

Sonia Ferrari
Tiziana Nicotera

First Report on Roots Tourism in Italy

From migratory flows to tourism flows: strategies of destination marketing for a 'recall' to the homeland of the Italian community around the world



Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale



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From migratory flows to tourism flows: strategies of destination marketing for a 'recall' to the homeland of the Italian community around the world

*Developed with the contribution of the Direzione Generale per gli Italiani all'Estero
e le Politiche Migratorie del Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale.*

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*I said to my mother:
After the trip, I do not know if I am more Italian or Argentine.*

While I was in Italy I was happy. I could be myself.

*I felt as if my grandmother was with me while I was looking at the church that she
spoke to me about.*

Citations from interviews of Italian descendants around the world.

To my mother, who helped me realize what it means to find a new home abroad.
Sonia

*To my parents and my children Ilaria and Francesco,
guardians of my roots to the past and the future.*
Tiziana

Table of Contents

Presentation	11
Introduction	15
CHAPTER 1	
Research on roots tourism	21
1.1 Roots tourism. Definition and opportunities for the territories	21
1.2 The current situation in Italy and around the world	23
1.3 Methods and purpose for the research	29
1.4 The research group	32
CHAPTER 2	
Roots tourists of Italian origin. The qualitative survey	35
2.1 The qualitative research conducted in Italy	35
2.2 The social-cultural sustainability of roots tourism	48
2.3 Roots tourism after the Covid-19 pandemic	51
2.4 Conclusions	58
CHAPTER 3	
A focus on Argentina	61
3.1 The Italian emigration in Argentina. From the unification of Italy to today	61
3.2 The qualitative research conducted in Argentina	64
3.3 The statistical survey	69
3.3.1 <i>The ties with the homeland</i>	71
3.3.2 <i>The organization of the trip, preferences and the experience</i>	75
3.3.3 <i>The reasons of those who have not travelled</i>	88

3.3.4 <i>The image of the homeland and the measures for maintaining ties with the emigrants and their descendants</i>	94
3.4 Conclusions	100
CHAPTER 4	
Roots tourism in Southern Italy: the role of the municipalities	103
4.1 Main focus and methodology of the survey	103
4.2 The survey of the municipalities in Calabria	107
4.3 The survey of the municipalities in Puglia	118
4.4 Comparisons and Conclusions	128
4.5 Some case studies in Sicily, Calabria, Puglia and Tuscany	130
CHAPTER 5	
Roots travel in the web: communication policies and ‘Internet listening’	153
5.1 The compared analysis of the institutional web portals of some national destinations	153
5.2 The web <i>sentiment analysis</i> in reference to roots tourism	165
5.3 Conclusions	176
CHAPTER 6	
Roots tourism and other consumption phenomena. Future lines of research	179
6.1 The interaction of roots tourism with other social phenomena: second home ownership, VFR tourism and new migrations	179
6.2 The promotion of local traditional products by means of roots tourism	183
6.3 Intellectual emigration and returning home for vacation.	186
6.4 <i>Wedding tourism</i> and roots tourism	188
6.5 Calabrian dialect spoken in Argentina and the sound archives <i>L’Altra Calabria</i>	190
6.6 Villages that are in the process of depopulation as possible research destinations on roots and identity	194
6.7 Events as attractions for roots tourists	196
6.8 <i>Educational-tourism</i> and roots tourism: niche tourism and sustainability	201

CHAPTER 7	
Dissemination activities and general conclusions	205
7.1 The activity of communication	205
7.2 Conclusions and practical implications	212
7.2.1 <i>The vision</i>	213
7.2.2 <i>The four areas of intervention for an effective marketing policy for roots tourism</i>	214
7.2.3 <i>The functional implications</i>	220
References	223
List of Tables	239
List of Figures	243

Presentation

In 2018, when the Direzione Generale per gli Italiani all'Estero e le Politiche Migratorie organized the first technical coordination round table on 'Roots Tourism', with the intent to gather in the same forum discussions on central administrations, local authorities, academic and research centers, associations, start-ups and tour operators connected to Italian communities around the world, we would not have imagined the great success and following that the theme would have generated in such a short time. During the course of the last four years, the initiative related to 'Roots Tourism' has multiplied and many have been developed with the support of the Direzione Generale per gli Italiani all'Estero. The Farnesina, from the beginning, has accordingly understood the extreme importance of supporting the academic component associated to this particular tourist segment: in fact, studies from this sector did not exist, and sustaining this publication, that is the first study in terms of wide-ranging and in-depth quality-quantity analysis, was from the outset one of the priorities that the Direzione Generale per gli Italiani all'Estero individuated for the success of the diverse initiatives that are connected to 'Roots Tourism'.

'Roots Tourism' today is a tourism sector that is still partially untapped by the great possibilities that are still largely unexpressed. This research work helps to brilliantly suggest that such potential can be adequately evaluated, through a study based on objective data that has been gathered following a survey conducted by a team that academic institutions from Argentina, Calabria, Turin and Bari have taken part. I am, moreover, firmly convinced of the fact that the research and identification of the audience projects, even by skillful use of the digital channels, are essential to define the tourism demand and to appropriately respond to the needs and expectations of our compatriots. I therefore, wish the best of success to an invaluable 'pioneering' work and the enjoyment of reading to those who will know how to draw near to ancestral tourism with appreciation to this research.

Luigi Maria Vignali
General Director for Italians Abroad and Migratory Policies
MAECI

It is with great and renewed pleasure that my department collaborates with the researchers of the Università della Calabria, the first in Italy to have aimed at concrete and focused initiatives on the innovative sector of 'Roots Tourism', dedicating even to this a top level Master's program entitled 'Planning and administration of roots travel'. The research work that fuels the pages of this book is a challenging and ambitious work, the first in its kind, it is conducted by surveys directly within the territories, capable of stimulating, through qualitative and quantitative research, the limited academic literature existent today on 'Roots Tourism', that is of a predominantly generalized nature.

Not only, the relevance of the conducted work is also for having chosen Argentina as the first nation with which to carry out the surveys necessary for profiling the potential users of the roots tourism sector. With its 1,050,000 Italians residing abroad, Argentina is indeed the country with the largest Italian community in the world, and it is, as a consequence, one of the main catchment areas for roots travelers who are increasing in number, which Italy is prepared to welcome by designing a specific offer for them.

I am pleased to have supported the project by the professors Ferrari and Nicotera, whom I thank, and hopefully, it will be able to be expanded to other geographical areas. Their academic research is indeed a very important core activity that will permit all the entities, public and private, involved within the Italian territory to define and improve the promotional policies and initiatives of ancestral tourism, a sector in which the Farnesina is always engaged with much passion.

Giovanni Maria De Vita
Director of the Department I Directorate General for Italians Abroad
MAECI

Roots tourism is by its nature hidden, inconspicuous, and when it is found it is often considered a curiosity, a *niche*, as there are many regarding tourism. Once monolithic in its keywords (sand, sun, sea), has begun to differentiate itself in all its diversity. In contrast, roots tourism is already important in many countries, beginning with the United States. Here 40% of the population has an ancestor registered at Ellis Island, the small island in front of the port of New York, under the shadow of the neighboring Statue of Liberty, where between 1892 and 1954 more than twelve million immigrants passed into the United States. If one looks at South America, its significance is not minor, as the innovative research demonstrates in this book. Also Scotland, Ireland and naturally Italy have much to say.

Roots tourism is in rapid growth, especially among middle aged people, a sector that is well looked after by the operators for the greater availability of time and resources. One begins to look online to then finish one's research in the real world, with an immediate emotional and growing involvement in time. Nevertheless, roots tourism is not only a question of numbers. It carries with it a different idea of tourism, richer and more interesting compared with the traditional dreamy scope of *leisure* tourism. Roots tourism speaks of sustainability, in the measure that it redistributes precious resources to realities that are at the edges of geography and of revenue; it promotes authentic relationships among residents and guests, through the modern category, certainly very timely, of the 'temporary citizens'; and it is responsible in its recognition equal in dignity to all the entities at play. In one way or another it intercepts all the most innovative aspects of contemporary tourism.

Sonia Ferrari, with her group of collaborators, has been among the first to grasp the importance of the subject matter in this book and for her vision she is praised. Reflection has been an important tool to bring this project to completion. This book is an important step in the right direction.

Claudio Visentin
Università della Svizzera Italiana,
Sole24Ore

Introduction

This book contains an important and extensive work consisting, of a series of studies on the theme of roots tourism conducted within the last few years by various scholars. It is composed of an initial study that I have pursued within the last few years with Tiziana Nicotera at the Università della Calabria. Subsequently, numerous other researchers joined us with various surveys that were coordinated within the framework of this research. The work in its entirety is, consequently, very heterogeneous and complex, and it aims to study the phenomenon of roots tourism from diverse angles. The objective is, therefore, practical: to become better acquainted with the roots tourism sector and provide ideas and information, other than authentic guidelines, designated to the managers of tourism planning within the territories, in addition to the sector companies and agencies, in particular to the incoming industry. We hope that these cognitive elements can foster a 'right' planning process for the roots visitors. These are, actually, travelers who have very specific needs, they are very emotionally involved and desire to reinforce the emotional connection with their homeland of origin. They cannot be considered 'normal' tourists but they desire to be welcomed as members of the community and as special guests worthy of respect. They often seek to give a hand, once having returned to their country of current residence, by spreading the word, by investing in the homeland of their family of origin, by promoting it as a tourist destination and by purchasing and promoting its traditional products.

The following is an analytical description of the volume that was published in Italian and also in an e-book format in English and Spanish to address an international target audience¹.

In the first chapter, roots tourism is described as it is presented in the academic literature and its most relevant characteristics are outlined. The main policies and initiatives are summarized that foster the tourism phenomenon, which is the subject of this study, on a national and international level. Finally, the objective and methodologies of our research and the members of the group who have participated are presented.

¹ We wish to thank the translators: Bettina Iantorno, Rocío Molina, Isabella Voce and Irene Voce.

The second chapter is dedicated to the qualitative research of an exploratory nature that provides the starting point of the surveys. Through in-depth interviews and focus groups with privileged partners and stakeholders, the aim is to know the main characteristics of the demand, studying its impact on the area in social-cultural terms and the levels of sustainability, also with reference to the future post-Covid period where the tourism sector will certainly experience dramatic changes.

In the subsequent third chapter, the conducted research is explained in reference to Argentina: a relevant part of the research work, actually, is dedicated to residents in Argentina of Italian origin and to their descendants, who represent an extensive segment of current and potential roots tourists. This country was chosen because it has welcomed a very high number of emigrants coming from Italy in the past and it is closely tied, consequently, in social and cultural terms to our nation. In the qualitative survey conducted in Argentina, the issue being studied is described in the narratives of the Argentines of Italian origin and of other stakeholders who have been interviewed. Next, the main results are described on the expanded quantitative analysis conducted through a survey addressed to those of Italian origin and residents in Argentina. This survey is the central nucleus and the most significant part of the whole research work; it was conducted by the online, administering of questionnaires in several languages and it aims to deepen the understanding of numerous aspects of the situation under consideration. The sample of respondents who answered the questionnaires turned out to be very broad and more than what was foreseen in the survey design.

In the fourth chapter, we look at the role of the local authorities for the development of roots tourism. To explore this subject matter, a total survey was conducted with a questionnaire directed to the municipal administrators in Calabria and in Puglia. There have been issued, in addition, some case studies regarding the Italian towns that have begun to be interested in this phenomenon that is the object of analysis, to define future prospective and initiatives to pursue. This part of the research has been created to understand what the levels of knowledge are, awareness and interest with reference to the subject studied by the mayors and councilors of tourism in respect to half of the municipalities of the two regions. There have been, in addition, invaluable insight on the initiatives and the services directed to the roots tourism segment in order to deduce the level of focus and efficiency of implemented marketing policies or of the current supply.

In the fifth chapter the part of the research being described is perhaps the most innovative. This consists of the survey on the theme of the roots tourism in the web. In today's day and age, it is not possible to study an economic topic without analyzing even what is happening on the Internet. The first part of this research is dedicated to the portals of touristic promotion of the major countries that have given birth in the past to relevant migratory flows and that today represent important destinations for roots tourists. Subsequently, the monitoring of sites, portals and social networks have occurred, that is, a real 'web listening' on the theme of roots tourism. This activity has regarded different types of channels (in general, of the

sector and social media) by means of *key words* that are related to roots tourism in Italy, with a focus on Argentina as a market of interest. The objective is an evaluation, due to a ‘sentiment analysis’, of quantity and quality of information flows on the topic of our interest.

The second last chapter is the outcome of the collaboration with numerous scholars; it shows an interdisciplinary approach on the theme and deals with various aspects of this type of tourism and its interactions with other consumption phenomena, such as *wedding tourism*, *second home tourism*, *visiting friends and relatives travel*, *event tourism* and various types of migrations. Furthermore, future studies are suggested on several positive effects of roots tourism within the territory, in terms of regeneration of Italian villages and promotion of local traditional products. An area is dedicated even to an anthropological and cultural initiative of great importance: a future sound archive of Italian dialects abroad.

Subsequently, dissemination and training activities on the theme of roots tourism are described. These activities were accomplished during the project with the aim of informing the various partners, of creating a greater awareness regarding the issue, and of promoting the research and its objectives.

Following, there are the conclusion and the practical implications, that attempt to encapsulate the strings of a kaleidoscope of studies and relative analysis about a phenomenon that is extremely multifaceted and even largely unknown, on which a great amount of work is necessary in the future both in terms of research and planning.

There is a testimonial video of particular interest that is the story of an actual ancestry trip from of a young Italian-Argentine descendant.

Upon completion of this brief content of the book, I wish to thank all those who have made this work possible, having dedicated passion and commitment. It is impossible to name everyone here, but in the first chapter a section is dedicated to the description of the research group.

Primarily, a heartfelt appreciation goes to the representatives of the Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale², in particular to the General Director per gli Italiani all’Estero e le Politiche Migratorie³, Luigi Maria Vignali, and to the Director of the Ufficio I della Direzione Generale per gli Italiani all’Estero⁴, Giovanni Maria De Vita, who believed in our research project and enabled us to pursue it.

A warm appreciation goes to all the members of the research team and above all, in addition to Tiziana Nicotera, who developed the research project with me, to Ana Maria Biasone of the Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, and to Anna Lo Presti of the Università di Torino, exceptional and tireless adventure companions. Thank you to my dear friend, Pasquale Guaglianone, who supported us from the beginning

² Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

³ For Italians Abroad and Migratory Policies.

⁴ Department I of the Directorate General for Italians Abroad.

and who gave us the opportunity to put an extensive network of important relationships in Argentina in place, by creating precious contacts such as that with Marcelo Carrara, president of the Federación de Sociedades Italianas de Mar del Plata y Zona, who was always enthusiastic and available. A warm appreciation goes to Ariadna Estefanía Cabello Rendace, president of the Centro Italo-Calabrese di Tucumán, who joined us from the beginning.

Again, thank you to the colleagues of the Università di Bari, Vito Roberto Santamato and Nicolaia Iaffaldano, who embraced the research project when it was already underway. My gratitude goes also to the colleagues who elaborated the contributions on the new lines of research, to the young collaborators both in Italy and in Argentina who worked with us and to Orazio di Stefano, who coordinated the focus groups. I extend a warm appreciation to the president of the Camera di Commercio, Industria e Artigianato of Cosenza, Klaus Algieri, who supported the project. Thank you to Franco Bartucci, for the assistance with communication, and Donata Marrazzo and Claudio Visentin, the first ones to speak to the media about our research.

Numerous entities and associations, named in the first chapter, have entered into agreements with us to participate or promote the research project in different ways. With appreciation also to them and to the local administrators who helped us in the elaboration of the case studies related to their municipalities and who responded to the questionnaire. Our gratitude goes, finally, to all the roots tourists and the other entities who actively collaborated for the success of the research by responding to the questionnaires and the interviews. I would like to thank, last but not least, the personnel of the Dipartimento di Scienze Aziendali e Giuridiche of the Università della Calabria for their essential support.

As is shown by the number of individuals and entities that have been involved in various ways with the research, we believe that only through knowledge networks and solid interdisciplinary cultural interactions can one progress in the study and the management of such important issues, complex but significant for the territories as roots tourism. We are working toward, but we are only at the beginning! In the future, we will dedicate our attention to additional aspects of the theme studied and to other countries who are affected by the relevant migratory flows from the past and of today.

Sonia Ferrari
Università della Calabria
Coordinator of the Research Project

*Thanks to an authentic **video testimony**, the story of a roots trip is brought to life, narrated by the voice of a young Italian-Argentine. To view this video, frame the QR Code with your smartphone camera.*



Chapter 1

Research on roots tourism⁵

SUMMARY: 1.1 Roots tourism: definition and opportunities for the territories. 1.2 The current situation in Italy and around the world. 1.3 Methods and purpose for the research. 1.4 The research group.

1.1 Roots tourism: definition and opportunities for the territories

As we look at the classifications, that are used in the surveys on tourism in our country, what clearly emerges is that roots tourism evades any type of classification in terms of observation of the phenomenon. The tourism sector not only addresses one industry, but a series of products most especially heterogeneous services. In regards to roots tourism, a distinct identification of the phenomenon is missing, which enables the definition. In particular, in the statistical official system that is conducted by ISTAT and the Banca d'Italia (Bank of Italy), the analysis of inbound tourism to Italy, implemented by the demand perspective, is based on information gathered directly from travelers, shows several reasons for the trip. Reasons for travel which may be work-related or personal. The latter can be classified as: leisure/vacation, study/courses, visits with relatives and friends, religious reasons/pilgrimages, health treatments/thermal treatments, honeymoons, purchases/shopping, and other. The reason for a vacation can also be determined by the activities one engages in during the holiday: seaside vacation, in the mountains, at the lake, cultural reasons, in the countryside, food and wine, sports, and others⁶. The crucial issue lies within the trip's main reason based on data results. Defining roots tourism, as with any other type of tourism, is based on the main reason why the trip has taken place to begin with, as well as, any other interests the traveller may have. This assumption begins with research, that is, the topic of this book: to identify

⁵ Tiziana Nicotera (Università della Calabria) is the author of the paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2; Sonia Ferrari (Università della Calabria) is the author of the paragraphs 1.3 e 1.4.

⁶ Please see: <https://www.istat.it/it/files//2020/06/Una-breve-guida-alle-statistiche-sul-turismo.pdf>.

the specific reason of the trip and to understand this phenomenon that, undoubtedly, deserves a separate discussion on its own, to define marketing policies aimed at this specific tourism sector.

Roots tourism does not have a single denomination, it is also known as origins or homecoming tourism. In some countries, it is defined as ancestral or genealogical tourism (although this is partially representative of it), sometimes, it is known as diaspora, remembrance, nostalgia or sentimental tourism. This tourism *is generated by migrants who leave their country of origin and travel for vacation, often being away for a long time, or by their descendants who desire to visit and discover their family's land of origin. The trip and the stay in one's birthplace is a highly emotional experience: for the first generation, this indeed represents an occasion to see loved ones and especially to rediscover the places that influenced one's life before leaving; for the second generation, it becomes a way to research one's roots and to discover the places where one's ancestors lived, especially for those who have partially or completely lost their connection to their homeland* (De Marchi and Mingotto, 2016: 589).

Roots tourism, unquestionably, is closely related to migratory flow and the main reason of the trip is to predominantly research one's heritage by belonging to a place that is different from where one lives and by reestablishing a connection with the history of one's own family. The roots trip to one's own country of origin is a memorable moment for the migrants in the discovery of their individual and family identity. In addition, to the visit that is connected to one's own family history, in general, roots travel also includes moments that are dedicated to research and meeting distant relatives from one's family tree who stayed in their country of origin: the discovery of 'new cousins' is defined, as being one of the greatest aspirations and satisfactions of the trip (Vietti, 2012).

The diaspora population aids in helping and opening markets for new tourist destinations and for local goods that are associated with the culture of the countries of origin (Newland and Taylor, 2010). The predominant positive effects that derive from the development of this type of tourism are as follows:

- Less competition among territories: in the increasingly fierce competition among tourist destinations, roots tourism offers the possibility to operate in a specific segment regarding every region (every town, will have its emigrants and descendants), that is, roots tourists will choose the destination that is connected to their origin. For some places, characterized by a greater migratory departure, it could also represent a competitive advantage because of the size of this target group.
- Social-cultural sustainability: is tourism that possesses certain characteristics so as to create positive effects on the economic but especially social-cultural fabric of destinations.

- Longer stays: the results of the surveys, that were conducted, show that on average these tourists usually remain longer, as opposed to the current trend of ‘city break’ stays or, anyway, depending on the tourists habitual routines.
- Less seasonal flow: emigrants and their descendants are willing to travel throughout the year and not only in high season.
- Greater propensity to purchase traditional local products: roots tourists highly value the food and wine of their areas of origin, but also artisan products and local art, generating an increase in export. The ‘nostalgia goods’ market can, for example, promote small artisan producers.
- Interests in villages and minor destinations: these tourists are willing to access less visited areas compared to other international tourists, travelling to revisit areas that are connected to their family history, seeing friends and relatives, participating in events and so forth.
- The role of ambassadors and investors: emigrants and their descendants spontaneously promote their homeland of origin (nation, region, and town) in the country in which they reside. They, are also often, interested in investing in entrepreneurial activities.
- Interweaving with various forms of emigration and with other tourist consumption phenomena, such as: *wedding tourism*, *educational tourism*, wine and food tourism, *retirement migration*, second home tourism and so forth, giving them more reason to travel.

