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THE GROWTH OF “ISLAMIC TOURISM” IN MAGHREB

SEASONAL RETURN OF EMIGRANTS, DIFFUSION OF HALĀL TOURISM AND NEED
FOR A REVISION OF “WESTERN-ORIENTED” ** TOURIST POLICIES

Introduction – The aim of this research, whose developments are still in progress and the first results are presented herewith, is to offer a contribution to the comprehension, even though limited to three countries (Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia) which constitute the strictly intended Maghreb ⁽¹⁾, of a phenomenon not negligible for its dimension but still little investigated the “islamic” international tourism² and the emergence of the so called *halāl* tourism ⁽³⁾. In spite of the dimension of the phenomenon, the scientific literature on the topic is relatively scarce and above all the tourist branch does not take into consideration properly the relationship between the strongly normative character of the islamic religion - also in periods of holidays and relaxation - and the prevalent features of the existing tourist offer. The focus is rather on the structural aspects of proximity tourism in North Africa (Mosse, 1994), on the cultural determinants subjected to the formation of the internal one (Berriane, 1989) or on the relationships between national and western tourists (Pfaffembach, 2011). A lack of studies goes with a delay in public and private strategies in respect to the emergence of this particular demand segment. These, in fact, do not take into consideration the dimension and potential social and economic relapses of this vast and rapidly changing

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(1) In this paper the definition of Maghreb proposed by Cresm (*Centre de Recherches et d'Etudes sur les Sociétés Méditerranéennes*) has been adopted, that says that Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia form part of it while Libya and Mauritania are excluded and are considered part of the Great Maghreb (Brondino, 1988; De Poli, 1999; Tamburini, Vernassa, 2005; Troin, 2006).

(2) The term “Islamic tourism” shall be understood for indicate the tourism of individuals of islamic religion regardless of which country they come from, however in this paper, we consider such only the tourists coming from islamic countries and the maghrebi permanently resident abroad due to the constraints in the available statistical data. It is obvious that non islamic citizens could be among them, as among tourists coming from non islamic countries and unidentifiable on the basis of identity documents shown at the frontier as maghrebi resident abroad there could be people who follow that religion. However, being the low incidence of both categories among the populations of active tourism centres, the error must be considered modest to our objectives. The determination of the entity of these flows is based on the fact that in two out of the three countries considered (Morocco and Algeria) the admission of nationals permanently resident abroad is inserted in special lists by the border authorities. The fact that this is not worth for Tunisia leads to an underestimation of the phenomenon for the latter country.

(3) The term *halāl* means “permitted” and it contrasts *haram* “forbidden”. The concept of *halāl* is not just nourishment or the preparation of food, and in particular butchery, but encompass also the daily behaviour of every muslim, from style of dress to interpersonal relationships between the sexes, social life, finance and health (Koran, sura 7: verse 157; Adamec, 2009).

varied reality, instead, they continue to be considered according to the conception that tourism is a consumer phenomenon exclusively “western” which has to be planned and managed as such ⁽⁴⁾. A perspective which might show itself completely inadequate to face the huge wave of tourists whose models of life and consumption are led by the precepts of Islam. (Battour, Ismail, e Battor, 2010). So it becomes necessary to proceed to an accurate verification of the congruence of analytical and interpretative models adopted so far and the compatibility of the offer with the cultural specificities of this new demand. From the geographic point of view this implies the need to prepare a theoretical framework which permits us to understand the processes of territorialisation activated by Islamic tourism in Islamic countries, in terms of changes in the spatial distribution of tourist activities, conflicts or the cultural convergences and the power relations between tourists, stakeholder, communities and local residents. A first contribution can come from the surveys which start from the analysis of the available statistics (those of WTO and those collected by Ministries and national Boards of Tourism) specify the dimension of the phenomenon and through the submission of questionnaires to samples of tourists and migrants and interviews to privileged actors working in the sector recognize its main features in respect to a definite area at the regional scale of Maghreb. So the article is divided into three fundamental moments: the description of tourist fluxes between 1995 and 2010 ⁽⁵⁾ and the bursting emergence of Islamic tourism, the analysis of the phenomenon trends and finally the emergence of “*halal* tourism” as an Islamic reply to “western” tourism.

(4) See for example Morocco tourism development programmes “Vision 2010” and “Vision 2020”. They plan the creation of 200,000 new beds, 150,000 in hotel structures and the doubling of international tourist arrivals which in 2013 were slightly above 10 million (www.tourisme.gov.ma/fr/vision-2020/vision-2010). According to the Ministry of Tourism the achievement of these objectives requires the implementation of a diversified offer and appropriate to the needs of international tourists, according to six big regional thematic areas: 1) seaside tourism, 2) natural and rural resources, 3) valuation of cultural identity, 4) leisure activities and sport, 5) business and health tourism, 6) domestic tourism. Only the last one is explicitly conceived to serve the requests of domestic tourism (www.tourisme.gov.ma/fr/vision-2020/grands-chantiers-du-tourisme). In Tunisia the recently adopted strategic development plan “VISION 3+1”, provides for the setting-up of 16 new tourist resorts, eleven of which available for seaside tourism (Cap Gammarth, Jénan El Oued, Bekalta, Sidi Salem, Chott Ennassim, Lella Mariem, Lella Hadrria, Sousse, Hergla, Ghedhabna, Gabes), two for environmental tourism (Sidi Founkhal, Zouaraa), two for thermal tourism (Grand Kourbous, Khebayet) and one for families (Chaffar). According to the Tunisian Ministry of Tourism the policies to boost the sector must seek to consolidate the international position of Tunisia through an improvement in the quality of services, the diversification of the offer (cultural sites, desert areas and golf equipment) and adequate promotional campaigns on European markets (<http://www.tourisme.gov.tn>). Finally, as far as Algeria is concerned, while taking into account the limits which distinguish its tourist development and which will be analysed more widely in the following paragraphs, on the basis of «*Assises Nationales et Internationales du Tourisme*» of 2008 (www.mate.gov.dz) the programme «Horizon 2025» has been launched whose objective is the tourist valuation on an international scale of the natural and cultural resources of the Country, pointing at achieving the objective of 11 million international arrivals (www.algerie360.com).

