# MIGRANT STREET VENDORS IN ITALY: A HISTORY OF IRREGULARIZED LABOUR AND PEOPLE

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*Migrant street workers are removed from urban spaces in the Italian cities where they work, because of municipal and police decisions. The methodology followed in this research oriented to understand migrant street vending in Italy is constructivist and mixed, qualitative, and quantitative. The hypothesis that is supported by this article is that the political and racist restrictions imposed on immigrant street vendor workers produce a process of irregularisation that jeopardises their chances of renewing their residence permit or gaining access to citizenship. The paper then discusses how forms of racialization are reproduced through systems of irregularisation, and introduces the concept of democratic racialization to understand how racialisation is reproduced, consolidated, and normalised by democratic instruments. The paper ends with suggestions for future research to collect data on police decisions and actions against foreign street workers.*

***Keywords**: racialisation; urban space; race profiling; public policies; urban ethnography.*

## INTRODUCTION

Street-vending is historically one of the first entry doors in the economic activities for 'regular' and 'irregular'[1] immigrants in Italy. The main aims of this article are to show both why street-vending made by foreign born people has been labelled as an irregular activity, even though it is usually done by 'regular' immigrants, and how this automatic but baseless link, between street vending and irregularity, influences the living conditions of immigrant street sellers. The article is organized in the following way. After the introduction, methodology and sources

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[1] Invert commas will be proposed for the words 'regular' and 'irregular' to emphasise the critical aspect of these concepts that are part of a broader socio-cultural process of irregularization and socialisation that should not be naturalised.

CALITATEA VIEȚII, XXXIII, nr. 2, 2022, pp. 147–159, https://doi.org/10.46841/RCV.2022.02.05

used to develop the research are explained in the second part. The third section presents how street vending and migrant street vendors have been constructed in Italy as marginal, despite they represent a part of the national economics and trade actors. In the fourth section, some social consequences of the irregularization, criminalization and racist labelling on migrant street vendors are shown, especially to highlight how public institutions increase the potential for administrative as well as symbolic irregularity of the immigrant population employed in itinerant work. The centrality of irregularity for migrants' street vending is explored in the fifth part of the paper, recognizing the vicious circle that produces and reproduces it. Finally, some conclusions are presented in the last section, in which the links between irregularity and racialisation related to the social condition of migrant workers in Italy are highlighted.

## METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

This article is based on a set of research conducted between 2017 and 2021. It includes fieldwork and other studies. Fieldwork includes a long ethnography in the city of Salerno, realised in two distinct phases (in 2017−2018, and in 2020), in one of the most visible areas of the city interested in street vending. The fieldwork was realised by two ethnographic tools: participant observation and interviews. The participant observation was a necessary step to investigate the relationship between the Senegalese and Bangladeshi street vendors, the municipal police and the space of *lungomare Trieste* (Ragone 2020). The methodological approach used in the fieldwork is qualitative, and is inspired by the constructivist grounded theory, the methodological elaborations of Kathy Charmaz (2006; 2020). Other field studies refer to co-research in Salerno between a university researcher and a group of five representatives of the Senegalese Association of Salerno (Avallone and Niang 2021; Molinero and Avallone 2020), and three research in Naples, Pisa and Caserta conducted in 2019 by a research group made up of representatives of local Senegalese associations and some professional researchers (Avallone 2020). Finally, field research has been reinforced by statistical data analysis about street vending and itinerant work in Italy, and the study of local and national press on street vending, based on the public archives of three newspaper and press groups (*La Repubblica*, *Il Manifesto*, and *La Stampa*).