1.2 The phenomenon today in Italy and in other countries

Roots tourism represents an exceptionally important type of tourism in our country, that was marked in the past by very consistent migratory flows and still today demonstrates elevated levels of international mobility. According to the Federazione Italiana Emigrazione-Immigrazione (Italian Emigration-Immigration Federation), the number of descendants of Italian emigrants around the world is estimated to be between 60 to 80 million⁷. The presence of Italians and their descendants around the world is especially from the south (2.6 million, equivalent to 48.1 percent of the total). These Italian emigrants and their descendants represent an enormous potential in terms of tourism demand. If the Italians registered in 2006 in the Anagrafe degli Italiani Residenti all’Estero (AIRE) (Register of Italian Emigrants Abroad) were 3,106,251, in 2020 this number has reached almost 5.5 million: in fifteen years Italian mobility has increased 76.6 percent. In 2020, almost 198 thousand more registered compared to the previous year (with an increase of 3.6 percent). Two issues are highlighted regarding migratory movement in 2020: Calabria is among the first regions in terms of expatriate Italian citizens who are registered in AIRE, with an annual percentage increment of 13.6 in 2020; the most significant

⁷ Source www.fiei.org.

community of Italians abroad is that in Argentina, equivalent to 869,000 units (Fondazione Migrantes, 2020). For this reason, we decided to implement a focus on Argentina as the country of current residency of Italians, as well as, Calabria, as the region for departure abroad, not only in the past but also today.

In the last several years, much attention has been placed on past emigration for the opportunity of tourism development. The interest in this phenomenon is still low in Italy. Official statistics are lacking. To date, roots tourism was, rarely, the subject of scientific research on an international level, and even less in Italy. In addition, studies on this topic concentrated mostly on anthropological and sociological aspects of the diaspora and less on tourism-territorial marketing. In our country, this tourism phenomenon is especially spontaneous, it is not sufficiently encouraged and it is neither organized nor structured by targeted policies on the central and local government level. The offer of specific services of tour operators is lacking, as well. Therefore, the necessity to improve studies on the topic for defining and implementing marketing strategies aimed at this particular tourism segment is recognized. Roots tourists have unique characteristics and can be considered a type of *sui generis* travelers, a cross between visitors and residents. Additionally, roots tourism itself can be considered somewhere between domestic and international tourism.

If there is another Italy that lives abroad, the question then arises, in which way can Italian emigrants and their descendants be encouraged and be ‘called’? Furthermore, it is necessary to value the way in which we can efficiently propose, specifically on the digital channels, a destination for ancestral travel to connect with the homeland and satisfy the migrants’ demand to find their identity.

To understand the opportunity that is generated by the promotion of roots tourism, this type of tourism should be explored and analyzed in several ways and from different points of view, beginning with in-depth knowledge of needs and expectations that roots tourists have and continuing on to the operators of this sector (whether in the country of origin or of current residence), the associations of Italians abroad, the hosting community, the institutions, among which, first of all, are the municipal administrations.

Only after having conducted more in the field research in regards to different categories of subjects through diverse methodological approaches, the cognitive foundations can be obtained for shaping a pilot project and a marketing model for the development of roots tourism, so it can be replicated in other regions.

Among the main institutional stakeholders, the Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale (MAECI) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy) is conducting an important promotional activity for roots tourism. In May 2018, a Technical Round Table was launched on this topic, and in 2021 it is now in its fourth edition, in which representatives of central and local administrations, academic centers of research, associations and operators of the tourism industry will participate to discuss and facilitate the exchange of best practices regarding initiatives and projects achieved, and the possible tourism offer to propose to the

Italian community around the world. A collection of the 'Guide to Italian roots. A journey in the footsteps of your ancestors', which is of interest to the various Italian regions, is supported by the Direzione Generale per gli Italiani all'Estero (Management General for Italians Abroad), and is the work of the Associazione Raiz Italiana (Italian Roots Association). The support of MAECI also pertains to the field of academic research, that includes the research project that is incorporated in this book as an overview of achieved results. In addition, as announced during the last Technical Round Table in May 28, 2021, in the Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza (National Recovery and Resilience Plan), the MAECI, will have their own area dedicated to roots tourism where they will be able to raise awareness on training activities, and other initiatives. The Direttore Generale per gli Italiani all'Estero e le Politiche Migratorie (General Director for Italians Abroad and Migratory Policies), Luigi Maria Vignali, announced during the event: *We would like to promote 2023, with the Ministry of Tourism and ENIT, as the year of Italian roots*⁸.

The Agenzia Nazionale del Turismo (ENIT) (Italian National Tourist Board) conducted a survey⁹ in 2018 that involved 140 tour operators that promoted Italy in 22 foreign markets; the results of the survey indicated that the demand concerning those of Italian origin contributed to the reservations' increase in 2018. In 2017, according to this study, ancestral tourism to Italy gave rise to 670,000 arrivals from the main American countries analyzed, with a total expenditure of 644 million Euros, considering that the sole reason of the trip was 'to visit family, relatives and friends', and in terms of expenditure is the second reason that pushes tourists originating from the USA, Brazil, Canada and Argentina to travel to Italy. Nevertheless, as is seen later on¹⁰, the reason of the trip for *visiting friends and relatives* can be deemed as one of the objectives for roots travel, but not the main reason. This, in fact, can also be related to other types of travel (just think of the process of the trip in reverse, that is, relatives and friends who visit the country in which an emigrant relative lives). Therefore, a perfect overlapping does not exist between the two segments, roots tourism and visiting friends and relatives¹¹.

In addition ENIT cited in their report, a series of initiatives conducted through their website for the promotion abroad of tourism in Italy that might also encourage roots travel, for example, the event 'Buenos Aires celebrates Calabria' and the competition in Buenos Aires "Travel to know your roots", aimed at the youth of the various communities who live in Argentina. In 2021, in ENIT's marketing plan and promotion, attention is placed on roots tourism in terms of engagement in

⁸ Source: <https://comunicazioneinform.it/il-dibattito-del-4-tavolo-tecnico-sul-turismo-delle-radici-promosso-dalla-direzione-generale-per-gli-italiani-allesteri-del-maeci/>.

⁹ For a complete report please see: www.ontit.it/opencms/opencms/ont/it/focus/focus/Il_turismo_di_ritorno.html.

¹⁰ Please see paragraph 6.4.

¹¹ Please see paragraph 6.1 on this subject.

communication, even if the strategic and operational lines to be implemented are not expressed.

On a national level, the dedicated commitment of the C.I.M. (Confederazione degli Italiani nel Mondo – Confederation of Italians around the World) is mentioned along with the development management of roots tourism, to which the Confederation has dedicated an area on their website, through direct contacts with the numerous associations of Italians abroad, the organization of debates, seminars and webinars and the presentation of proposals and projects. Among the events organized, one was developed in May 2021, in collaboration with the Associazione Borghi più Belli d'Italia (Association of the Most Beautiful villages in Italy) for the appreciation of Italian small towns.

Even the local regional entities implement measures in favor of persons from their region abroad, through the councils or offices that are dedicated to the relationship with the Italians living in foreign countries and their families. The objective is to not only boost tourism but also other forms of collaborations and exchanges. Additionally, there are many initiatives from various Italian communities that have enabled the emigrants' bonds to their birthplace to be kept alive in various ways, for example, with events, awards, recognition, missions abroad with the community of those originally from a certain municipality, studies for the reconstruction of one's family history and so forth.

Some associations, with headquarters in Italy, contribute generously. Among these, the Associazione Brutium¹² (Brutium Association) is remembered; it was founded 55 years ago by Giuseppe Gesualdi, with the purpose of reuniting Calabrians in Italy and creating a solid connection among all Calabrians around the world. The latter, thanks to virtual networking that unites communities abroad and to the various delegations, have valued the Made in Calabria in the countries where they live. The community of Calabrians abroad introduce projects, through the Associazione Brutium, to then return to their own country of origin where they often purchase the home of their grandparents and at the same time introduce the beauty, the traditions and the culture of their region of origin to their children. Among the associations with a geographical area restricted to a specific region, the new Associazione Radici Calabresi (Calabrian Roots Association) originated as a seed from scientific research activity conducted to seize the opportunity arising from roots tourism and to become a point of reference in the region and common ground between the demand and supply of specialized services and products, whether for local travel or for support and remote assistance. The ambitious objective is to create a network of associations in other regions, inflecting the roots research into the specificity of the different regions (Sicilian roots, Apulian roots, etc.) and providing an operative format.

Useful resources for the roots tourism development project can, furthermore, include the emigration museums, such as, the Museo Narrante dell'Emigrazione of the Fondazione Napoli Novantanove (Naples Ninety-nine Foundation Narrative

¹² <https://www.brutium.it/>.

Museum for Emigration) in Spezzano Sila, in the heart of the Sila plateau. As shown, in the tourist destinations portals' analysis of various countries, in addition to the experiences lived by the roots tourists who were interviewed, the attractions that identify the historical memory of places that will emerge, as well as, access points for data consulting, are government archives, libraries, municipal registration offices and so forth. They contribute, however, indirectly, to the constructing of roots travel, starting with genealogical research. Some countries, such as, Ireland and Scotland, have focused on roots tourism, particularly on genealogy, by organizing travel packages, services and targeted communication. Germany and Poland have also dedicated, as you can see in the following paragraphs¹³, a part of their tourism offer to this sector.

In our country, genealogical research appears to be a challenge, and investing is necessary to facilitate its accessibility and placing information digitally and within networks, also, by creating specialized professional figures for the reconstruction of family trees. The history of emigration is of interest to entire communities and to one's personal family history, and must become a strength for the tourism product that is connected to Italian origin.

There is an Italy outside, in the world...

There is an Italy outside, in the world, which is something extraordinary. Nevertheless, we are oblivious to it, still, because of superficiality and indifference. There is an Italy that protests, that innate identity in every person, and we know that there are millions, having left long ago, for multiple reasons. They left to search for a new life, a future that, in the darkness of the years of our emigration, Italy could not guarantee. Today, those millions of Italians, who have their origins in the "Belpaese" (beautiful country), in a loud voice demand their belonging to our peninsula. It is a connection of affection, of the heart, of roots. This is summarized in that which can be commonly defined as 'tourism of origins or roots tourism.'

I experienced this up-close, for professional reasons, this great portion of Italy that is scattered in every continent. I realize what every one of these Italians abroad desire: to have the dignity of one's roots origins. For almost seven years, I worked as a correspondent in Argentina and other countries in South America on various programs on Rai, first Community, then L'Italia con Voi produced by Rai Scuola (the international network of Rai) and subsequently released by Rai Scuola, Rai 3 and Rai 1. Our assignment was to tell the stories of Italians around the world. In these extraordinary experiences, one can comprehend how Italians have been able to meet their very needs by adapting to every condition in life. These were obviously not easy times, but the dignity of Italians are indescribable. Hard work, capability, and creativity, all elements that many times made him/her an example, in every part of the world.

¹³ Please see paragraph 5.1.

Television, as an extraordinary tool of communication, has fulfilled and fulfills, even if not completely, the work of reconnecting the homeland with distant lands. In this, the Rai is clearly a premier source around the world, specifically through its international network. I remember many individuals who recalled, with emotion, their stories about their relatives or parents from every region of Italy who emigrated. The emotion was sovereign. Because the voice of the heart spoke. Everything was born from what grandparents and parents were able to transmit to their successors. Today, the need to discover the country of ancestors, the places of belonging, takes place in the majority of the cases through the so-called roots tourism, by exploring the small villages and the towns from which the personal stories of all these individuals originated. Television has a fundamental role in this, but it is only through videos that a story that is alive with emotion emerges and is capable of evoking a reawakening of memory and the desire for discovery.

I have had the possibility to hear about sad stories and stories of success. All, however, born with a unique pathos. I was particularly attracted to those uneventful stories, those who did not have the opportunity of becoming wealthy and creating a comfortable life. Because in those stories, I perceive the emotion of the narrative, the nostalgia of a distant land. Roots tourism today focuses on these considerations, in recovering the knowledge of one's own origin. A trip that can occur once in a lifetime or it can be repeated. But it always leaves an unforgettable impression on the human mind. Because it can be seen by the way these individuals narrate their own emotions. Often, as if it were an obligation toward one's ancestors, who greatly loved the country that they left, at a distant time. I remember three brothers who were shoemakers who emigrated from Calabria, with their parents, to Montevideo, Uruguay. The youngest was two years old. To hear them speak their Calabrian dialect gave me goose bumps, as it was so real and authentic. A way to remain anchored to that far away land.

I hope that the Rai, as with other communication companies, will continue to be interested in a significant way to our emigration situation, knowing that there are millions of Italians of origin around the world. This represents not only a social but a cultural resource; many individuals who can be of value to reinforce the Italian system. Immediately after the war in the first years of the 1900s, when the Italians' support determined that entire countries could be rebuilt. Today, it is this Italy that yearns to help the homeland. All that is needed is to give these individuals their fair and proper dignity.

Given that, as I usually say, the emigrant is like the leaf of a tree that grows from the earth and lies on its branches, when autumn arrives, just like the autumn of life, the leaves fall and return to their very roots. Just as the large part of our emigrants' desire. Sometimes it is possible, many times it is not.

*Pasquale Guaglianone
Filmmaker and television director*

1.3 Objectives and research methodologies

The research that is the subject of this report proves to be important for the filling of a gap in international literature, and above all, in Italian literature on the theme of roots tourism, in particular, regarding studies with a place and tourism marketing approach. This approach could help the study of this form of tourism as an opportunity to be grasped, in order to validate the rich Italian historical and cultural heritage towards a very extensive community of emigrants abroad.

That which is necessary to emphasize is that this research activity does not represent a culmination but a starting point, that requires continuous insight and consistency, in order to produce concrete results of interest for our country and for the various territories in which this is organized. As the title of this book suggests, the main objective is to encourage the return of the community of Italian emigrants and their descendants during vacation periods and to reinforce their sense of identity and belonging with reference to their country of origin.

These pursued objectives can be expressed in terms of knowledge of the target group 'roots tourists', of awareness by the diverse categories of stakeholders concerning the issue, of the understanding of policies previously adopted on a national and territorial level (regions, districts, lastly the single municipalities), of comparison of our country with other destinations, of involvement of subjects who could contribute in various capacities to the development of this type of tourism.

The research project is aimed, primarily, to the awareness and the in-depth analysis of the expectations, of the needs and peculiarities of the roots tourism segment. The study aims to shed light on important information, exceptionally useful to efficiently orient public administrators and companies in the industry regarding the planning and presentation of specifically designed products for this target market, who have specific travel objectives, needs and characteristics. Consequently, this research work aims in the most effective way to orient and to support the future actions of strategic marketing planning of the operators and the institutions responsible for the policy planning of tourist development. This would attract visitors and best fulfillment of their expectations; another scope is that of encouraging a positive word of mouth to improve the image of some of the territories and of their products abroad. The study represents, in addition, a useful tool to attract the interest of public opinion and the local community toward these tourism flow which is imperative for the conservation and the appreciation of local historical identity, heritage and culture, and to support forms of sustainable development in villages and minor tourist destinations.

The studies carried out in the last few years by the research group represent the initial phases of a more expansive investigation process. These studies require further and constant in-depth analysis to provide continuous and updated results, so that Italy and, in particular, the regions most affected both in the past and today by migratory flows, can be perceived as destinations capable of attracting and effectively welcoming emigrants and their descendants as tourists.

With the scope of focusing at best on the investigation activities to produce results that, are as closely as possible efficient and of interest, the decision was to concentrate the research on one of the countries that historically was the destination of Italian emigrants: Argentina. The Italian community in Argentina is the first community of Italians abroad: in 2019, in fact, there were 869,000 Italian residents in the country (Source: AIRE). From here, the decision to collaborate with the Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata and to enable partnerships such as that with the Centro Italo Calabrese di Tucumán (Italian-Calabrian Center of Tucumán) and with the F.A.C.A (Federazione Associazioni Calabresi in Argentina – Association Federation of Calabrians in Argentina). The idea is to replicate this research model, in the years following, also in other countries of current residence of Italian emigrants and their descendants such as Canada, Chile, Brazil, USA, Australia, in view of an ongoing survey activity that is fostered on innovative studies and always up-to-date on the diverse aspects of the situation and the various territories that are interested by it.

After an in-depth study regarding the state of the art related to the national and international academic research on the issue analyzed, various types of surveys were conducted, namely, the qualitative and quantitative surveys, as well as, some case studies and other analyses containing specific methodologies for the web. It has been decided to approach the research by adopting a series of different methodologies to render it more comprehensive. In fact, a mixed approach in the research develops the strengths of the various adopted methods, and as a consequence, enables understanding and intuition that otherwise would be impossible to achieve. It is, therefore, more inclusive and complementary, and promotes clarity and depth over other approaches. The *mixed methodology* or *research triangulation* is considered, consequently, as the correct modality for a greater and deeper understanding of the theme. It is nonetheless, a more challenging choice in terms of time and resources, thus, less utilized, but much more powerful for obtaining useful information and new points of view regarding this field of study. It is, particularly, suitable for the analysis of complex social issues, such as tourism-related themes (Creswell, 2015; Morse, 2016; Yin, 2006).

In the first phase of research, which was exploratory, the qualitative methodology appears to be the most suitable, because it is particularly interactive and in-depth. The main interest in this initial phase of the work was the understanding of specific dynamics (reasons, behaviors, expectations, levels of satisfaction, tourists' preferences) instead of their measurements.

The qualitative survey was conducted both in Italy and in Argentina, with semi-structured interviews and focus groups on a purposive sample of stakeholders and privileged witnesses, who were available to explore the themes that were the subjects of research. Collectively, there were 113 respondents, of which 81 were in Italy and 32 in Argentina. After the processing of the results of these surveys, comparisons and integration were made among the results of the surveys that were conducted in conjunction by the two research groups. Special attention was placed on the aspects

of social-cultural sustainability of roots tourism and on which the evolution of the tourist sector and roots tourism post coronavirus will be. The Argentine partners addressed the theme of roots tourism in a different context and perspective compared to the Italian one, deepening even those aspects related to the entrepreneurial and economic interests for the issue in Argentina.

With regards to the quantitative survey with a focus on Argentina, the target population consists of all of the emigrants from Italy in Argentina and their descendants who live in Argentina today.

The survey was conducted through the online distribution of a questionnaire in Italian, English and Spanish. The questionnaire was intended to answer a series of research questions pertaining to the connection of the respondents with their homeland of origin, the type of vacation experienced in Italy and their impressions, with the attempt to also know the level of interest for participating in roots travel by those who have never taken any. Finally, the assessment on the respondents' and their acquaintances' visions on their familial land of origin. 1,545 were the final sample of subjects who completely answered the questionnaire.

Another type of survey that was conducted involved the Calabrian and Apulian Municipalities. A questionnaire was submitted to all the municipal administrations of the two regions and directed to the mayors or their delegates. Around 50 percent of the Municipalities responded. This decision was made in order to take advantage of the related opportunities for the promotion of roots tourism, considering that the municipal administrations represent the connecting link between who has emigrated and their homeland. A trip to discover one's own family history should not miss the opportunity to visit the municipality of origin or of one's own descendants. The sense of belonging tends to be reinforced in an increasingly limited geographical area: within Italy, in general, in a specific region and within a certain town. This is the reason why it seems necessary to build a sustainable development model for roots tourism in a specific territory, primarily involving the municipalities. Upon completion of the surveys in the two regions, comparisons were conducted on the two paralleling studies.

Some case studies were also processed, relative to the same tourist destinations or towns in which the interest for the subject of roots tourism appears to be greater. The hope is that those locations would be implemented upon and enriched in the future, also following the contacts with the research group and the development of the studies on the diverse areas, strategy planning activities specific for attracting roots tourists with promotion and development tools for sustainable tourism.

A subsequent phase of the conducted research has provided the analysis and the comparison of the institutional European tourist promotion websites that, like Italy, have communities of emigrants around the world. This was done by a *content analysis*, in order to understand what the adopted policies are in terms of online communication on the theme of roots tourism and if *best practices* exist. The most innovative part, of the research is represented by the forthcoming *web listening* and by the analysis of digital footprints on this particular form of travel of Italians in

Argentina. This consists of a very complex *sentiment analysis*, that is highly sophisticated and advanced and reveals if and in what terms roots tourism is spoken about in digitally, where demand and offer come together.

Part of the work was dedicated to the individuation of ideas with regard to various themes that could represent future lines of research with reference to roots tourism. These are themes that are not yet addressed in this perspective, that could open the way to new ways of sustainable development related to roots tourism, to start-up and to innovative professional figures. This consists of issues of considerable interest for lesser known destinations, that have always been more interested in the theme of the research. In view of the results of the conducted research, various marketing activities have been identified in the implemented conclusions, in order to promote the development of roots tourism in the future in our country by dividing them into different fields of intervention.

The overall picture of the editing project of this book is completed by the description of communication and dissemination activities conducted through the organization of a great number of meetings and debates, primarily to increase awareness of public opinion and present the research and secondly to promote the results and initiate a collection of concrete initiatives for the development of roots tourism in the Italian territories. Finally, the video testimony of a young Argentine woman of Italian origin allows the viewer to take an inside look into her emotions and a way of understanding the roots trip from the Italians that live abroad and their point of view.