(5) The most recent statistical information available provided by UNWTO and by the statistic and tourist boards of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria refer to 2013. However the “Arabic springs” of 2011 and the turbulences which followed have caused a collapse of arrivals from foreign countries in Tunisia which have been partly absorbed by Morocco, so it was considered appropriate to limit the survey to the period 1995 – 2010.

Tourist fluxes towards Maghreb between 1995 and 2010 – There are several definitions of the term “tourism”, with the consequence of a variable extent and typology of the phenomena considered from time to time. We are herewith going to use the definition of tourist, and so of tourism, given by the *United Nations World Tourism Organization* (UNWTO) and accepted by the OECD (<http://stats.oecd.org/glossary>), according to which with the term “international tourists” we refer to «any person who travels to a country other than that in which s/he has his/her usual residence but outside his/her usual environment for a period not exceeding 12 months and whose main purpose of visit is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the country visited» and «stay at least one night in a collective or private accommodation in the country visited».(OMT, 2001, pp. 8 - 9). As a consequence we are herewith considering as tourists all the visitors entering the three countries considered for relaxation or for religious ⁽⁶⁾, study, business, health reasons, to participate in conferences, congresses or symposiums or just to visit relatives and friends.

According to the data provided by the UNWTO ⁽⁷⁾, in 2010 about 18 million tourists crossed the borders of Maghreb countries and within a period of fifteen years their consistence has more than quadrupled, with a rate of middle annual increase double of that recorded in the same period from the world tourist fluxes. However, the most relevant feature of the phenomenon lies less in its dynamics than in the change occurred in its composition in the last decades, with a growing weight taken by “Islamic” tourism. In 2010 32% of tourists entering the area was made up of Maghrebi living abroad ⁽⁸⁾ to whom a 18% coming from north Africa and a 2% from other islamic countries were added ⁽⁹⁾. As a consequence, more than half the entries (that is more than 9 million) was made up of people who, albeit with a certain approximation, can be considered “Islamic tourists”. If we consider that in 1995 they were little more than 3 million and that still in 2000 they were less than 4 million, it is evident that there is a the steep rise in the phenomenon. It is proof of this the fact that the annual middle rate of the increase changes from 3.5% in the period of five years between 1995 – 2000 to 14.1% in the following ten years, more than three times the value than that showed by Euro-American tourists in the same period (4.2%) and nearly four times the average value of international world tourist fluxes (3.9%).

(6) For example to participate in Ramadan rites or other Muslim festivals or taking part in local traditional religious festivals, for example the *moussem*, festivals linked to “holymen or *marabut*” particularly widespread in Maghreb but almost entirely absent in the rest of the islamic world (Berriane, 1989; Deil, Heike e Berriane, 2005).

(7) Unless otherwise specified the statistical data are taken from the years 1995 – 2012 of *Statistical Yearbook* of UNWTO, given in the *Arrivals at frontiers of visitors from abroad* (for the years 1995-1996) and *Arrivals of non resident visitors at national borders, by nationality* (for the period 1997-2010).

(8) Thus by individuals who are nationals of the Maghreb country of which they cross the frontier but permanently resident abroad.

(9) With this expression we mean the countries where the majority of the population professes the Islam religion.

Between 1995 and 2010 the world tourist arrivals rose from 528 to 935 million, with an average annual rate of growth of 5%; in the same period the tourist entries in Maghreb rose from 7 to 18 million with an average annual rate of growth of 10.5%. The development of the two fluxes (fig. 1) shows a significant inflexion between 2001 and 2003 ⁽¹⁰⁾, more pronounced in the case of those headed towards the Maghreb. In both cases the fluctuation is related to the acts of terrorism carried out by islamic groups between 2001 and 2003 as well as the beginning of the wars in Afganistan (2001) and Irak (2003), events which caused in international tourists the perception of an increased risk (Ritcher e Waugh, 1986; Ryan, 1993; Hillali 2004; Al-Hamarneh, 2013). The phenomenon has considerably interested the fluxes from the islamic countries to North America and Europe, with 50% and 35% reductions respectively. This is due in part to the introduction of stricter border controls over visitors coming from islamic countries and the imminent difficulties they were facing and in part to an increased stigmatization of the latter in the western countries (Hazbun, 2006). The departures from Islamic states are not generally steadily decreasing, rather a substitution occurs in destinations to the benefit of islamic states, including those of Maghreb that in such a way can see the effects of the decrease of the arrivals from Europe and North America partly mitigated. Starting from 2003 the world tourist arrivals in the Maghreb countries have started to grow but with different rapidity, recovery time towards the crisis in 2001-2003 and sensitivity to the economic downturn which started in 2008. These trends can be found, but exaggerated, also in the Maghreb and it is on this scale that it is possible to grasp the profound changes more precisely. These have occurred in the composition of fluxes which were referred to in the introduction and their potential effects on the tourist policies. In 1995 52% (equal to 7.2 millions of visitors) of incoming international tourists in the three Maghreb states was made up of Europeans (3.6 million) and in some small way by North-Americans (130 thousand). Tourists coming from Islamic states were 1.7 million and those Maghrebi living abroad were more than a million and a half, so that altogether Islamic tourists were 3.3 million, equal to 47% of the entries at Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia's borders. In that period, then, Islamic tourists were the second important component of the total volume of incoming visitors, preceded by Europeans if considered net of Maghrebi resident in Europe. In 2001 the fluxes of Maghrebi tourists resident abroad or coming from islamic states were not affected by any decrease but only by a drop in the growth rate (fig. 2) in contrast with what happened for those of non islamic tourists. This fact can in part be explained, as already mentioned above, for widespread fears about their own security and the concern of meeting difficulties on re-entry, effects which are partly offset by a lack of stigmatization in the countries of destination. However,

