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# Being at home and away: transnational entanglements of tourism and migration in Sardinia, Italy.

## Abstract

In this study we discuss the intersection between tourism and migration. In doing so we interrogate how tourism and migration meet, interrelate, overlap, and merge in multifaceted and fluid ways. We draw upon literature on transnational migration and on Sarah Ahmed's work on the relationship between "strange encounters" and home (Ahmed 2000; Ahmed et al., 2020). These theoretical perspectives enable us to move away from an "ontology of the stranger" (Ahmed, 2000, p.79) and polarised views on migration and tourism. We investigate these issues through semi-structured interviews with people with different migration backgrounds and migration-related experiences who revolve around the Sardinia tourism industry. Our discussion unveils the entrenched inequalities and unexpected resources that people with different experiences of migration live and mobilise to reconfigure and expand notions of home through their involvement in the tourism industry. Our discussion underlines how processes of regrounding and the shaping of transnational ties between countries of origin and migration can exceed the remit and frameworks of initiatives to "integrate" migrants through tourism. Drawing on the participants' accounts and experiences of uprooting and regrounding, we contend that different identities and multiple notions of home can emerge from the uneven relationship between tourism and migration.

## Key words

Migration; tourism; uprooting/regrounding; transnationalism; home.

## Introduction

In this paper we critically examine the intersection between transnational migration and tourism. Our focus aims to address the need to broaden "cultural perspectives of leisure [and tourism] as a contested domain where power, knowledge, subjectivity, belonging and marginality are constantly negotiated along the intersecting lines of class, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, physical (dis)ability and legal status" (De Martini Ugolotti and Caudwell, 2022, p. 3). Hence, our discussion on how tourism and migration link, acknowledges the complex multiplicity of perspectives, experiences and power dynamics which constitute this intersection.

We examine this topic in the context of the Italian region of Sardinia by engaging with the experiences of a range of people who differently inhabit the intersection of tourism and migration, namely: 1) a group of men and women who migrated to Italy because of a variety of often overlapping reasons, including economic needs, wars and/or political instability and are employed in different roles in the tourism industry in Sardinia; 2) children of migrants who are employed in different roles in the tourism industry in Sardinia ; 3) Italian citizens who are involved in the promotion of multicultural diversity in Sardinia, including through

tourism-related initiatives. By putting to dialogue the diverse and overlapping experiences, practices, and viewpoints across a series of actors differently positioned in the tourism industry in Sardinia, we aim to shed light on the complexities of the migration-tourism nexus beyond existing analyses on the topic.

Importantly, when it comes to addressing people who migrated to Italy, we chose not to focus on specific legal and policy categories (such as economic migrant vs. refugee) usually adopted in public, political and academic discussions on the topic. In this way we acknowledge and underline that immigration categories and socio-legal statuses are not fixed nor “objective” (Crawley and Skleparis, 2018). This representational choice seeks to highlight the slipperiness and complexity of people’s migration trajectories as they move between statuses through time, either agentically or because of shifting structural barriers such as increasingly restrictive legislation and policies (Lewis et al., 2014; De Martini Ugolotti and Caudwell, 2022). This is particularly relevant, though not limited to the Italian context. It has been calculated that the 2018 Salvini Security Decree-Law that introduced legal restrictions for people seeking asylum in Italy has turned more than 200.000 foreign legal residents who had obtained humanitarian protection into undocumented migrants in the range of few months (Ambrosini, 2020).

From this starting point, we interrogate the ways tourism and migration meet, interrelate, overlap, and merge in often complex ways by engaging with literature on transnational migration (Erel and Lutz, 2012; Huang et al. 2016), and Sarah Ahmed’s work on the relationship between “strange encounters” and home (Ahmed, 2000; Ahmed et al. 2020). Putting to dialogue these perspectives, we explore the complexities, tensions and possibilities that underpin the relationship between the notions of *home and tourism* from the perspective of people with migrant backgrounds who are involved in the industry. From this theoretical standpoint, we foreground the connections between migration trajectories, overarching socio-political processes (e.g., migration and citizenship policies), and daily practices of belonging, exclusion and (im)mobility that emerge in the tourism industry. In dialogue with other authors who engaged with similar perspectives to address the wider connections between leisure and migration, we contend that such focus, can disrupt forms of binary thinking around difference and belonging as constituted through the opposition of supposedly homogeneous and fixed categories such as here/there, past/present, them/us (see Lewis, 2010; Mata-Codesal et al., 2015; De Martini Ugolotti, 2022a; Collison and De Martini Ugolotti, 2022).