1.4 The research group

Research on the theme of roots tourism had already begun in 2017 at the Università della Calabria by two members of the research group, Sonia Ferrari and Tiziana Nicotera. The following activities of study and survey, the object of this report, were conducted in an academic setting by a partnership initially composed of: Università della Calabria (leading), Universidad de Mar del Plata (Argentina), Centro Italo-Calabrese (Tucumán, Argentina) and F.A.C.A. (Federazione delle Associazioni Calabresi in Argentina). A professor from the Università di Torino and two professors from the Università di Bari have participated.

Sonia Ferrari, who is an associate professor of Tourism Marketing and Place Marketing at the Università della Calabria, author of numerous national and international publications on tourism marketing, coordinated the research. Tiziana Nicotera is a junior researcher with previous research experience on the theme of roots tourism with relative publications, an expert on tourism marketing, territorial marketing and web marketing. Both handled all of the strategic and operative aspects of the study and of the various comprising phases and operations, including the field interviews and the writing of the contents for the book. In addition, they have conducted all the tutorial and educational activities on the subject of roots tourism planned on the research project designated, to increase the awareness of the stakeholders and to disclose the results of the research.

The following individuals have collaborated with them, performing support operations to the field research: Domenico Bilotto, Veronica Catalano, Federica Francesca Napoli and Giovanni Trombino, all with experience in tourist hospitality, destinations promotion, assistance with roots tourists and use of digital communication tools. They have contributed to the diffusion of the initiative and the promotion of the questionnaires to the municipalities and to the tourists through the network of the associations for emigrants. They have also participated with the implementation of direct interviews and focus groups with various entities and, finally, have supported the exploratory study conducted online on the portals of the foreign organizations for the promotion of tourism.

The representative of the research in Argentina was Ana Maria Biasone, who is professor of Public Sector and Tourism, Public Management of Tourism, Professional Practice in Tourism and director of the Master's Program in Development of Sustainable Tourism at the Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata. We wish to thank the following individuals who have shown appreciation for the research and have participated in the project: Daniel Antenucci, Vice Rector of the Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, and Miriam Berges, economist, researcher and Vice Dean of the Department of Economics and Social Sciences of the same university. The following individuals have collaborated: Juan Pablo Morea and Lautaro Rech – researchers and teachers at the Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata – and Franco Manzo, student of Economics, Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata.

Anna Lo Presti has taken part in the research, responsible for the calculations and statistic studies. She is a university researcher of Methodological Statistics at the Università di Torino, professor of Statistical Analysis and Probability Theory, as well as an author on various publications.

Pasquale Guaglianone has also formed a part of the research team. Mr. Guaglianone, an expert on the themes of emigration, is a journalist and television reporter for the RAI-Radio Televisione Italiana in South America, in particular for the program 'L'Italia con Voi' of RAI ITALIA and RAI PLAY, which is dedicated to Italians around the world.

The following individuals have collaborated and promoted the research project with the community of Italians emigrated in Argentina: Marcelo Carrara (president of the Federación de Sociedades Italianas de Mar del Plata y Zona), Ariadna Estefanía Cabello Rendace (president of the Centro Italo-Calabrese di Tucumán), Leonardo de Simona (president F.A.C.A.) and many other representatives of associations of Italians abroad.

The following individuals have conducted the survey in Puglia: Vito Roberto Santamato, associate professor at the Università A. Moro di Bari, where he teaches Economics and Business Management and is coordinator for the Degree Program in Planning and Management of Tourism and Cultural Systems, and Nicolaia Iaffaldano, researcher at the same university where she teaches Economics and Business Management and conducts research particularly on the theme of local

development from the perspective of sustainability. The statistical processing has been organized by Angela Maria D'Uggento, adjunct professor of Statistics for Economic and Financial Analysis at the Università degli Studi A. Moro di Bari.

Several contributions were developed courtesy of researchers and external scholars with the project who also wished to collaborate. We would like to, therefore, thank the following scholars for their contributions: Luciano Romito (professor of Phonetics and Phonology, Experimental Phonetics and General Linguistics at Università della Calabria), Emilio Velasco (associate professor of Gestione d'Impresa at the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid), Giuseppe Emanuele Adamo (director of the Academic Department of Marketing at the EAE Business School, Madrid), Filippo Grasso (professor of Marketing Analysis, Università di Messina), Salvo Iavarone (president of Asmef), Debora Calomino (subject expert and teaching assistant at the Università della Calabria) e Anna Cipparrone (director of the Museo Consentia Itinera). Damiano de Marco of The Data Appeal Company has participated in the survey in regards to the 'sentiment analysis' on the web.

During the course of research other individuals have been involved and have given support as a partner by collaborative agreements or otherwise. Among these are mentioned, in Argentina: the Embassy of Italy in Buenos Aires; the Consulate of Italy in Mar del Plata; CGIE – Consiglio Generale degli Italiani all'Estero; Italian Cultural Institute in Buenos Aires; COM.IT.ES - Comitato degli Italiani all'Estero-Circoscrizione Consolare di Mar del Plata; FEDITALIA - Confederación de Federaciones Italianas en la Argentina; Federación de Sociedades Italianas de Mar del Plata y Zona; Casa d'Italia, Mar del Plata; Istituto Dante Alighieri di Mar del Plata; Red PROTER – Red de Profesionales y Técnicos de la Emilia Romagna; APUCIA - Asociación Profesionales Universitarios Calabreses e ítalo Argentinos; Unión Regional del Molise; Centro Pugliese de Mar del Plata; Cátedra Itálica de la Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata.

And in Italy: Camera di Commercio, Industria e Artigianato di Cosenza; ANCI Calabria and ANCI Puglia; Osservatorio sul Turismo Regione Calabria; Lavorare in Calabria; Associazione Io Resto, Crotone; Osservatorio Internazionale Emergenza Turismo; Dipartimento Sviluppo e Cooperazione Italia Brasile; Esaro Italia web radio; Confederazione Italiani nel Mondo; UNPLI Calabria and UNPLI Cosenza; Fondazione Attilio e Elena Giuliani di Cosenza; Dipartimento di Studi e Ricerche Turistiche e di Sviluppo Territoriale.

Chapter 2

Roots tourists of Italian origins. The qualitative survey¹⁴

SUMMARY: 2.1 The qualitative research conducted in Italy. 2.2 The social-cultural sustainability of roots tourism. 2.3 Roots tourism after the Covid-19 pandemic. 2.4 Conclusions.

2.1 The qualitative research conducted in Italy

In this phase of the research, an exploratory qualitative survey was done, in order to, study the characteristics of the demand in the roots tourism sector (Ferrari and Nicotera, 2018a, 2018b and 2020). Considering the gaps in the knowledge available on this phenomenon and the necessity to acquire and deepen some of these dynamics, the qualitative research intent is to explore this theme and to offer a cognitive approach of the characteristics, preferences and actions of the emigrants and their descendants. Moreover, a section of the research, which is described in the next paragraph, was dedicated to aspects concerning the sustainability of roots tourism in social-cultural terms and, namely, the phenomenon's impact on the social and cultural fabric of the host community. This concerns a theme that appears to be new and of great interest and relevance also in international literature. Lastly, the issue of the current Covid-19 pandemic and what could occur in reference to roots tourism has been addressed.

This initial exploratory survey has made the information provided for possible future implementation of the research, particularly of the statistical survey that was subsequently conducted. Opposed to the quantitative research, that presents a high level of standardization and permits the use of the statistical analysis for the

¹⁴Sonia Ferrari and Tiziana Nicotera (Università della Calabria) are the authors of paragraphs 2.1 and 2.4. Sonia Ferrari is the author of paragraph 2.2. The authors of paragraph 2.3 are: Anna Maria Biasone (Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata), Sonia Ferrari and Tiziana Nicotera (Università della Calabria), Nicolaia Iaffaldano and Vito Roberto Santamato (Università di Bari).

elaboration of the data, the qualitative research presents a low level of standardization and a less formal nature of the gathered data analysis procedures. The qualitative method enables flexibility and adaptability with the research objectives and is more interactive, detailed and sensitive for the study of human behavior, attitudes, ways of thinking and reasons. An appropriate method for the gathering of data has been assessed by the in-depth interviews. Two focus groups were also organized and managed.

The field survey followed the broad study of literature on the theme, as well as some preliminary meetings with various stakeholders. The survey regarding the tourism phenomenon observed in Calabria was conducted by in-depth interviews with roots tourists and also with other individuals who were involved in various ways in the offer of products and services designated for roots tourists, public administrators, representatives of associations and other members of the local communities. It was necessary, to address the topic by studying different facets of the experience. In order to identify the individuals to be interviewed, the non-probability sample method 'snowball' was used. Each semi-structured interview lasted about 40-50 minutes and was conducted personally by researchers in Italian, English and Spanish; its content was different for each category of respondents. The results were re-examined in light of the subject matter, until having reached the limit in terms of possible responses. The interviews were conducted beginning in 2017 and were mostly done in-person with only a small portion having been conducted through Skype.

A purposive sample of 48 tourists and a total of 33 people among tourist operators (11), local administrators (11) and representatives of associations both in Italy and abroad (11) were interviewed. The objective was to know, along with the characteristics of the tourists, the current state of the offer of services by the operators of the travel and hospitality sectors directed at these specific tourists, including the initiatives and actions put into place by institutions and local authorities for the support of roots tourism.

On the demand side, the roots tourists of Calabrian origin who were interviewed belong to the first and subsequent generations of emigrant families who chose to return for vacation at least once to their homeland of origin. The tourists who were interviewed originate primarily from Argentina, Brazil, Canada and Australia. The interviews were conducted during or after their trip to Italy, and were organized on five main themes that were addressed and discussed, although from a different perspective, with all the different types of stakeholders, namely:

- *the emotional bond with Calabria;*
- *the reasons for the trip;*
- *the expectations before leaving;*
- *the planning of the trip;*
- *the travel experience.*

The data analysis followed an inductive approach. The data was managed manually by a content thematic analysis according to the five themes identified earlier. Subsequently, the synthetic results of the interviews were reported. These results naturally cannot be generalized regarding the total population of roots tourists of Italian origin; nevertheless, the results are interesting and useful, on the basis of the lack of marketing studies on the topic, with a particular emphasis on our country.

Regarding the first theme, the **emotional bond with Calabria**, this is particularly relevant in this study, because, in order to understand the reasons for the trip, the emotions that unite the roots tourists to their own places of origin must be known. At the foundation of the entire re-connection process to one's birthplace that leads these tourists to embark on this journey, there is a feeling of a loss of continuity with one's own past and the desire to recuperate and/or reconstruct one's own identity through belonging to somewhere different than where one usually lives. It is this feeling that provides the impetus, in the phase before the trip, for the research, that can be genealogical in nature or of another kind, for example, on the places of origin, potentially contacting residents in that area and so on. This is an important aspect that emerges from the stories, which are the outcome of various interviews. The following statement is from an Australian interviewee and is filled with meaning: *In Australia, my generation and the one preceding mine (the first), had suffered, and some are still coming to terms with their sense of identity. I have struggled with my identity and I have finally found peace and acceptance, even in regards to the incredibly positive attributes that my Calabrian heritage has given me. It is difficult to explain, but already at the age of 5, I was living with the struggle of growing up Calabrian and being Italian in Australia. I was happy when I was in Italy. I could be myself.*

Almost all of the respondents state to have a strong relationship with their family's homeland of origin. The first question that is raised in the interview involves this issue, which is the roots tourists' connections with the 'Calabresità' ('Calabrian Heritage'). Two tourists (emigrants of second and third generation) affirm this: *I feel that I carry it in my DNA. I feel it is my home.* The main incentive of roots tourists is, even according to some representatives of the Calabrian associations around the world, *the ancestral ties with Calabria and the desire to live the culture of this region in a closer way, as well as, the desire to see the places and the environment that their ancestors told stories about, because the stories of the older generation alone are not enough.*

The traditions, kept throughout various generations and, above all, during the festivities, are indicative of the profound connection with one's own homeland of origin. In some cases, when an individual is of Italian heritage but this heritage is from different regions, clearly identifying the origin of some of these traditions is not easy, and some customs are not typically Calabrian but Italian in general. For example, this happens in the case of the structure of a meal that comprises of a first course (pasta) and a second course, instead of the meal being only one course. In one's own country of residence, it may happen that those of Calabrian origin will recognize each other, and are recognized by others as a community that contains

specific characteristics and image. A young individual who was interviewed says in this respect: *To be of Calabrian origin is something that I carry with myself even when I am with my friends*. The majority, above all the elderly, have already been on vacation more than once in Calabria. The desire to travel is greater in the first and second generations, while the subsequent generations are less interested and rarely visit the region. Therefore, with the passage of time and of the generations, the connection with Calabria weakens, as well as, the interest to visit the region.

With reference to the **reasons of the trip**, the results of the survey show that the research of one's identity heritage is the predominant motive. It is possible, however, to identify other numerous factors, linked to the main reason, that encourage the decision to embark upon the trip, namely:

- *deepening one's knowledge of the local culture;*
- *visiting places that one has always heard about at home;*
- *learning the language;*
- *researching on one's own family;*
- *seeing relatives;*
- *transmitting the Calabrian culture to the next generations;*
- *keeping a promise to one's own parents or grandparents.*

In addition to these reasons, which have been revealed in the field survey, Lambert (1996) lists other reasons: to preserve the family and cultural traditions, to collect information on the family's medical history and to have a family album¹⁵. The research of one's own family history appears to almost always be a very important reason that often results in a superimposed position of this segment with 'genealogical tourism'. Second generation tourists and, above all, those of the next generations show a greater interest for this research, because they know their own family history in a more superficial way. Only a minority of individuals engage in in-depth research, in order to build a family tree, but almost everyone seeks out information before leaving, and, above all, on the Internet. A respondent stated that he/she appointed a travel agency who contacted the State Archives of Cosenza and some parishes, to ask for documents that were then picked up upon arrival. Visiting with relatives and friends is also among the experiences that are regarded as the main reasons for the trip and is very important. Some, especially the first generation, have maintained direct relationships with their own family members living in Calabria, while the second and third generations form contacts and connections mainly through social networks.

¹⁵ The family album, actually, was often mentioned by the roots tourists who were interviewed as a service that was requested to the tour guides at the end of the trip rather than having been the reason for the trip itself.

Regarding roots tourists' **expectations**, in general, they are very specific and different compared to those of other tourism segments. A respondent states: *The visit in Calabria was not one of a conventional tourism package. It was the moment of discovering my origins, and in this sense, it was unforgettable.* Another individual says: *I immersed myself in these places with a new point of view, as that of an investigator of my own family history.*

It appears from the interviews that expectations are rarely unmet. Almost everyone was expecting exactly what they discovered, especially in terms of social interactions. *I was expecting this sense of family and community*, one tourist explains. Some visitors of Calabrian origin imagined a Calabria of the past and an underdeveloped one, but they were very pleasantly surprised to find a place that was very different. The opinion also depends, naturally, on the current place of residence of the respondent (the more economically developed that one's current homeland is, the harsher the opinion is of Calabria). The respondents from the Latin American countries, however, were satisfied with Calabria and said to have been positively impressed.

The focus of the survey was also to understand if and what research was conducted before leaving, from the genealogical to that of the places, traditions, and cuisine. The genealogical research, conducted before but also during the vacation, could be considered an integral part of the tourism experience. Regarding the informational research activity before travelling, the Internet offered the tourists enormous advantages with information on their places of origin and for booking trips and services in the area. According to some respondents, the information on the tourist destinations were found primarily on the web. The search for information occurs in different moments and using diverse sources:

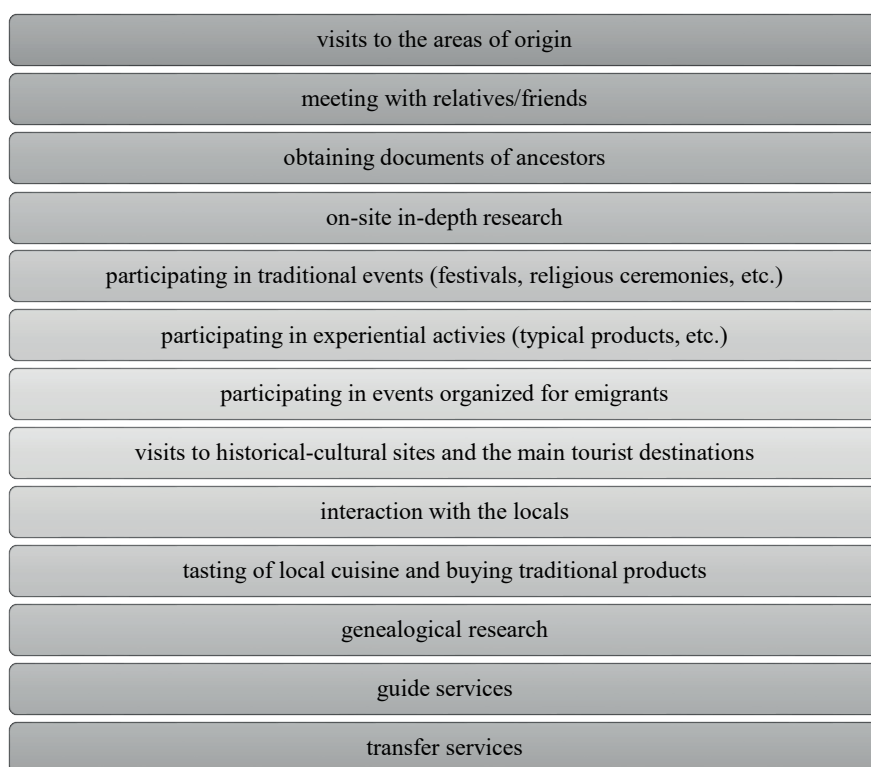
- online research on the sites specialized in family trees, digital archives, document research;
- search for people through social networks;
- search for contacts through the web in churches, State Archives and municipal offices;
- search on the websites of the municipality of origin (even amateur, not only institutional);
- research entrusted to specialized agencies;
- offline research through documents, libraries, etc.;
- research through direct stories from family members;
- on-site research with the municipal administrations, parishes and State Archives;
- on-site informal research with questions addressed to the residents of the area.

In reference to the **travel experience**, in terms of organization these tourists generally travel alone, seldom in groups with whom they can share the experience.

An operator, who throughout the years has accompanied roots tourists originating from the United States and Argentina, explains that the trips are often planned one or two years in advance. Usually, the groups rely on associations, but roots tourists do not always want to go to their places of origin. There are also individuals that travel alone, assisted by direct contacts through the Internet. Frequently, the tourists ask for individual tours and wish to be accompanied, especially if they do not speak Italian and do not know the areas, mainly because many operators and contact persons in the region do not speak a foreign language.

The survey sheds light on the experiences these tourists would like to live and the services they ask for (Nicotera, 2021), as it is shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 The needs of the roots tourists



Source: direct survey

The visit to the town of origin is the aspect that gives the most value to the stay in one's homeland or the homeland of one's ancestors, and represents a unique, memorable and unforgettable experience. The visit focuses on the narrow streets, houses, churches, places and people that are the subjects of memory or of narratives.

This statement is given in an interview: *I felt like she (my grandmother) was with me while I admired the church that she always told me about.* Many of the tourists ask the tour operators, if they can visit their towns of origin when they are in the reservation and purchase phase of the trip. Some ask for assistance when they are in the area, while others still prefer to explore these places alone. Many wish to be accompanied or be provided with their own vehicle so they can move around independently. *This is also because, states an operator, of the lack of internal public transportation and the difficulties when travelling, also due to limited tourism information.* Another operator explains: *The information that is available online is mostly related to the seaside supply. However, those who want to come to Calabria during the year, other than summer, find very little information.*

The excursion to the area of one's origins includes, states an operator: *A visit to the municipality, the cathedral or another church (in which, for example, they were baptized or their loved ones were married) and the streets of the town; if possible, a visit even to the residence where their ancestors lived; possible meetings with relatives and acquaintances; and it ends with a stop at the cemetery where the relatives were buried.* A guide states, regarding this experience, that some tourists brought with them the ashes of their grandparents who were born in Cosenza and of their father, who was not born in Calabria, with them. The ashes were dispersed in the ancestors' area of origin, probably because of a promise kept.

Obtaining documents plays an important role in the experience, as one tourist who was interviewed explains: *As incredible as it may sound, I identified as a Calabrian only when I obtained my great-grandparents birth certificates as well as my grandparents marriage certificate. It was the most exciting moment of the trip.* The research deals not only with documents of the ancestors but also, in some cases, with objects that belonged to them. Some of these have a symbolic meaning and the tourists cling to them also during the trip (for example, old photos and post cards).

Among other services sought after one is peculiar to this tourism market segment. As a tour guide relates, the roots tourists often ask for genealogical research. The clients give the information they have on their ancestors, including photographs, that are then used to conduct research through the residents. It is a process that requires a lot of time and research in the tourist's place of origin. It is necessary to visit the churches, the municipality and the cemeteries.

Other than the visit to the places that are connected to the family history, the trip in general also comprises of moments dedicated to search for and meet distant relatives who live in the town or village of origin. Given the strong attachment to the community of the area visited, the tourists prefer to stay in their own dwellings or with relatives, to eat in traditional restaurants and to purchase local products. The tourists who were interviewed particularly appreciate experiential tours, especially if they are related to cuisine and traditions (as, for example, watching the production process of cheeses, cakes and wine), they are interested in homemade cooking lessons and love to immerse themselves in the folklore traditions of the area (such as learning to dance the *tarantella*) and to speak with others about their own family history.

