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# The Insularity in the Contemporary World

-Small Islands in Japan,  
Italy and the World –

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# Definition of islands

## Insularities in Japan, Italy and the World

1. Isolation
2. Offshore advantages
3. Powerlessness or peripherality
4. Universal panacea for island economy?
5. Ethnic plurality
6. Geopolitical significance
7. Ecology
8. Geographical imaginations of the island

# Definitions of the Island

Any area of land smaller than a continent and entirely surrounded by water.

(Greenland is the largest island of the world)

(Very often Great Britain, Honshu, Java and so on are not considered as island.)

What about the islands connected by bridge, tunnel .....?

Prince Edward Island, Suo-oshima Island, Manhattan Island, Tsukuda Island.

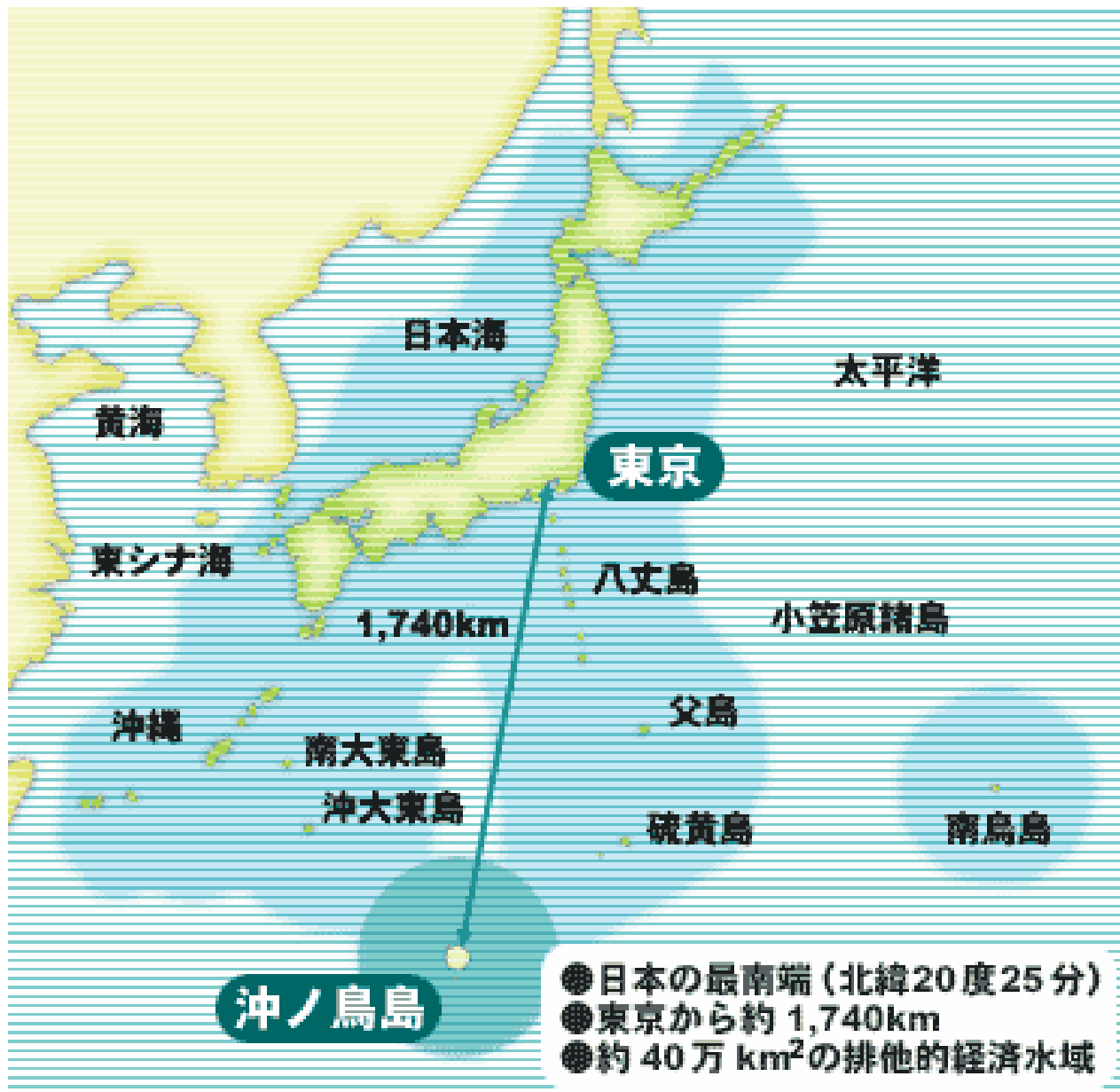
Japan Coast Guard considers as island the land surrounded by water and having **more than 100m shoreline** at high tide, except for Okinawa-honto (main island), Kyushu, Shikoku, Honshu and Hokkaido. (Japan has 6,852 islands in this sense)