(10) It refers to the attacks of 11 September 2001 in New York, of April 2002 to Djerba synagogue (Tunisia), of October of the same year and to two night-clubs in Bali and to those carried out in 2003 in Casablanca and Madrid.

this is only a temporary slackening, in fact the development rate of islamic tourism in Maghreb states has been increasing rapidly since 2003, whereas the European tourism resumption will come only one year later in accordance with the world dynamics. The rate of increase of incoming tourists of maghrebi origin but resident abroad has been superior to the rate of other tourists coming from Europe and North America since 2001 and for the first time in 2002 Islamic tourists with 5.3 millions of visitors, surpassed Euro-Americans which were 5.1 million. This trend remained unchanged throughout the following ten-year-, period in which the average annual rate of increase of incoming islamic tourists rose to 13% so that they shortly became the main component of tourist entries in Maghreb. In 2010 the relationships between “western” and “islamic” tourists were inversed: European tourists were 8.2 million, North Americans 300 thousand and as a whole the former represented 47% of incoming tourists, whereas tourist coming from Islamic countries rose to 9.4 million and were che 52% of incoming tourists at the borders. Of them about 6 million were Maghrebi resident abroad and 3.4 million were coming from Islamic states, mostly (94%) from North Africa. The structural nature of the change is confirmed by the fact that while the arrivals from European countries, likewise recognised on the same basis on a world scale declined as a consequence of the global economic crisis started in 2008, those of Maghrebi resident abroad and of tourists coming from Islamic states has continued to increase (fig. 2). Thus it can be presumed that, consistent with the change of world sceneries also in tourism in Maghreb the two years 2001 – 2002 represented a major breakthrough of which it is necessary to investigate the determinants trying to illuminate the scenarios it discloses.

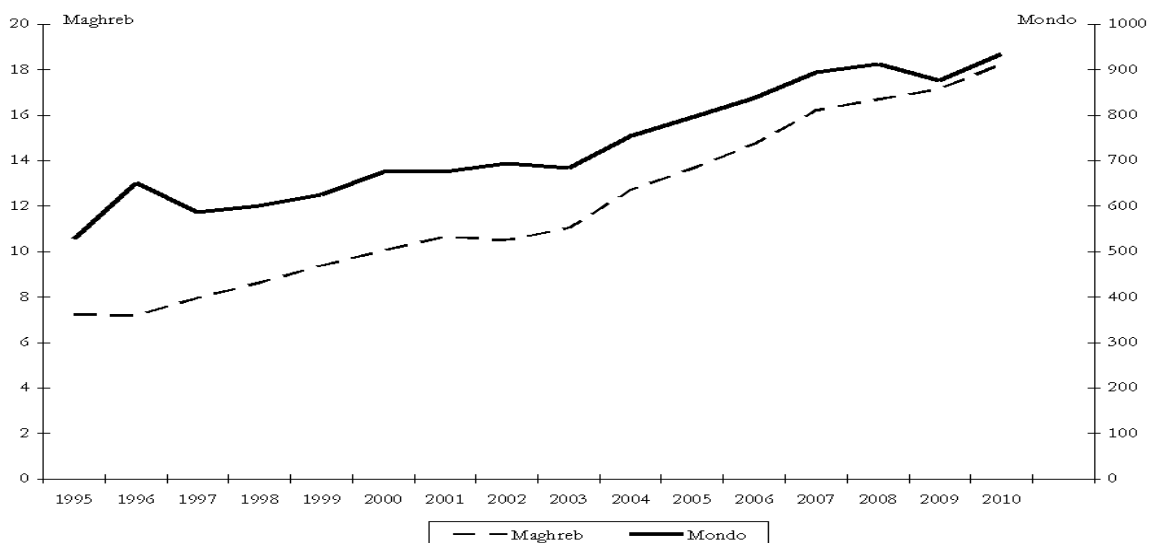


Fig. 1 – Tourist arrivals in the world and in Maghreb 1995-2010

(Source: UNWTO Yearbook, 1997-2012)