We explore these issues by critically engaging with the narratives of migrants, children of migrants and stakeholders from the tourism and cultural sector in the context of Sardinia (Italy), the second largest Italian island in the Mediterranean Sea. We chose this setting for three reasons. First, Sardinia is one of the most popular Italian tourism destinations both domestically and internationally (RAS, 2022). Second, given its geographical position, the island has represented a crucial point in southern Europe for the arrival of migrants, particularly from the North-African coast (ECFR, 2017). Third, Sardinia is a popular location

for seasonal migrant workers employed in and around the island's tourism industry (Schapendonk, 2020).

This theoretical and empirical standpoint contributes for a reconsideration on how the interconnections between tourism and migration are fluid and often move between challenges and opportunities, inequalities, and solidarities. To this end, we pose the following questions to develop a critical understanding on how tourism intersects with wider societal conditions and dynamics: a) how do actors with different experiences of migration construct and negotiate forms of otherness and belonging as part of their involvement in the tourism industry? b) how do tourism and migration intersect in a unique socio-economic landscape such as the Sardinian one? c) how are notions, feelings and material dimensions of *home* constructed and negotiated through an involvement in the tourism industry by people with different experiences of migration?

In addressing these questions, we contend that a theoretically-driven, and critical understanding of migration can help to broaden views on its connections and overlaps with the tourism landscape and can contribute to offer novel perspectives on both domains. Hence, the paper is structured as follows. First, we discuss theoretical perspectives on tourism and migration. Second, we present conceptualisations of transnational migration and how this intersects with tourism. Finally, we will contextualise the study using the setting of Sardinia, before discussing the data and the findings of the study and their relevance for scholars and scholars-practitioners at the intersection of tourism and migration.

### Tourism and Migration.

As Noel Salazar (2022) points out, there is a long lasting and close link between tourism and migration which, in turn, shapes various forms of mobilities and is shaped by different “regimes of mobility” (p. 144). At present, the nexus between migration and tourism has been mainly explored through a focus on labour migration, return migration, entrepreneurial migration, retirement migration and second homes (Barbosa et al., 2021; Özyurt, 2022). Additionally, migration and/in tourism has been examined through the consideration of temporary migrants, seasonal workers, and nomads as forms of non-permanent migration (see Casado-Díaz et al., 2014; Haug et al., 2007). Salazar (2022) notes that the tourism industry often relies on people who belong to ethnic minorities, low skilled and unemployed youngsters, among others. Similarly, Choe and Lugosi (2022) remind us how certain labour migrants within the context of tourism, particularly from the Global South, experience social discrimination, exploitation, and injustice because of and/or as a result of uneven types of mobilities.

At the same time, other studies have highlighted how local tourism initiatives contribute to foster social integration in host countries (Scheyvens and Biddulph, 2018). An example is the development of walking tours in different European cities led by people with a background of (forced) migration (Burrai et al., 2022; Ormond and Vietti, 2021). Nonetheless, academic explorations on the topic have often missed to consider the impact of pervasive bordering

practices, and the *longue-durée* of entrenched racisms on the capacity of tourism to integrate and include people with migrant backgrounds. In this sense, studies on tourism as a tool to foster integration of ethnic, religious and cultural minorities have often “taken for granted a linear narrative of migration as disconnected from colonial, postcolonial and neo-colonial relations of power” (Ahmed et al., 2020, p. 8). By missing to address the hierarchies of deservingness (Kyriakidou, 2021) that shape integration discourses and policies, scholarly views that address tourism as a tool for the integration risk reinforcing bi-dimensional perceptions of migration as “a problem to fix” and tourism as a “resource” (for a notable exception see Bloch and Adams, 2022). Instead, we contend that interrogating how migration and tourism interweave allows to explore how people with different relationships and experiences of migration in the tourism industry in Sardinia reproduced, complicated, and negotiated the social and political construction of the migrant and the tourist, the local and the foreigner.