## A HISTORY OF MARGINALISATION

Since the beginning of immigration to Italy, street vending has constituted the first employment for a part of immigrants, especially men from Morocco and Senegal, and more recently from Bangladesh (Mingione and Quassoli 2000; Della Puppa 2014). For example, the historian Michele Colucci (2018, 42) highlighted

that the newspaper La Stampa recorded the first groups of immigrant street vendors in the Italian Northern cities, specifically in Turin, in the august 1972. Many of them have begun to insert themselves in the economic and commercial relations of the immigration country through this job (Colucci 2018; Perrone 2002; Macioti and Pugliese 1991; Riccio 1999; Fall 1998). For a share of immigrants in Italy, street vending has constantly or intermittently characterised the entire migration experience. Consequently, their presence in this economic sector has increased over time, statistically consolidating, according to the available data. Mingione and Quassoli (2000, 15) showed that during the 1980s and 1990s they "find immigrants employed in six main segments of the South European labour market", including street-vending, that "represented the most visible face of mass migration from the 'Third World' into Southern Europe". In Italy, street trading is regulated through two types of licences granted by municipal authorities: the type A licence provides for a fixed stand allocated by the municipality among the places available in local markets; the type B licence allows itinerant activities to be carried out throughout the Italian territory, and to make use of stands that are temporarily vacant in local markets. Available data show that trade in public areas has increasingly become an activity made by immigrants over time. According to an elaboration made by Indis-Anva Confesercenti (2014) based on Unioncamere-Si. Camera-Infocamere data, foreign itinerant businesses, both those with a licence to access markets (type A), and those with a licence for itinerant work (type B), accounted for 42.2% of the total of itinerant businesses in 2011. In 2014, this value rose to 46.8% of total, corresponding to the absolute value of 182,763 itinerant businesses.

Official data highlighted in 2016 that itinerant work − including both types of licence − regularly employed in Italy around 200,000 people, of whom just over half are foreigners. Precisely, available data show that 191,963 enterprises were active in itinerant work in 2016, of which 102,543 (53.4%) were foreign-owned (Ufficio studi della Camera di commercio di Monza e Brianza 2016). 2018 and 2019 data confirmed the prevalence of foreigners over nationals in street vending, with three nationalities standing out above the rest: Moroccan (representing 36.4% of all foreign businesses), Senegalese (14%), and Bangladeshi (13.8%) (Unioncamere 2018; Il Sole 24 ore 2019). Statistical data also show that foreign born street sellers tend to trade in cheaper goods, compared to those sold by Italians. Precisely, 21% of the total of foreign-born street vendors are classified in the field of sales of trinkets and costume jewellery, the poorest sector in this kind of trade, whilst this percentage value is 1,5 among Italian itinerant traders (Ufficio studi della Camera di commercio di Monza e Brianza 2016). Data clearly show that migrant street vendors are orientated towards poor consumption and, consequently, that street vending in Italy is defined as a work crossed by the colour line, as most of the owners of the cheaper businesses are not white. The spread of immigrant street sellers has been accompanied by a public and political narrative that has produced the construction of the racist labels '*vu cumprà*' (*do you want to buy*