The Scottish census of 1861 defined an island as such only if it was **inhabited** and had **sufficient pasturage** to support at least one sheep.

Shima: land surrounded by water  
small village, settlement  
circumscribed area, such as turf or sphere of  
influence (**Nihon Kokugo Daijiten**)

*Shimadas* (2004 edition) of Nihon Rito  
Centre lists 1100 islands (c.a. 430  
inhabited islands including those  
connected by bridge(s) and c.a. 670  
important uninhabited islands)  
**surinsularité** (Pelletier 1997)

With the entry in force of UN  
Convention on the Law of the Sea in  
1994 (signed in 1982 at Montego) the  
uninhabited island has got a new  
geopolitical / geographical significance.  
(France has 11 million km<sup>2</sup> EEZ, the  
largest in the world)







# The Insularity in Japan, Italy and the World

## 1) Isolation

It depends on the cost / time distance rather than the absolute distance.

It depends also on the attributes of the transportation facilities.

airport, kinds of boat, harbour facilities.....

## Island as places far away

Johnston Atoll, Bikini, Shisaka Island

## Isolation as a resource

Getting away from it all

holy places

Stepping stone

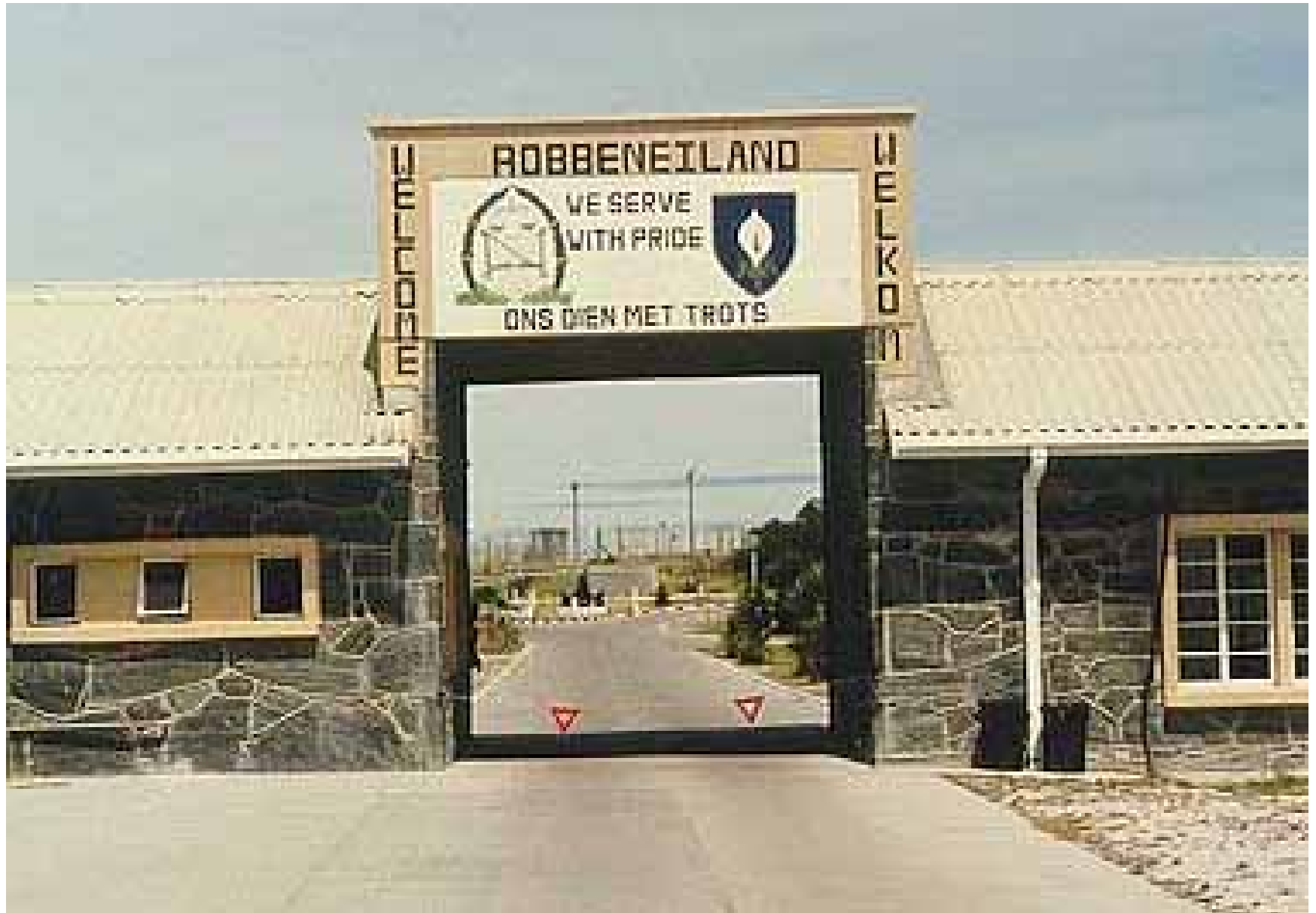
Zanzibar, Elis Island, Amami Islands

Supply or relay points

Cape Verde, Midway Islands

Prisons

