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## **Productive Reintegration of Return Emigrants and Rural Tourism: Life and Work Experiences in Sardinia (Italy) and in a Mountain Area in the Province of Marrakech (Morocco)\***

### SUMMARY

The paper provides a contribution to the formulation of return migration policies that seek to harness the skills gained by emigrants and channel their savings into the creation of small businesses within a local development scheme. We have drawn from experiences described by return emigrants, gathered in Sardinia and in the Marrakech province in Morocco, to formulate measures capable of generating positive opportunities for encouraging the return of migrants to their home areas, utilizing the skills gained in the hospitality industry in Europe and investing their savings in their country. The measures are also designed to offer return migrants an alternative to settling in urban destinations. The case study is concerned with a rural tourism initiative in subcoastal and interior areas as an alternative to marine and coastal tourism. Based on the premise that only those areas with a natural and cultural heritage offer good potential for the development of rural tourism, the following conclusions are presented: a) one seemingly useful form of action is for the authorities in the host countries to organise training courses for migrant workers, within the cooperation framework for assisting migrants to return to their home countries; b) it is essential for local authorities in the migrants' home countries to improve transportation systems, facilities and tourist services in general; c) equally important in the home countries is the adoption of measures aimed at the recognition, rehabilitation and enhancement of the archaeological heritage, material culture and of traditions in general, together with the natural/environmental resources for an integrated tourist product.

KEY WORDS: Morocco, Sardinia, return migration, rural tourism

### Introduction

The topic concerned with here falls within the framework of research and teaching experiences regarding initiatives aimed at creating alternative tourism anchored by cultural and natural attractions, looking for common but specific features in different Mediterranean contexts.<sup>1</sup> The experience gained during the research has formed the basis

\* Paper presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> Globility meeting (Pescara, Italy, 2–4 December 2005).

<sup>1</sup> Between the late 1990's and early 2000's funds granted by the Sardinian Autonomous Government under Law 19/96 enabled members of the research team at Cagliari University, M. L. Gentileschi, M. Iorio, P. Manduchi, A. Corsale and A. Leone, to partake in seminar activities in Sardinia with professors M. Berriane, Rabat University, S. Boujrouf, Marrakech University and A. Miossec, Montpellier University. These were

of publications and degree dissertations that represent – at least in the eyes of the participants – an important step towards the knowledge of the common characteristics and mutual problems that tourism creates in Mediterranean environments. Studies conducted concurrently on Moroccan and Tunisian immigration towards the northern shores of the Mediterranean, led to consideration of potential initiatives for emigrants returning to Maghreb countries, investing their savings and harnessing the experience gained during their stay in European countries, including Italy.

Tourist services are an important segment of immigrant labour in both Italy and France, though not clearly visible because of the type of work immigrants perform (cleaning, food preparation, gardening). This experience does however provide immigrant workers with the opportunity to make contact with clients in tourist areas and to get an idea of what services can be offered and of what European tourists visiting North Africa expect. It is above all the great French tradition in training tourism professionals and the country's well-established hospitality facilities in rural environments that provide immigrants with the possibility of emulating forms of hospitality and leisure management in their homeland based on decentralized non-mass tourism models, aimed at exploring rural cultures, along the lines maintained by several international opinion groups.

Forms of tourism such as guest houses (*logement chez l'habitant*) can benefit from the experience gained by members of the migrant's family in European countries, investing their savings over time. In some cases returnees would be able to invest their end-of-service gratuity. Sometimes investments started during emigration will be completed with the return of the emigrant. However, development of rural tourism will require some public sector support, to ensure appropriate training, soft loans and the essential local infrastructures (roads, power and water supply, telephone, sewage and solid waste collection).

The interest of comparing experiences of returnees to Sardinia and the mountain area in the vicinity of Marrakech, lies in the following points:

- a) both areas need to diverge part of the beach tourists to inner areas in order to alleviate seasonal crowding (Gentileschi, 2002, 2003);
- b) Sardinia has already lived through the experience of return emigration in the period 1970–80, which was characterized by intense tourism trade growth;
- c) alternative tourism might concern inland mountain areas which have in common some similarities, such as a sparse population, pastoralism, offer of local food and folklore tradition, as well as natural attractions.

## 1. Productive return migration policy

These initiatives arise from the particular attention that governments of sending

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followed by brief visits to Morocco and Tunisia accompanied by a small number of final year undergraduates from Cagliari University. In 2003, Daniela Pisano, at the time a student at the Faculty of Political Science in the University of Cagliari, Sardinia, and the author of part 3 in this paper, conducted the interviews in Morocco and Maria Luisa Gentileschi conducted those in Sardinia and wrote the rest of the paper. A summary of the interviews will be available in Italian on the Department website from January 2007 (<http://spol.unica.it/sitodres/contributi.htm>).

countries pay sooner or later to the type of return migration known as “productive and innovative” (Bonifazi and Heins, 1996; Cerase, 1971; Gentileschi, 1984; Reyneri and Mughini, 1984), which has been widely analysed, assessed and proposed in Italy too.<sup>2</sup> According to the World Bank data, migrants send back a substantial amount of savings to their North African hometowns and the figure is steadily increasing. It is a proven fact that not only does the money serve to improve their families’ living standards, but that it contributes directly to the economic growth of their homelands.