*something?*) during the 1980s and 1990s. This label has been used to define the entire non-white immigration in Italy, contributing to produce the national common sense on immigration (Sajir 2020). From the archives of newspapers available on the Internet, it can be verified that the words '*vu cumprà*' appeared for the first time in two articles in *La Stampa* in 1986 and in *La Repubblica* in 1987. In the same period, the first two laws on immigration were approved in the Italian Republic (1986 and 1990), and the approach towards migration that would become constant in the subsequent years was beginning to consolidate, as summarised in the words of Claudio Martelli, the Vice-President of the Council of Ministers who proposed the first organic law on immigration approved in 1990. In April 1990, Claudio Martelli highlighted the need for a border police, asking, according to what transcribed by Antonella Fiori (1990), "who should stop the flow of illegal entries? The police do not have sufficient personnel to control the 8/9 thousand kilometres of national border and that is why I asked the government for the collaboration of the Armed Forces". At the same time, immigrant street-vendors become the target of some protests organised by the retailers in the central areas of a part of Italian cities: for example, in 1989 spring and summer, in Turin, as well as in Florence and in several sea towns, such as, for example, Rimini (Colucci 2018, 80). In sum, in the late '80s "the most striking events are represented by the protests of retailers in various cities (such as Florence, Genoa, some tourist areas in Emilia Romagna) against the presence of illegal street vendors, accused of practising unfair competition; events that, although destined to be reproduced in a similar way, in the course of the following years, in other areas of Italy (representing the conflict between retailers and street vendors, one of the classic factors of clash between autochthonous and immigrant communities), were still confined to the list of episodes of exceptional collective intolerance" (Campesi 2009). According to Campesi, this kind of conflict has characterised the history of immigrant street-vendors in Italy also in the following three decades, coherently with the rise and strengthening of public policies based on a specific frame, defined by a triad that combines the following key words: safety, decorum, legality. In particular, the issue of urban safety has been translated into a discussion around the cleanliness and decorum of public spaces in Italian cities, becoming a fundamental reference for debate and policies at the local level (Dal Lago 1998; Pisanello 2017; Pitch 2013). This political trend has produced several state laws on urban safety between 2009 and 2017, known as urban security decrees. The 48/2017 Law came to define the urban order as "urban decorum". Precisely, this Law stated that "urban safety means the public good that refers to the habitability and decorum of cities, to be realised also through interventions of qualification and recovery of degraded areas or sites". A concrete tool of the "decorum policies" implemented in many parts of the country has been the constant reference to the promotion of legality, which, in the case of the presence of street vendors, is allegedly violated by the sale of illegal and not taxed products (Piazzoni 2020). Consequently, street vending has become

one of the main targets of such policies, as has been underlined by the 48/2017 law that introduced the measure of the so-called "urban daspo" (prohibition of access to certain urban spaces for those who can carry out activities considered illicit). According to this way of defining urban space, Italian cities would have to become a set of homogeneous spaces, free of social presences defined as "inopportune", usually associated with poverty, and not white bodies, questioning the heterogeneity as one of the constitutive characteristics of contemporary urban space (Wirth, 1938). In brief, starting from the end of the 1980s, the condition of foreign street workers became synonymous with 'irregular' and, therefore, outlaw, in line with the prolonged process of stigmatisation of this job and the social figure that embodies it: an economic activity and a figure that have become, in their self, an outrage against both the rules in force and public safety, therefore against what is often officially defined as legality.

## LABELLING AND STREET-VENDORS

According to Federico Faloppa (2011), the repetition over the decades of the racist expression '*vu cumprà*' crystallises the stereotypical image of some immigrants in a set of defining characters, which associates them with the sequence 'African-black-poor-irregular street vendor'. Historically, in Italy, the presence of foreign street vendors has been a reason not only for social and political conflict, but also for the institutional construction of a troublesome, dangerous, or even enemy figure. In any case, their presence is encapsulated in a label, that of '*vu cumprà*', which initiates an inferiorizing way of thinking about, as well as governing, the presence of immigrant street vendors in Italian cities. Foreign street vendors are perceived and described as 'irregular' immigrants (even if they are not), and as 'disturbing elements'' (Bergamaschi 1999) of public space. Indeed, the presence of these subjectivities (Moore 2007; Pinelli 2013) and the mere existence of their bodies and trades in public space is considered by other white Italians to be an intolerable disturbance created by people who do not belong to the 'white cultural landscape' of Italian cities. The recourse to the classification of illegal vendor and 'irregular' migrant, and the use of the expression '*vu cumprà*', even in cases where the worker has documents and a municipal permit to trade, is part of a wider process of racialization (Miles 2009), and it only reveals one more racialised category to stigmatise non-white people. In societies in which white people have political, social, and economic power, the process of racialization creates a hierarchy in social structures and systems, based on the socio-cultural construction of race. In these complex processes of racialisation, the dynamics of valuation are evident: people are evaluated by how they are racialised (Dantzler 2021) and the valuation primarily benefits white products, places, and people, while devaluation disadvantages non-white people, as in the case of immigrant's street vendors who are systematically removed from the public spaces in which they work. The