Regarding **levels of satisfaction**, the vacation is assessed overall as being positive or very positive. For all roots tourists who were interviewed the trip was truly captivating and unforgettable. For this very reason they want to return, affirming that they will speak well of Calabria with their friends and relatives. The bond with this region is significantly reinforced after the vacation experience, as a respondent stated: *I said to my mother: I do not know if I am more Italian-Calabrian or Argentine*. Obviously, there are services that are more or less inadequate, depending on the area that is visited. For example, concerning public transportation, there are some complaints due to significant inefficiency.

For many, the vacation was also an interior journey, as is remarked in the following statement: *I discovered that I am Calabrian even if I was not born in this region*. Another respondent states: *I felt that I had returned home*. These comments help to understand the frame of mind of those who live such an engaging and exciting experience. In some cases, this defines the wish to *acquire a home*, as a tourist who was interviewed said, creating a form of second home tourism¹⁶.

A facet to emphasize is the interaction with the residents, which is the main point of satisfaction mentioned by all the roots tourists who were interviewed. All claim to be impressed by the warmth demonstrated of the residents in the area to welcome the visitors and to have them feel at home, and by the kindness and disposition of the Calabrians. We can describe Calabrians as: *Friendly, reliable, and much more at ease than in my country, and willingly helpful in difficult times*. One of the respondents explains: *This was the first time that I was able to interact this openly with people who were born in the area I visited*. Another says: *I have never felt like a stranger here, they made me feel at home*. This shows the intent of being welcomed as guests and not as tourists, and to want to belong, even if temporarily, to the community.

Other elements of significant satisfaction mentioned are the local culture (in particular, the strong sense of family) and the food. The family units of emigrants are regular buyers and consumers of Calabrian goods and Italian products, especially food, and these goods generate important revenue for the communities of origin. Besides the gastronomy, they bring a bit of Calabria to their country through books (literature, art, cuisine) and other products, such as flags and souvenirs.

The Calabrian and Italian associations carry out an important role abroad. Some of the respondents are part of the social clubs in particularly, the elderly; everyone recognizes their purpose in the preservation of traditions and customs. The associations offer many services and often give support in the organization of roots travel. From the interview with a local administrator, we learn that there are some Calabrian associations that perform a role of promo-marketing of travel to the region.

It is evident that Calabria is not known in the country of origin of the participants and is not considered a very competitive tourist destination. This is also shown in

¹⁶ Please see paragraph 6.4.

the lack of foreign tour operators interested in the region. However, in the course of the interviews conducted with Italian and foreign tourism operators who carry out, outgoing activities even with our country, it appears that the interest with the Calabrian destination in these past few years has grown. For example, a Canadian tour operator¹⁷ explains about the organization of an educational tour in Calabria in 2018, with the purpose to launch travel roots tourism packages within the region: *With the climate that exists in Calabria, almost like that of Florida in winter, many Canadians of Calabrian origin could come here instead of going there and they would prefer it, because the amenities are more affordable and because they know the surroundings.*

The exploratory survey involved, among the various stakeholders, also local administrators, who provided useful elements for the subsequent quantitative survey with the Calabrian and Apulian municipalities¹⁸. A few mayors or councilors of tourism of Calabrian municipalities made statements that help one understand the flurry of activities that are created for the visits of the emigrants and their descendants in their towns of origin: *Even more surprising is that these individuals are not interested in going to the seaside or to visit important tourist attractions, but they want to visit the home of their own ancestors and the streets of the villages where they lived* (an administrator of the Municipality of San Marco Argentano, CS). *These individuals remember and establish a very strong bond, immediately [...]. Emigration is an open wound for the emigrant and also for those who were abandoned. Our towns are living the condition of a decline in demographics, desolation, and when the emigrants return, all the countryside towns relive moments of peace* (an administrator of the Municipality of Mangone, CS). *These people stay in their own town of origin, but they would be encouraged with the organization of tour groups, events and initiatives during their period of stay. We must find a way to contact all of them, so they can return during a specific time and we can organize an event that is dedicated to them* (an administrator of the Municipality of Mendicino, CS). Among the factors that could stimulate roots tourism, there are initiatives such as events, different types of hospitality aimed toward the communities of young people of Calabrian origin who live abroad (not necessarily in a certain town), as well as, volunteer and philanthropic activities, such as, the creation of amateur websites from enthusiasts who reconstruct the history and genealogy of numerous families, making digital archives available.

The tourists who were interviewed, in general, show the desire to promote the region, its traditional products and its culture abroad and to contribute to the improvement of its image. Some state that they are available even to invest in the tourism sector. These visitors travel responsibly and frequently become ambassadors of the destination, promoting it around the world. In addition, they are willing to visit small inland towns and villages that are often unknown by other tourists, encouraging their

¹⁷ We would like to thank Virgilio Palermo of Volare Group Inc.

¹⁸ Explained in Chapter 4

promotion. They are, ultimately, greatly interested in forms of sustainable hospitality, such as, *alberghi diffusi* (spread hotels in which one lives in the village's homes, in direct contact with the residents) or *home restaurants* (where one can savour the real atmosphere of the Calabrian meals).

Besides the in-depth interviews, two **focus groups** were conducted, adopting another non-standardized technique for the disclosure of information, based on an informal group discussion with more facilitators, that was focused on the theme of roots tourism¹⁹. The focus groups were conducted during the last phase of the research, with an exploratory objective. They were mainly aimed at deepening some aspects in a conclusive place study viewpoint for gathering insights and suggestions on the future perspective of development of this type of tourism and verifying if the activities of awareness raising and creation of understanding of the theme conducted within the last few years by the research group have been recognized in any way. The selected individuals are not only considered to be an informative source but are the main protagonists of this same research. The first nucleus was represented by the Calabrian Pro Loco and the next by tourism operators and Calabrian producers²⁰.

The representatives of the Pro Loco have shed light on the crucial role that these organizations have, as a result of the strong rooting in the territory and the pronounced sense of belonging to this, with a particular reference to tourism in general, and in particular, to roots tourism. These have expressed their willingness to propagate the culture of this type of tourism, virtue of the risk of depopulation of the small municipalities. The Pro Locos are committed to hospitality and are already creating tourist packages for the visitors. Consequently, they believe that they can carry out the important task of connection with the tourism segment of emigrants and their descendants.

Some municipalities where the Pro Loco work are active with roots tourism. The Municipality of Santa Domenica Talao (CS), for example, as the manager of the Pro Loco states, for ten years and due to accommodation investments and twinning projects, has started to show interest in the communities of emigrants abroad, particularly, in the Dominican Republic, encouraging them to return in 2020 (the initiative was then postponed because of the Covid-19 pandemic). The municipality has, in addition, the intention to achieve a type of *Atlante degli Emigrati* (Atlantis

¹⁹ We would like to thank the sociologist Orazio Di Stefano who moderated the two focus groups for his collaboration.

²⁰ We would like to thank the following for their participation: Filippo Capellupo (UNPLI Calabria and Pro Loco Catanzaro), Antonello Grosso La Valle (UNPLI Provincia Cosenza and Pro Loco Belvedere M.), Giovanni Fabiano (UNPLI Provincia Crotone), Elvira Sacco (Pro Loco Lago), Valeria La Greca (Pro Loco Santa Domenica Talao), Giovanna Ruggiero (Pro Loco Belmonte Calabro), Rosalba Palermo (Pro Loco Sangineto), Maurizio Rago (Pro Loco Terranova da Sibari), Mariella Policicchio (Pro Loco Potame Busento), Salvatore Licursi (Pro Loco Scalea), Paolo Nicolazzo (Pro Loco Platania).

for Emigrants), to foster origins research by the emigrants and their descendants. The Pro Loco represents a point of contact, through social networks, for various requests (as, for example, to know where the home of one's grandparents is located). Another municipality that has made its first steps in the direction of roots tourism is Lago (CS), that every year welcomes emigrants of first, second and third generations, because of the event 'Laghitani nel mondo' (Laghitani around the world), but is now experiencing the absence of accommodations and must lodge these individuals in other towns. A book that represents the history of the emigration in Lago and is a tool for the study of the reconstruction of the families' history is referenced. The Municipality of Belvedere (CS), which is represented by the President of UNPLI of the Province of Cosenza, mentions an Association of Belvedereans in Argentina, that expresses a strong devotion to the patron saint of their municipality of origin, perpetuating him in the country of current residence, dedicating competitions to him, naming schools after him, etc. The community in Argentina, moreover, passes down the ancient tradition of ceramic and pottery making. In the municipality of San Domanico (CS), that refers to the Pro Loco of Potame, some of the abandoned houses that are used for the *museum of the narrating houses*, that was born as a redevelopment project and also for the construction of scattered hotels, belong to the emigrants who could, therefore, return to enjoy this visit experience. The representative of the Pro Loco of Belmonte Calabro (CS) defines roots travel as *a cultural travel and a remembrance [...] a bridge between the past, present and future*.

All the participants in this first focus group express a great interest and appreciation towards the academic research on roots tourism, asking how to translate it into practical terms, *with repercussions of a certain value not only in economic terms, but as social growth of the Pro Loco and the community*, as one of them points out. What has emerged is that, although the Pro Loco can represent a functional strategic tool for the development of roots tourism, there is a complaint on the limited attention to a diverse and new reading of the territory by the public administration body; it is necessary to have a greater responsibility in terms of the assignment of services and managing of activities in a more structured way, designated for the development of the territory all-around, especially for tourism and, in particular, for that which involves the emigrants. Concerning roots tourism, the Pro Loco that were interviewed hope to improve in quality, thanks to the research project, and are available to know what could be their role in operative terms.

The most interesting aspect of the discussion concerns the theme of training, not only for the representatives of the Pro Loco, but also for the personnel of the municipalities or for young residents. Training could indeed generate employment opportunities connected to roots tourism. From here, the idea is to focus on a collaboration network among more individuals in order to foster the training on the theme of roots tourism, that is the outcome of the results of the research. The proposal to create *community cooperatives* is advanced, not for only one territory,

but that which encompasses more territories for the accomplishment of common projects.

The training aspect is taken up also by the second focus group²¹, that has united operators in the tourism sector (tour operators and agencies, accommodations, tour guides, tourism promoters) and food agricultural industry representatives, to analyze their points of view in this aspect of tourism on the financial recovery level. The necessity of training for welcoming these visitors with very specific needs is considered important especially for the subjects who work in hospitality, although the tour operators and the agencies do not address specific requests to this category of operators. In some cases, however, the tourist accommodations become a point of reference for the foreign tourists of Italian origin who travel alone. These individuals who, not having organized their trip in advance, subsequently face difficulties due to their limited knowledge of the language and the lack of information, and ask the hotel's personnel for assistance. One of the hotel directors present in the focus group makes a distinction between roots tourists among those who return every year, who knows what to do and where to go, and the tourists searching for their ancestors, to whom it is more difficult to offer services, for example, contacting their municipality of origin.

Participating travel agencies and tour operators have different visions, according to the experience gained with this target group. Agencies state how very difficult it is to organize services for roots tourists, because they are very demanding, they need greater attention, and emotions play an important role in their experience. A tour operator reports of offering complete packages for these travelers (guide, transfer, etc.), and contacts with municipalities. The elevated level of mediation of the guide and accompaniment services that often support the tourists from their arrival, is one of the aspects to reflect upon. The same tour guide who has participated in the focus group has direct contact with roots tourists and considers it essential to improve the responsibility and sensitivity for managing the inquiries of these tourists.

The respondents, in general, think that much time is needed for the development of this type of tourism. Those individuals who work in tourism promotion and have had many opportunities to know Calabrian emigrants and their descendants, think that tour operators in the region have focused too much on the outgoing and too little on the incoming. An often inadequate level of information and structures is added to the criticism that discourage travel to Calabria. Some examples of roots travel that are given by all the participants show, though in a limited measure, that the phenomenon exists and even more than one can imagine. Trips are generally

²¹ We would like to thank the following participants: Paola Morano (tourist guide), Valentina Pulzella (Hotel manager of Terme Luigiane - Acquappesa), Gianluca Miceli (Hotel Royal - Cosenza), Annarita Presta (Si Travel Network - Cosenza), Giuseppe Canzonieri (Full Travel Service - Siderno), Giulio Pignataro (tourist promoter), William Lo Celso (Hotel Tasso - Camigliatello S.), Giovanni Guido (M.E.C. - Mercato Eccellenze di Calabria), Michele Di Stefano (Esse Turismo Calabria).

organized individually, but the region is also the focus of roots travel of groups from Argentina that return every year and are organized by Calabrian associations. The associations are considered by some of the participants as the main access around the world for the region.

Considering the services offered in individual locations, a sort of collaboration is proposed by the participants among the personnel that are trained and available in the various Calabrian communities for facilitating access to the municipalities, in terms of registry of documents, visits to areas and so on. The lack of knowledge of the Italian language is emphasized by many and they suggest the creation of a network of specialized professionals, also thanks to the scientific activity research that is being conducted. The same focus group is seen as an opportunity for the exchange and the sharing of viewpoints. Some of the present operators recently launched a network project, which is informal at the moment, among tour operators in Calabria (that is called T.O.C.) to encourage all types of tourism; among these is roots tourism.

Ultimately, emerging from the discussions, there are some themes that are addressed in this book, related to the interweaving of roots tourism with other segments of travelers, in particular, the *wedding tourism* and *educational tourism*. An operator tells the story of the wedding of an English couple and another operator of a honeymoon who saw newlyweds from Toronto choosing Calabria as a destination because of a great-grandfather of Calabrian origin. The new generations could be attracted by the offer of Italian language courses and of courses tied to traditions and local culture. Even the real estate market and the promotion of the brand Calabria are indicated as opportunities to encourage roots tourism through the images of well-known personalities of Calabrian origin.

A key for a different reading is introduced by those who are involved in the internationalization of the food agriculture industry. *The main consumers of the gastronomical excellences of Calabria*, states the representative of this export company of traditional products, *are the Calabrians abroad*. Roots tourism can represent a driving force for Calabrian food agriculture and vice versa. *Cooking courses, particularly with an emphasis on the Mediterranean diet, could be proposed especially for the second and third generation descendants. In the immediate aftermath of the pandemic, when the consumer models are changing towards new paradigms, the encouragement could be characterized by the ability to pleasurably experience the inland areas, with their quality of foods, positive interactions with the community and fresh air*, he adds.

In conclusion, roots tourism is very different from other tourism segments, and above all, from mass tourism. The respondents do not look for famous tourist attractions or destinations and overcrowded areas. They especially want to know more and experience local culture, traditions and authenticity. Often, a vacation is not a standard package, but it is organized and tailored for the needs of these visitors, that appear to be very specific. In fact, from the planning phase of the trip, the roots

tourists request continuous assistance and personalized services, where the supply is often currently lacking.

The interviews and the focus groups reveal that Calabria has the potential for tourism that is still not fully tapped, and the Calabrians around the world are the ambassadors of a land that is rich in culture, tradition and warmth. The same respondents feel that they must transmit their love for this region, beyond the emotional aspect, despite the fact that this clearly represents a very important element.

In view of the survey's results, it is suggested that many Italian regions, like Calabria, could be important tourist destinations for those with local origins regarding the rediscovery of their roots. Based on these results, these regions could become interesting travel destinations even for those tourists who are not of Italian ancestry, being encouraged by the stories of the emigrants and their descendants.

For all the types of tourism to succeed, especially of the one being studied, it is necessary to involve the local community. Indeed, a warm welcome could truly have the tourists feel 'at home' and part of the community rather than only being guests. In this regard, the next paragraph addresses the theme of the impact of roots tourism on the social-cultural fabric of the hosting community and from this viewpoint of its sustainability level.

2.2 The social-cultural sustainability of roots tourism²²

The aim of this part of the research is to understand if roots tourism can be considered a type of sustainable tourism in social-cultural terms. The theme is of great interest, both as an area of study and for its concrete implications, because it also appears to not have been addressed in international literature. The social-cultural dimension of the sustainability of tourism, often neglected in studies and research (Craik, 1995; Deery et al., 2012; Mowforth et al., 1998; Ooi et al., 2015; Robinson, 1999), *concerns a type of tourism that is fair and democratic, that provides proper and equal opportunity to the current and future generations to become involved in the decision making processes that empower the local community and respect their cultural values and integrity, in this way contributing to a better quality of life* (Ooi et al., 2015: 419). This research concentrates on the specific aspect of the socio-cultural sustainability of tourism because, in many cases, it could have a greater, longer lasting and irreversible impact on the hosting community than environmental and economic sustainability (Swarbrooke, 1999). Additionally, while the environmental and economic effects on the community are easily observable and measurable, the social-cultural repercussions are largely

²² This paragraph is a summary of the research work that is presented in the following article: Ferrari, S., Hernández-Maskivker, G., and Nicotera, T. (2021). Social-Cultural Sustainability of Roots Tourism in Calabria, Italy: A Tourist Perspective. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13567667211020493>.

intangible, difficult to examine and quantify and often only emerge in the long term. These repercussions concern various effects that tourism could have on the quality and lifestyle of the hosting community, such as, the cultural regeneration, the reduction of depopulation, the growth of prosperity, the reinforcement on social cohesion and of civic pride, a greater level of tourist and resident satisfaction and the minimizing of friction between the two, in addition to the respect of the social carrying capacity of the destination (Barbier et al., 1990; Bartelmus, 1986; Belisle et al., 1980; Clarke, 1997; Cooke, 1982; Mathieson et al., 1982; Murphy, 1981; Robinson, 1999).

The nucleus of social-cultural tourism sustainability is the *host-guest* relationship (Smith, 1977, 1989; Uysal et al., 2012), that often deteriorates with the quantitative increase of tourism flow. These phenomena have been studied by various models, among them being the *Irridex* of Doxey (Bramwell, 2003; Doxey, 1975) and the *Theory capacity of social carrying capacity* (Graefe et al., 1987; Muler Gonzalez et al., 2018; Murphy et al., 2005).

The research that is presented here refers to the studies of Swarbrooke (1999), that suggest the value of the social-cultural impact of tourism through the examination of the positive and/or negative effects of the tourism phenomenon on the following variables (Ap, 1990): *heritage* (effects such as the impact on the local architecture, the interest of the hosting community on the preservation of heritage, the quality of the museums or damage to the local heritage); *language* (interest in preserving the traditional languages or damage to the local languages due to the impact of foreign words and idioms); *traditional arts and material culture* (promotion and enhancement of the local arts and their exploitation and commercialization); *traditional lifestyle* (reinforcement of the local lifestyle and of the identity of the host community, or changes as a result of the adoption of new customs and traditions); *religion* (interest for the local religion and respectful or disrespectful attitudes towards the sites, rituals and traditions); *values and behavior* (adoption of values and behaviors that can be positive and virtuous or negative and dangerous, that can reinforce or weaken the social fabric); *hosting population* (reduction of the local depopulation levels, arrival of new residents or control on the community by immigrants).

Swarbrooke identifies a few elements, other than the life cycle phase of the destination, that can significantly influence the above mentioned effects. These are the strength and the cohesion of the culture and the social fabric in the local community, the type of tourism, the level of social-cultural development of the residents compared to the tourists and the initiatives of the public sector designed to minimize the negative social-cultural effects of tourism through the proper management of the phenomenon. These are issues that should not be neglected in the analysis of the sustainability of roots tourism flow, because in the long term such flows could have a negative impact on the lifestyle of the hosting community, as it is frequently observed when a population comes into contact with other cultures and

mentalities over a long period of time (Ap et al. 1993; Brunt et al., 1999; Johnson et al., 1994; Levitt, 1998).

The study, a qualitative research, regards Calabria and was conducted to analyze the social-cultural sustainability of roots tourism from the demand's point of view; this approach was chosen because it was more compelling to understand the implications of roots tourism in terms of sustainability than to measure it. After an in-depth study on the literature and meeting with those who work in the field, 45 in-depth interviews were conducted with roots tourists. The sample was composed of emigrants and their descendants of different generations who travelled to Calabria on vacation at least once. The social-cultural implications of roots tourism were analyzed on the basis of the effects on the seven variables that were previously described. The effects were classified as *tangible* (material and measurable) or *intangible* (immaterial, rarely noticeable if not in experiential terms) and *positive* or *negative*.

Regarding results, the respondents showed similar ways of thinking on the topics of discussion, thus revealing a unanimous vision. The results show that roots tourism, if managed in the proper way, can have a positive and relevant impact on the local social-cultural fabric, especially regarding the effects on the heritage/tourism promotion and on the lifestyle/values and traditional behaviors. Roots tourists are greatly interested in the local culture and authenticity. They are passionate about their places of origin and desire to contact individuals directly or to be indirectly connected to them. They also often have other reasons or interests, such as visiting beautiful places, tasting local foods and studying Italian. Ultimately, these travelers are not interested in famous tourist attractions and visiting cities of art, or, at least, not exclusively, and this supports lesser known areas as tourist destinations.

The respondents emphasized the heightened sense of hospitality of the local community. The local residents' ability to welcome roots tourists, which is currently high, should be the objective to turn a community into a tourist destination of excellence. Calabrians should be aware that the tourists desire to visit welcoming and well-maintained areas and should understand the potential of their resources in terms of tourism. Many of the respondents explained that the local population does not know how to take the appropriate action for their municipality to become a competitive tourist destination, or are not aware of the importance of moving in this direction. Consequently, Calabria must embark upon a long and challenging journey to become a destination for success and sustainability.

