continents. Italy represents only a stage in their migration, the final objective being immigration into North America or returning to the Middle East. Even if their migration is due to the political situation, they move because of economic and family reasons, for economic challenge and social promotion. Their occupational integration into the Market depends on the duration of their presence and generation.

Eastern European nationals :

A survey carried out on a longer time-scale would indicate that there are flows of immigrants from various origins according to the periods. We know for example that before the rush of Brazilians and Mexicans, Rumanians were among the most numerous employees ; they were substituted while they were investing in less precarious activities with higher social status (pizzeria, bakeries) in Florence and the region. The newest arrivals into the Market are Albanians : young, qualified and with no prospect of returning home. We notice that the populations victims in the Yugoslavian conflict are rare : for them, the San Lorenzo Market does not seem an issue nor a stage of migratory flows via Italy from across the Adriatic Sea (CAMPANI, 1997).

Black Africans and North Africans :

Very few Black Africans work in the San Lorenzo Market : we have met only two. Their rented mobile stall represents a material insurance and a social promotion (CAMPUS, PERRONE, 1990 ; SCHMIDT DI FRIEDBERG, 1996). Black Africans are above all present as itinerant dealers, and they do not count in this survey because they are always in a temporary stage in the Market and do not work with mobile stalls. They are pejoratively called *Vù Cumpra* by Italians and their economic and legal situation is often very precarious.

However they represent the most important immigrant group from the Third World in Italy, the presence of North Africans is relatively weak in Florence, and even less in the San Lorenzo Market. These few North Africans integrated several years ago. For them, the Market is clearly not a privileged economic place of integration.

Western European and North American nationals :

Although a small minority, the presence in the San Lorenzo Market of workers originating from OECD countries is original in the sense that there is hardly any similarity with the other immigrant groups. In the majority of cases, these are only individual strategies (choice or travel), which made the stay and local integration noticeably easier for them.

	<b>Florentines</b>	<b>Iranians</b>	<b>Palestinians</b>	<b>Mexicans</b>	<b>Brazilians</b>	<b>Albanians</b>
<i>Gender</i>						
male	+	+	+	-	+	+
female	-	-	-	+	-	-
<i>Age</i>						
young	-	-	+	+	+	+
old	+	+	-	-	-	-
<i>Training</i>						
high	-	+	+	+	+	=
low	+	-	-	-	-	=
<i>Social class origin</i>						
moving stall	+	-	-	-	-	-
craftsmen, shopkeepers	+	+	=	-	+	=
higher	-	=	=	+	-	-
<i>Presence in Italy</i>						
recent		-	+	+	+	+
permanent		+	-	-	-	-
<i>Reason of presence</i>						
studies		+	-	+	+	+
work		-	+	-	+	-
<i>Occupational status</i>						
owners	+	+	-	-	-	-
employees	-	-	+	+	+	+
<i>Gender division of work</i>						
male owners	+	+	+	-	-	-
female owners	-	-	-	-	-	-
male employees	-	-	+	-	+	+
female employees	+	-	-	+	-	-
<i>Occupational preference</i>						
self recruitment	+	+	+	-	-	-
eclectic recruitment	-	-	+	+	+	+
<i>Selling</i>						
clothes	+	-	-	-	-	-
leather goods	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Migratory project</i>						
to remain		+	-	-	-	-
short-range migration		-	-	+	+	+
middle-range migration		-	+	-	+	+

## SAN LORENZO MARKET, A LABOUR SPACE IN MUTATION

The diversity of the demographic, migratory and occupational situations of the workers of San Lorenzo Market, reflects social, political and economic logics that affect these populations in various ways. This diversity is the translation of global dynamics (international division of labour, international migrations) that clash with a localised, special labour market, heir of its own history. In this sense, San Lorenzo Market is a labour space in mutation.

This mutation is verified in the first instance by a process of substitution among the business owners : Iranian owners progressively replace the Florentine owners. This process of conquest took place over a long period with a strategy of economic and community investment that is not well perceived by their Florentine competitors. Moreover, they blame the Iranians for their aggressive selling methods : on their mobile stalls, the Iranians call out to the customers whereas Florentines have more passive ways, leaving more free choice to the potential customers.

It however seems that the labour force is in full mutation, but a faster and more fragile mutation. Beyond contributing to the feminization of labour, the massive recruitment of young Mexican women whose migratory project totally differs from the population with economic migration (and above all from the Third World), contributes to emphasize the volatile feature of the labour force in transit at the Market. For the employees, San Lorenzo Market is only a temporary stage in a migratory path and even in the urban economic integration. On a short term, the Market is increasingly becoming a labour market for temporary integration, in transit, as is the case of the Mexican women. However, in a middle term, we can perceive that this labour market will undergo a periodicity of the turnovers of labour in accordance with the dynamics of international migrations : yesterday Rumanians, today the Mexican women, who tomorrow ?