Instead, Ahmed’s view on acknowledging less linear narratives of migration help us to move away from what she defines as *ontology of strangers* whereby “the stranger is produced, not as that which we fail to recognise, but as that which we have already recognised as a ‘stranger’” (2000, p. 3). Ahmed’s discussion of stranger fetishism complicates established notions of identity, difference and belonging that are inherent in current understandings of migratory phenomena whereby a stranger is defined as someone who is not at their “natural” home. This conceptualisation gives space to more fluid considerations of migration where people negotiate their experiences of *making* home through unevenly distributed material possibilities (e.g., legal status/citizenship, socio-economic position, racism and social inequalities) and sensory, affective, and bodily registers (smell, taste, everyday practices) This perspective allows to reconsider the notion of *home* as constituted through the intersection of multifaced, dynamic and multi-sited dimensions (Lloyd and Vasta, 2017). Homeland and home, although interrelated, become two distinct domains that cannot be conflated. Whereas the homeland is the country of origins of migrants, home is an “experience of locality” (Brah, 2005, p. 2), the place where feelings of familiarity and emplacement are experienced (even amid forms of exclusion and marginality). Moreover, the definition of home for migrants can often constitute an open and unfinished accomplishment (Boccagni and Baldassar, 2015). Although migrants might feel rooted in a new country, they might still maintain strong imagined or actual ties with their homelands, or, as children of migrants in Italy, they can face public and political perspectives that position them as “out of place” in the national body politics (see Hepworth and Hamilton, 2014; De Martini Ugolotti, 2022b).

The multitude of interconnections between homelands and homes that are maintained by people crossing borders has been significantly addressed in the last few decades through the lens of transnationalism (Schiller et al., 1995). The term “transnationalism” refers to the spaces in which migrants create an imaginary or real link between their country of origin and the society that hosts them (Schiller et al., 1995). Following Vertovec (2001), a focus on transnationalism highlights how the “identities of numerous individuals and groups of people are negotiated within social worlds that span more than one place” (p. 573). Through the lens

of transnationalism, migration is thus understood as a constellation of experiences which cut across borders and forge subjectivities by displacing traditional notions of the nation-state as the main frame to understand people's movements, belongings and attachments (Schiller et al., 1995; Vertovec, 2001).

Relatedly, Ahmed and colleagues (2020) argue that although migration is commonly understood as a process that involves a physical movement which takes people away from their homes, staying or re-grounding in the arrival place is not a static process. In some cases, the lives of those that leave their countries of origin are tied to nostalgia for what they left and for their past. Hence, "a nostalgic relation to both the past and home might become part of the lived reality in the present" (Ahmed et al, 2020, p. 9). Yet, the author warned from associating this relationship to a lost or far-away home as inherent to every migration trajectory, an interpretation that reinforces the notion of migrants as always "out of place". Instead, Ahmed called scholars to address how the possibilities to make home are constrained by and bound with a "historical economy of difference" (Ahmed 2013, p.60) in which nationally specific ways of encoding "race" and alterity intersect with other entrenched forms of inequality.

In this sense, only if we account for "the political processes whereby some others are designated as stranger than other others" (Ahmed, 2000, p. 6), we can recognise the constraints and practices amid which processes of 'making home' can unfold within diverse migration trajectories. To this end, in this paper we explore how narratives of uprooting and re-grounding (Ahmed et al, 2020) are told and made by people with different experiences of migration and the tourism industry, and the different ways in which an involvement in the tourism industry related to such processes.

The context: Sardinia.