Robben Island, Egadi Island





# Islands used for nuclear weapons testing 1945-98

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<i>Island</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Number of tests</i>
Mururoa Atoll	French Polynesia	174
Enewetok Atoll	Marshall Islands	43
Christmas Island (Kiritimati)	Kiribati	30
Bikini Atoll	Marshall Islands	23
Johnston Island	USA	12
Fangataufa Atoll	French Polynesia	12
Malden Island	Kiribati	3

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Source: *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* at <http://www.bullatomsci.org/research/qanda/tests.html>

## Notes

1. 24 different places were used for nuclear weapons testing from 1945–98. Seven were islands (29%).
2. There were 2051 nuclear tests known about between 1945 and 1998. 297 took place on islands (14.5%).

## 2) Offshore advantages

### Trade Centres

Copenhagen (Sjælland), Lagos,  
Malabo (Equatorial Guinea),  
Manhattan (New Amsterdam)

### Financial Centres

Bahama, Cayman Island

### Freeport

Singapore, Hong Kong

No island of these cases in Japan,  
neither in Italy

### 3) Powerlessness or peripherality

#### Economic aspects

Typical expression is **emigration**  
( **aging society**) and the dependency  
on the external resources  
( Migration, Remittance, Aid,  
Bureaucracy, **MIRAB**)