In light of the study's results, we can conclude that the roots tourism segment can be considered a form of sustainable tourism consumption that respects the social-cultural integrity of the hosting community and its values and cultural traditions, thereby positively influencing the social fabric of the community. This type of development of tourism can empower the hosting community to contribute and reinforce the local identity, the cultural values and their integrity, in addition to improving the quality of life. Moreover, the research for authenticity and for a closer contact with the residents and with their lifestyle on behalf of roots tourists can be met through forms of sustainable accommodation. By focusing on authenticity,

places like Calabria could reinforce and reaffirm their own identity and cultural integrity. Currently, this integrity is threatened by cultural homogenization, that is a consequence of globalization and of the growing absence of resources for the conservation and the enhancement of artistic, cultural and natural Italian heritage.

2.3 Roots travel after the Covid-19 pandemic

The Coronavirus pandemic has created drastic health problems, being one of the most contagious in recent human history. To date, it has caused 170.8 million cases of disease and the death of 3.5 million people worldwide²³. The rapid spread of the epidemic has imposed numerous lockdowns, in addition to travel restrictions in 100 percent of destinations²⁴. All of this has caused grave consequences in numerous industries and has resulted in an unprecedented crisis in the national and international tourism sector, with a decline in arrivals on an international level equivalent to 87 percent in January 2021 as compared to the previous year²⁵. The tourism demand is very sensitive to issues related to security. It is related to moments of relaxation and leisure of a high enjoyment value, with such a value being reduced in the case of risks of various kinds. Thus, tourists have always looked for safe areas to spend a vacation. The destination's image and that of the providing agency, from this point of view, are therefore, among the factors that mostly influence the tourists' choices during the purchasing process. Currently, visitors and agencies are focused on hygienic and sanitary issues; consequently, the communication of destinations is changing, it is no longer focused on elements of differentiation that include scenery and culture but on health safety (*health first*) that build trust with the potential client (Menglioli and Manente, 2020).

If today it is difficult to think about the globalized world before the spread of Covid-19 – with its contrasts and inequalities, with its having wreaked havoc on humanity that has overcome, within the course of history, crises, plagues and calamities of every kind – to think about a post-pandemic world is even more difficult. Never before have we lived in a state of global quarantine, in which almost one third of humanity has found itself in a situation of mandatory confinement. The world has experienced closed borders, safety precautions, social distancing, government that is increasingly present –without distinction of models or rules – and the ICTs at the service of security paradigms and control. Technology has entered the homes and lives of everyone, and today more than ever.

Tourism, leisure and recreation are fundamental rights, even if for many years they were partially seen, and the different dimensions of the approach to take into account for the global management of these activities were not considered. The industrial development model's crisis and the research for alternatives have led to consider

²³ Data OMS updated on June 2, 2021.

²⁴ Source: UNWTO.

²⁵ Idem.

tourism as a revitalizing tool for economies, the reason for which governments have been involved and created official organizations for the promotion of tourism on a national and regional level, in addition to individual destinations. Tourism has passed from being an important mass phenomenon to a strategic economic activity that attracts foreign currency, creates jobs and promotes regional support in many countries. In this regard, sustainable development becomes part of the development of tourism planning, where sustainability requires that tourism *satisfies the needs of the tourist and of present-day hosting regions, protecting and improving opportunities for the future* (Masri de Achar and Robles Ponche, 1997:21). However, it should not be forgotten that the development of sustainable tourism is based on the equal distribution of the benefits that it generates (not only of the economic benefits, but also of those derived by heritage preservation, whether that be natural or cultural, tangible or intangible) and especially, with the active and inclusive participation of all those involved; that becomes tourism governance. Territorial marketing, implemented quality standards for the destination and the goods and services of companies distributed in an area, restructuring and enhancement of public spaces, development of new products, market research, health safety, innovation, new technology, digitalization, cybersecurity, intelligent destinations, nature tourism, cultural tourism, educational tourism, incentive trips, heritage tours, museums and outdoor shopping centers; it is now time to ‘reinvent oneself’, to reflect on which tourist destination to aspire towards and where residents desire to live, work, enjoy and dream that provides opportunity for the development of future generations. The organization of tourism must change towards the direction of a greater measure of sustainability, with hope that the pandemic will leave a new form of tourism development planning as a legacy, along with the growing participation of local communities and companies. There is room for slow tourism and for new types of travel that were previously unimaginable.

Tourism appears to be restarting. In Italy, the mandatory quarantine was lifted for those who arrive from Europe, and with ‘Covid tested’ flights one can arrive from the USA, Japan, Canada and other destinations. The airline companies are resuming their connections to and from Italy, but the pre-pandemic flow of arrivals and overnight stays will not be reached quickly. According to experts in the field, the current pandemic situation has resulted in changes in behavior and in lifestyles that will perhaps continue in the future. In regards to tourists’ preferences, it is expected that they will return whenever it is possible to travel freely, to nature areas, outdoor activities, secure places from a healthcare point of view that will guarantee rigorous sanitary-hygienic protocols. Some destinations are now positioning themselves as *Covid free*, for example, Dubai, the Canary Islands, and in Italy, Procida and other islands. However, attention to sustainability will continue to grow even through the choice of lesser known and crowded destinations. The desire to avoid *over tourism* will encourage many to choose the low season period and to take fewer but longer trips over the course of the year. Furthermore, many destinations and resorts are being equipped to welcome those tourists who are interested in *workation*, a new

trend that combines remote working and vacation, encouraged by the ICTs (Angeloni, 2021; Cresta, 2021; Tripadvisor, 2021). Please see the box at the end of this chapter regarding this subject.

Unexpected territories will join the tourism offer with renewed expectations of experiences that have been, until recently, unknown to the public, such as innovative ways to engage in tourism and enjoy free time, new work opportunities and new standards of coexistence between residents and visitors, including the enjoyment of public spaces and the conservation of resources and attractions, whether cultural or natural. In brief, innovative business opportunities will emerge for companies in the industry, new demands in public policy and in management with a growing government responsibility, as well as a great challenge for the academic field to train professionals for the future.

In reference to the current pandemic situation, the theme on how tourism will change after Covid-19 was addressed in the interviews concerning the qualitative survey in Italy and in Argentina. It is expected that the roots tourists will be among the first to resume travel, due to the strong motivation and high emotional involvement that characterizes this segment.

An Italian operator of the tourism sector states: *In the Post-Covid period, the first tourists to return will be the roots tourists, because of their strong attachment to their homeland of origin.* Another person who was interviewed in Italy, the representative of an association, confirms this statement by saying: *Roots tourists look forward to coming back. As soon as the Coronavirus ends, they will return. We are in contact with them and they are very eager to travel.* These tourists express their great desire to come to Italy and to their region of origin. The following respondent's statement is full of emotional meaning: *The virus is creating a sense of nationalism. The government encourages travel only to Australia to support Australian businesses, but this conflicts with my re-connection process with my Calabrian heritage. We are forced to choose between two countries, when in the end both countries dwell in my heart and one cannot survive without the other. I cannot wait to return.*

It is certain that roots tourism, sustainable from all points of view and intended for a *slow stay*, could play an important role in the near future, because it is consistent with the existent trends. The results of the interviews reaffirm these predictions that reveal that once the state of emergency is over, there will be a quick recovery of the tourism activity, but now with new rules. Everything indicates that the tourism movement will tend to grow again, beginning within the borders of countries, promoting inland tourism and the awareness of the territory. It will not be mass tourism but rather local and of a low impact nature. But first, it will be necessary to 'dismantle' the established image that suggests that, in order to have tourism, it is necessary to travel to remote places. The pandemic will bring profound changes and even new opportunities that we still do not understand.

A public administrator explains in reference to how buying and consumer behaviors will change, especially in the tourism sector, and what could happen, in particular,

to the sector in question: *The hope is that after Covid, tourism will change and more attention will be on the territories.* Another affirms: *I suppose that, in order to resume travel flow like that of two years ago, one must wait. Roots tourism is a fundamental form of tourism for the area's growth, because it can help to reduce seasonality, and also these tourists have great respect for their own areas of origin.* Many small Italian villages in the south will always be more attractive because, as the mayor of an Italian municipality says: *They are very rich with a kind of serenity, tranquility, spaciousness, closeness to nature, to the environment, to the area, to history and as well as to an economic convenience that perhaps other territories may not have.*

In the aftermath of the pandemic, some opportunities will be connected to funding from the government and the European Community, that will be designated for the industries that were hit the hardest by the economic crisis caused by Covid. An Italian mayor illustrates the strategy in this relation, which includes courses of action that would make the region more welcoming for roots tourists: *In the last several years, we are trying in every way possible to create the conditions to host our compatriots as well as tourists. Unfortunately, we must take into account the serious building predicament in which the earthquake of 2002 has rendered an 80 percent of lodging unfit for use. We have rebuilt almost half. The remaining concerns the second homes of our non-resident compatriots, and we have asked to include this initiative in the recovery and resiliency plans by applying the super bonus of 110 percent²⁶, and this is being discussed in the next few days. This project will incentivize roots tourism and those people who have not returned to their town because accommodations are lacking, tourists could return to spend a period of vacation time or even longer periods here in retirement.*

The hypothesis on what will happen in the near future when the pandemic ends were completed by the respondents in Italy and those who were interviewed in Argentina agreed with them. In continuation, excerpts are reported from some interviews with the respondents in Argentina. One of these individuals, the representative of an Italian association, states: *After Covid, there will be a greater desire to travel. There will be a 'boom'. Italy is a destination that always attracts. This is the reason why its sought out. It also has good infrastructures and railway transportation, but that is not enough.* The representative of another association explains: *There is a lot of uncertainty, but the feeling is that tourism will re-start. And in a broader sense, with more proximity, that is integrated perfectly with the post-pandemic world. It will not be mass tourism but of contact with others. It could be a boom for roots tourism, but in Italy they must be ready to receive these visitors.* The respondent's optimism is also shown in the next statement: *This phase is an opportunity to reactivate tourism in Italy, not only thinking about the Argentine market, but worldwide one.*

²⁶ The superbonus is a tax incentive, provided for by the Decree Law n.34/2020 that raises the tax deduction rate to 110 percent for the costs incurred from 01/07/2020 to 30/06/2022 for a series of building renovation interventions.

This thought is also shared by others. A tourism operator remarks on this subject: *Depending upon the trends that lie ahead, post-Covid tourism will encourage travel experiences to the communities of origin for health security reasons and also for the completion of procedures for the recognition of citizenship in Italy*²⁷. Another tourism operator states something similar: *Roots tourism will not slow down. If subsidies are able to be obtained, it will be a boom for the regions. The pandemic has pushed tourism towards the inland of the territories, that is, towards the most remote and least known places, but also towards our roots.* A third operator of the tourism industry clarifies that: *In the post-pandemic era tourism is restarting again, but from the beginning. The trend is towards experiential travel. And this is sustainable. It is necessary to decompress the mass destinations. Today culinary travel and tourism for seeing family exists and it is important. The classic destinations are becoming less attractive. People are looking for more authentic things. Only 'entering' in places and discovering the most hidden parts can reawaken the interests of younger people. There is a need of creativity on behalf of tour operators in order to do something that is different and more sustainable. Mass tourism was causing more harm than good.* Another tour operator adds in his interview: *There is a general feeling that we have lost almost two years regarding the possibility of travel and, once travel resumes, people will not loose out on the opportunity to travel. Ties with family will reinforce the desire to travel.*

A media representative also thinks that tourism will be increasingly more experiential and targeted to new destinations: *We want to return to experiences: travel, events, concerts*, he explains. And he adds: *It can be very attractive to offer alternative destinations, complimentary to those that we have already experienced. This is why it is necessary to organize travel that has been specifically studied. Today, in the media we see the desire to reevaluate European villages (with initiatives such as homes at one Euro). The small towns are short of residents. Family homes are vacation residences for their descendants. Roots tourism can be useful for giving new life to the villages.*

One of the respondents, the representative of a university institution, states: *To know other cultures, without prejudices, brings people closer. In addition to generating revenue for a country. In the time frame of 2 or 3 years, the changes in peoples' behavior will not be so significant. I do not think that the dynamics of cultural penetration will change so much as to influence travel motives...or tourism imagination. I see roots tourism continuing as a niche that has something special.*

²⁷ In Argentina, Italian citizenship is passed down by the father's ancestry to the children, independent of birthplace. Since January 1948, even a mother can pass down citizenship to her children. The *reconstruction* is the administrative procedure in which the transmission of citizenship is verified uninterruptedly from the first person born in Italy by Italian parents and emigrated to Argentina, to the individual who presents the request of reconstruction. The procedure of reconstruction is also called *Riconoscimento della cittadinanza italiana*. Source: Consulate General of Italy in Buenos Aires.

But information and promotion of roots tourism is necessary in the long term, this is an important and needed change.

In Argentina, roots tourism is seen as mainly sustainable and, as such, more adaptable to other forms of tourism with the possible post-Covid changes in lifestyles and in consumptions. The representative of an association explains: *Roots tourism is mainly associated with sustainability as compared to other modes of travel. They are not mass consumption, itineraries that are more ecologically sustainable. It is a public that aspires caring for places, for nature, with a deeper knowledge of the implications of their own behavior for the planet, the impact of climate change, etc.* Therefore, as the representative of a federation that reunites all of the Italian associations in Argentina explains: *We must aim at a small scale and more sustainable tourism, the time has come to believe in roots tourism as an industry to invest in.* This concept is even better illustrated by the representative of an institution that disseminates the Italian culture around the world, who says: *They were already developing agritourism and ecological tourism in Italy: cultivating olives, making homemade wine [...], all that has to do with Denominazione di Origine Controllata certified products. In addition to the scenery and the tourist attractions in the city, the experience in those places that is offered to the visitor is the lifestyle. This is sustainable and alternative tourism. In the last 20 to 30 years, young people have moved towards the big urban centers of Europe. Now we like for these young people to 'fall in love' with the small Italian villages. In tourism there must be something that 'reconnects you to your roots'.*

A few cases from the Apulian municipalities are illustrated in the following box as they manage to overcome the tourism crisis related to the Covid-19 global pandemic.

Smart working in the villages of the Dauni Mountains in the Covid and post-Covid periods²⁸

A young Bovinean who emigrated to Milan is one of the many people that returned to her land of origin, southern Italy, after the health crisis. She now lives in Bovino, a village of 3,055 inhabitants in the province of Foggia and explains: *It is possible to live in Bovino and work in Milan, and my experience is precisely that. My opportunity in the health emergency crisis was to leave Milan and it has been possible to rediscover my birthplace as an area that I particularly love. This is where my roots are. It is certainly a very powerful and exciting experience to be able to see it after 20 years, with its unique beauty, to be able to have two places near at hand, basically to enjoy this wonder, and to stroll in the village at the end of my workday.* The young woman adds: *It is an experience that I even recommend to others, to those who have their roots in this place; it is certainly an opportunity to not only be a tourist but a resident of this place. It means to be able to live in a home that offers*

²⁸ We would like to thank the mayor of Biccari, Gianfilippo Mignogna, and all those who were interviewed.

you marvelous scenery and at the same time to be able to continue a profession that one can have in a big city. I am a vegetarian and it is a great occasion for me to have breakfast in the morning with figs, mulberries and apricots. It is a great rediscovery that I think is valuable to be experienced. The interviewee describes her typical day. She lives in her second home that she remodeled a few years ago: she wakes up early in the morning, often has breakfast outdoors, during the day she works, but, as soon as her work is done, she walks along the village walls and, especially in the months of June and July, she finds this trail to be wonderful. She asserts: *In June and July, even in September, in Bovino there are not many tourists; you can enjoy it, engage in sport activities and at the same time you can walk around the town and enjoy its scenery, watching and meeting people. The latter is what I like most.*

Another young woman who was interviewed states that she is one of 14 young Argentines who are working remotely, thanks to the initiative of the association for social advancement ‘Argentina for the world’, that has its headquarters in Rimini. These young Argentines are located in Biccari, a municipality of 2,645 inhabitants in the province of Foggia in the area of the Dauni Mountains. The aim of this initiative is to host young Argentines of Italian origin in small municipalities in our country, in order to bring diverse cultures and societies together, but also with the purpose of completing the requirements for attaining the Italian nationality for visitors. The respondent stated that she chose this period because she planned the trip last year and she had to save money for her trip. She is from Rosario and is working as a freelancer for Argentina. In regards to her experience in Biccari, she declares: *It is quiet here, you live well, the air quality is good, there is an adventure park, and a lake. Besides enjoying the natural beauty and landscape, I like the inhabitants of the town, they are warm, kind, and also the food is good with excellent salami.* Another Argentine youth who was interviewed states: *I am working here, it is a great place to learn the Italian language, the people are welcoming, and it is not the same as being in Rome, which is a much bigger city. I am working remotely as a web developer and web programmer. I did that in Argentina and I am also doing it here.* In reference to his stay in Italy, he says: *I often go to the mountains, then to Pescara Lake that is gorgeous. I take walks in the forests and I play soccer with the residents.*

The president of the Association ‘Argentina for the world’ explains that Biccari is the first Italian municipality to have participated in this initiative. This small town was chosen especially because of the great willingness of the municipal administration, but also of the residents. He states: *From the moment that we set foot here, we felt at home. The Biccarian people with their warmth have done everything possible to encourage our stay, contributing not only with human resources but also with financial resources, because these young people spend their savings in Biccari.* It was the task of the Association ‘Argentina for the world’ to find housing onsite, even though the young people spend their savings on their stay. The respondent is

aware that it won't be easy to have a stable job on site, because of unemployment in small municipalities and also because of circumstances due to the pandemic.

The mayor of Biccari states with pride that there are not only those who leave the small towns, but also those who arrive, such as the group of young Argentines who chose Biccari. In order to help the youth, the municipality has made the office of the community cooperative available to them for working remotely. The municipality has also put into place *Homes in Biccari from 1€ to 20.000€*, an experimental project designed to show, through its online site, the characteristics of the houses in the historic center that are being sold by the owners at extremely competitive prices. Emigration, depopulation and the rise of various living models (such as apartment buildings and single homes) have resulted in a progressive emptying of the historical center, nonetheless its beauty and charm remain intact. The municipality has decided, therefore, to encourage the property sales to repopulate the historical center. The challenge for the municipal administration is to continue to work on the improvement of the hospitality to ensure that the small towns can be areas of arrival and transition and not only areas of departure. Fortunately, the new technologies offer opportunities to stakeholders and local administrators to take advantage of. On the reception of the Argentine youth by the community, the mayor states: *Our community is welcoming, open and eager to meet new people; despite the limits of the pandemic, the Argentine youth have become integrated and live their new jobs and social experiences peacefully.*

2.4 Conclusions

This exploratory qualitative survey has provided an in depth knowledge on the roots tourism segment. The results of the interviews have contributed to an understanding about the strength of connection of the Italian emigrants, but also of their descendants, to the homeland. The love for the homeland of one's roots extends also to the Italian lifestyle, culture and traditions that one desires to pass on to the next generations. This love impels the individual to return on vacation, but also to create and maintain many established relationships with the homeland, that are important for the promotion of the region, and sometimes to invest locally. Roots tourists have many objectives and numerous interests before and during the trip, in addition to needs that are often extremely specific. Nevertheless, the connection with the place of origin characterizes attitudes and behaviors and promotes an exceptional interaction with the local community, which is a prerequisite for social-cultural sustainability.

This aids in understanding the importance of this tourism segment and how it must be properly supported through an effective strategic marketing planning, that includes targeted products and services, as well as specific communication and promotion activities. It also provides understanding on what could be the role of roots tourism for the future, as well as in the near future: a tourism of new efforts, that favor the development of sadly depopulated ancient towns and villages, that

often lack the necessary resources to offer high level services and infrastructures. This consists of efforts made to revive villages, inland and forgotten areas, but also to help new professional figures to flourish, to favour enthusiasm around re-population projects, remote work, reinforcement of connections with the Italian community abroad, in short, a new vitality for social-cultural and economic development. The Covid-19 pandemic is changing lifestyles and preferences, it permits people to forget the problems of *over tourism* and has increased sensitivity on sustainability. We are preparing to start again, but this will be a recovery towards the new, towards innovative forms of tourism, towards different destinations: roots tourism will support this journey in a new direction.

The research does not stop here. The initial phase of the project has been followed by an in-depth phase of study. However, in the future, the points of view and behaviors of other stakeholders should be studied, particularly of those members of the local community who until now have only been heard through public administrators, representatives of associations and tour operators.

Chapter 3

A focus on Argentina²⁹

SUMMARY: 3.1 The Italian emigration in Argentina. From the unification of Italy to today. 3.2 The qualitative research conducted in Argentina. 3.3 The statistical survey. 3.3.1 *The ties with the homeland*. 3.3.2 *The organization of the trip, preferences and the experience*. 3.3.3 *The reasons of those who have not traveled*. 3.3.4 *The image of the homeland and the measures for maintaining ties with the emigrants and their descendants*. 3.4 Conclusions.

3.1 Italian emigration in Argentina. From the unification of Italy to today

‘The promised land’. Being motivated by this illusion, from the second half of the 1800s, millions of Italians left their homeland in search of new and promising horizons beyond the European continent, having been driven by structural factors and by a national and international context that favored the migratory process. These individuals have written an essential page in the history of Italy.