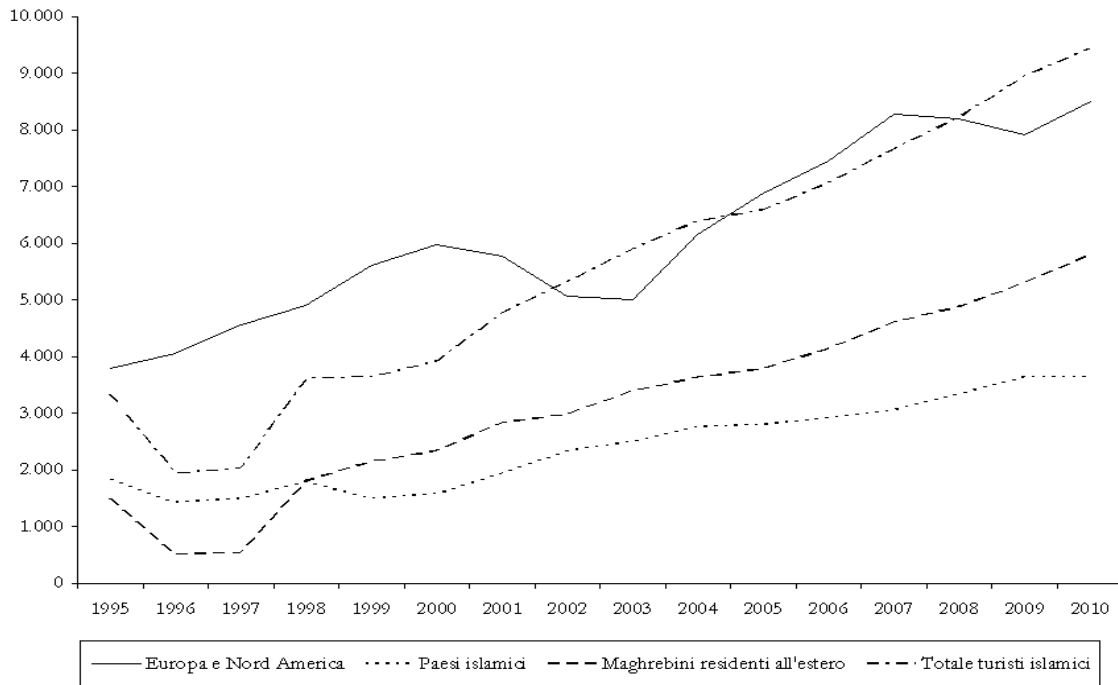


Fig. 2 – Tourist arrivals in Maghreb 1995-2010 (main geographical areas of provenance)

(Source: UNWTO Yearbook, 1997-2012)

The trends of the tourist offer in Maghreb between the XX century and the beginning of XXI – The specific economic features, the international political position and institutional and political regime of the maghrebi states are reflected, with some differences, on their tourist policies and on the features of their offer. However it is possible to identify some common elements traceable to great ideological narration of modernity. In particular the idea that the development and handover process from pre-modernity to modernity necessarily happen in a linear way ⁽¹¹⁾ and that the economic growth can spread from developed countries to the “developing ones” thanks to the action of the so called “trickle down’ effect” (Daher, 2007; Croes, 2014), starting from poles of tourist development with a sufficiently wide economic dimension and so contributing to bringing sizeable fluxes of hard currency. As a result tourist policies in Morocco and Tunisia are directed to meet the demand generated by western tourism, the development of a “brand” consistent with that market, the creation of infrastructures and attractions able to fulfil the

(11) Think, for example, about the stages of development theory by Rostow (1960).

expectations produced in tourists in terms of quantity and quality and the seasonal adjustment of the flows (Ouerfelli, 1999; Kegermeier, 1999; Bernard, 2002; Wafa, 2006; Hillali, 2008; Brucculeri, 2009).

The contradictions affecting these policies appear evident if the dynamics and the composition of incoming tourist flows in the three countries between 1995 and 2010 are taken into consideration. In 1995 in Morocco 41% of international tourists, equal to more than one million entries, consisted of Moroccan resident abroad. They were followed, far behind, by the French (400 thousand, 16% of the whole) and then by the Spanish (200 thousand, 8% of the whole). Fifteen years later the situation was essentially unchanged in relative terms but with absolute values significantly higher. Moroccan resident abroad still ensured 47% of the arrivals but their number was quadrupled and now it was close to 4.4 million, while the French with 1.8 million entries saw their incidence rise up to 20% of the whole. The weight of the Spanish (about 700 thousand entries) remained equal to 8% of the total. English, Italians and Germans saw their relative weight reduced (in the order from 5 to 4%, from 4 to 2.5% and from 6 to 2%) while moving up in absolute value. In spite of the weight of Islamic tourists, and in particular of Moroccan resident abroad and the long tradition of internal tourism (Berriane, 1989) the supply policies have continued to follow on the French colonial power (Cattedra, 1990, 1993; Borghi, 2005, 2009), combining the needs of internal stability of the system of monarchic power with its international political and economic position (Hillali, 2007).

The French land use planning policies clearly expressed the concern for preserving the “heritage” of the country (Dresch, 1947; Borghi, 2009; Sebtì, 2009) ⁽¹²⁾. Newspapers and tourist and travel literature in turn made considerable use of expressions underlining the charm of a far and exotic world ⁽¹³⁾. It was a relapse of orientalism which had spread in Europe since the first half of XIX century by painters, novelists, musicians and since the end of the eighteenth century by photographers who saw in Morocco an epitome of the “Orient” (Said, 1991). It is not so surprising then that the tourist “brand” of the country was built from that vision and has become its stereotyped expression (fig. 3) and that a great part of the experiences

(12) Henri Prost, the architect who had planned the urban development of Marrakech at the time of Protectorate, stated the need to foresee separate districts for Europeans and natives so that the *«autonomie des villes indigènes leur permettra de conserver les physionomies si caractéristiques de leurs merveilleux aspects panoramiques qui restent de superbes points de vue pour les principales perspectives des nos villes modernes»* (Prost, 1932, in Sebtì, 2009, p. 258) and at the same time Europeans would not have been deprived of the benefits of a modern settlement. The Medina was then reduced to a sort of background for the lives of the Europeans resident in the new town and even more for the holidays of the future tourists.

(13) In 1938, when the tourist development of Marrakech was by then underway, Roland Dorgelès, author of *Le dernier Moussem*, wrote: *«Marrakech est un rêve (...). Ville d'amour, ville de faim, ville de fête. (...). Allongée dans la plaine, elle se drape de son manteau rose et attend frémissante. Elle paraît sèche et frémit de fontaines. Aride, et le bougavilliers, des mimosas, des ifs surgissent de palais ignorés. Les jardins se dérobent au bout de longs couloirs en chicane, derrière d'énormes portes cloutées de bronze. Marrakech la Rouge, la Perle du Sud, la métropole de l'Occident musulman»* (Dorgelès, 1938; in Sebtì, 2009, pp. 259 – 260). In turn, in 1937 the travel magazine *Atlas* was writing about Marrakech: *«C'est une somme et c'est une synthèse. Tout concourt d'ailleurs à attirer vers elle une théorie toujours plus nombreuse d'admirateurs fervents qui y trouvent, avec le charme de l'Orient, l'épanouissement d'un pittoresque humain d'une originalité puissante, d'une couleur inégalable»* (ibidem, p. 261)