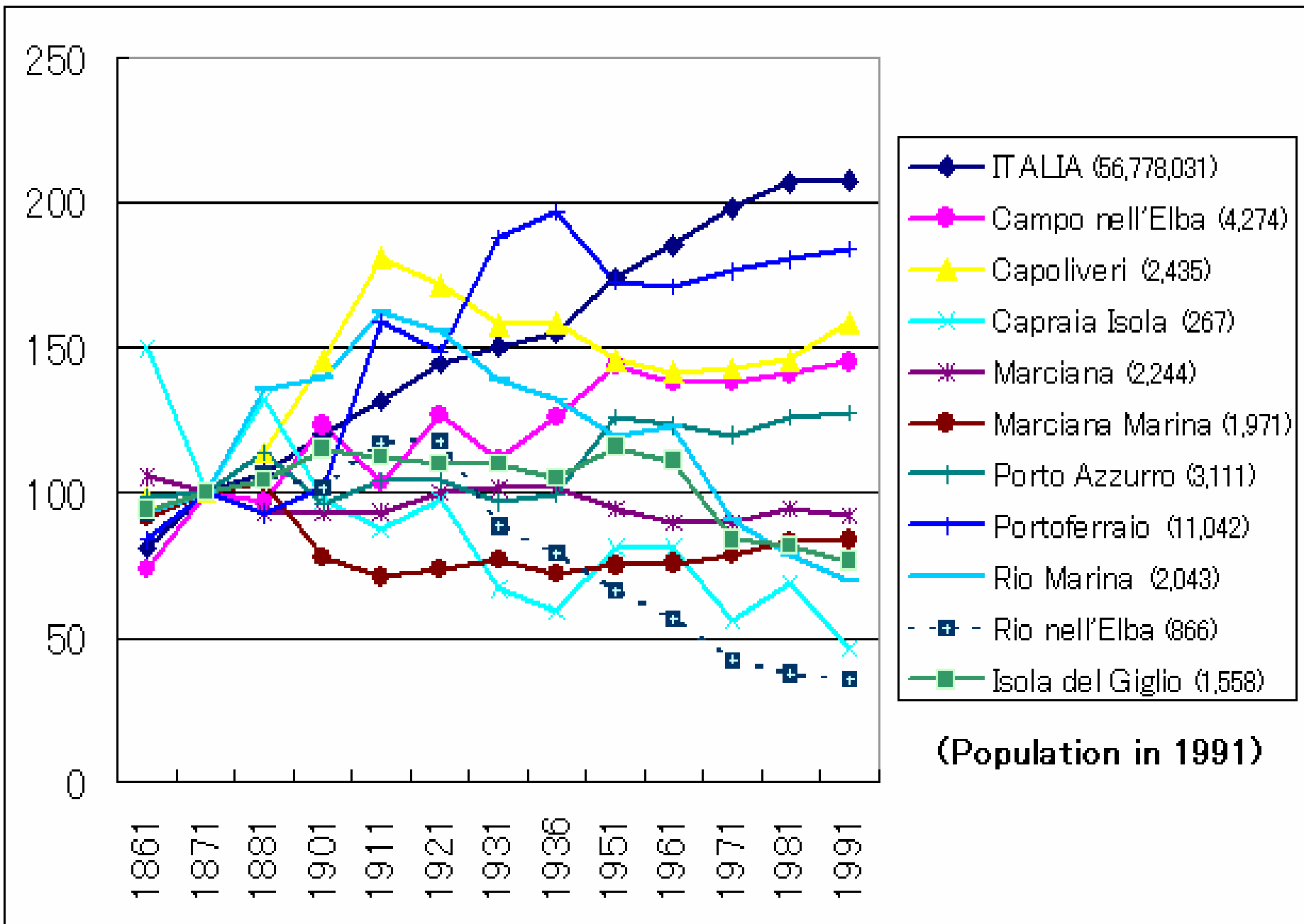
All the eggs in one basket or pluri-  
sector economy