expulsions happen all over Italy, from the south to the north, and especially where tourist expectations draw a utopian city in which non-white bodies are considered not 'attractive' and a risk to urban security: in fact, the production of space is intricately linked to the reproduction of racialisation and racism (Hawthorne 2019; Frisina 2020). Although there are cases in which the criminalisation of street vendors does not coincide with a criterion of racial discrimination, and all street vendors are indiscriminately removed, as Pietro Saitta (2022) explains in his research on the Messina case, in many other cities, non-white street vendors were progressively criminalised and accused of endangering the city to legitimise the racist expulsion to which they were subjected. Tindaro Bellinvia (2013) has long dealt with the expulsions of Senegalese street vendors in Pisa, and has noted that the newspaper closest to the mayor of Pisa, *Il Tirreno* (part of the *Espresso-Repubblica* group), constantly emphasized the 'criticality' of the presence of street vendors in the city, and filmed 'live' the spectacular performances of the mayor talking about the 'urban insecurity' generated by the Senegalese workers. Another example is Salerno, in southern Italy, where a market in which numerous Senegalese and Bangladeshi street vendors worked was suspended in 2016, and several central areas of the city were deemed inaccessible to street trading by the municipal administration. From one day to the next, these traders were denied their right to the city and to work (Ragone 2020; Niang 2020; Avallone 2020), while white workers continued to conduct their commercial activities without being removed by the *vigili urbani*. In this regard, Vincenzo De Luca, president of the Campania region and former mayor of Salerno, said in 2017: 'There are hundreds of non-EU citizens on the Salerno seafront in the evenings and at weekends. It is a unique case in Italy − he says − this situation is intolerable. Unfortunately, in Salerno, since there is no Camorra that governs the territory, there are hundreds of non-EU citizens who think they can militarily occupy the territory and do what they want' (Di Costanzo 2017). Acts of this kind also take place in northern Italy, as we already said. An emblematic case is that of Rimini, where street vendors have been removed since the 1990s, and where these workers are described, using a language of war, as one of the biggest problems in the entire province (Riccio 2007). Many resources, energies and police personnel were mobilised in this case, as if we were dealing with a dangerous criminal phenomenon. The labelling 'irregular', 'criminal', 'counterfeit products', has contributed to further precariousness of this work, marginalising it in the urban space. The narrative that has characterised street workers in recent years has been not only to 'protect' urban security, but also to 'fight' against irregularization or 'irregular' migrants. The data collected in recent years, however, show exactly the opposite. It produces a greater push towards irregularity for thousands of foreign workers, and makes it difficult to renew residence permits. In fact, attempts to make itinerant work increasingly unaffordable produces increasing irregularity, both because it reduces the possibility of earning money and meeting the criteria for renewing a residence