proposed to tourists still meets those canons ⁽¹⁴⁾, including the flavor of tourism in the desert. Besides, within the urban context these policies have led to the diffusion of “gentrification” processes most marked in the *Medina* of Marrakech and Fés. In fact in both we are now facing the replacement of part of the poorest population by new owners, mostly foreigners, who buy old Riad intended for tourist residence (Abu-lughod, 1980; Wilboux 2001; Sebti et alii, 2009). Albeit to a lesser degree also tourism “in the desert” has followed these trends and in the Erg Chebbi or in the Draa Valley on the edge of the Sahara, false “bedouin camps” meant for tourists and equipped with every comfort have risen. By this reference framework the policy of great coast tourist complexes carried out within the framework of the Vision 2010 and 2020 programmes differs ⁽¹⁵⁾. They in fact, mainly prize on the combination of unspoiled natural landscapes and the possibility of practising sporting activities – from those linked to the sea, such as surf or kate-surf, to golf – or spending moments of relaxation and rest in pleasant environmental conditions throughout the year thanks to the favourable climatic conditions. The model referred to in this case is that of tourist “non-place”, repeatable anywhere and deprived of any possibility of social interaction territorially rooted, perceived as anomic spaces of the absolute individual freedom (Augè, 2014).

Only somehow similar to the previous case is that of Tunisia whose international tourism is similarly characterized by massive and consolidated flows from Europe and in particular from Germany. In 1995 Euro-Americans with 2.4 million visitors, represented 58% of the arrivals; of them the main component consisted of Germans with 800 thousand incomings (20% of the total), while the French were in second place with nearly 500 thousand visitors (the 11% of incomings). Unfortunately data concerning the influx of Tunisian resident abroad are not available, for which, although it may be considered that their impact is not significantly different from that detected in Morocco they are not to be found in our calculations.

(14) Fixed in the collective imagination also thanks to films like “Casablanca”, “The man who knew too much”, “Tea in the desert”, “Marrakech express” or, more recently, “Fall in love in Marrakech”.

(15) See footnote 3.



Fig. 3 – Postcards sold in Morocco souvenir shops, taken from some affiches of the ‘20s of the last century: a) “*Le Maroc par Marseille*” (M. Romberg, 1920, *L’Affiche Orientaliste*, affiche, 105 x 66 cm., Collection Fondation Abderrahman Slaoui); b) “*L’Hiver, le Printemps au Maroc*” (Derche, 1929, *L’Affiche Orientaliste*, affiche 105 x 66 cm., Collection Fondation Abderrahman Slaoui)

Nearly a million visitors (24% of the total) was coming from Algeria and nearly 500 thousand (15% of the total) from Libya. But while the former can be considered tourists attracted by the possibility of enjoying good-quality receptive structures and attractions at relatively low prices, the latter were probably seasonal workers. As a consequence, deducting the latter from the incomings, islamic tourists were about 1.2 million, slightly less than 29% of the total: an already marked proportion that would have been even more if Tunisian resident abroad could have been calculated. Fifteen years later incoming tourists were more than tripled and nearly touched 7 million and their composition slightly changed. If, with 56% of arrivals

Euro-Americans remained the predominant group, the weight of German tourists declined and went down to only 500 thousand visitors and 7% of the total, ousted by the French that now, with 1.4 million visitors (20% of the total), placing themselves first among “western” tourists. However considering that Tunisian tourists resident abroad are counted as tourists coming from the country in which they reside, it can be assumed that they represent a significant part of French incoming tourists. The growing weight of islamic tourism is moreover attested also by the increase in the number of tourists coming from Islamic countries, risen to little less than 3 million, to 43% of the total number of the arrivals, and so it can be assumed that, if Tunisian people resident abroad could be calculated as islamic tourists would be the majority of visitors. However, also in Tunisia there is a huge disconnection between the composition of the demand and the characteristics of the offer. The tourist “take-off” started after the independence and the new ruling class which came into power in 1956, under the leadership of Habib Bourghiba, saw in tourism an instrument to promote the development and the modernisation of the country and at the same time to show the masses the wealth the new regime could lead to. So it is considered an ideological mediator which through discorsive forms easily transmissible and assimilable offers a sort of “*theat-realisation*” of modernity (Saidi H., 2005, 2008). So it is not surprising that until the end of the ‘60s the state made nearly 60% of its investments in this sector and that starting from the ‘70s once the takeoff of the sector started up the following tourist development of the country was delegated to private enterprise, leaving the financial responsibility for the infrastructural works to the public sector. The territorial outcome of this policy is the growth of a series of standardized installations along more than 800 miles of coastline, distributed in five development areas Tunisi, Biserta, Hammamet/Nabeul, Sousse/Monastir e Jerba/Zarzis (Kagermeier, 1999, p. 75). They are intended to accomodate a primarily European mass tourism and a deep economic and social caesura separates them from the rural inland areas (Belhedi A, 1999; Suissi M., 2007). However, there is a development path only partly similar to that of the littoral moroccan tourism; in fact here the attractiveness is based on the combination of natural and cultural factors that only marginally show the effects of the calls from orientalism so present in Morocco. The image of a “Mediterranean dream”⁽¹⁶⁾ rather prevails, culturally and geographically not too far away⁽¹⁷⁾, where it is possibile to enjoy oneself for physical and psychological well-being.

Despite Algeria sharing the French colonial experience with Morocco and Tunisia, its tourist model notably differs from that of the two other Maghreb countries, also its evolution during the second half of

(16) The *claim* used in the institutional advertisements was: “Don’t dream it. Leave” (Bruculeri, 2009, p. 40).

(17) A tunisian tourist *brochure* says: “The Italians already own the key of such a close country: a smile will be enough to open the doors and the hearts” (Bruculeri, 2009, p. 53).