Moreover we can put forward that the emphasized turnover of labour, observed in the course of the survey, results from a system of remuneration of the employees more and more precarious which leads therefore to a deeper social segmentation. In fact, from oral information, the Iranian traders - and more generally Middle Eastern - pay their labour less than the Florentine owners do. This phenomenon appears to be notably linked with the payment system for the selling of leather jackets which are the most sold goods by Iranians : the employees are paid piecework. This precarious payment system is one of the explanations of the important turnover of labour affecting the mobile stalls where these leather jackets are sold. The interest of student labour or travellers is obvious for this type of trade because their presence in Florence and in Italy is already planned for a short duration and they have a family financial background. Also, it seems there is a conjunction of situations and interests between a numerous and volatile labour force like the Mexican women, and a new category of business owners with stronger capitalistic methods. The



emergence of a new type of labour relationship, more volatile and flexible, depends on the generalization of a new social relationship specific to the diffusion of selling leather jacket and notably by a new category of business owners coming from immigration and in a process of conquest.

\*  
\* \*

San Lorenzo Market is a working space in mutation where local heritages are in conflict with global dynamics. The diversity of demographic, migratory and occupational characteristics of the workers gives it a feature of Babylonian territory. Globally, the situation of the natives, the Florentines/Italians, is in opposition with the immigrants' one. Two groups of immigrant workers are distinguishable for the rule - Iranians and Mexican women - and even are in opposition themselves. There is an important relationship between migratory trajectories and the economic, political and social characteristics of migration for every immigrant group.

Processes of mutation and substitution are perceptible at the two levels of the social division, both for the business owners (end of the Florentines, rise of the Iranians) and the employees (influx of the Mexican women). Furthermore, several important national groups in Italy (like the Moroccans) or in Florence and its metropolitan region (Chinese) are almost or entirely absent from the Market (MACIOTI M.I., PUGLIESE E., 1991). At the San Lorenzo Market, the several features of the division of labour are based on the diversity and the heterogeneity of the migratory paths of the different groups of immigrant workers.

To expand the analysis, to better determine the dynamics in act in this Market, we would have to explore two ways : to make a diachronical research with a similar survey after several years, and to see the relationships between this localised labour market and the urban labour market, at the scale of the metropolitan area.

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- (l) This paper was presented at the Workshop “Growth, Environmental Policies and Sustainability” organised by the Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei, Venice, June 1, 2001
- (li) This paper was presented at the Fourth Toulouse Conference on Environment and Resource Economics on “Property Rights, Institutions and Management of Environmental and Natural Resources”, organised by Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei, IDEI and INRA and sponsored by MATE, Toulouse, May 3-4, 2001
- (lii) This paper was presented at the International Conference on “Economic Valuation of Environmental Goods”, organised by Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei in cooperation with CORILA, Venice, May 11, 2001
- (liii) This paper was circulated at the International Conference on “Climate Policy – Do We Need a New Approach?”, jointly organised by Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei, Stanford University and Venice International University, Isola di San Servolo, Venice, September 6-8, 2001
- (liv) This paper was presented at the Seventh Meeting of the Coalition Theory Network organised by the Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei and the CORE, Université Catholique de Louvain, Venice, Italy, January 11-12, 2002
- (lv) This paper was presented at the First Workshop of the Concerted Action on Tradable Emission Permits (CATEP) organised by the Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei, Venice, Italy, December 3-4, 2001
- (lvi) This paper was presented at the ESF EURESCO Conference on Environmental Policy in a Global Economy “The International Dimension of Environmental Policy”, organised with the collaboration of the Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei, Acquafredda di Maratea, October 6-11, 2001
- (lvii) This paper was presented at the First Workshop of “CFEWE – Carbon Flows between Eastern and Western Europe”, organised by the Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei and Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung (ZEI), Milan, July 5-6, 2001
- (lviii) This paper was presented at the Workshop on “Game Practice and the Environment”, jointly organised by Università del Piemonte Orientale and Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei, Alessandria, April 12-13, 2002
- (lix) This paper was presented at the ENGIME Workshop on “Mapping Diversity”, Leuven, May 16-17, 2002
- (lx) This paper was presented at the EuroConference on “Auctions and Market Design: Theory, Evidence and Applications”, organised by the Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei, Milan, September 26-28, 2002
- (lxi) This paper was presented at the Eighth Meeting of the Coalition Theory Network organised by the GREQAM, Aix-en-Provence, France, January 24-25, 2003

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