In Sardinia different types of mobilities interweave with tourism. These include tourists who visit the island; Sardinians who leave the island to look for less seasonal and precarious livelihood opportunities; migrants who reach the island to find a job often in the tourism industry and Sardinians who work with migrants. Sardinia is the second largest Italian island in the Mediterranean Sea and, globally, a sought-after destination by international and domestic tourists. The island receives more than 3 million tourist arrivals a year, 80% of which are concentrated in the summer season, from June to September (RAS, 2022). The strong seasonality of the tourism industry affects economic and employment dynamics. The island is also affected by significant depopulation, as many young Sardinians emigrate to other regions of Italy or abroad to find work, contributing to a demographic variation. While the seasonality of tourism and the financial dependence on the industry pushes many Sardinians to migrate, on the other hand it attracts foreign migrants because of the informal nature of tourism and its geographical position in the Mediterranean Sea.

Out of a total population of 1.639.591 inhabitants, the foreign population in Sardinia counts around 52.329 people, 29.449 of which non-EU citizens (Tuttitalia, 2021). The top countries of origin are Romania, Senegal, Morocco, China, Ukraine, Nigeria and Philippines (ECFR,

2017) Communities from sub-Saharan Africa in particular are present and active in the island context and are the ones that most interface with the tourism sector, albeit often informally (e.g., working as street and beach vendors) (Soriga, 2017).

Some organisations on the territory attempt to support and valorise migrants' presence beyond stereotypical images. These include an Italian-Senegalese association, *Sunugaal*, which shares knowledge of African cultures aiming to create a culture of exchange between people of different cultures. Another relevant organisation that operates in Sardinia is Migrantour which is a European Union-funded project that plans intercultural urban walks led by (forced) migrants and people with migrant origins (Ormond and Vietti, 2021). The participants involved in our study engaged in different roles within the tourism industry: 3 were Migrantour guides, 7 worked as street vendors and/or cleaners, waiters, housekeepers (with these often alternating or overlapping), 4 were promoters of inter-cultural exchanges and integration initiatives that involved the tourism sector. We discuss this more in details in the following section.

### Methodology.

Our qualitative approach consisted of 14 in-depth, semi-structured interviews, conducted by one of the authors, on the themes of migration, home and tourism. This method enabled to obtain information by asking questions through a verbal interchange: the researcher prepared a list of questions as a guideline, however the interviews usually unfolded in a conversational manner (Longhurst, 2009). Although the experiences of the informants were related to different parts of Sardinia, the interviews were held in August 2020 in Cagliari, the capital city of Sardinia, which constitute a key hub for tourists, tourism operators and migrants operating and/or travelling across the region. We identified the participants through a purposive sampling technique. As such, we selected individuals of different ages and nationalities currently residing in Sardinia and with various forms of migration trajectories and involvement in activities connecting the issues of migration and tourism (see Table 1).

### Table 1 – Overview of informants

\*\*\*\*Insert Table 1 here\*\*\*\*

The second author was able to conduct most of the interviews in person, nonetheless, for reasons relating to restrictions on travel due to the pandemic, some interviews were held online. Interviews were conducted in Italian; however, language fluency limitations have, at times, hindered the flow of communication with some participants. When relevant, the researcher asked participants for clarifications, and discussed with them the transcripts of the interviews to confirm that these correctly reflected their conversations. Participation in this study was voluntary, and the informants were informed in advance of the nature of the

interviews and the purposes of the research. The interviews transcripts were manually coded using thematic analysis. Broader codes initially assigned were subsequently revised and refined through an iterative, dialogical process among the authors. Although, our initial thematic attention focused on how tourism shaped experiences of migration, our research material highlighted a much more complex scenario whereby clear categories of migrants and tourism blurred and offered unexpected insights on the topics that we discuss in more details in the following sections.

### ***Unpacking the ontology of strangers through tourism experiences.***

Tourism imaginaries and industry practices often reproduce and reinforce what Ahmed (2000) defined as an ontology of the stranger by addressing people with migrant backgrounds working in the sector as instrumental yet invisible actors who are “out of place” within the established categories of “mobile tourists” and “local”, or “native” hosts. These dynamics were often exacerbated for those among the participants who were in precarious legal and economic situations, such as Malik:

“I am from Nigeria, I am 29. I got here 4 years ago, undocumented and in search for work. [...] I do cleaning, in a hotel resort. [...] For now, I want to stay in Sardinia. The main difficulty [of settling in Sardinia] is having the documents, I am trying to start my life here...”.