'900 can be associated with the great ideological narrations of the last century. In Algeria, starting from its independence and until the end of the '80s, tourism was part of a political project aimed at building a secular and socialist society. So the tourist policy as any other feature of the national economic life was led by the directions defined by the development plans, whose objectives essentially consisted in pursuing an integrated growth but was substantially founded on the realization of heavy industries assembled in development poles (Benissad, 1997). On a more general political level the economic policy, including the tourism policy of the regime was mainly directed to meeting the basic needs of the local population through the implementation of an "integrated" system of basic infrastructures. This led to the fact that tourism inevitably had a marginal role in the Algerian economic policies¹⁸ and in the Tourist Expanding Zones (ZETs) established in 1966. Very soon a multiplicity of housing developments mostly formed by multi-family housing groups of dubious quality (Tabet Aoul e Kacemi, 2014) were set up. The State's intervention was to nationalise the hotel and lodging patrimony inherited from French colonial times (¹⁹), to build new structures concentrated in resort complexes of Zeralda, Moretti, Sidi-Ferruch e Tipaza (Sofiane, 2013) along the coast and in the resumption of tourist colonization of the desert areas which had already started in the colonial period (Blake e Lawless, 1972; Widman, 1976). The majority of the hotel structures set up on the coast, although destined to European customers were ranked "3 stars" and there were only five "5 stars" which represented less than 10% of the total reception facilities. Overall for the whole of the seventies and eighties the incoming foreign tourist flows remained on fairly limited levels, also due to an unfavourable price/quality profile of the tourist offer (Boukhelifa, 2007) that thus can not intercept the changes in international demand (Widman, 1976, Sofiane, 2013). In the early 1990s a period of transition to a market economy and a revision of tourist development policies started also in Algeria. However, this process is nipped in the bud by the civil war that bathed the country in blood between 1992 and 2002, and in the most recent years the prolonged political uncertainty impeded the start of an international mass tourist development, while fostering the emergence of a dualism between the desert areas of Tassili and Hoggar and the coastal ones. In the former a niche tourism is rapidly expanding, identified with "adventure and culture", directed at the western market while in the latter where the equipment of tourist facilities is largely non-existent, tourism keeps on languishing (Sofiane, 2013). All that is confirmed by the reduced dimensions of the international tourist flows and in their composition. In 1995 international tourism was almost completely absent and, with 400 thousand entries, Algerian resident

(18) The first Algerian four-year plan (1970 – 73), allocated only 2.5% of the total amount of public investment to tourism, an amount which went down yet to 1.4% with the four-year plan 1973 – 1977 (Widmann, 1976, p. 25).

(19) With the independence and the establishment of a socialist government the hotel estate inherited by the colonial period was conferred to a public body, the Cogehore (Comité de gestion des hôtels et des restaurants).

abroad were by far the majority (81%) of incoming visitors. To these nearly 50,000 Moroccan, Tunisian, Libyan and coming from Mali (slightly above 10% of the total of arrivals) were added, even if they probably were mainly seasonal workers. Islamic visitors therefore constituted almost all incoming tourists (92%) at the frontiers. Fifteen years later the visitors from abroad had increased by four times, exceeding two million arrivals and likewise the other Maghreb countries the majority of them consisted of Algerian resident abroad (1.4 million) to whom about 250 thousand Tunisian were added so that Islamic tourist touched 2 million equivalent to 85% of international tourists.

A response to the growth of muslim tourists: "Halal tourism". Undoubtedly some of the factors favouring the growth of islamic tourism are in part specific to each country, however they are part of a cultural, economic and social common ground and we are going to focus our analysis on that. As we have seen a significant part of the tourist flow we have defined as "islamic" consists of maghrebi resident abroad who come to visit relatives ⁽²⁰⁾, especially for the main recurrences of the islamic calendar ⁽²¹⁾ and take this opportunity to practise seaside and cultural tourism. Thus such particular kind of tourism not only contributes to maintaining family ties and friendship bonds and deep-rooting with their country of origin, but frequently to strengthening the sense of belonging to the *humma*, an issue that as we will see may have not insignificant consequences on the forms of this tourism demand and on the resulting emergence of new typologies of offer such as the formula for *halāl tourism*. Secondly but tightly linked to the previous point it must be considered that in all the three countries considered Islamic tourists find themselves in a cultural, linguistic and overall religious context more familiar to them than western tourist resorts might be. Here many of them not only can share the local language ⁽²²⁾ but also the customs and the lifestyles prescribed by the Koran, the *Sunna* or their tradition. If we consider the dimension of the tourist flows generated by the islamic countries and those of the maghrebi resident abroad, the effects that a further strengthening of this trend could have on the tourist systems of the three countries concerned are evident. That is something very likely to occur if we consider the widespread rebirth of religious practice among the emigrants and the consequent strong observance of the *halāl* lifestyles (Zamani- Farahani ed Henderson, 2010). The latter also concern the behaviour to be held in tourist contexts, imposing a rigorous respect of rules concerning the kind of food consumed and its preparation, to avoid sexual promiscuity

(20) With "relatives" we mean the blended family or "the cousins' family" (Berriane, 1989).

(21) Obviously the flows are more pronounced when the two festivities of *Ramadan* and the "feast of sacrifice" coincide with the summer or winter holidays.