In the villages, remittances provide for micro-credits: it is estimated that in West Africa alone 5 million people benefit from loans granted by small credit organizations, a six-fold increase since 1993. Sending country governments feel it is necessary to channel part of these savings into productive development activities. Numerous projects exist that envisage co-financing schemes. For example in Senegal and Mali, emigrants still living in France can take advantage of “long distance investment”, using their savings as a guarantee for soft loans granted by French banking subsidiaries.<sup>3</sup> IOM (International Organization for Migration, Geneva) has on its agenda “assisted voluntary return projects” for a number of sending (in Africa, Guinée, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, An-

<sup>2</sup> Return policies have accompanied in different ways the history of Italian emigration abroad. One of the latest initiatives is Bill No.53, 2000 (*Provisions for encouraging the return home of Italian workers living abroad*). This differs from “humanitarian return”, which concerns political refugees with temporary residence in a foreign country, who cannot partake in productive return projects, owing to the fact that they are not supposed to work in the country of refuge but should live on welfare. German authorities have decided (23724, June 2005) to repatriate Afghan refugees, and Kosovo refugees will follow soon. Refugee resettlement could also concern safe third countries, besides their own countries of origin. The point is hotly debated, owing to the reservations expressed by human rights organisations, such as Amnesty International and Pro Asyl. The impact of return could also in their case be mitigated by resettlement policies to render reintegration more productive and economically sound. At an informal meeting in Dublin, the interior ministers of the 15 EU member states and the 10 EU accession countries have agreed to intensify European cooperation in order to step up common repatriation measures for rejected asylum seekers. The present and future EU members have decided to launch a two-year pilot scheme aimed at fostering European cooperation in carrying out deportations (e.g. joint deportations by plane) and offering reintegration programmes for migrants who have been repatriated to their home countries. The EU Commission announced that the European Union will allocate € 30 million in the EU budget 2005/2006 for common European repatriation measures. Ministers have also reached agreement on setting up an EU agency for carrying out the pilot scheme; the agency is to become operative within twelve months.

<sup>3</sup> The term co-development applies to initiatives which are being promoted in cooperation with migrants who continue to live abroad and invest their personal savings, which are supplemented by funds coming from microcredits and from development agencies and local public administration. AFD (Agence Française de Développement) assists Moroccan, Senegalese and Malian immigrants living in France with setting up businesses in Morocco through the 1 + 3 financing scheme (one quota consisting of the immigrants savings plus one quota from a bank loan and one quota from AFD). The role of migrants as agents of local development is taking place under the form of individual projects and also collective projects, when they become active members of associations of their villages where they invest their own savings with the co-financing obtained through NGOs (health care, education, water management, food production and consumption, agricultural projects) (Zupi, 2002: 845 onwards). An overview of the numerous initiatives of this type in the River Senegal basin, where emigration towards Europe is thriving, all of them programmed by French-Malian or French-Senegalese cooperation, is given in the of Cellule Migration Développement website ([www.promail.org/cmd](http://www.promail.org/cmd)). A similar initiative has been described in Mexico (Battistella, 2005: 324) and in other countries.

gola, Congo, etc.) and receiving countries (Switzerland, Belgium, Netherland, etc.), largely targeted at asylum seekers.<sup>4</sup> Strategies are also being undertaken in this field as a part of a Euro-African pact for the development of Africa.

The productive reinsertion of returnees is a complex issue that concerns on the one hand the future of non-European immigration, in the sense that nurturing the return myth helps to deflect attention away from integration difficulties. On the other hand, it presents once again the ultimate aim of immigrant work that is, to generate savings to send back to their homeland, an increasingly important issue. Overcoming the logic of investing savings to support the family or to purchase property or land, productive insertion encourages immigrants' families to consider the possibility of setting up a small business. Within this aim, remittances not only have a direct influence on local consumption, but also become an expenditure multiplier, therefore producing a positive effect on local development.

The contradictions of current management of migratory flows include indications that the closure of or tight control at EU external borders prevents migrants with more substantial savings capacity from going back and forth, as they fear that once they return home, even for a brief stay, they will not be allowed to re-emigrate. The result is that their families tend to join them and the remittances diminish, thus depriving their homeland of financial resources and initiatives. The climax of remittances sending is estimated to take place between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> year of emigration, followed by a sharp reduction (Zupi, 2002).

Very little literature addresses, and the immigration debate disregards, those policies aimed at encouraging the productive return of non-European immigrants in the EU, at least as far as Italy is concerned. Little has been done by the government over the last few years.<sup>5</sup> The attention is simply focused on the arrival of immigrants and their insertion or integration. Return policy planning is often viewed as prior acceptance of the principle that the migrant will eventually return to his/her homeland and

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<sup>4</sup> The projects indicated by IOM include Pasarp (Program for activities in support of Albanian regions and prefectures), launched in 1999, financed by the Italian government and implemented by UNOPS (United Nations Office for Project Services), which aims to achieve the permanent return (*ritorno durevole*) of Albanian emigrants to their homeland. The project, aimed at promoting local development, involves profit making businesses on the one hand and disadvantaged classes on the other and offers support to returnees so that they will not be forced to re-emigrate. Some NGOs have expressed interest in its implementation. The tourism-related sub-projects include the construction of a tourist information centre at Vlora, the restoration of Kanina Castle and archaeological excavations at various sites. In addition, the Italian government (Minister of the Interior) has promoted a project for preventing the trafficking of human beings, which includes measures for reintegration of victims in their home countries. Seasonal immigrants who comply with entry conditions and return home once the allowed period is over, will be allowed a precedence right the following year.