In more than a century (1860-1970), Argentina received almost 3,000,000 Italians; 2,000,000 of them entered into a more intense phase, 670,000 between the two wars and 500,000 in the first decade after World War II (Rosoli, 1977). [...] from a quantitative point of view, the main era of the Italian immigration in Argentina was from 1876 to 1925. During this phase, 16,986,924 Italians left Italy. Of these, 2,000,000 arrived in our country (Argentina), that is, 12% of total emigration (Favero, 2013:76). The most intensive period of emigration reached its peak in the first decade of the XX century, caused by economic, social and political factors after the unification of Italy, summarizing the effects of the first great world depression, which occurred between 1873 and 1879; the latter, which caused the fall of agricultural prices, forcing farmers to look for new countries in order to survive outside of Italy (Favero, 2013). The ‘great emigration’ had to a certain degree

²⁹ Ana Maria Biasone (Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata) is author of the paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2. The paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 are the result of the joint work of Ana Maria Biasone, Anna Lo Presti (Università di Torino), Sonia Ferrari and Tiziana Nicotera (Università della Calabria).

*peculiarities in continuity with the prior geographic mobility within Europe, but some characteristics rendered it a different phenomenon, for its relevance and for the prevalence of the overseas destinations*³⁰.

Thanks to the information provided by governmental agents, honorary consuls, recruitment agencies and shipping companies, as well as, those received by relatives, friends and neighbors, families decided which members would embark on the adventure of 'fare l'America' and, who would remain in Italy. All the scholars who have analyzed the migratory phenomenon toward South America concur in affirming that, in the context of the European migratory situation towards Argentina, the Italian immigration was, without a doubt, one of the most significant components; that actually represents 46 percent of the total net migration of the century (Favero, 2013). *From the Italian point of view, Rosoli (Albónico and Rosoli, 1994) emphasizes how Argentina, from the middle of the XIX century, was the second destination chosen by the Italian overseas migratory flow and the fourth in the world in terms of importance. According to Italian statistics, from 1876 the country welcomed around three million Italians within a century. As Germany has stressed, it is the American country in which the demographic and social impact of the flow of Italians was the most significant. Such an impact will not be found in any other host country (Lucarini, 2016).*

The conditions that Argentina offered at the end of the 1800s onwards were enticing and decisive in the choice: peace in political terms, economic growth, modernity in the production and institutional facilities, and a great territorial extension. *The mass immigration in Argentina was promoted as a political project from the time of the so-called 'generation of 1880' [...] that was meant to 'populate the desert' of the newly created Republic, developing and expanding the inheritance of the old (Spanish) colony and an economy that was predominately agricultural (ITENTES, 2003:3).* The first Italy migratory wave arrived at the port of Buenos Aires and, in many cases, relatives, friends and 'compatriots' were waiting there for the new arrivals to help them to find housing and work. For the most part, they were farmers, predominantly male, who established themselves in the metropolis, forming urban employment offer and settling in the so-called 'conventillos'. Here, various families shared a kitchen, the toilet facilities and the courtyard, renting a room in those homes that, formerly, belonged to noble families who relocated when the epidemic outbreak of yellow fever took place in 1871. *The Italian flow in Argentina began in the period between the end of the century and World War I. It consisted of, especially at the beginning, a departure from the port of Genoa of Ligurian, Piedmontese, and Lombard emigrants. Despite the rural origin of the majority, the first national census (1869) reveals that 59% of all Italians in Argentina settled in Buenos Aires. An 'urbanized proletariat', in effect, was created, where the Italians had a significant presence in all of the socio-professional groups, from the land cultivation to*

³⁰ <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/interior/migraciones/museo/el-camino-de-los-inmigrantes>.

industries, commerce, construction and services. The first mutual aid societies (Unione e Benevolenza in Buenos Aires, 1858), schools (Italian) and the first newspapers (La nazione italiana, 1863) were born (ITENETS, 2003:3). In 1914, Argentina was included among the ten richest countries in the world and the census in that year portrayed a situation in which the Italian nationality is always the most numerous (930,000 units, namely 12% of the population) and presents a 'southernization' of the flow: around 40% of the arrivals originated from the Southern regions (10% from Campania, 15% from Calabria, 9% from Sicily, 5% from Basilicata) (ITENETS, 2003:4).

With World War I, there was a weakening of the migratory flows attributed to various factors, mainly to the recruitment of men to go to the battle front. Once the war was over, the migrations resumed again with a new impetus, but without reaching the figures of the first wave. This was the consequence of the anti-immigration policy pursued by the Italian government of the time, that tried to put a definitive halt on emigration, redirecting it towards the colonies in Africa, but also the decline in activity in the host countries that were hit by recurring crises (Favero, 2013). *Immigration resumed during World War II under the Perón presidency. The Argentine government instituted the 'Delegación para la Inmigración en Europa' (Delegation for Immigration in Europe) with the headquarters in Rome and signed bilateral agreements with Italy in 1947 and 1948. The economic development project called for a specialized work force and took the system of allowances from the United States as a model [...]. The legend of Argentina as the 'promise land' was reborn [...]. The Italian emigration became an ever growing intranational phenomenon (South-North), while Argentina required, above all, capital and know-how. In order to implement the major public projects required from Perón, unprecedented investments entered with companies such as Fiat, Olivetti, ENI, Ansaldo, Italgas, Parmalat and Ferrero in the food industry, and Benetton in the agro-industry (Germani, 1999: 201).*

The third and last phase of Italian emigration in Argentina – from the post-war to the 1960s – had very different characteristics, given that Italy had lived an 'economic boom' defined by a rapid process of industrialization, that produced an exodus from the countryside to the industrialized cities of the north of the country, as well as to other European countries (France, Belgium and Germany) and, in less measures, to Latin American countries. In those years Argentina did not continue to offer the same possibilities of work and development as in the previous phases. Arrivals of Italians diminished considerably and a reverse process began: children and grandchildren of the immigrants left for Europe to find better economic and social opportunities (Favero, 2013).

Argentina alone received, between 1876 and 1976, around 11.5% of the total of Italian emigration (26 million) (Rosoli, 1993:3). Between 1871 and 1930, Italians came to represent an average 43.6% of the immigrated population. To date, the rate of Italian presence of the total foreign population has always maintained significant percentages (ITENETS, 2003: 3).

This migratory phenomenon has significantly affected the host country and has profoundly impacted the cultural development of Argentina.

3.2 The qualitative research conducted in Argentina

The qualitative research that was conducted in Argentina focused on the study of the theme of roots tourism from the demand's perspective as the main objective. The focus was concentrated on the understanding of behavior, preferences, expectations, needs, requests and levels of satisfaction of the roots tourists. In addition, some issues that were linked to sustainability and the effects of the post Covid-19 situation were studied regarding this type of tourism.

The research was conducted by in-depth interviews with subjects who for various reasons are connected to this type of tourism experience. 33 semi-structured interviews were collectively conducted with the following subject categories: roots tourists belonging to various generations of Italian families who emigrated to Argentina, members of Italian associations and institutions in Argentina, tour operators and representatives of the mass media. The analysis of the interviewees has resulted in the individuation of the theme's specific facets that are repeated in the answers of the interviewees who belong to the different groups and provide the identity of some behavior models. The following summarizes the main results of the different categories of interviewees.

15 roots tourists were interviewed. The majority assert to having strong ties with Italy and all state to having travelled there at least once. The majority of the interviewees visited the municipality of origin of their ancestors. Only two of them had never visited it. Additionally, almost all the interviewees state that travelling within Europe is what interests them most, including a few days to dedicate to visit their relatives on the tour, especially as part of their first type of vacation experience. In the case, where a trip was taken for the second or third time, the primary reason was to visit roots locations. The trip becomes an opportunity to choose more specific destinations for the purpose of reconnecting with one's own roots.

Among the most relevant reasons highlighted are: to discover the area where one's ancestors lived, to deepen one's knowledge of the family history, to visit relatives and to learn the Italian language and culture better. Other reasons were to learn the language by taking courses, academic exchanges, food and wine tourism, and recently, the purchase of real estate, following news of offers at symbolic prices (*Houses at 1 €* in the municipalities in the phase of depopulation). Travel to obtain Italian citizenship has grown significantly, also as a consequence of the recent economic crisis in Argentina. Many young people who are facing difficulties of completing the process in Argentina choose to travel to the area of their origin, rent an apartment or a home and expedite the paperwork there while residing locally for a while.

Regarding the organization of the trip, the interviewees unanimously expressed the preference to plan their own trip. The majority assert to having travelled with

relatives or friends. In terms of accommodation, half stay with relatives and the rest prefer to remain in a hotel. In regards to the tourist's expectations, they express in the interviews to have rarely been disappointed. They all consider the experience as positive or very positive. Among the most valued aspects there is the fact of having felt at home, a positive welcome and the kindness of the residents. As a confirmation of the above stated, a tourist affirms: *Discovering the country of origin was like going home, but to a new place where I had never been before*. In very few cases the language barrier and the transport to very small and remote villages are reported as inconvenient.

Lastly, the tourists who were interviewed and challenged on sustainability of this form of tourism and on the post-Covid situation mostly affirmed that roots tourism could be an interesting alternative for the future. The main reasons that are given are the research on new destinations, the need to find quieter locations and the possibility to enrich personal experiences.

The ten interviewees who represent **Italian institutions and associations** unanimously express the concept that the bond with Italy is stronger and more intense among the elderly. The connection weakens with the passage of time and the following generations, making the work on these ties and the sense of belonging essential. In general, all agree on the fact that the maintaining of family relationships enhances the ties with the places of origin that are often also the reason for travelling to the country of one's ancestors.

The representatives of institutions and associations are the most informed group on the themes of *Italianness*; frequently, the associated members participate in social, gastronomic and reunions of other types, maintaining the connection with Italy. *During the annual conference of Calabrians abroad*, as one individual affirms, *we meet with people from all over the world who come from places where other languages are spoken, but the element that connects us is the Italian language which is the foundation of our culture and civilization*. In this regard, a few refer to some of the most significant events such as: *Cammina Molise* (in various areas in Argentina), *Buenos Aires celebra la Calabria*, *Buenos Aires celebra l'Italia* (in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires), *Italia para Todos* (in La Plata) and the *Fiere della Comunità* in various cities in Argentina.

Almost always the interviewees made at least one trip to Italy and the majority have visited their own municipalities of origin. When the behavior of the members of the represented institution is referenced, there are many reasons for travel that are disclosed, emphasizing the purpose of study (workshop, learning the language), cultural visits, sport events, other events and festivals, applications for citizenship and/or travel for work, as well as, visiting relatives in the country of origin.

It is an interesting concept that the roots tourism flows are not only outgoing but incoming, with significant advantages for the Argentine economy. One of the interviewees explains: *Roots tourism is essential for Argentina for its relative importance, whether it be from an economic perspective or for the 'removal of borders'*. And adds: *We can also speak about the 'reverse effect' in regard to roots*

tourism, that is, from Italy to Argentina, back and forth, namely, of tourism that is based on the preservation of customs and culinary traditions because they have been preserved here over time while they have already been lost in Italy. Roots tourism from here to there is needed in order to discover the areas of origin and create an exchange.

Even though the trips are generally organized spontaneously and coordinated by the members of the associations, the institutions usually support both the emigrants who have never returned to Italy as well as the first, second and third descendant residents in Argentina with the research for information and, in many cases, with the organization of trips to the regions of origin. They describe experiences in which some Italian regions subsidized these trips years ago, creating a very strong bond with the territory and an authentic feeling of belonging. The members of the associations prefer to stay in hotels or in the homes of relatives.

In every case, the experience of having travelled to one's town of origin is highly valued. In general, these tourists want to see the home or area where their relatives were born and where they lived, to enjoy the cuisine that is reminiscent of childhood, to live the experiences that are connected to local tradition, to participate in religious events, to connect with the locals, to enjoy nature (sea, mountains), etc. A few interviewees denote certain aspects that should be improved, such as accessing tourism information of interest and problems with transportation. Although the majority of the interviewees from this group do not see their municipality of origin as a tourist destination, all agree on the fact that this type of trip has the potential for the development of tourism; in this sense, they attribute a fundamental role of tourism marketing to the Regions and the Municipalities through public policies. A critical issue is the communication and the promotion of the territory so that the areas can be appealing, but if there is no emotional involvement, they will not be chosen. The interviewees believe that the authorities should take on a proactive role and *seek out* roots tourists. The local institutions are those that know their territory best, they have access to personal data, can design tourism itineraries and routes that connect small towns with interim destinations and well known places, offer discounts and reductions to the descendants, assist them in the process of obtaining citizenship or give support in entrepreneurial ventures. The local institutions are the ones that can best establish a connection with the Italian individual who lives abroad and promote roots tourism.

Regarding the sustainability of roots tourism in the post-Covid era, it is unanimously affirmed that this concerns a niche tourism that requires a thorough preparation of the places of origin so that this tourism becomes a revitalizing factor for the territory, incorporating it in the tourism routes that have already been long established. Some interviewees specifically state that post-Covid tourism can be an opportunity for this type of target group, while it is anticipated that there will be changes in the behavior of the travelers who are looking for places of less importance and with more modest tourism flows. Others, in contrast, do not foresee significant changes in the tourists' motivations. All the interviewees foresee a global *tourism boom*, they believe that

people have greater appreciation of the possibility of travelling and seeing relatives, but want to feel protected. The health care and its protocols will become a standardized practice. One of the interviewees in this category states: *The negative implications of the worldwide pandemic – the closing of borders, increase in inequalities – in the education field are contrasted by the internationalization, in the public's opinion they are obliterated by tourism. Experiencing and discovering other cultures without prejudices brings people together.*

Regarding the four **tour operators** who were interviewed, their opinions coincide with almost all the former ones. Italy is a very appealing destination for the Argentine public and among the most chosen when planning a trip. It is always relevant. In general, one can feel the very strong bond with the country, but not necessarily among the Italian descendants: there is a public that loves Italy, its culture and lifestyle.

The operators who were interviewed believe that the culture is really the main reason of the trip: history, heritage, art, but also cuisine, scenery and natural resources. In general, the first trip to Italy is part of a tour through Europe, but these tourists are usually seeking their roots, and both motivations merge. The visit to the country of origin is perceived as the main reason for the elderly. The youth do not show much interest in discovering their country of origin, except when the motive is to obtain Italian citizenship or to participate in organized trips by associations or regional governments.

The tour operators who were interviewed report that these trips are generally individual; however, when these trips are organized in a group, the visitor is given a few free days to visit his/her town of origin. There are even tourist packages for visiting a particular region. A hotel is the type of preferred accommodation and a minimum standard of comfort is sought after. Staying with family is only chosen in cases where there has been previous contact with one's relatives. The interest to buy regional products (olive oil, cheeses, salami, wines, dried pasta), crafts, kitchen items and typically local products is strong and considered among the attractions of the country of origin.

According to the operators and travel agents, Italy is characterized by the offer of an excellent hospitality and for a significant focus on tourists. If the visitor has family connections, the treatment that is received is even warmer. In most cases, this makes the travel experience very enjoyable. With the destinations that are not tourism oriented, the services are often lacking or do not live up to one's expectations. Nevertheless, the tourists always value the trip positively and express the desire to return. The visit to the country of origin is lived with expectation and is not like an ordinary vacation. A common expression is: *It was worth it*. There are very few cases of negative experiences, for example, having been met with distrust by family members or having returned with disappointment because they did not find what they had expected. The greatest difficulties are in the logistics or lack of information. As tourist operators, the interviewees see the tourism potential of many of these little towns and villages and anticipate that after the pandemic tourism will return, but in

a new way. The public is beginning to look for new attractions, more authenticity, not only a change in the name of a product that is offered. A sense of loss is perceived in the public due to the restrictions from these last two years, and people do not want to lose future opportunities to travel. The reason to visit family has become more important. The pandemic has motivated, these individuals to search for their origins. This is where roots tourism becomes an alternative option.

In interviewing four **mass media representatives**, differences are noted between the audience of traditional media (radio, television, publications) and those who communicate on social networks. In the first ones, a significant emotional attachment is perceived with Italy, with its culture and traditions. These types of media allocate an important area with the Italian community in Argentina and propagate the news that arrives from Italy and the conducted activities from the Italian institutions. The sponsors are Italian-Argentine businesses or Italian families, as well as, travel agents who operate with Italy as a tourist destination. The interviewees have visited Italy more than once, in a few cases they were invited by a Region, in others, they have come to finish their education or to follow an international event. In every case, they took advantage of the trip by visiting the country of origin and have very positively appreciated the experience, that they describe with enthusiasm, compared to a *before and an after*.

The audience is diversified in social media. There are not only descendants of Italians, but also people who love *Italianness*, who want to enjoy tours, cuisine, music, art, wine culture and other expressions of the *Made in Italy*.

A characteristic case is that of a site that is responsible for providing information to whomever wants to request citizenship, an issue that arises strongly during every Argentine economic crisis. In this case, the public has very little information on Italy, does not belong to an institution or association that is connected with the community, and in general does not speak the language but begins to study it when asked. The primary interest of these individuals is to obtain citizenship, but while researching their family history and contacting people about the areas of origin in order to request documentation, they begin to be interested in their own roots. These are young people who, in general, have not travelled to Italy. They express the desire to live in the country and to develop themselves professionally or to work there. They believe that Italy could offer them this opportunity. Once citizenship is obtained, they wish to exercise their own rights and are interested in Italian affairs during elections. Nevertheless, considering the opinions expressed in the Facebook group 'Italian citizenship in Mar del Plata', which was created in order to help people who wanted to obtain Italian citizenship and who have encountered bureaucratic obstacles and do not know how to proceed, an interviewee expressed skepticism that the main reason for the trip to Italy is the desire to discover one's roots.

The interviewees are generally optimistic on the post-Covid development of tourism: *Tourism will return so quickly that air travel will not be able to keep up*, one of them affirms. They believe, that once the crisis that was caused by the pandemic is over, the better known destinations will continue to be appealing, but

Italian descendants will choose to visit their places of origins, whether they have family there or not.

The results of the qualitative research on roots tourism conducted in Argentina shows the potential of this type of niche tourism from the demand's perspective, and consequently, the possibility of diversification of tourism in Italy, increasing the basis of activity in the territory. In order to achieve this goal, the interviewees of the various groups assign a leading role to the regional and local administrations in the planning and implementation of public policies that contribute to the balanced and sustainable development of the activity within the territory. Such a result could be achieved in a tourism *governance* framework, creating networks of local stakeholders and investing in infrastructures in accordance with the market demands, both in terms of physical accessibility (transportation, trains, etc.) as well as, connectivity in communication. Projects and programs that promote enhancement of tourism attractions (natural or artistic) should be added. The outline of the offer includes diversification and the reinforcement of the tourism brands image. It also implements direct forms of communication with prospective visitors.

These are uncertain times. The pandemic has dominated and affected travel and tourism around the world in an unbelievable way, the interviewees agree on the fact that there will soon be resurgence in the sector, with other models of market supply and consumption in which the destinations' resilience capacity will be a very relevant factor.

The offer of this 'experiential' proposal in alternative destinations, in addition to those destinations that are already known, could be very attractive, not only for the Italian descendants but for whomever has a special fascination for Italy and who seeks to further know all that it offers. Roots tourism may be useful for revitalizing many villages facing depopulation, but at the same time for contributing to the revival of Italian institutions in Argentina by attracting new generations and reinforcing the bonds of identity and belonging through these travels.

3.3 The statistical survey

The target population of the quantitative survey with a focus on Argentina is composed of all the first generation emigrants and their descendants who live in Argentina today. The survey was conducted by a structured self-compiled questionnaire available online in Italian, English and Spanish. The questionnaire focuses four main research questions to answer. Primarily, it aimed to assess the intensity and type of relationship of the respondents with their homeland of origin in terms of maintaining contacts with friends and relatives, respecting customs and traditions, and emotional and physical connection with the homeland of origin of one's family. Secondly, it tried to find out about the type of stay and the impressions experienced from those who had taken a roots travel. It targeted to gather information on the preferences related to the trip and the stay in Italy, as well as, the time of year chosen, the length of the stay, the type of accommodation or hospitality

chosen, the enjoyment in activities, the connections that were rediscovered or created, the satisfaction concerning the experience, and the interest to embark upon a new trip. Thirdly, it aimed to evaluate and analyze the interest to take a roots travel by those who had never experienced it. Particularly, for those of second and third generation, we analyzed: the reason for which they had not taken, at least recently, a roots travel, depth of the feeling of belonging and type of emotional connection that ties them to the homeland of origin, expectations regarding possible difficulties, economic or bureaucratic, that they will come across embarking on such a trip. Lastly, the research attempted to evaluate the vision of the respondents and of their acquaintances about their homeland of origin and the connection with the past, personal and or what they inherited from family, and what they know indirectly through media or contacts with one's own relatives.

In order to be able to collect all the relevant information to answer these research questions, it was necessary to work with a large enough sample. Due to the unlikelihood of using a probability sample, given the lack of a frame population from which to randomly draw the sample, a *convenience sampling* was used. 1,914 respondents took part in the survey; however, in order to prevent distortions of missing values, only fully completed questionnaires were used for estimation. For this reason, the final sample, initially set around 1,000 respondents, reached the total of 1,545 units³¹, a size that is large enough to provide credible estimates despite the absence of solid official data on the consistency and the structure of the population in reference³².

The Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata was primarily responsible with the recruitment of the respondents and distributed the questionnaire among the emigrants and Italian residents of Italian extraction in Argentina who are connected to Italian-Argentine associations and their relatives and acquaintances. In order to contain the eventual distortion of self-selection bias, the university also advertised the survey on the local and national media, organizing webinars and participating in radio and television programs, to reach respondents who were not connected with Italian-Argentine associations and were residents in every region of the country. In addition, the questionnaire was proposed by some associations with which the research group is directly in contact with and with whom it has ongoing

³¹ As noted, given that this is a non-probability sampling, it is not possible to measure the reliability of estimations. Actually, such information is available only in case of random extraction of the units from population. However, to have an idea of the sampling error, one can say that if the sampling was probabilistic, this sample size would have a margin error equal to $\pm 0,03$ at 95% confidence level.