In elaborating on his plans and desires to make Sardinia his home, Malik described how the type of work he managed to secure in the tourism industry, while helpful to retain a temporary type of work-permit in Italy, did not really allow for making any longer-time plans for the moment:

“I don’t think this is the type of job I wanted to be doing. It is just to have a contract and then I pay the taxes and then maybe I get the documents. I am trying to build up what I will do in the future”.

For several of the participants as in the case of Malik, processes of uprooting and re-grounding were clearly characterised by the challenge of securing the legal rights to remain and work in Sardinia. In this sense, increasingly restrictive legislation and hostile migration policies hindered the possibility of re-grounding for many like Malik in the host destination, even though, as he suggested, working in the tourism industry offered him a way to, as he put it, “*start a new life*”. Similarly to Malik, Manu, a 34 years old man from Nigeria, also mentioned that he arrived in Sardinia undocumented to look for a job. However, the precariousness of the roles that Manu secured in the tourism industry combined with the arbitrary and lengthy procedures to obtain legal status in Italy made difficult for him to imagine the possibility to settle or to travel back “home”. Manu’s precarious economic and legal position *de facto* left him “stuck” in a position between uprooting and re-grounding.

Others, like Taye, a 50-year-old man from Senegal, still travelled between Senegal and Sardinia every six months despite 25 years of residency in Italy. His transnational routes and



links clearly marked by seasonality of the tourism industry in Sardinia: “*once that the summer is over, I go back to Senegal. My parents are old, and I want to go back to them*”. Issa, 55, from Senegal described very similar practices, and stated how: “*After all these years I [still] come and go I have my family and my children in Senegal*”. Taye and Issa’s transnational connections and ways to make home “in constant movement” arguably complicated narrow understandings of migrants’ integration or segregation (Nunn et al., 2021; De Martini Ugolotti and Caudwell, 2022; De Martini Ugolotti and Webster, 2023). In this sense, while an ontology of the stranger (Ahmed, 2000) usually attributes migrants’ relationship to their country of origin as inherently marked by longing and loss, Manu, Malik, Taye and Issa’s different conditions, attempts and desires of making home across national borders illuminated *something else*. That is, their accounts underlined how precarious legal and economic conditions often made more difficult for people with migrant backgrounds to imagine themselves and make home in Sardinia and pushed them to live it instead (and at best) as a place where economic resources could be gathered to maintain a home “elsewhere”.

Research has shown how the conditions of legal insecurity related to ever-restricting migration regimes often exacerbate the precarity of living and working conditions among people on the move (Dal Lago, 2010). In line with this, previous tourism studies have highlighted the exploitative nature of migrant work in an industry that sustains precariat and informality (see Rydzik et al, 2017; Robinson et al., 2019). The circuits of the tourism industry (precariat, informality, seasonality) thus intersected in the participants’ trajectories with other structural processes such as migration policies and legislation, that in Italy have been notoriously informed by exclusionary premises regarding to who could call Italy “home” (Ambrosini, 2013).

These issues are not limited to those who directly migrated to Italy, as the children of migration face often similar difficulties to their parents. The Italian Citizenship Law (dating from 1992) significantly favours access to citizenship through descent (*ius sanguinis*) and marriage with an Italian citizen (*ius conubii*), rather than through birth, residence and social/community ties (Baldassar & Raffaetà, 2017). Consequently, almost half of all children of immigrants who were born in Italy have the same legal identity as their parents as ‘laborers for life’ (Sayad, 2004, see also, Della Puppa & Sredanovic, 2017). Such conditions bind many youngsters of migrant origin to a protracted second-class status in the country where they were born and/or raised, thus limiting opportunities for upward social mobility and to position themselves as rightfully “at home” (Hepworth & Hamilton, 2014; De Martini Ugolotti, 2022b). Karima, 22, originally from Morocco, grew up in a small Sardinian town since she was 5 years old, and observed that while “local” Sardinians have always been kind and hospitable towards her and her family, she also felt:

“a kind of commiseration like 'she is different poor thing, she is Moroccan'. It is a sort of soft racism. Some people really speak without knowing, kind of like 'eh, I have heard that in your countries they do this and that...'. This especially happened after the terrorist attacks in Europe. They looked at me differently because I’m a Muslim”.