<sup>5</sup> Note that the 2005 Caritas/Migrantes *Dossier*, as well as the ISMU 10<sup>th</sup> *Annual Report on Migration* published in 2004, do not dedicate any particular chapter to this topic, which receives only a brief mention in the other chapters. The latter source, on the subject of Islamics in Europe, cuts the question abruptly, stating that, following the family reunions, the myth of return is now over ("il mito del ritorno è finito"). Initiatives promoted by the Italian government include provisions in favour of Senegalese returnees and financing of the project for Albanian returnees.

thus represents almost an invitation to follow the line of migrant work force rotation, expending less effort on the integration issue. On the other hand, family reunion in receiving countries in Europe make massive returns unlikely. The emigration/immigration debate in the 1970's–1980's failed to appreciate the importance of this issue which is now finding it difficult to re-emerge. A negative evaluation of the economic effects of the use of remittances and productive return dominated the scientist's opinion, a judgement which is now believed to need an adjustment.

The measures envisaged by the projects on the one hand facilitate remittance transfers, by providing the migrant with access to formal banking channels, and on the other provide for enterprise training.

Enterprise training (Battistella, 2005) can be carried out in three stages:

- 1) prior to departure, to be arranged in the sending country with the assistance of NGOs: these could include monetary benefits and priority processing of the migrant's return visa application; in this phase the prospective migrant should be assisted to follow a trade which could be of interest in planning his own return home;<sup>6</sup>
- 2) training in the arrival country, to be conducted by local organizations delegated to do so;<sup>7</sup>
- 3) the third stage (is it carried out anywhere?) could be devoted to training migrants for their return, and could be conducted in the receiving country and subsequently in their homeland.

Several measures applied at the micro-level aim at influencing the decisions of migrants working abroad and convincing them to use their resources more efficiently. Several projects are currently being implemented in both sending and EU countries, supporting the economic initiatives of the migrants themselves. Immigrants are being trained in specific sectors, so that they can return to their homeland with the knowledge and capital necessary for setting up a business. "Ethnic funding" could be created to provide the financial resources necessary.

## 2. Channelling savings into tourism

The majority of immigrants in Italy are employed in the services sector. Tourism is a very important segment that creates employment opportunities for foreigners: Europeans prevalently in the higher skilled occupations, or more specialized work, because

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<sup>6</sup> A first initiative, concerning the implementation of Art. 23 of the Bossi-Fini law on immigration in Italy, is the bilateral agreement between Italy and Morocco which allows the formation of specialized workforce in the country of origin before emigration to Italy (signed November, 2005). Pilot-projects on the same ground are under way in Tunisia, where the Regione Lombardia has started (2004) a project aimed at selecting 250 workers in the governorates of Gafsa and Kasserine who will follow a course of 400 hours in order to become plumbers, masons, electricians, and tile setting workers. In 2005, Italy and Morocco agreed on a professional formation programme aimed at future Moroccan emigrants to Italy.

<sup>7</sup> Under existing law (No. 287, l. 25.08.91) in Italy specific vocational schools and trade associations are responsible for hospitality management training and these are controlled by regional administrations. Clearly, foreign citizens are also required to comply with this ruling. The immigrant working in the food/drink sector will have access to this type of training.

of their knowledge of languages and specific training, while non-Europeans work chiefly in manual or low-skilled jobs, but above all in a myriad of small service businesses that revolve around tourism and leisure. Summer trade in holiday resorts provides numerous job opportunities, especially in southern Italy. The immigrant has the chance to come into contact with a multiplicity of hospitality activities that provide information about tourist demand and about the businesses created to satisfy that demand in what is a highly disaggregated industry. Similar entrepreneurial models can be emulated in the immigrant's home country, to cater for domestic and foreign tourists.<sup>8</sup>

Hospitality management training in the villages could also be linked to initiatives launched in the developed countries. In Europe, rural tourism was developed to provide additional income for farmers in an effort to stem rural exodus and decay. Joining up with the green holidays business (*vacanze verdi*), rural tourism adds value to the countryside, lifestyles and local knowledge of rural areas.

Countryside tourism plays an important role in the Maghreb too, particularly in Morocco, where abandonment of inland mountainous areas has resulted in excessive population pressure on human settlements along the coast and in historic towns. Another reason why this form of tourism deserves special attention is that it may well succeed in making the tourist industry less season dependent, offering products suitable for the shoulder seasons. New tourist attractions also need to be encouraged as an alternative to the standard tours of the Moroccan capitals. Lastly, a domestic demand already exists for forms of tourism and hospitality that share many common features with the rural tourism in Europe (Berriane, 1992).