Nauru, Hime-shima, Hegura Island,  
Ibiza, Zamami Island

# Mineral Phosphate of Nauru

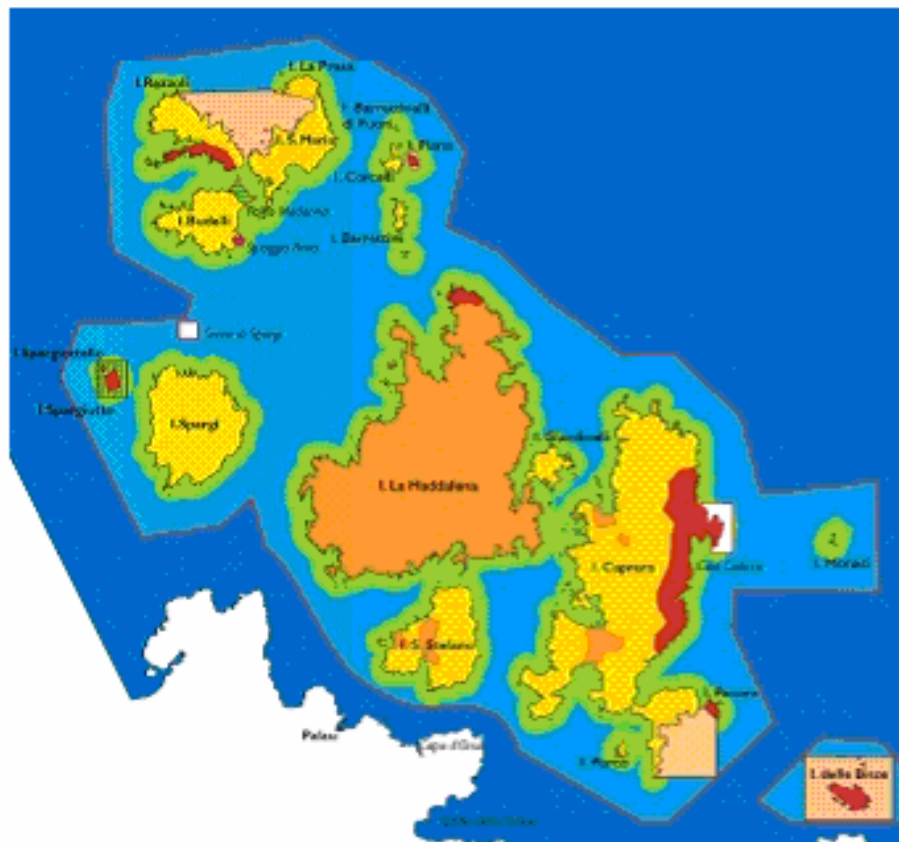






**(Population in 1991)**





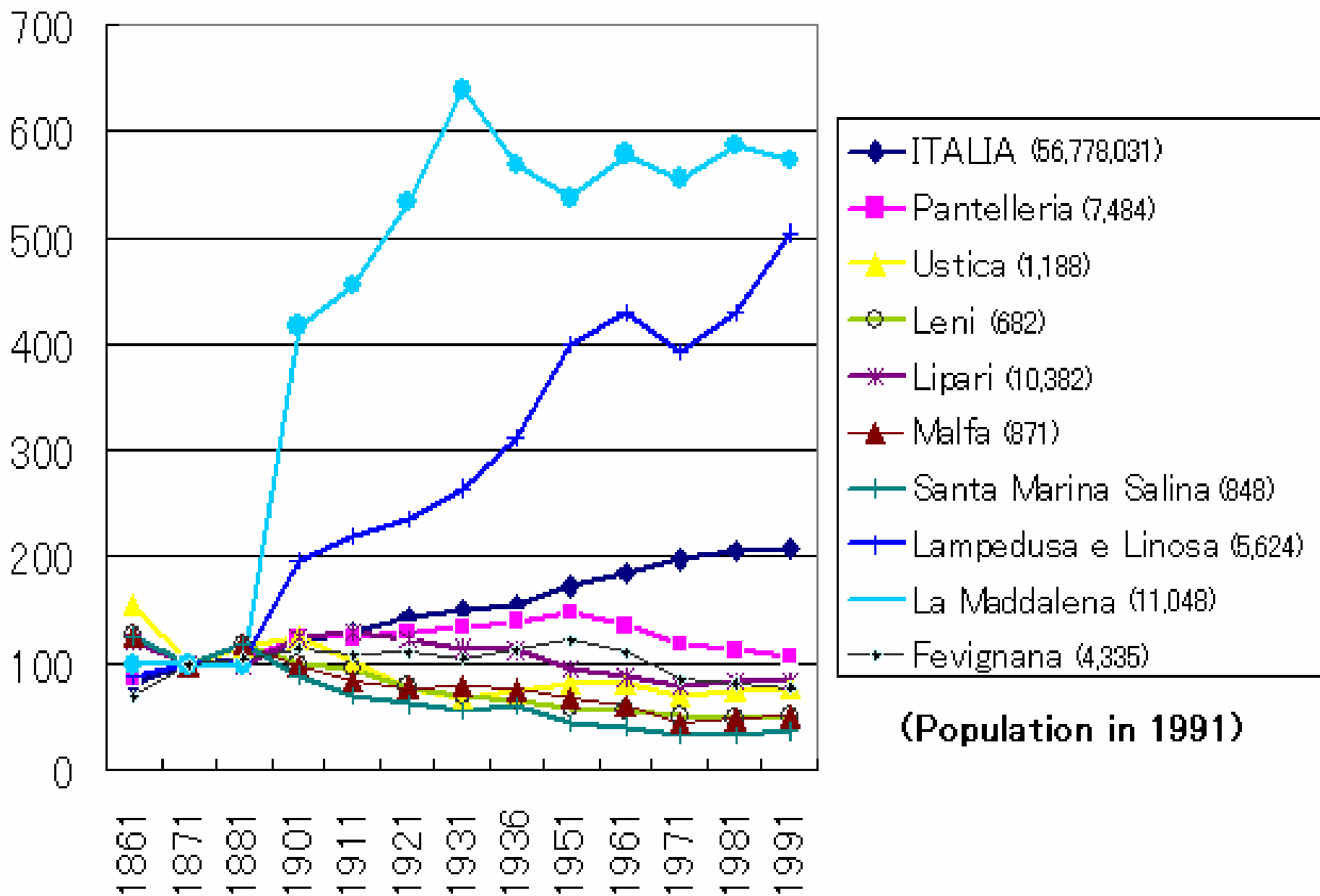
## ZONIZZAZIONE

### Legenda

- Limite del Parco Nazionale e zona MB oltre i 300 metri dalla Costa
- Zona TA
- Zona TB
- Zona TC
- Zona MA
- Zona MB entro i 300 metri dalla Costa
- Divieto di sosta, navigazione e ancoraggio e pesca sportiva
- Divieto di pesca sportiva
- Spiaggia Rossa: Divieto di navigazione, sosta e ancoraggio per navi e natanti  
Divieto di balneazione e colpo di canoa
- Porta Moderna: Divieto di sosta, navigazione e ancoraggio.  
Consentita la balneazione e l'accesso con natanti a remi

Scala 1:100,000





**(Population in 1991)**







## Political aspects

- Political dependency of island states
- Except for Gibraltar, Ceuta, Melilla and French Guinea all the oversea territories are islands.

## Vulnerability to the natural disasters

Maldives, Caribbean Islands against hurricane

Urbanisation (demographic concentration to the administrative centres or the main islands)

# Majuro and the Marshall Islands population statistics, 1958-98

	<i>1958</i>		<i>1967</i>		<i>1973</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Total	14,163		18,799		25,045	
Majuro	3415	24.1	5249	28.9	10,290	41.1
Other islands	10,748	75.9	13,370	71.1	14,755	58.9

	<i>1980</i>		<i>1988</i>		<i>1998 (est)</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
	30,873		43,380		62,924	
	11,791	38.2	19,664	45.3	30,204	48.0
	19,082	61.8	23,716	54.7	32,720	52.0





1998年8月9日 すぐ下が汚染物質なので直に座るのは良くない





*Edifici del carcere*







4) Is there any universal panacea for island economy?

Antinomy of the tourist development and the tourist resources

Development of tourist industries aggravating competition with agriculture over land and water resources.