Once again, the perceptions described by Karima aligned with socio-political (mis)representations and stereotypical images of “the stranger”. Though in her case such stereotypical perceptions appeared on surface to be innocuous and benign, she pointed out how these interactions “stuck” her in the position of the “stranger” even after living most of her life in Italy. Moreover, the ontology of the stranger at work in what Karima called “soft racism” towards her and her family arguably shared the premises for much more corrosive perceptions and representations in which migrants have been often held responsible for issues of criminality and Italy’s “moral decay” (Palmas 2009). Federica, an Italian 33 years old Migrantour coordinator, chimed on this, considering how in the last three decades, the rise of nationalistic rhetoric like “Italians first” or “No to a Multi-Ethnic Italy” among the population contributed to the normalisation of language describing migrants as dangerous “national pollutants” (Merrill, 2011) and the endorsement of increasingly restrictive laws for civil rights, work and residence for foreigners in Italy (De Martini Ugolotti, 2015):

“Appropriate words are not used in the media, either from a technical point of view but also from a human point of view. The fact that the word “clandestine” is used to refer generically to people who come from different countries is not normal, neither in Italy nor in Europe, it is a word that does not exist”.

Unfortunately, Federica noticed how similar stereotypical constructions of the “stranger” were often unproblematically perpetuated in the context of tourism, even in relation to integration initiatives such as Migrantour:

“I have had the impression that the articles and images offered by the media on Migrantour have not been very accurate. The media have not observed the difference between the new generation [refers to children of migrants] and those who ‘came by boat’. These are complicated topics that [...] are oversimplified using wrong messages”.

Federica, by pointing out how Italian media-accounts did not differentiate between migrants and their children born or brought up in Italy, underlined how distinctions between who can call Italy “home” and who remains considered a migrant are often bound up with normalised ways of encoding and remaking of race, alterity, and “difference” (Hepworth and Hamilton, 2014). Additionally, by commenting upon the misleading media accounts on the Migrantour initiative, Federica hinted to the cultural, social, and political factors “whereby some others are designated as stranger than other others” (Ahmed, 2000, p. 6). Relatedly, from her account we noted how positive initiatives like Migrantour could still be reinscribed in stereotypical notions of difference-to-be-included through “common-sense” perspectives premised on a pervasive and normalised ontology of the stranger. A similar vision was shared by Muhammad, a 46 years old, president of a Senegalese-Sardinian association, according to whom such perspectives make it more difficult for people with migrant background to make Italy their home, even though, he and others would be keen “to add something to that culture,

*because I am there, I live there, I interact, I want to participate in that culture we create in Italy”.*

The stories of tourism and migration of several participants addressed the difficulties of regrounding in Italy, mainly due to precarious legal, economic, and social status and entrenched forms of racism that, apart from Migrantour initiatives, often were normalised rather than challenged in the tourism industry. Yet, Ahmed and colleagues (2020) observed that processes, modes, and materialities of uprootings and regroundings can often emerge in and through a range of often “mundane”, everyday contexts. In these everyday contexts, notions of here and there, us and them blur and complicate an assumed and prevalent ontology of the stranger (Ahmed et al, 2020) operating in and beyond the tourism industry. In the next section we explore further the participants’ perspectives to address how and to what extent more open and fluid feelings of home emerge in and through the participants’ engagement with tourism imaginaries and practices.

### ***Re-making home(s) through tourism practices and experiences.***

Despite the intersecting dynamics discussed above that often-constrained possibilities of making home in Sardinia, many accounts highlighted how processes of regrounding nevertheless took shape. Several of the participants underlined for example how fleeting, yet meaningful sensations of being emplaced, transpired from a series of mundane encounters and related feelings of familiarity with people and places including, as we will discuss, tourist encounters. Dume, a 46 years old street vendor from Senegal, argued that:

“Sardinia is similar to Senegal. The landscapes, nature and most importantly the hospitality and curiosity. Sardinians are open towards others, they make the first move, like in Senegal.”.