The Moroccan Ministry of Tourism has recently launched several hospitality projects aimed at setting up facilities that, though designed along the lines of traditional dwellings, offer satisfactory standards of hygiene and comfort.

These innovative low-cost products are expected to attract increasing numbers of domestic and international tourists keen to experience alternative tourism, bringing visitors into direct contact with the local population, local initiatives and local culture. Organizations acting as intermediaries between the tourist and this type of holiday destination are now flourishing.<sup>9</sup>

These kinds of initiatives involve all family members in a variety of activities in order to meet the tourist's expectations (cooking, cleaning, leisure, escorting, etc.). The crucial point is linguistic communication, to enable tourist/host contact and interrelationship once the tourist arrives at destination.

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<sup>8</sup> A few references can be found now and again in the literature about migrants' investments in rural tourism, by return emigrants or by emigrants living abroad. For instance, families living on wood cutting in the woodlands in the province of Suceava (Romania) are reported to rent rooms to tourists. Sometimes they even go as far as to build entire hotels *à l'occidentale*, but in this case, the lack of formation and experience in the business may cause their failure (cfr. Cingolani and Piperno, 2005: 35).

<sup>9</sup> Among the many organizations that exist, we mention here the London-based *Tourism Concern*, a non-profit organization which publishes *The Good Alternative Travel Guide*, and also *The Responsible Ecological Social Tours Project* in Bangkok. Some have connections with tour operators, others with non-profit organizations. The underlying principle is to ensure that most of the money spent by tourists benefits the local community.

Both in inner Morocco and interior Sardinia most migrants originated from villages perched on hills or lost in remote areas. On their return home they must confront stagnant economies and lack of new development, if they want to go on living there. The only means of adding to the family revenues seems to be in investing savings and specific work experience in the tourist trade. Natural assets, local traditions and folklore will then attract a seasonal inflow of tourists. The practise of a foreign language and possibly some training in catering will make a big difference. Local families, being already settled in the hills and engaged in some agricultural activities, are in the position of running with some profit small rural accommodations and services.

The link between type of farm and rural tourism shows a certain variety. In Morocco, for example, accommodation is offered in small farms which offer holidays targeted at tourists on a more modest budget, as well as on large farms which organize activities such as horse-riding and hunting. This recalls some forms of agrotourism practised in France, England or on large estates in Tuscany, which include mansions and castles. The Moroccan government launched a coordinated effort to support rural tourism only in the 1980's. Of the most significant experiences we recall here the creation of the Association des Guides locaux et des Accompagnateurs in 1996, for organizing and developing tourism and sports activities in the High Atlas mountains. Also worthy of mention is the association Migrations & Développement in Marseille which in the 1990's financed, in the area concerned, the purchase of a generator and set up a first aid post in the village of Armed, in the Rherhaya valley, essential innovations not only for the tourists but also for the local population. Equally important is the Migrations et Développement local au Maroc, a federation of village associations with its head office in Rabat, which implements electrification projects and other initiatives required to set up small businesses. Nine immigrants now in France also belong to this federation which has already opened small businesses in Morocco; 670 members strong, it also has a decentralized office in Taliouine (Taroudannt).<sup>10</sup>

A great deal of attention is being focused on rural tourism as a means of investing migrant remittances and of harnessing the skills acquired abroad. These are documented in the initiatives of the ADS (Agence de Développement social), which in 2003 signed a partnership convention with the Agence Française de Développement on the *Tourisme rural project*, which aims to promote the building of accommodation and *gîtes* (huts, lodgings) for tourists and to involve Moroccans living abroad in investment projects in their homelands.<sup>11</sup> Of course, the quality of the territory where these actions take place is very important to ensure their success and therefore even this type of initiative becomes a cause of differentiation in the local distribution of wealth.

The early initiatives were largely implemented thanks to the capital invested by

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<sup>10</sup> Information provided by Chaire Unesco de Bordeaux sur la formation professionnelle du développement durable, which operates in decentralized Franco-Moroccan cooperation.

<sup>11</sup> A Seminar on this topic, organized by the Agence de Développement Social au Maroc and Association Migrations & Développement, was held in Paris in May 2004. The former agency is responsible for tourism training in rural environments (*Colloque National pour instaurer une formation par apprentissage en Ecotourisme*, Institut Technique Agricole de Ben Khilil-Khenifra, June 2005).

the wealthy families of Marrakech, who set up hospitality facilities which they then handed over to the village notables or to associations. However, over the last few decades increasing numbers of workers have been playing an innovative role, investing their savings from activities carried out in the city in this way. A multitude of actors is involved in implementing tourism projects and tourist guides play a decisive role in promoting these initiatives as they are the only people interested in channelling visitors to the areas concerned. They play a leading role in getting their families and acquaintances to open hospitality facilities. Work experiences of Maghrebins in France as well as in Moroccan cities are instrumental in arousing interest in this form of hospitality. A survey conducted in Morocco has shown that it is not uncommon for migrants to take up employment in the tourist industry. The most important part of their work experience was found to be learning French. Being the owner of the *gîte* or of the land on which to build it, was also a major asset.