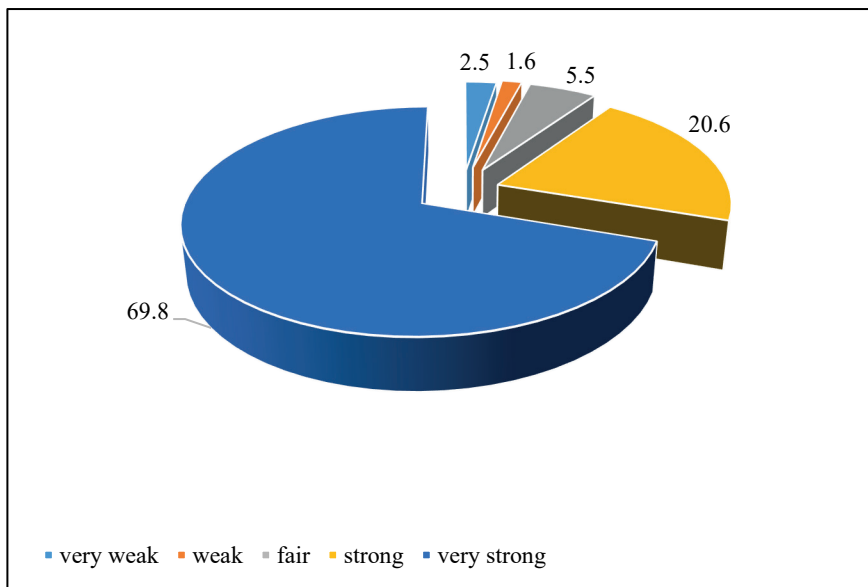
³² The only data to refer to would be the total number of the Argentines born in Italy, but the figure, updated at the census of 2010, at 147,499 units, is presumably today more than reduced in half. With this hypothesis, the first generation emigrants present in the sample represent about 2.5% of the total. INDEC, Instituto Nacional de Estadistic y Censos, Censo Nacional de Población, Hogares y Viviendas 2010

partnerships³³. The associations involved and the Universidad de Mar del Plata were available to submit the questionnaire even to those who usually did not use Internet or those who could have difficulty responding to an online questionnaire. The main results are presented as follows.

3.3.1 *The ties with the homeland*

The first question concerns the measure in which the respondents feel emotionally connected with Italy. The result³⁴ is that a broad majority states a very strong (69.8 percent) or strong (20.6 percent) connection with their own country of origin, while 4.1 percent of the respondents stated in total a weak or very weak connection (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Percentage distribution of the respondents for the depth stated of the emotional connection with Italy



Source: direct survey

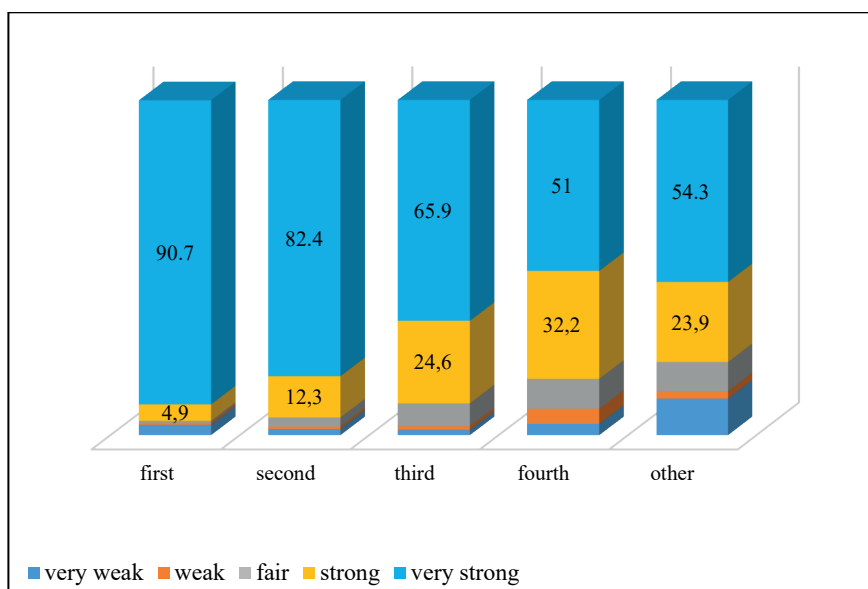
Figure 3.2 presents the distribution of the respondents who belong to the various generations by the strength of emotional connection with Italy. Notably, for the first generation, the connection is extremely relevant (the values ‘very strong’ and ‘strong’ are respectively at 90.7 and 4.9 percent of the total), for the second it is less

³³ Please see Chapter 1, paragraph 4.

³⁴ Reclassified on a scale 1-10 as follows: very weak (1-2), weak (3-4), fair (5-6), strong (8-8), very strong (9-10).

(82.4 and 12.3 percent respectively), for the third the value ‘very strong’ is reduced even more (65.9 percent) and the value ‘strong’ increases (24.6 percent), for the fourth they both decrease (‘very strong’: 51.0 percent; ‘strong’: 32.2 percent).

Figure 3.2 The depth of emotional connection with Italy stated by generation (percentage values)



Source: direct survey

Beyond the stated emotional connection, it is important to analyze how much the respondents behave as Italians, that is, to what degree they respect the traditions and customs of their origins. The most observed appear to be the culinary traditions (‘greatly’ from 47.1 percent and ‘much’ from 28.5 percent of the total), the religious traditions (21.9 percent and 18.1 percent respectively) and others (20.6 percent and 26.1 percent). Public holidays appear not to be observed at all (as stated by 45.7 percent of the total) and the use of dialect (41.7 percent), other than the usage of Italian, but in a reduced measure (29.2 percent). The percentage is very high of those who do not observe the religious traditions (31.4 percent). This figure appears in contrast to the prior, but in reality it shows how there are different groups, for example of different ages³⁵, with diverse religious beliefs. (Table 3.1). This difference is confirmed by the distribution by generation of emigrants in respect to

³⁵ Analyzing the tendency to respect the religious traditions by age groups results that the younger respondents (up to 29 years old) have four times greater tendency (OR-3.78) of the older classes (70 years old and older) of stating to not respect almost at all the religious traditions.

the traditions and customs of the homeland of origin (Table 3.2). As one can imagine, in general, the first generation is the one to mostly observe the traditions. Interest for Italian cuisine is, however, high for everyone, confirming its excellence on an international level. With the generational transition, a rather elevated interest is maintained, but to a lesser degree, even for the religious traditions, other traditions and the Italian language.

Table 3.1 Level³⁶ of observation of Italian or from the region of origin customs, culinary traditions and festivities (percentage values)

	Use of dialect	Use of the Italian language	Religious traditions	Public holidays	Culinary traditions	Other traditions
<i>None or nearly</i>	41.7	29.2	31.4	45.7	5.6	23.2
<i>Few</i>	7.4	14.4	10.7	11.5	4.9	9.4
<i>Not much</i>	15.5	19.0	17.9	18.3	13.9	20.7
<i>High</i>	19.0	20.5	18.1	12.5	28.5	26.1
<i>Very high</i>	16.4	16.9	21.9	12.0	47.1	20.6
<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: direct survey

Table 3.2 Average score³⁷ attributed to the respect for customs by type of tradition and by generation

<i>Generation</i>	Use of dialect	Use of the Italian language	Religious traditions	Public holidays	Culinary traditions	Other traditions
<i>First</i>	6.6	6.8	6.1	5.8	8.5	7.3
<i>Second</i>	5.5	6.0	6.1	4.9	8.4	6.4
<i>Third</i>	4.2	4.7	4.9	3.7	7.7	5.5
<i>Fourth</i>	3.2	3.7	4.2	2.6	6.7	4.3
<i>Other/unknown</i>	2.9	3.9	3.5	2.5	6.3	4.3
<i>Total respondents</i>	4.6	5.1	5.2	4.0	7.7	5.7

Source: direct survey

In the open responses, many indicated a strong attachment to some elements of the Italian traditional lifestyle, whether it is Sunday lunch with family, food (especially pasta), gatherings during holiday occasions, music and some customs that are being lost in Italy today, such as, the cultivation of a vegetable garden.

³⁶ Reclassified on a scale 0-10 as follows: not at all or almost none (1-2), few (3-4), not much (5-6), much (7-8), greatly (9-10).

³⁷ Scale 1-10.

In order to be better acquainted with the emotional attachment to Italy, the respondents were asked if they were in contact with Italian associations abroad, friends and family in Italy and if they had conducted genealogical research about their own family. Even here, the greatest connection with the homeland of origin is from those of the first generation, who had engaged in research (in 84.0 percent of the cases), maintain contact with relatives and friends in the region (85.2 percent) and outside of the region (73.5 percent) and belong to associations (69.9 percent). A comparable interest, although less intense, is shown by second generation and then increasingly to a lesser degree from the others (Table 3.3). It can be noted that the interest in genealogical research increases with the last generations, an indication of the desire to have information on one's own descendants and on the history of one's own family. In general, the data is very high for all of generations, but if 86.1 percent of the total had done research on family of origin, the percentage would reach 87.2 percent for the emigrants of third generation and 91.1 percent for those of fourth generation.

Table 3.3 Contacts and research on the family by generation
(percentage values)

<i>Generation</i>	Belongs to Italian associations abroad	Maintains contact with friends and relatives in the region	Maintains contact with friends and relatives outside of the region	Has engaged in research on the family
<i>First</i>	69.8	85.2	73.5	84.0
<i>Second</i>	59.2	73.7	65.2	82.4
<i>Third</i>	51.3	45.3	56.4	87.2
<i>Fourth</i>	39.0	26.7	47.3	91.1
<i>Other/unknown</i>	41.3	26.1	58.7	80.4
<i>Total respondents</i>	52.8	53.0	58.9	86.1

Source: direct survey

Regarding the reasons for genealogical research, the primary reason is the desire to construct a family tree of one's own family (for 45.4 percent of the respondents), followed by considerably less important reasons in numeric terms, such as finding relatives (19.2 percent), other reasons (18.4 percent) and having a document of one's own family (13 percent) (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4 Main reasons for genealogical research

<i>Reasons</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Construct a family tree</i>	45.5
<i>Bureaucratic necessities</i>	3.9
<i>Finding relatives</i>	19.2
<i>Desire to have a document of the family</i>	13.0
<i>Other reasons</i>	18.4
<i>Total</i>	100.0

Source: direct survey

The respondents were given the possibility to include an objective with the genealogical research on one's own family that was not provided for on the predetermined responses. Almost half of those who had included other reasons in regards to those provided for in Table 3.3, referenced the desire to obtain Italian citizenship. In Argentina, it is very common for the descendants of immigrants of Italian origin to have dual citizenship. The process of acknowledgement of Italian citizenship occurs through the verification that the transmission of citizenship has never been interrupted, from the first descendant who was born in Italy from Italian parents and arrived in Argentina to the person who submits the application. For that purpose, it is very important to know and to be able to document the history of one's own family. This is often, therefore, the reason that urges the individual to conduct a genealogical research.

As is shown in Table 3.5, a significant difference was not found in terms of the level of *place attachment* towards the Italian homeland among the emigrants and their descendants who originate from diverse geographic areas. The average score given to the intensity of one's own ties with Italy is, in fact, very high in all regions.

3.3.2 The organization of the trip, preferences and the experience.

The purpose of this part of the survey is to know the type of stay, the method of organization of the trip, the activities engaged in during the period of stay, the set of underlying reasons in addition to that which is more general for the ancestral journey, the emotional bonds rediscovered, the level of satisfaction of the overall experience, the desire to return and the inclination to promote the homeland as a tourist destination.

50.5 percent of the total of respondents returned to their areas of origin. By comparing the generations of emigrants and their descendants, the first and second generations are those to affirm to have taken in a greater measure a roots tourism vacation: 67.9 percent of first generation emigrants and 63.8 percent of descendants of the second generation; for the third generation this value is 49.3 percent, and then decreases to 27.7 percent for the fourth generation (Figure 3.3)

Table 3.5 Intensity³⁸ of the ties with Italy by region of origin

<i>Region of origin</i>	Average score
<i>Abruzzo</i>	9.1
<i>Basilicata</i>	8.8
<i>Calabria</i>	9.2
<i>Campania</i>	9.1
<i>Emilia- Romagna</i>	8.7
<i>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>	9.0
<i>Lazio</i>	8.3
<i>Liguria</i>	8.8
<i>Lombardy</i>	8.6
<i>Marche</i>	9.1
<i>Molise</i>	8.8
<i>Piedmont</i>	8.7
<i>Puglia</i>	8.8
<i>Sardinia</i>	8.2
<i>Sicily</i>	8.8
<i>Tuscany</i>	8.8
<i>Trentino-Alto Adige</i>	9.0
<i>Umbria</i>	8.8
<i>Valle d'Aosta³⁹</i>	--
<i>Veneto</i>	9.0

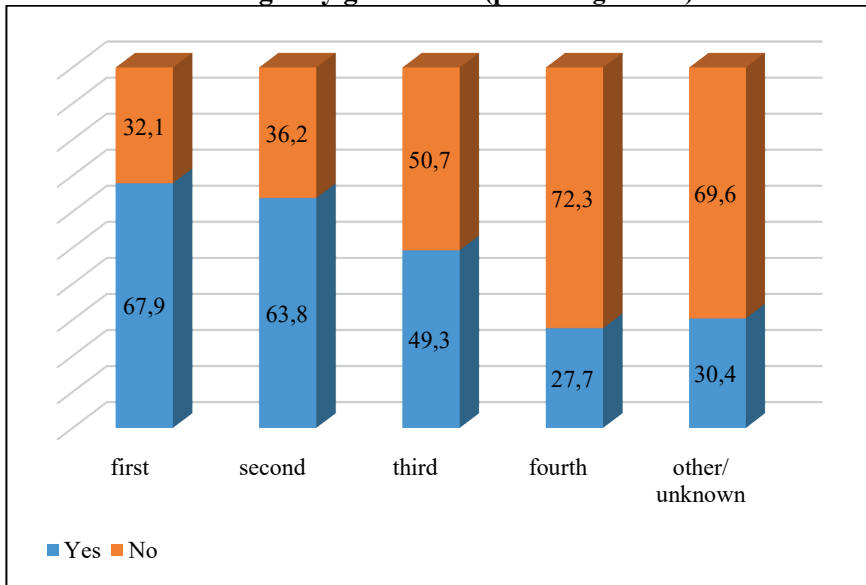
Source: direct survey

If the emotional attachment to one's own birthplace is evident for those that emigrated to another country such as Argentina, it is extremely interesting to explore if such an emotional tie exists for the subsequent generations and if this fact is connected to the trip. By analyzing the data relative with having taken (or not taken) a trip to the areas of origin of one's own family and the intensity of the connection with such areas, many respondents who have never travelled to Italy express to have, however, an average to strong connection (Table 3.6). In fact, well over 70.1% of those who have stated to have a strong connection and 40.6% of those who indicated a very strong bond have never taken a roots vacation. On the other hand, the percentages of respondents who indicate a weak bond with the land of their ancestors and who claim at the same time to have never taken a trip to the country of their ancestors are high.

³⁸ Scale 1-10.

³⁹ Given the reduced sample size the result are non-significant so data is not provided for this region.

Figure 3.3 Respondents having or not having gone on vacation in the regions of origin by generation (percentage value)



Source: direct survey

Table 3.6 Intensity of the connection with the homeland of origin for the second, third and fourth generations who have or have not taken a trip to discover one's roots (percentage value)

<i>Intensity of the connection</i>	Trip		
	Yes	No	Total
<i>Very weak</i>	27.3	72.7	100.0
<i>Weak</i>	8.3	91.7	100.0
<i>Average</i>	15.5	84.5	100.0
<i>Strong</i>	29.9	70.1	100.0
<i>Very strong</i>	59.4	40.6	100.0

Source: direct survey

Possibly, he/she who experiences a very strong connection is naturally more inclined to take this ancestral trip compared to the individual who indicates a weak bond, but, as it appears to confirm the qualitative research conducted on the roots tourists⁴⁰, the greater attachment could derive from a reinforcement of the feeling of belonging, because of the trip itself.

⁴⁰ Please see Chapter 2.

Although the reason for the trip is connected to returning to one's own birthplace or of one's own ascendants, in some cases, as revealed from in-depth interviews, roots tourists take trips to Italy but not necessarily making stops in those areas. The respondents were asked to specify if they had been to Italy without having visited their region of origin. 62.8 percent of the respondents make the roots trip in its narrowest sense, therefore staying in one's birthplace (understood as region), in particular, the first generation. The remaining 37.2 percent travels within Italy. In this last case, the most visited regions, different from those of origin, are Lazio (chosen by 69.2 percent of those who have been to Italy but not to the region of origin), Tuscany (59.7 percent) and Veneto (57.9 percent), locations of the main cities of art, followed by Emilia Romagna, Lombardy and Campania. Presumably, these individuals travel for cultural tourism or perhaps for work or study purposes, but not for roots travel.

In regards to the frequency of returning to the regions of origin among whom have spent a vacation in Italy visiting these areas, 53.7 percent have travelled only once within the last ten years (Table 3.7). All the generations have predominately indicated that they have taken only one trip in the last ten years (Table 3. 8), but the first generation of Italian emigrants in Argentina tend to return more frequently (switching from 36.4 percent of respondents who specify only one trip to 23.6 percent who take five or six roots vacations). The data is, however, encouraging of the Italian immigrants of the second and third generations with a frequency of travel of 2 or 3 times (in particular, 25 percent of the third generation affirms to having twice visited the areas of origin of their Italian grandparents within the last ten years).

Table 3.7 Frequency of travel in the regions of origin within the last 10 years by those who have taken at least one trip

<i>Frequency of travel</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Once</i>	53.7
<i>Twice</i>	20.9
<i>Three times</i>	9.2
<i>Four times</i>	5.6
<i>Five or more times</i>	10.6
<i>Total</i>	100.0

Source: direct survey

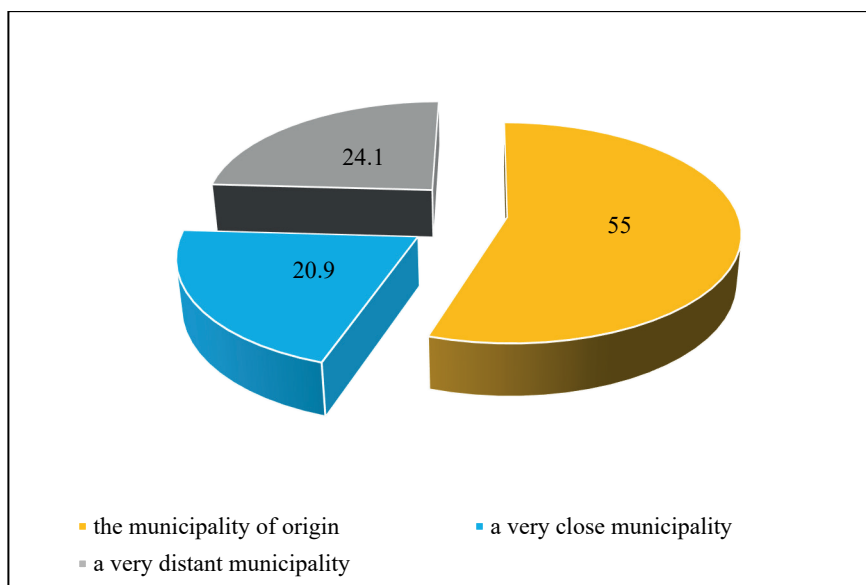
Table 3.8 Frequency of travel in the regions of origin within the last 10 years per generation of emigrants (percentage values)

<i>Frequency of travel</i>	Generation				
	<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third</i>	<i>Fourth</i>	<i>Other/ Not known</i>
<i>Once</i>	36.4	54.2	55.9	64.2	64.3
<i>Twice</i>	20.9	17.4	25.1	17.3	14.3
<i>Three times</i>	10.9	8.3	8.0	14.8	7.1
<i>Four times</i>	8.2	6.4	4.5	3.7	7.1
<i>Five or more times</i>	23.6	13.6	6.4	0.0	7.1
<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: direct survey

The survey is subsequently focused on the analysis of the main destinations of roots travel in the areas of origin. For much of 75.9 percent of the respondents, the destination of travel is the municipality or a nearby municipality (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4 Main destination of travel (percentage values)



Source: direct survey

The visit to the areas of origin is indicated as the prevalent reason of the trip. The second question we ask in our research is part of the study of the specific reasons for the roots trip. A series of reasons that are related to this type of travel were,

therefore, evaluated according to a numerical scale of importance from 1 to 10. The results, illustrated in Table 3.9, highlight how the most important considered reason (with a score of 8.7) is that of the visit to the areas connected to the history of one's own family, but also to reinforce one's own indentitary heritage (7.9) and reduce the sense of a loss of roots (7.8). The attributed importance to some of the reasons change with generations. If reuniting with friends or relatives is a strong reason of travel for the first generation, it is less important for the subsequent generations. For the latter, for example, it is more important to conduct research on one's own family in respect to the first generation, given that presumably the direct contacts and the knowledge of the family history tends to fade in time. In addition to those indicated, the respondents were given the possibility to add another potential personal reason. One individual expressed that he wanted his wife and children to know the areas of their origins. A fair amount of the respondents, above all those belonging to the third and fourth generations, stated to having made the trip for tourism in a more general sense, for the love of Italy, its history, its art and its culture, to learn more about it, and to also visit other regions besides the areas of one's roots.

