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The role of organized criminality in the illicit trafficking in the Mediterranean area: economic and sociological focus

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Illegal immigration: the business of the mafias of the 21st century

Illegal immigration represents a very delicate issue of the 21st century, not only from the juridical point of view but also from the political and social ones, nationally and internationally. Huge flows of migrants in search of better living conditions have, in fact, overwhelmed Western countries, especially Italy, which unfortunately respond with an attitude of closure, generating, in this way, an even greater and faster growth of illegal immigration.

But this phenomenon becomes even more dramatic because of the criminal circle that arises overwhelmingly around migratory flows: organized crime decides to use the condition of vulnerability in which migrants are, in order to get from it cheap criminal labor and consequent economic gain. So illegal immigration becomes one of the main and most profitable criminal businesses.

Mafias, in fact, organize and control every phase of the entry of illegal immigrants into the territory. And so, they manage their present, but also manage their future, placing them in a criminal circuit from which there it is no longer possibility to escape. Prostitution, begging, illegal work, illegal hiring, drug trafficking and criminal activities of all kinds: these are the ways in which they are forced to pay off the debt they have contracted with criminal organizations, when they benefited from their "assistance" and "services".

Starting therefore from the study of Italian and foreign organized crime, the overbearing protagonist of this scenario, and of its *modus operandi*, this paper analyzes the transnational dimension of the criminal control of clandestine migratory flows, examining the criminal offenses connected to it and the contrast measures designated for it.