### 3. Experiences in Morocco, High Atlas Mountains

In latter years the Ministry of Tourism has launched a series of initiatives to promote rural tourism in efforts to implement a strategy able to create and enhance marketable tourism products. The projects have focused largely on hospitality establishments, but only part of the population in limited areas has benefited from the wealth created. This emerges quite clearly in the study area. Foreign associations operating in the region have and continue to fulfil an important function, also establishing lasting relationships in sustainable tourism and tourism that offers an alternative to the most sought after destinations. Thanks to interactions with European countries, tourism strategies are changing, and are now oriented towards alternative forms that look for new destinations and innovative accommodation facilities. Following the example of the countries on the northern shores of the Mediterranean, hospitality structures integrated into the local environment are now being set up on the southern shores.

The Ourika Valley and neighbouring Rherhaya Valley, close to the Toubkal National Park inland from Marrakech, are frequented by both domestic and foreign tourists. The Toubkal National Park has attracted many small rural tourism businesses because of its favourable situation and the proximity to the city and airport of Marrakech as well as to Agadir (Figure 1).

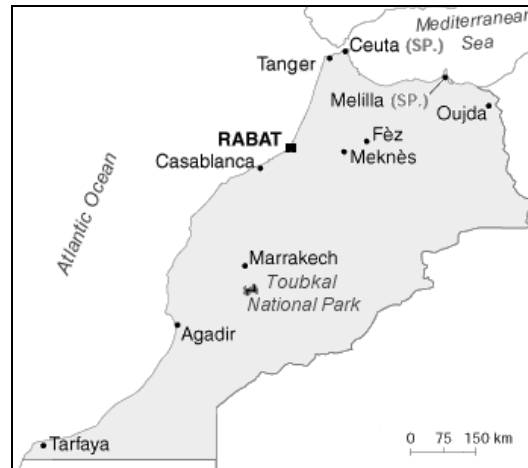
Tourism in this area began on a small scale in the 1980's: the rapid increase during the 1990's was accompanied by a change in tourism strategies towards alternative leisure and hospitality options. In spite of their height (Mgoun the highest peak at 4,076 m), the central High Atlas Mountains are easily accessible to tourists and hikers. No specialized mountain guides are needed to escort tourists nor are special climbing fixtures or equipment required. The area is usually quite isolated thus preserving its traditional habitat and the traditional lifestyle of the local population.

A bilateral French-Moroccan economic cooperation project called *Projet Haut Atlas Central* got under way in 1982 to promote agro-pastoralism, handicrafts and, in particular tourism, in the upper part of the central High Atlas Mountains. As the local population immediately showed an interest in tourism, a few years later a second pro-



ject was launched, with the focus on tourism. Professional mountain tourism training was provided by the Centre de Formation aux Métiers de la Montagne, at Tabant. The guides trained at this school are awarded a specific diploma. In addition, existing properties have been renovated to make guest houses (*logement chez l'habitant*).

Figure 1: Location of the Toubkal National Park in Morocco



A survey conducted a few years ago (Popp, 1999) in a small area in the High Atlas Mountains region showed that already by 1992 the *gîtes d'étape* had registered roughly 3,200 visitors out of a total of 90,000 in the study area. This number was certainly lower than the actual figure and was in any case to increase over the years to come. It was found that the older properties (*gîtes*) had gradually improved their services and amenities, adapting them to European tastes. It was the guides who were to be thanked for the high profits and customer satisfaction. This undoubtedly had a positive impact on the local economy and community, notwithstanding a few mishaps. A soft tourism product was created that roused the interest of the local population and improved their ability to meet visitors' demands, despite some misunderstandings.

The agro-pastoral economy provides the local population with a source of income from the sale of surplus farm and dairy produce. Today this income is no longer sufficient to make ends meet, also because ever since the Protectorate era, the rural population pays State tax. So, the local population is increasingly looking for new more remunerative, capital non-intensive businesses in an effort to solve this crisis and stem the exodus of the rural population. As the Berber proverb goes "pour faire vivre sa famille l'homme doit se tourner soit vers l'est, soit vers l'ouest" (to meet family needs, the man must turn to east and to west).

A series of interviews was conducted among the people in the valleys who had set up catering and hospitality establishments, in similar circumstances to those described in the survey mentioned above (Popp, 1999). The questionnaire, which contained open questions, was divided into six parts: a) general information about the interviewee, b) pre-

vious experience in the hospitality industry, c) project design, d) project implementation, e) investment, f) running of structure, and, g) impact of the project on family and local community. No sampling of the interviewees was feasible, owing to the small number of families engaged in the business and to communication problems.

The various types of internal migration are important for transferring money and ideas into the region as these contribute to the social dynamics of interior zones. Even more significant is international migration. Sometimes, exchanges of information and experiences do bear new fruit in the long run. As the interviews described here show, in the Atlas Mountains, the returnees savings and direct experience contribute to changing the pattern of commercial activities, especially in the tourist industry which is only just starting to take off. Beginning with very little, usually land or old property inherited from their family, the homcomer gradually builds up and renovates, first offering just a few rooms and rudimentary services, gradually adding more rooms and improving comfort (Iorio, 2004; Pisano, 2003–04). Tourism and emigration are linked by important communication tools that have started a virtual circle. Speaking with these people, one soon realizes that they have similar tales to tell and that a leitmotiv runs through their stories: a chance meeting with the forest wardens, or an experience with visitors that will not be forgotten. Moroccan immigrants in France often return home for their holidays so much so that Morocco is one of the few countries that distinguishes between domestic tourists and others. Tourists come through word of mouth recommendations and the number of return visits appears to be very promising.