permit, and because the reduction in earnings influences their housing conditions. In 2021, itinerant workers must have an individual annual income of at least of 5.983,64 euro (equal to the amount of the old age social allowance recognised by the National Institute for Social Security) to renew their residence permit, but because of restrictions, they often fail to meet this criterion. Even more problematic is the access to housing eligibility. When the earnings related to the itinerant trade decrease, the itinerant workers try to find shared housing solutions to decrease the costs of rents. This, however, leads to overcrowding of spaces, and does not grant street vendor workers the certificate of housing eligibility (*certificato d'idoneità alloggiativa* − D. Lgs 286/98 – DPR 394/99) that is necessary for the renewal of the residence permit, for the application for citizenship, but also for access to social and health services. Some ethnographic data collected in 2020 in Salerno could help us reconstruct the trajectory of irregularity that is triggered when itinerant work is denied to immigrant citizens (white workers find it much easier to access this work). In 2020, in fact, one of the authors of this article conducted some ethnographic research on *Lungomare Trieste*, Salerno, among Bangladeshi and Senegalese street vendors who were (and still are) severely displaced from the city centre where they would like to continue working. Most of the workers on the *Lungomare* have a municipal licence (licence type B) for street vending, and they must renew it every year (paying). The type B licence allows the exercise of itinerant trade in public areas in markets and fairs throughout the national territory. To obtain this right, you must apply with a €14.62 revenue stamp to the mayor of your municipality of residence, who will issue the licence within 30 days of submission of the application. Once the licence has been obtained, it is first necessary to have a VAT number and then to register with the Chamber of Commerce and INPS (with an annual registration fee of 120 euros). So, they are 'regular' workers, and they pay annual fees to renew the licence, but this is still not enough for the municipality of Salerno. Abul's story is illustrative. Abul (a fictitious name to preserve privacy) is 35 years old and arrived in Salerno in 1999 at the age of 14. He attended middle and high school in Salerno. He likes living in the old city centre: its noisy alleys, the smell of food and the sea so close remind him of the warmth of Bangladesh (the country he emigrated from with his family). He started working as a street vendor with his father when he was a young student. The closure of the market in 2016 and the removal of street vendors from the *Lungomare Trieste* impoverished him and his family. During our conversation, Abul introduces an element worth analysing: residency and obtaining citizenship. He has almost succeeded in obtaining Italian citizenship, he has followed the long procedure and now all that is missing is the oath of allegiance (*giuramento*) to the Italian Republic. However, to do so, he needs residency. Residency is a crucial step for both renewing his residence permit and obtaining citizenship. But the fact that Abul lives with five other people in a small flat in the city centre leads to constant controls and the blocking of his residence and therefore of his citizenship.

> *The rent is too much, and they do not let us work (he is referring to itinerant work), so instead of four people staying in a house we stay six . That is why they come, check and then if we apply for residency, every month, or every two months they come and block the residency procedure, we must run back and forth to the municipality and start the paperwork and protocols. (Abul, Bangladeshi street vendor).*

The crucial aspect for the research is that Abul did not risk becoming an 'irregular' migrant before the market closed. In fact, when the market was open in the *Sottopiazza*, Abul was able to obtain residence and the renewal of his residence permit, and would continue to do so if the municipality protected their right to work, as he says:

> *If they made us work (The Municipality and the municipal police), we would get a house and live with a few people, let us say a peaceful life, now we cannot even do that. (Abul, Bangladeshi street vendor).*

Another important consequence of the restriction of street vending has to do with the search for another job and the consequent worsening of working conditions. Many street vendors I met changed jobs to escape the restrictions on street work. In large part, they found employment in the restaurant sector. Manik (a fictitious name to preserve privacy), for example, became an assistant cook in a well-known restaurant in Salerno, working 14 to 17 hours a day for a salary of only 1,000 euros. He has a bogus contract which refers to a small part of the hours he works. Manik has three school-age children and lives in the city centre, he explains to me that he is in great economic difficulty, between rent and utilities, he and his family are left with very few euros (he has a salary of 1,000 euros and spends 480 just to rent his flat). The harsh conditions of labour exploitation he is subjected to do not guarantee him the income he used to get from street trading in the market. The working conditions in restaurants (especially for citizens racialised as non-white) are extremely hard, and street trading is an alternative to exploitation, in fact, this work could be seen as a means of a relative autonomy to the rules of exploitation and when it is obstructed by municipal authorities, one of the effects is an increase in the number of exploited people in restaurants and agriculture.