Dume’s accounts underlined the sense of familiarity he found in the Sardinian’s landscape. Moreover, and despite the experiences of discrimination and difficulties shared with many other participants, what felt familiar to him was also people’s hospitality which he compared to that of Senegal. While Karima’s account in the previous section eloquently showed how notions of hospitality are entangled with stereotypical assumptions about “the stranger”, Dume, instead, felt in it glimmers of something familiar and comforting. While puzzling at first, we found these diverse accounts illuminating of the different positionalities, trajectories and processes through which people flattened in the category of “strangers” experienced and negotiated “what it means to (not) feel at home” in Sardinia.

For Karima, it was unsettling and painful to be kept at a distance by the hospitality showed to her as a “stranger” in a country where she grew up but where most people could not see her as “everyone else” (Sayad, 2004). In Dume’s case, processes of regrounding included cherishing familiar experiences of hospitality lived beside feelings of discomfort and, not rarely, hostility and rejection he experienced as a migrant. Dume further linked and blurred notions of homeland and home in his aspiration to open a restaurant that could offer Italo-Senegalese cuisine. In this aspiration, in which he envisaged the commercial possibilities

related to operating in a tourist destination, his past and present merged into a new reconsideration of a transnational home not fixed or bounded to a specific territory (Dossa and Golubovic, 2019).

Similarly, an involvement in tourism provided opportunities, for some, to reconfigure home and their “lived experience of locality” (Brah, 2005, p. 2) through the possibility to create networks and renewed forms of belonging. Karima, who we heard before and trained as a Migrantour guide, explained:

“The thing I liked the most (of being part of Migrantour) was the sense of ‘group’ which we built with the other guys that I met when training (to become a tour guide). It has been really amazing to listen to their stories, their aspirations...to create a network and rediscover aspects of your own story in the words of others”.

Karima’s account thus highlighted how the (re)configuration of an experience of locality, of home, was enabled in her experience by being part of a tourism-related community in which experiences of movement and “difference” were part and parcel of a sense of belonging and emplacement (Ormond and Vietti, 2021).

Several accounts highlighted how the participants’ involvement in tourism in some cases enabled them possibilities to bend the distinction between the “local”, the “migrant” and the “tourist”. Some of the participants described themselves as “travellers”, much like their more privileged counter-parts from the Global North working their way as they explored new destinations (Haug et al., 2007). In this sense, the participants ironically, yet meaningfully, underlined the uneven regimes of mobility that labelled them as migrants. In a similar way, Dume explained:

“I feel mainly a tourist. Italy is not my place of origin, every day I feel I discover something new, new places. I had to leave my job as street vendor as, instead of working, I talked to people [...] I loved speaking to people, especially foreigners. I tried to help them with information about the city and chatting in their languages. I was a tour-guide for free.”

In this account, Dume referred to *foreigners* those visiting Cagliari, and identified himself both as a tourist, someone “discovering something new” *but also* a local, someone that was knowledgeable about the city. Tourism roles and practices (e.g., becoming a “tour-guide for free”) enabled him to redefine his position as migrant in the shadow of the “official” tourism industry. Becoming and seeing themselves tour guides and/or as tourists enabled Dume, Karima and other participants not just to negotiate their marginalising social positioning as strangers to be included at best or exploited and excluded at worst. Moreover, it opened opportunities of encounters with locals, tourists that visited Sardinia and people who, like Karima, rediscovered aspects of their own story “in the words of others”. As such, in ways

not limited to valuable initiatives such as Migrantour, the domain of tourism offered to a number of participants meaningful, but rarely discussed transnational configurations of identities and homes. As a final example of these reconfigurations Muhammad, a 46 old man from Senegal, explained how his work as a tour operator made him to straddle across tourism, migration and “making home” in Italy and Senegal:

“If I travel, I won’t be the same. [...] It is not just about seeing a place but also to understand what’s behind. It’s important that people that travel understand what they are seeing. [...] I have taken lots of Sardinian people to Senegal. Now these people go back to Senegal regularly and they do not need me anymore. They know the places better than Senegalese people”.