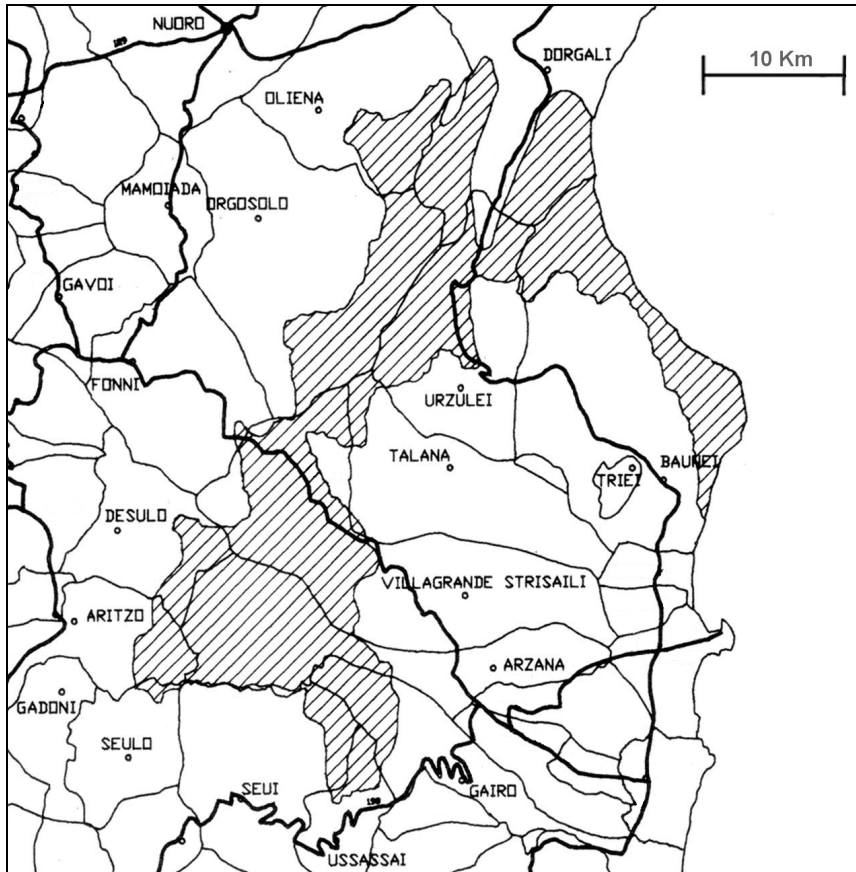
#### **4. Return migration in Sardinia and tourism investment: experiences and proposals**

It is interesting to compare the experiences of Sardinian migrants returning home to set up rural tourism businesses, or in any case tourist-related activities, on the island. A small number of returned emigrants engaged in their own catering and hotel businesses were interviewed, more often in coastal resorts. It is not easy to find out the status of returnees and therefore no sampling plan could be made.

On coming back, most returnees originating from interior villages choose to re-settle in coastal areas, forming a kind of triangular move between place of origin, place of residence abroad and final destination (Simoncelli, 1978). In this case the migrant does not return to his hometown so does not invest his savings in villages in the interior. Sometimes rural tourism establishments only appear as such but are really looking for any business. So these structures do not always serve to keep savings and residents in villages in the interior. Productive integration of returnees is also an accumulation mechanism for the better-endowed tourist areas, in terms of quality of tourist resources. It is the coast that attracts investments, especially the west coast where emigration started later and where return rates of migrants have recently increased. A number of these returnees have worked abroad in jobs in the tourist industry and returned home bringing with them savings and experience. Clearly, the contact with other Italian catering professionals and Italians with catering traditions working abroad, like the Venetians and Sicilians in Germany, also plays an important role.

Almost all these return migrants have worked in the tourist industry during their stay abroad, often employed in small Italian-run businesses. Usually they keep in regular contact with their place of origin, friends and relations. Sometimes they return home bringing their foreign wives with them. By comparison, a larger number of returnees set up their own tourism related businesses on the east coast, in recently developed tourist areas. Many returnees have settled in central-eastern Sardinia hoping to develop rural tourism in an area which boasts valuable natural assets (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Central-eastern Sardinia\*



\* Protected areas are slashed

In Sardinia, Regional Law No. 7 dated 15.01.2001, makes provisions for training courses for return migrants to facilitate their occupational, social and cultural reintegration (Art. 19). If the returnee intends setting up his/her own business, then he/she enjoys the same rights as residents and the same benefits provided for by the law. In addition, priority processing is given to applicants with returnee status and they are also gi-

ven precedence in any placing (Art. 21). In their experience, having attended training courses and vocational schools in Italy and abroad is an asset for Sardinian emigrants. Furthermore, spending holidays in their hometowns keeps them informed about the possibilities of reintegration.