(22) It is mostly *standard* Arab, used by the great international media and by the most part of the press.

while bathing and to adopt correct way of dress ⁽²³⁾. Hence the need to make use of reception and leisure facilities ensuring compliance with these norms and relying notably through the so called “Islamic finance” ⁽²⁴⁾. The contradiction with regard to the standard tourist offer “western oriented” is evident. This could cause inconvenience and in any case it is a problem that the main stakeholders of the sector will have more and more to face as confirmed by the first results of the survey carried out in 2013 on a sample of Maghrebi citizens resident in the provinces of Massa and Carrara ⁽²⁵⁾: around 20% of those interviewed declare not to use bathing sites, or to go there to a limited degree due to the presence of foreign tourists as they would be forced to assist to *haram* behaviours and the 28% state that the possibility of respecting the dictates of Islam represents a determining factor in the choice of the place and the tourist facilities where to spend their holidays. A first response of the market (Ghadami, 2012) to the emergence of this particular demand segment is namely in the establishment of a network of leisure and entertainment facilities which qualify as «*halāl*» ⁽²⁶⁾. It is a phenomenon already significantly present in the Arabian Peninsula, Malaysia and in Turkey and that has recently appeared also in Morocco. In Tunisia it is still marginal but since 2011 also thanks to the political success and to the widespread, among broad sector of the population, of the islamic movements emerged in the open with the “Arab Spring” contacts were made with Turkey and Malaysia to promote its development (Carboni, Perelli e Sistu, 2013) and in general although it is still undoubtedly a niche phenomenon it is spreading also thanks to the new media and *booking* systems (fig. 4)²⁷.

(23) Included the use of *burkini*, a bathing suit which covers the whole body excluded feet, hands and face.

(24) What is meant by “islamic finance” is the use of economic-financial practices based on Koranic precepts in economic matters and in particular on the prohibition of receiving interest (*ribā*) on the money on loan and on the obligation to make socially responsible investments (Giustiniani, 2006).

(25) 48% of the people interviewed declared to return home at least once a year for a period between 15 days and one month, 16% of them motivated by religious concerns (Data collected by Ismail Zizi under the supervision of the author).

(26) There are many on-line travel agencies ensuring «*halāl*» holidays; interesting examples are offered, for example, by www.halabooking.com, www.halālvoyage.com and www.serendipity.travel/morocco. The facilities they piggyback onto guarantee the respect of the islamic rules for food and drinks, the availability of a copy of the Koran in each room and bathrooms with bidet, the possibility for women not accompanied by their husbands to be put up in private spaces, the availability of spaces for the prayer, the possibility for men and women to go separately to the swimming pools and the other leisure centres, in addition they guarantee areas only for women in the beaches and the mixed beaches are only frequented by families, to have a predominantly muslim staff with traditional clothes and to adopt a management compliant to the rules of “islamic finance”, while they impose clothes in line with the islamic rules.

(27) In 2014 *Crescent rating*, one of the most important agencies of the sector, published a partnership proposal for the travel agents of many countries, among which Morocco; the preliminary condition to join was to be «*capable of understanding the requirements of Muslim customers and are able to cater to them*» (www.crescentrating.com).

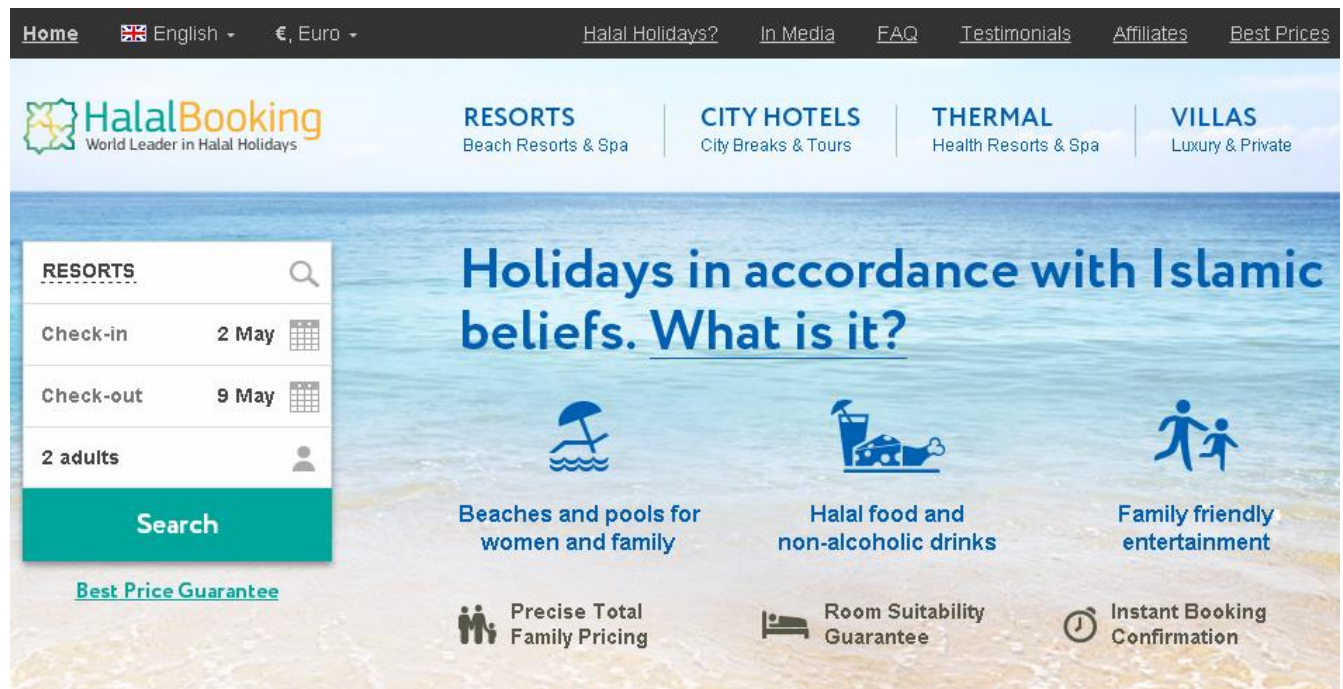


Fig. 4 – Home page of *Halalbooking.com* site specialized in booking *halal* tourist services. The agency proposes *halal* holidays in beach resorts and spa; city hotels, city breaks and tours; thermal health resorts and spa; villas luxury and private. The focus on the centre of the page is on what is holiday in accordance with Islamic beliefs, and the underlined icons specify some of the most important features of this kind of tourism.