Limit to the brand products of island

Madeira wine, lacy products, shrimps kept alive of Hime-shima

There is **no universal panacea** for the development of the island economy

Each island has to find out the proper development strategy on the basis of own **cultural tradition, socio-economic circumstances** and **existing resources**







5) Ethnic plurality as resulted from the island position as crossroad

Ethnic plurality has been very often resulted from the slave trade and the introduction of the labour forces of external origin to the plantation in the colonial island

Réunion, Nouvelle Calédonie, La Isla Española

Ogasawara Islands excepted, no such case in Japan

## 6) New geopolitical / geographical significance of the island

### EEZ

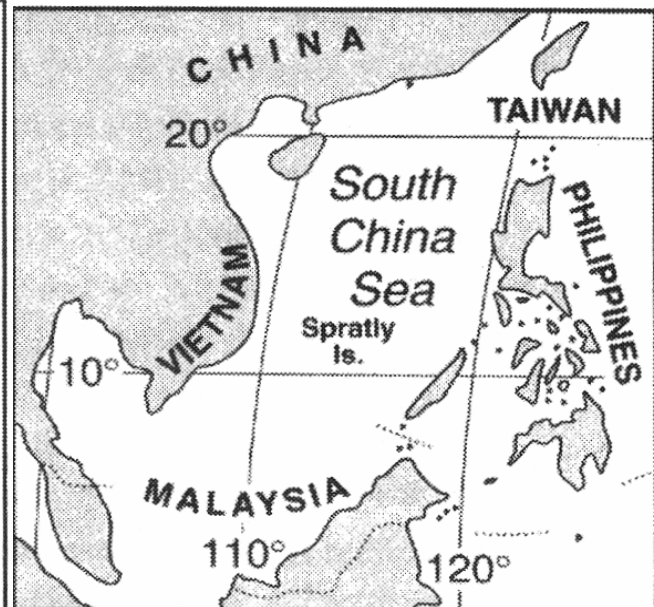
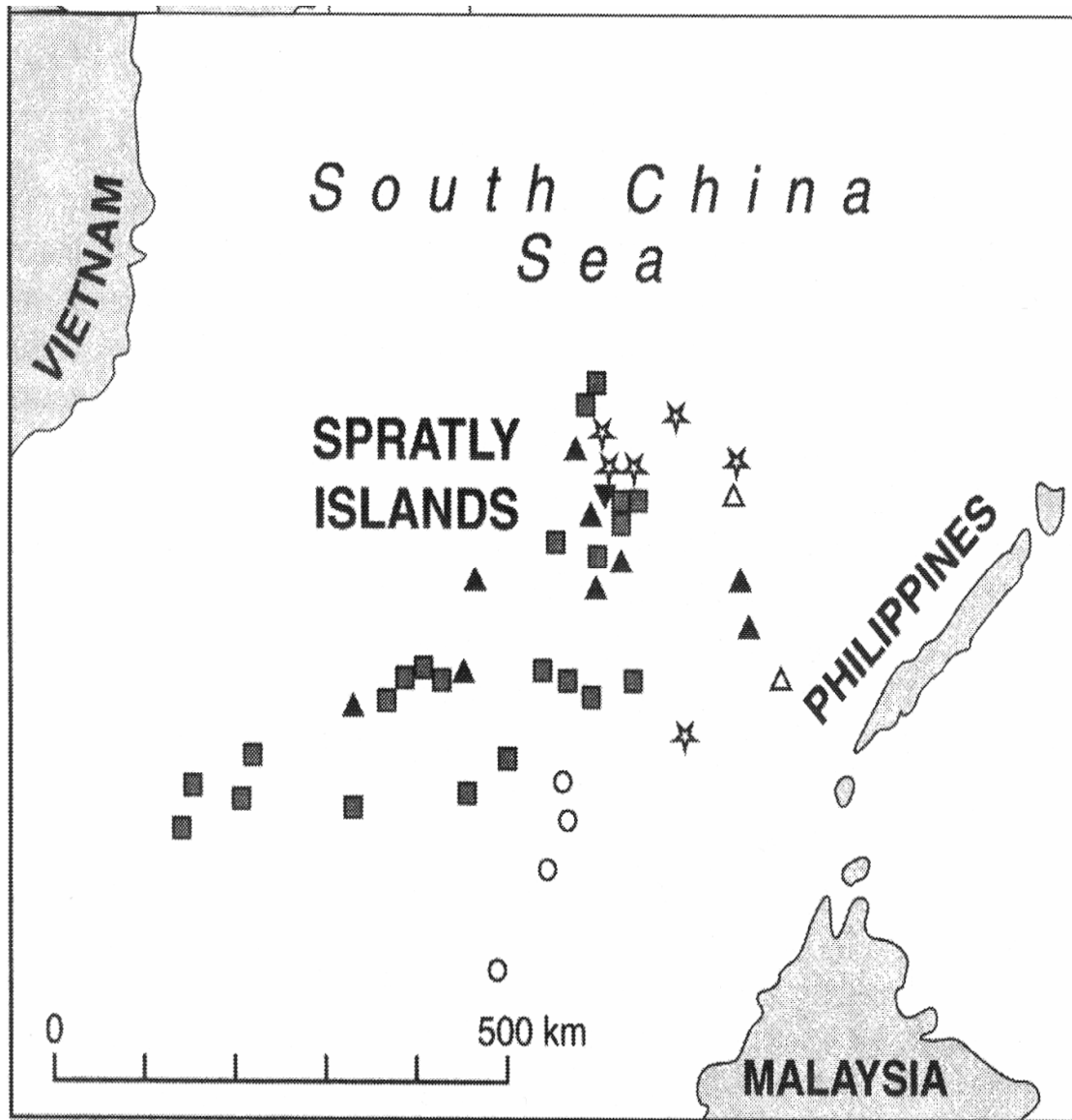
Most of the international territorial disputes over the island relate to the fishing, mineral and hydrocarbon resources in EEZ