As far as tourism-related activities are concerned, Italian legislation requires all businesses providing food and beverage services in a place open to the public – restaurants, pizzerias, bars, pubs and the like – and which do not operate within a licensed hospitality establishment, to register with the REC (Registro Esercenti il Commercio, trade register). No such requirement exists for the hospitality business in Italy – hospitality establishments providing food and beverages are not required to register. Other forms of control exist for agrotourism and bed & breakfast establishments. However, in the former case, registration is required only if food and beverage services are provided to external clients.

Only those persons wishing to register with the REC who do not possess specific qualifications (hospitality training schools or similar) or who have not passed an exam permitting them to provide food and beverage services, are required to attend courses. Equivalence of qualifications obtained by Italian citizens in EU member states can be provided. This facilitates reintegration of Italian citizens and makes it easier for them to obtain a license. Several emigrants who had obtained professional qualifications in their home country returned home with a wealth of experience gained working abroad. Others had worked in a variety of sectors but once they had come into contact with the hospitality/catering industry had decided to make a living from it. Having learned a foreign language while working abroad and how to cater for clients' needs are a major asset. In some cases clients contact tourist associations or travel agencies abroad for their on-line bookings. The returnees' foreign wives – German, Dutch, etc. – maintain relationships with clients and tourist agencies. In this way the clients arrive not only from Sardinian towns and the major tourist resorts, but directly from Germany and other countries.

## **5. Training for foreigners (non-EU citizens)**

In Italy, non-European immigrants are required to attend a course to obtain a licence for food and beverage establishments should the qualifications obtained in their country of origin not be recognized.<sup>12</sup> In the city of Cagliari, in 2005, at least thirty foreigners (especially Chinese and Romanians), attended the (fee-paying) courses held by Ascom (a merchants association) or Confesercenti (an association of medium and small enterprises in Italy) – trade union associations responsible for organizing the courses – and obtained the certificate, the first step towards setting up a food and beverage establishment of their own. This certificate is valid throughout Italy. Foreigners wishing to attend the course are required to have a temporary residence permit, granted for self-

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<sup>12</sup> Foreign qualifications recognized by the Ministero dell'Industria for providing food and beverage services are specified for each country. For African countries only the courses taught in Egypt (Luxor Hotel and Catering School) and Eritrea (Asmara University) are recognized.

employment or for family reasons. Usually the applicant is moving on from the employee (generally employed by a fellow citizen) to the self-employment status to which he/she aspires, and is already familiar with the profession. Acceptance is conditional upon the candidate's having a good knowledge of Italian and at least 8 years of schooling. Therefore African Muslims who have only attended Koran schools, have never worked in the catering sector and do not speak Italian, are not accepted for the course, unless they attend evening classes to complete their primary education and learn Italian.<sup>13</sup>

A training project in the small hospitality and food and beverage sectors, designed for the numerous foreigners employed in the tourism industry in Sardinia, could be implemented as a decentralized international cooperation initiative by the Sardinian Regional Government. However, a training course of this kind would not allow foreigners to open up food and beverage establishments in Italy. Two different channels are involved. Should immigrants decide to return to their home country then the certificate might facilitate their reintegration. In any case, the experience gained would be a major asset.

Moroccan operators are well aware of the importance of education and professional training for managing their albeit modest hospitality establishments. Almost all of them have had work experience in tourist resorts or in the catering industry in Morocco and abroad.

### **Conclusion: possible interaction between work experience and formation abroad and the development of the tourist trade at home**

One general consideration, which also emerged from the interviews, is that the experience gained elsewhere by migrants in large cities, in coastal tourism or abroad, is a precious asset. Education, learning a foreign language and a brief experience in the tourist industry are of fundamental importance. Qualifications obtained abroad and recognized in the country of origin (as is the case of Sardinian immigrants in the EU), prove invaluable. Specific training for migrants, provided by the sending countries or organized in the countries of origin on their return, could form part of an action programme aimed at developing decentralized country-based initiatives locally. These might help to mobilize migrant savings and micro-credit practices over a much wider area. This would become part of a co-development policy in the immigrants' home country.

However, modernization of the transport system, provision of power and water supply, as well as solid waste and waste water collection systems are crucial to the development of the small hospitality sector in immigrants' home countries – essential requirements for any economic activity, even more so for tourism. Increasing the supply of

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<sup>13</sup> This is probably the main reason why very few of the many Senegalese living in Cagliari run food and beverage establishments. A large percentage of the older Senegalese have only attended Koran school and have never had the opportunity to work in restaurants or similar establishments owned by their countrymen. Neither have they attended specific courses in their homeland or in Italy. Another reason is that, unlike the Chinese, they certainly do not possess the necessary capital. Foreign street traders/stall holders, including the Senegalese, only sell non-food items, food trading being left to the Sardinians, as they are obliged to attend a licence qualifying course organized by the trade associations.

tourist accommodation, along with the recognition, accessibility and fruition of the archaeological sites and natural heritage remains an essential ingredient for promoting integrated tourism in the interior zones. Another point that emerged from the interviews with Moroccan returnees is *the assistance in planning and designing the buildings destined for hospitality* provided by some Moroccan town councils. This initiative also represents a form of quality control, to ensure that the *gîtes* merge with the natural surroundings and reflect traditional architectural styles as well as satisfactory standards of hygiene and safety.