## IRREGULARITY AS A PERMANENT CONDITION

The definition and governance of migration oriented by a securitarian approach interprets migration as a threat, alternatively or simultaneously, to public, political identity and socio-economic order. According to Giuseppe Campesi (2015, 19), these three references find their justification and strength in the category of 'irregular' migration, which has been decisive for the securitisation of migration in international relations as well as in the internal context, in other words, for its subordination to a "process through which an issue is transformed into a security-related problem entirely independently of its objective nature, or the

concrete relevance of the supposed threat". In this process, the privileged object of institutional action and public discourse is the 'irregular' migrant person, the archetype and summary of threats to public, political-identity, and socio-economic order, to be controlled with police tools. In the case of street sellers, it is their own work activity that is constructed as 'irregular', irrespective of the possible absence of regular residence documents. In other words, immigrant street vendors are defined by institutions and media as 'irregular' in themselves. Consequently, to understand the relationship between the quality of life of immigrant street-vendors in Italy and the irregularity is necessary to understand how the policy of their permanent social (although not always administrative) irregularity/clandestinization works. Meanwhile, we need to understand how this policy produces irregularity, recognizing that the more street vendors are criminalised the more they are pushed towards irregularity. In fact, the repression of street-vendor workers makes it difficult to achieve the minimum income level to confirm annual or biennial documents, and to achieve the certificate of hosting eligibility. Repression is sustained by the process of racialisation lived by foreign-born street vendors. This process is produced through two main mechanisms: one depends on discourse, the other one depends on a specific way to use racial profiling. The first mechanism consists in the political and media description of the itinerant workers and their commodities as 'irregular', even when these workers have licences and residence permits, and their goods are anything but irregular or counterfeit. The second mechanism consists in making these workers the privileged object of policing policies (racial profiling), coherently with the 'securitarian' management of public spaces, which exposes them to expulsion and greater police controls. Being a privileged target of social control policies increases the likelihood of being convicted of handling stolen goods and selling counterfeit goods, exposing foreign street vendors to the risk of losing the opportunity to renew their residence permit (even before conviction and during the trial, whilst other social groups and networks involved in counterfeiting are much more difficult to identify). Combining the processes and mechanisms identified above, the overall picture obtained is one of a vicious circles of irregularity articulated in five stages: (1) the attribution to immigrant street vendors of a condition of irregularity regardless of their administrative status makes them; (2) the privileged object of police controls and, at the same time, of public and institutional security discourse; (3) this overexposure to control and police action favours the possibility of being subjected to criminal trials, as well as to administrative proceedings that can lead to the loss of the validity of the residence permit and, therefore, (4) to become 'irregular' also on a concrete administrative level; (5) this exposure to a greater potential of irregularity in comparison with other categories of immigrant workers favours the production and reproduction of foreign street sellers as enemies or dangers to public, political and economic order. In brief, the lack of social, political, and institutional recognition of street vending is connected to processes of criminalisation of those who carry out this activity, which directly affects their living standards because, in addition to the fines imposed on them, it reduces their

possibilities of selling. In fact, in many Italian cities, street vending has been *de facto* outlawed: foreign born street vendors have been constructed as new "dangerous classes", based on an order of discourse that assumes that these people are alien to local contexts, and therefore out of place.