Sparty Islands (China, Taiwan, Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia)

Senkaku / Diaoyutai / Tiaoyutai Island







Occupied in 1995 by:

- ▲ China
- Malaysia
- ☆ Philippines
- ▼ Taiwan
- Vietnam

Marked (but not occupied) by:

- △ China

Changing strategic importance

Diego Garcia Island, Kulusuk Island  
(Greenland)

Decreasing or diminishing importance of distance    **Information**

**Technology**    call centre, back or  
satellite office

a small numbers of islands of this  
case (some islands of Ireland)

## 7) Ecology

As Galápagos Islands, and in less degree Ogasawara, as a sequel of long time isolation, many islands possess specific fauna / flora or some specific original species (such as *Timeresurus flavoviridis* in Amami and Okinawa Islands)

The confined and closed insular ecosystem can easily be destabilised or destroyed by human activities.

difficulties in recycling used cars, plastic products and so on.

exhaustion of forest, land or water resources, consequent upon the pursuit of monosector economic activities.



北九州市 エコタウンセンター







## 8) Geographical imaginations of the island

### Utopian Thought: Utopia in Western Tradition

Thomas More: *Utopia* (1516)

Tomaso Campanella: *La città del sole* (1602)

Francis Bacon: *New Atlantis* (1627)

## Irony or criticism

Daniel Defoe: *Robinson Crusoe* (1719-22)

Jonathan Swift: *Gulliver's Travels* (1726)

Jacques Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre: *Voyage à l'Isle de France* (1773), *Paul et Virginie* (1787)

Orientalism of 19<sup>th</sup> century romanticist literature

Julien Viaud: *Le Mariage de Loti* (1882),  
*Madame Chrysanthème* (1887)

Orientalist tourism in Oceania  
(folklore fakelore)

In many parts of Japan there exists the legend of **Onigashima** (Isle of Demons)



Gauguin wouldn't recognise it now

The Economist, November 13th-19th 2004







Future Task: Investigation of the geographical imaginations of island in different cultures (spaces) and periods (times)

There should be more aspects of insularity to be considered, such as ecology, public services and so on.

Many thanks for your attention!