Lastly, after a review of the conditions imposed by control regulations and policies for assisting returnees, here we should also mention the major role played by family solidarity. In the life experiences reported here, a synergy emerges once again, where savings and effort are combined, as well as the shreds of knowledge and skills that each member of the family has gradually gained. In learning from their stories the difficulties they encountered, the determination and the sacrifice of entire existences, one can empathize with them and rejoice in the small but great success story about the tourist who arrives and appreciates the little that he/she is offered.

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PRODUKTIVNA REINTEGRACIJA ISELJENIKA POVRATNIKA I SEOSKI  
TURIZAM: ŽIVOT I RADNA ISKUSTVA U SARDINIJI (ITALIJA) I U  
GORSKOM PREDJELU PROVINCIJE MARAKEŠ (MAROKO)

SAŽETAK

Rad predstavlja doprinos u oblikovanju migracijskih politika povratka koje nastoje iskoristiti stečene vještine iseljenika te usmjeriti njihove uštede u otvaranje malih poslova (businessa) unutar programa lokalnog razvoja. U formuliranju mjera koje mogu stvoriti pozitivne mogućnosti za povratnik migranata u njihova rodna mjesta koristeći njihove vještine stečene u industriji zemalja primitka i ulažući uštede u svoju zemlju, autori su se oslonili na iskustva iseljenika povratnika prikupljenih na Sardiniji i u provinciji Marakeš u Maroku. Te mjere iseljenicima povratnicima također trebaju ponuditi i mogućnost naseljavanja u urbanim sredinama. Studija slučaja bavi se inicijativom za pokretanje seoskog turizma u priobalnim i unutrašnjim predjelima kao alternativom za nautički i obalni turizam.

Pod pretpostavkom da samo krajevi s prirodnom i kulturnom baštinom pružaju dobre mogućnosti za razvoj seoskog turizma, ponuđeni su sljedeći zaključci: a) čini se da bi bilo korisno kada bi vlasti u zemljama primitka organizirale tečajeve osposobljavanja za radnike migrante unutar okvira suradnje za pomoć migrantima za povratak u domovinu; b) bitno je da lokalne vlasti u zemlji podrijetla migranta općenito poboljšaju sustav prijevoza, te popratne pogodnosti i turističke usluge; c) u zemljama podrijetla jednako je tako važno usvojiti mjere kojima je cilj prepoznavanje, obnova i povećanje arheološke baštine, materijalne kulture i tradicije općenito, zajedno s prirodnim/ekološkim resursima kako bi se stvorio integrirani turistički proizvod.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: Maroko, Sardinija, povratna migracija, seoski turizam

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## LA RÉINTÉGRATION PRODUCTIVE DES PERSONNES RÉINSTALLÉES ET LE TOURISME RURAL: VIE ET EXPÉRIENCES DE TRAVAIL EN SARDAIGNE (ITALIE) ET DANS LA ZONE MONTAGNEUSE DE LA PROVINCE DE MARRAKECH (MAROC)

### RÉSUMÉ

Le présent article apporte sa contribution à la formulation des politiques migratoires de retour, qui s'efforcent de tirer profit des savoir-faire acquis par les émigrés et les invitent à consacrer leurs économies à la création de petites entreprises au sein d'un programme de développement local. Dans la formulation des mesures susceptibles de créer des opportunités positives pour le retour des émigrés dans leurs villages natals, en utilisant leurs savoir-faire acquis dans l'industrie des pays d'accueil en Europe et en investissant leurs économies dans leur pays d'origine, les auteurs se basent sur l'expérience des émigrés réinstallés, en Sardaigne et dans la province de Marrakech, au Maroc. Ces mesures doivent aussi offrir aux migrants réinstallés la possibilité de se fixer dans des milieux urbains. L'étude de cas se penche sur une initiative pour la création de tourisme rural dans les régions littorales et intérieures, en tant qu'alternative au tourisme nautique et balnéaire. Partant de la supposition que seules les régions dotées de biens culturels et naturels présentent un bon potentiel pour le développement du tourisme rural, les auteurs exposent les conclusions suivantes: a) il semble qu'il serait utile que les autorités des pays d'accueil organisent des cours de formation pour les travailleurs immigrés dans le cadre de leur coopération pour l'aide au retour des migrants dans leurs pays d'origine; b) il est essentiel que les autorités locales des pays d'origine des migrants veillent à améliorer de façon générale le réseau de transports et les activités touristiques et de services; c) il est tout aussi important, dans les pays d'origine, de prendre des mesures visant à souligner le cachet, à sauvegarder et à élargir, le patrimoine archéologique, la culture matérielle et les traditions en général, y compris les ressources naturelles/environnementales, afin de créer un produit touristique intégré.

MOTS CLÉS : Maroc, Sardaigne, migration de retour, tourisme rural