Conclusions - In the Maghrebi countries tourism is based on cultural stereotypes and economic models functional to the interests of the great international tourist operators and to the political and economic interests of the local élites. On the other hand, as has been shown in the earlier pages, from the beginning of the millenium in the three countries considered we are witnessing a rapid increase in tourist flows generated by Maghrebi resident abroad and by those coming from Islamic countries. The motivations of this phenomenon are undoubtedly also economic and demographic, however these factors only partly explain its growth. The first results of surveys carried out by interviewing immigrants resident in Italy and Maghrebi tourists in Morocco in the spring-summer 2014, make it possible to better comprehend the role of cultural and religious factors and the strict link with the diffusion of *halāl* tourism. For many members of the Maghrebi community emigrated to western countries, the adherence to the islamic religious principles represents a strong factor forging their identity as is for many muslims of islamic countries who, as a consequence of the improved living conditions, are joining the ranks of world tourism. In both cases

we are facing people who embody values and cultural expectations very different from those characterizing “western” tourists whose flows until recently were the majority of incoming foreign visitors at the frontiers in the Maghreb countries. The tragic events at the turn of the millennium have marked a turning point in the tourist dynamic, initially determined by exogenous factors: the attempts and the reaction of western countries both in terms of border controls (with the consequent anxiety about inconvenience to muslim tourists at their re-entry in Europe) and in the form of a growing stigmatization of outward forms of the adhesion to the Islam (such as clothing) or even the simple use of the Arabic language (sometimes degenerated in forms of authentic fear of Islam. Morocco and Tunisia have therefore become two important alternatives to other destinations of the non-Islamic world, and pretty soon this possibility resulted in the discovery, for some people a rediscovery, to practising some forms of tourism no less interesting than those practicable elsewhere (there is no shortage of culture, landscapes, relaxation and contact with nature in the Maghreb countries) in a culturally and in some cases also geographically “close” context. If we consider how the principles prescribed in the Koran and in the Sunna interfere with the practices of the daily life of anyone who joins Islam, a few considerations on the possible perspectives of tourism in these countries originate. First of all it can be considered that the expected, even greater increase in the number of islamic tourists in the Maghreb countries, will be accompanied by the growth of internal tourism that we have not herewith analysed, will bring an increase in the demand of services and tourist attractions in conformity with the dictats of Islam. But at present, and presumably also in a medium- and long-term future, these trends seem to be opposed by mighty strengths determined by the significant inertia of the tourist systems, consolidated in these countries for decades, in Morocco for nearly a century, and of its models of receptiveness and leisure prevalent in most of the world. They are, however, quite simply incompatible with the needs of a close compliance with the Islamic rules of behaviour and lifestyles, hence the appearance on the international market, included Tunisia and Morocco, of an offer of tourist products qualified as *halāl*. So it would be possible to assist to the establishment and strengthening of two distinct “tourist systems”, not only distinctly differentiated but potentially even opposed as founded on antinomic ethical-cultural principles. To a first approximation we could qualify these two systems respectively as “western” and “islamic”. If their present rigidity lasts a possible consequence could be the reproduction in tourism of forms of opposition between cultural worlds that are perceived by both sides as distant if not hostile, and a possible outcome of all of this may result in a sort of mutual “segregation” ⁽²⁸⁾.

(28) It is an emblematic representation the relationship of distinction/separation between two groups of tourists in Marrakech, the evenings of the month of Ramadan on the Koutoubia mosque open space. In that occasion of great relevance for the islamic faith, also many moroccan resident abroad are present on the square as believers. Western tourists watch the

To prevent the strengthening of this trend and make it possibile for forms of tourism to be compatible with different religious and cultural needs, it is therefore necessary to face the analysis and planning of tourist activities with new conceptual tools able to go beyond the stereotype according to which the only possibile kind of tourism is “ours”, irrespective of whether western or islamic.

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“spectacle” beyond the barriers on the eastern side of Mohammed V Avenue, the great artery which bound the square at the northeast and they are separated from the believers by a row of policemen located in the middle of the road. For both groups in the square it is a touristic, tourist-religious space on one case and a tourist-cultural one on the other, but the big artery without traffic pointed with policemen which crosses it expresses symbolically the segregation of the two worlds.

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THE GROWTH OF “ISLAMIC TOURISM” IN MAGHREB: SEASONAL RETURN OF EMIGRANTS, DIFFUSION OF HALĀL TOURISM AND NEED FOR A REVISION OF “WESTERN-ORIENTED” TOURIST POLICIES. - Between 1995 and 2010 the tourist arrivals in Maghreb increased from 7 to 18 million with an average increase rate of 10.5% per year (the average world rate was 5%). Moreover, if in 1995 52% of visitors entering the Maghreb countries were Western, for the most part European, in 2010 the foreign tourists of islamic religion counted for 52%. However, in spite of its dimension, the phenomenon is quite marginal in the scientific tourist literature, so the aim of this study is to contribute to a better understanding of the reference mainframe. The tourist offer of the Maghreb countries has mostly followed a political and economic logic and met both the political and economic interest of the power elite and the needs of the tourist demand generated by the European and North-American centres of active tourism. However the new tourists of islamic religion bring values and requests deeply different from those which characterise the demand expressed by western tourism. A reply to these needs and to the consequent establishment of a specific market demand is given by the so called *halal* tourism that is the offer of services, social relationships and economic premises of the activities performed in accordance with the regulations of the Koran, the Sunna or more in general with the islamic tradition. The consolidation of this phenomenon brings about the problem of how to avoid forms of segregation corresponding to the manifestation of distinct if not opposite «worlds» in the tourism space.

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