Muhammad was the founder of a cooperative in Cagliari which ran experiences of responsible tourism in Senegal. His involvement in tourism allowed him to shift his identity from being a migrant in Sardinia to become the facilitator of tourism experiences to his homeland, Senegal. Home for him was, therefore, reconfigured, in relation to his transnational movements.

Building on and expanding on the data presented in the previous section, the participants’ accounts highlighted how forms of uprooting and regrounding are entangled with historical, legal and economic processes and inequalities overlap and shape “what it means to (not) feel at home” in Sardinia. Yet, the participants’ accounts and experiences addressed how forms of regrounding can also emerge from mundane, creative, affective domains that complicate narrow and static notions of “migrants’ integration” (Boccagni and Baldassar, 2015; De Martini Ugolotti and Webster, 2023). The participants’ experiences and practices of regrounding that emerged from their engagements with tourist roles and domains *de facto* bent and blurred ideas of difference and commonality, here and there, native and stranger. The engagement with tourism, often enacted at the fringes of the “official” or “mainstream” tourist sector, allowed the participants to negotiate meanings and practices of home that enabled and promoted “varied and ever-changing perspectives [...] where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference” (hooks, 1991, p.148).

## Conclusion.

This study examined the intersection of tourism and migration by putting to dialogue Ahmed (2000) and Ahmed et al.’s (2020) work on uprooting/re-grounding and the ontology of the stranger with wider literature on transnationalism. In doing so, we explored, via a qualitative research approach, how people with different experiences of migration constructed and negotiated notions, feelings and material dimensions of home through their involvement in the tourism industry in Sardinia, Italy. By addressing “home as practised, as process and event” (Lloyd and Vasta, 2017, p. 4), the discussion advanced perspectives that can complement and complicate established discussions on tourism and migration which often address their relationship in dichotomous ways (e.g., tourism as site of inequality *or* resource for migrant integration).

Our findings highlighted how an engagement with tourism and migration requires addressing the inequalities, complexities, and unexpected possibilities to “make home” that the overlapping of uneven regimes of mobility and belonging entail. Moving beyond polarised, static and narrow understandings of the relationship between these two domains requires a necessity to name and make visible the “historical economy of difference” (Ahmed 2013, p. 60) in which nationally specific ways of encoding “race” and alterity intersect with other entrenched forms of inequality. Yet this study also highlighted that critically interrogating the intersections of tourism, home and migration does not bring to the fore only precarity, entrenched inequalities and exploitation. Rather, it allows researchers to engage with the unexpected, creative ways in which tourist domains and practices can become conduits to forge spaces of familiarity, emplacement and home-making within uneven regimes of mobility and citizenship.

The practices discussed in this paper can thus open further and yet-to-be explored possibilities for “theorising processes of mutual permeation, changing perceptions of space, territory, states, goods and notions of belonging and citizenship” (Erel and Lutz, 2012, p. 409) that emerge from the uneven relationship between tourism and migration. In calling scholars and scholars-practitioners to critically engage and expand these perspectives, we contend that addressing the entanglements of tourism, home and migration can reveal how privileged and unprivileged mobilities and moorings unfold in tourist contexts and domains, thus contributing to debates at the intersection of tourism, leisure and migration studies.

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**Table 1 – Overview of informants**

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Years living in Italy</b>	<b>Type of involvement in tourism</b>
Aicha	26	F	Moroccan	17	Tour guide
Karima	22	F	Moroccan	17	Tour guide
Mustafa	28	M	Senegalese	11	Tour guide/street vendor
Issa	55	M	Senegalese	27	Street vendor
Malik	29	M	Nigerian	4	Cleaner in a hotel
Omar	25	M	Syrian	2	None
Bem	23	M	Senegalese	14	Tailor/waiter/cleaner in hotels
Taye	50	M	Senegalese	25	Street vendor
Dume	46	M	Senegalese	7	Street vendor
Manu	34	M	Nigerian	5	Handyman in a bed and breakfast
Federica	33	F	Italian	Born in Italy	Migrantour coordinator
Muhammad	46	M	Senegalese	23	Sunugaal president
Ilaria	37	F	Italian	native	Cultural mediator
Giovanni	27	M	Italian	native	Tourism operator