## CONCLUSIONS

Street vending is an important and non-marginal sector of the Italian economy in which hundreds of immigrant citizens work. Among the various reasons that could explain the high number of foreign street vendors in this sector, mention should also be made of the fact than it is often a response to the difficult access to paid work in Italy, caused by structural racial discrimination (Siebert 2013). As we have presented in the previous paragraphs, this work is hampered. Street vendors are systematically removed from the historic centres of the Italian cities where they work, on the grounds that they are a danger to public order, tourism, and urban safety. They are described by the press and politicians as 'irregular' and criminal, and are essentialised in the racist expression '*vu cumprà*'. The irregularity is a permanent status for foreign-born street-vendors in Italy, even if they are not 'irregular'. This status is a cultural, political, and symbolic description that produces a material vicious circle that pushes them to irregularity. Foreign street vendors face numerous problems as a result of the criminalisation and stigmatisation: pressure from the municipal police, severe impoverishment, induction to labour exploitation, division of families (mothers and children return to the cities and countries from which they emigrated), reduction in remittances to their countries of origin and the consequent impoverishment of hundreds of family members, difficulty in accessing housing, renewal of residence permits, citizenship, social and health policies. These are all symptoms of a more widespread racial and structural discrimination. The results just listed are illustrative of how municipal decisions and '*vu cumprà*' label deeply affects the daily life of hundreds of people, sometimes with tragic consequences (the death of a Senegalese street vendor, Malick Thiam, in a fire in Foggia in June 2020, where he was looking for another job because of municipal restrictions in Salerno), beyond national and municipal borders. The case of the itinerant workers gives us a cross-section of ordinary racialisation that can be used to better understand how migrations are conceived and governed not only on an urban, but also on a national and European level. These policies of control, in fact, irregularise, racialize and limit the freedom of racialized subjectivities in the urban space and in the Schengen space, leading those who migrate, often, into conditions of poverty and danger. These studies about the conditions of foreign street vendors in Italy not only help us to recognise how racialisation is reproduced, but also how it is consolidated and extended by democratic instruments, leading us to reflect on the terms of democratic racialisation (use of the law, municipal regulations, the

criterion of legality, police investigation work, etc.) and to consider the European democracies as states based on racial and colonial hierarchy. One of the instruments of democratic racialisation is race profiling. Racial profiling in policing has been defined by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (2007, 4) in 2007 as "the use by the police, without objective and reasonable justification, of grounds such as race, colour, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin in monitoring, surveillance, or investigative activities". This is a method of democratic racialisation that consists of laws, regulations and rules, and may not cross the boundaries of a democracy based on racial hierarchies and built on the remnants of the colonial past. The racial profiling is what happens to migrant's street vendors in Italy, who are controlled and harassed more than other citizens. In this connection, it would be important for future studies to be carried out on the reports of the municipal police who control and confiscate their goods (one possible hypothesis is that even in cases where the goods of migrant street traders are legal, the risk is that they will be confiscated by the police simply because it is assumed that foreign warkers sell counterfeit goods). In conclusion, with the onset of the crisis related to the new coronavirus, new scenarios have opened for this type of work as well, which are, yet, uncertain. One trend could be a general contraction of this specific commercial sector, due to the continuous political restrictions, with the probable increase of irregularities and poverty in the lives of many itinerant workers. An opposite trend could be an expansion of the sector, which could once again expand as an area of resistance to unemployment processes, also affecting new parts of the population. It is not possible to predict which trend will prevail, also because it will depend on the type of public space that will be redefined and, therefore, on how much (and if) the centrality of the streets and squares in social life in Italy, to which itinerant street vending is connected, will be confirmed.

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*Migranții lucrători stradali sunt îndepărtați din spațiile urbane în orașele italiene în care lucrează, prin deciziile municipalităților și poliției. Metodologia urmată în această cercetare, orientată spre înțelegerea activităților de vânzare stradală desfășurate de migranți în Italia, este constructivistă și mixtă, calitativă și cantitativă. Ipoteza susținută de articol este că restricțiile politice și rasiste impuse lucrătorilor migranți vânzători stradali produc un proces de nereglementare care le periclitează șansele de a-și reînnoi permisele de rezidență sau de a accede la cetățenie. Articolul discută cum formele de rasializare sunt reproduse prin sistemele de nereglementare și introduce conceptul de "rasializare democratică" pentru a înțelege cum rasializarea este reprodusă, consolidată și normalizată prin instrumente democratice. Materialul se încheie cu sugestii pentru cercetări viitoare, care să colecteze informații despre deciziile și acțiunile poliției împotriva vânzătorilor stradali străini.*

***Cuvinte-cheie**: rasializare; spațiu urban; profilare rasială; politici publice; etnografie urbană.*

*Received: 18.01.2022* *Accepted: 11.05.2022*