Table 3.9 The importance attributed to the various reasons for travelling per generation of emigrants (average score⁴¹)

<i>Reasons for travelling</i>	Generation					
	<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third</i>	<i>Fourth</i>	<i>Other/ I don't know</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>See friends and relatives</i>	8.7	7.9	6.2	4.5	5.6	6.9
<i>Keep a promise</i>	4.4	4.2	3.9	2.8	3.3	3.9
<i>Better discover one's own origins/reduce the sense of loss of one's roots</i>	7.7	8.0	8.0	7.1	6.6	7.8
<i>Visit areas connected to the history of one's family</i>	8.9	9.0	8.6	7.8	7.1	8.7
<i>Research on one's family</i>	5.9	6.8	6.7	6.1	5.6	6.5
<i>Reinforce one's own identity</i>	8.2	8.1	7.9	7.0	6.0	7.9
<i>Find documents such as birth certificates</i>	3.5	2.6	2.8	2.6	3.9	2.8
<i>Learn the Italian language</i>	6.0	6.3	6.5	6.3	5.7	6.3

Source: direct survey

The survey has also had the purpose of understanding the activities engaged upon during the trip, an important aspect to effectively plan an offer of better products and services and experiences dedicated to this target group. Possible interests were

⁴¹ Scale 1-10.

proposed to which a score would be attributed on the basis of how much everyone was dedicated to this activity during the vacation (from 0, meaning, ‘very few’, to 10, meaning ‘greatly’). As shown in Table 3.10, the higher average score refers to tasting local food (8.9) but also to discover the history and the culture of the area (8.3) and touring the region of origin (7.9); these results are independent from the generation. All the entries exhibit a positive score and, therefore, a participation in the various activities, but slightly less regarding the patron saint festivities and other events. The open answers, provided for by the survey with the purpose of gathering other possible activities to consider, are highly varied and concern the study of language, study in general and work. Many speak about visits to see monuments, museums, and places. Some respondents refer to experiential aspects of the vacation and the desire to ‘enjoy Italy’ and to ‘live in Italy’. They speak about walks, rest, chatting, and the desire to speak with the people of the area. These responses confirm the idea that the ancestral tourists wish to live like the residents, to be seen as members of the community and not as guests, and to enjoy even the little things pertaining to the Italian lifestyle.

Table 3.10 Intensity⁴² of the experience lived during the vacation per generation of emigrants (average score)

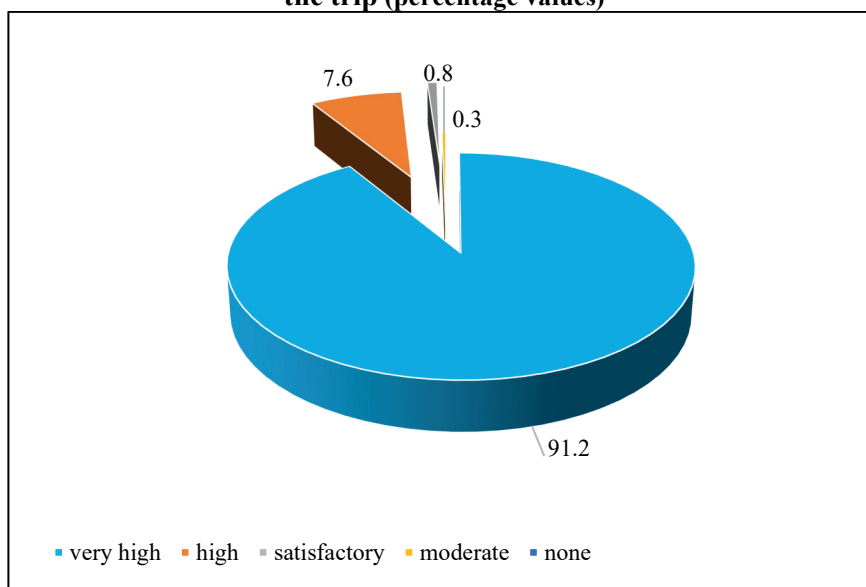
<i>Activities engaged in</i>	Generation					<i>Total</i>
	<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third</i>	<i>Fourth</i>	<i>Other/ I don't know</i>	
<i>Visit relatives and friends</i>	7.7	7.6	6.4	5.7	7.2	6.9
<i>Visit significant places of one's origins (grandparents' house. etc.)</i>	8.6	8.2	7.0	5.8	5.9	7.5
<i>Discover local history and culture</i>	8.3	8.3	8.4	8.3	7.1	8.3
<i>Discover popular traditions and folklore</i>	7.2	7.6	7.5	6.9	6.6	7.4
<i>Participate in patron saint festivities</i>	5.9	5.7	5.0	4.0	4.8	5.3
<i>Participate in events of other types</i>	6.6	5.6	5.7	4.5	5.3	5.7
<i>Sample local foods</i>	9.1	8.9	8.8	8.7	7.9	8.9
<i>Buy traditional products</i>	7.7	7.5	7.0	6.8	6.6	7.2
<i>Tour to discover the region</i>	8.0	7.9	7.9	7.8	7.4	7.9
<i>Other activities</i>	5.7	5.4	4.9	5.0	4.1	5.2

Source: direct survey

⁴² Scale 1-10.

The level of satisfaction for the overall experience of the vacation is very high for 91.2 percent of respondents, as is shown in Figure 3.5. This evaluation does not vary substantially among emigrants and descendants of various degrees. It is evident that a higher percentage of individuals of the second generation considers the trip exceptionally satisfying (93.6 of the second generation, versus 86.4 percent of the first generation).

Figure 3.5 Level of satisfaction⁴³ by the experience lived during the trip (percentage values)



Source: direct survey

The elevated degree of satisfaction for the experience lived translated into a strong desire to repeat it, thus to return to the areas of origin (Table 3.11). 96.9 percent of the respondents declare it, and this applies to all generations, even for those furthest from parents or ancestors.

⁴³ Reclassified on a scale 1-10 as follows: none (1-2), moderate (3-4), satisfactory (5-6), high (7-8), very high (9-10).

Table 3.11 The desire to return to the places of origin per generation of emigrants⁴⁴

<i>Level of interest to repeat the trip</i>	Generation					
	<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third</i>	<i>Fourth</i>	<i>Other/ I don't know</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>None</i>	0.9	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
<i>Weak</i>	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
<i>Moderate</i>	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.2
<i>Strong</i>	1.8	1.5	3.2	1.2	14.3	2.4
<i>Very strong</i>	97.3	97.3	96.5	98.8	85.7	96.9
<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: direct survey

It is evident that the roots tourists promote their place of origin (that is the region or regions of one's birth or of one's ancestors) as a tourist destination, as well as, the local traditional products once they have returned home. This naturally confirms the crucial role of this tourism segment as informal, credible, authentic ambassador of its homeland of origin and able to influence the choices of other potential visitors. The roots tourists engage in a form of positive word of mouth of great importance, that is, more effective than other marketing information sources, even those of an institutional nature. 68.2 percent of the respondents specified to have recommended often or very often their region of origin to their network of contacts (Table 3.12).

Table 3.12 Distribution of the roots tourists by generation and propensity⁴⁵ to promote the region of origin and/or its local production

<i>Possibility of promotion of homeland</i>	Generation					
	<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third</i>	<i>Fourth</i>	<i>Other/ I don't know</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Never or rarely</i>	4.3	9.4	13.5	23.3	23.9	13.6
<i>Sometimes</i>	3.7	3.6	6.0	9.2	13.0	6.0
<i>Not often</i>	5.0	6.0	13.2	22.7	13.1	12.2
<i>Often</i>	14.2	18.4	20.4	16.4	15.2	18.2
<i>Very often</i>	72.8	62.6	46.9	28.4	34.8	50.0
<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: direct survey

⁴⁴ Scale 1-10.⁴⁵ Reclassified on a scale 1-10 as follows: never or rarely (1-2), sometimes (3-4), not often (5-6), often (7-8), very often (9-10).

It is noted that the inclination for a positive word of mouth is more emphasized in the first generation and tends to gradually decline in the subsequent generations. The practice of promoting one's homeland compared to the desire to return, which is very high, shows a more contained, though interesting, data. It consists of an ability that may not be completely expressed and that has its own ulterior potential. It is possible that not all the respondents have had the chance to utilize word of mouth, for various reasons, such as having few opportunities, few contacts, and an absence of channels for the exchange of information, etc.

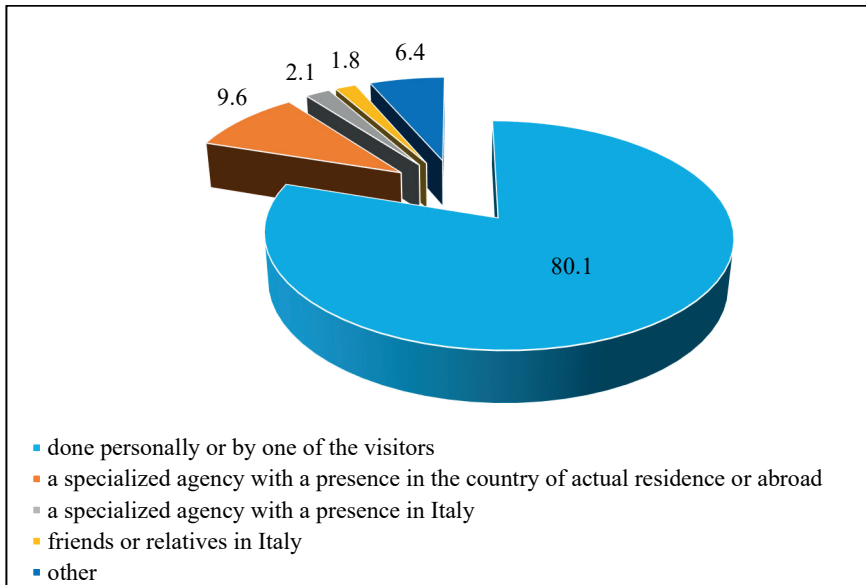
To be able to evaluate if and in what measure the involvement in the promotion of the area of one's origins is associated to whether or not he/she has engaged in roots travel, the data related to the actual and potential roots tourists was analyzed, that is, those who have made at least one trip and those who have never returned to their place of origin. From the comparison, shown in Table 3.13, a radical difference is appreciated among the diverse categories of respondents. 90.4 percent of those who have been on vacation in their areas of origin, affirm to have promoted these areas, versus 45.8 percent of those who have not engaged in roots travel.

Table 3.13 Distribution of roots tourists for vacation in the areas of origin and tendency to promote the region of origin and/or its local production (percentage values)

<i>Promotion of the homeland of origin</i>	At least one vacation taken in one's area of origin	
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Never or rarely</i>	1.5	25.9
<i>Sometimes</i>	2.1	9.9
<i>Not often</i>	6.0	18.4
<i>Often</i>	16.7	20.0
<i>Very often</i>	73.7	25.8
<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0

Source: direct survey

The majority of roots tourists (80.1 percent) organize their own trip, while a few contact specialized agencies abroad (9.6 percent) or in Italy (2.1 percent). Among those who have indicated to have chosen other arrangements (6.4 percent), many specify to have travelled courtesy of an exchange program organized by their own region or by associations for emigrants (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6 Method of organization of roots travel (percentage values)

Source: direct survey

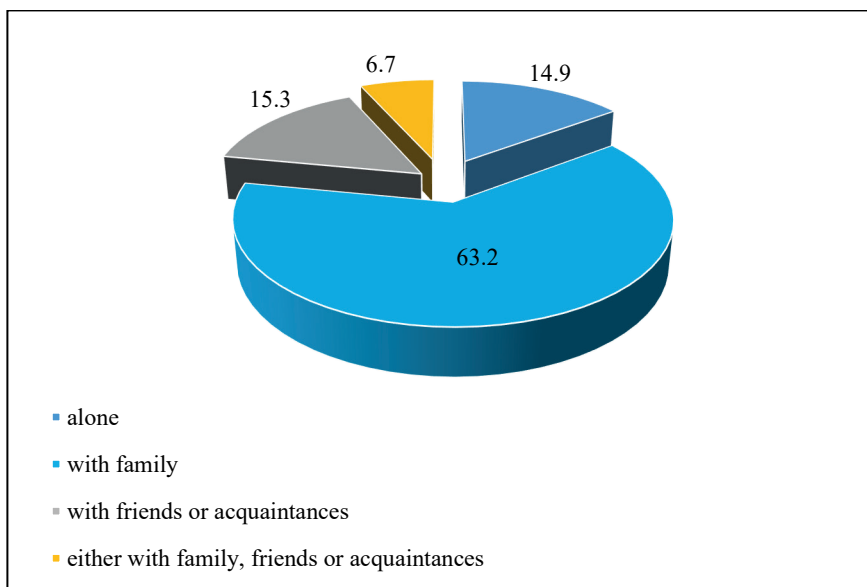
5.9 percent of those who contacted an agency, Italian or foreign, chose an organized trip, enjoyed together with other tourists. The remaining 40.9 percent preferred a trip alone. Therefore, in summary, there is only a small percentage of roots tourists who travel within a group (6.7 percent). The experience of travel to discover one's own origins appears to primarily be a family project, considering that the majority of tourists have travelled with their own family (63.2 percent) or with friends (15.3 percent) (Figure 3.7).

Generally, the preferred period for the trip is in the summer, from June to September. Over three quarters of the indicated stays are concentrated in these months (Table 3.14).

They mostly consist of rather long vacation periods, distributed by more than a week (Table 3.15). If this data is compared with the average number of overnight stays of foreign tourists in Italy, equal to 3.4⁴⁶, it is noted how much this stay is relevant within the national tourism context.

⁴⁶ Source: ISTAT (2019). 2020 was omitted due to Covid, which strongly influenced the tourism sector.

Figure 3.7 Percentage distribution of roots tourists by type of group with whom they have travelled



Source: direct survey

Table 3.14 Preferred period to travel (percentage values)

<i>Two month period</i>	Yes	No	Total
<i>January-February</i>	13.5	86.5	100.0
<i>March-April</i>	13.3	86.7	100.0
<i>May-June</i>	35.5	64.5	100.0
<i>July-August</i>	38.7	61.3	100.0
<i>September-October</i>	37.2	62.8	100.0
<i>November-December</i>	6.8	93.2	100.0

Source: direct survey

Table 3.15 Distribution of roots travel by length of stay

<i>Stay</i>	%
<i>Less than a week</i>	12.8
<i>One to two weeks</i>	30.0
<i>Three to four weeks</i>	38.6
<i>More than a month</i>	18.6
<i>Total</i>	100.0

Source: direct survey

The trip could have been itinerant, with various visits in different destinations and a longer stay, in general, in the area of origin of the tourist. In the longest period of stay, one third of the respondents lived with friends or relatives (32.3 percent) or in their own homes (1.3 percent), while the remaining two thirds stayed in tourist accommodations, non-hotel and hotel, with a clear preference for the latter, being used by 38.6 percent of the respondents (Table 3.16).

Table 3.16 Type of preferred accommodation

<i>Accommodation</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Hotel</i>	38.6
<i>Bed & Breakfast</i>	10.9
<i>Rented home</i>	9.9
<i>Own home</i>	1.3
<i>Agrotourism</i>	0.4
<i>With friends-relatives</i>	32.3
<i>Camping</i>	0.4
<i>Other</i>	6.2
<i>Total</i>	100.0

Source: direct survey

As Table 3.17 shows, 47.6 percent remained for another week in the indicated facilities. Obviously, the average length of stay varies with the different types of accommodations. However, more than two thirds (68.7 percent) of those who stayed for the longer period of the holiday in no charge arrangements (one's own home or hospitality with friends or relatives) state to having remained more than a week. Little more than one third (36.8 percent) stayed for more than a week in tourist accommodations, hotels and non-hotels. It is possible that this last group is represented by those who travel to their own areas of origin as one of the stops of a larger tour or during the occasion of a business or study trip (Table 3.18).

Table 3.17 Distribution of roots travel in the accommodations specified for a longer period of stay

<i>Stay</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>1 night</i>	2.3
<i>2-3 nights</i>	24.1
<i>4-7 nights</i>	26.0
<i>More than a week</i>	47.6
<i>Total</i>	100.0

Source: direct survey

Table 3.18 Distribution of the percentage of roots travels by the length of stay and by the type of accommodation (percentage values)

<i>Stay</i>	Own home or with friends or relatives	Tourist establishment
<i>1 night</i>	1.1	2.9
<i>2-3 nights</i>	8.8	31.9
<i>4-7 nights</i>	21.4	28.4
<i>More than a week</i>	68.7	36.8
<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0

Source: direct survey

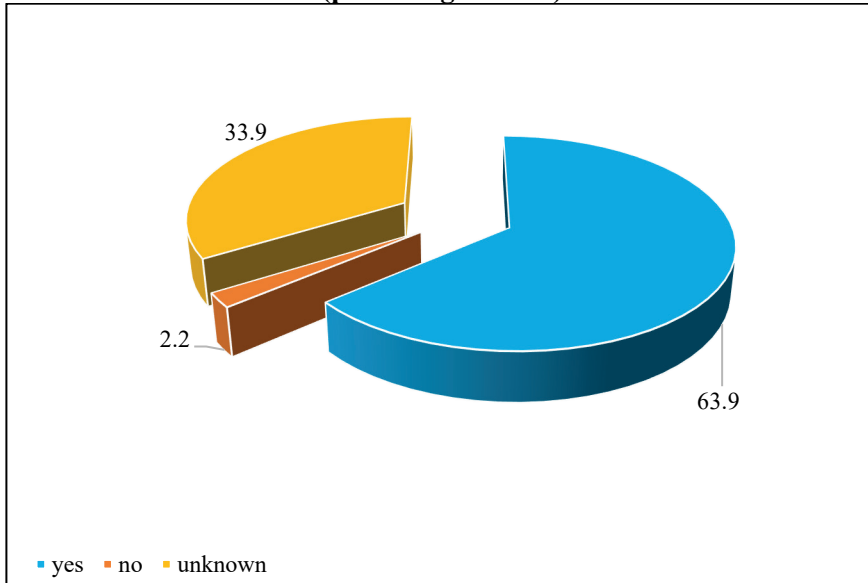
3.3.3 The reasons of those who have not travelled

Those who have not travelled to the areas of their origins to research their family roots were asked what their degrees of interest are regarding a trip of this kind. Almost 50 percent of the respondents stated that they had never been or had not returned to their regions of origin, nonetheless around 63.9 percent claim to have a plan to visit it within the next 5 years. Many, 33.9 percent, do not know if they will plan this type of trip and only a minority, 2.2 percent, do not think about going to Italy (Figure 3.8).

The study also attempted to understand the reason why these individuals did not visit their areas of origin in Italy. The primary reason, reported by 71.9 percent of respondents, was connected to the cost of the trip, therefore due strictly to a financial difficulty. The second reason appears to be much less relevant: 19.3 percent of respondents referred to organizational problems within the family, with work or time (Figure 3.9).

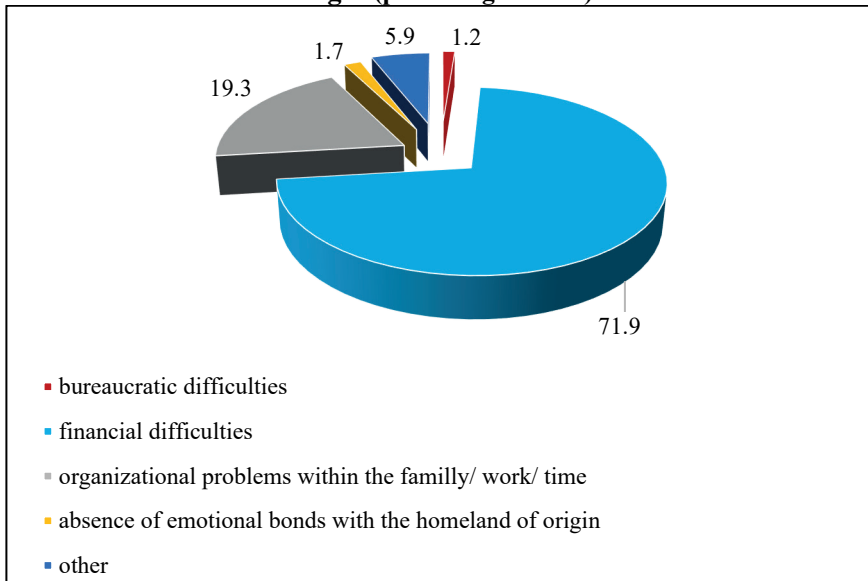
It is very interesting to see how the importance changes with the diverse reasons regarding a trip not taken for various generations of emigrants. In Table 3.19, it is seen how the absence of emotional ties with one's own homeland of origin becomes more relevant as a reason of the missed trip for the fourth and subsequent generations.

Figure 3.8 The intention to travel to Italy within the next 5 years (percentage values)



Source: direct survey

Figure 3.9 Motives for which an individual has never visited his/her country of origin (percentage values)



Source: direct survey

Table 3.19 Reasons of the missed trip for the various generations (percentage values)

<i>Reasons for those who have never travelled to their country of origin</i>	Generation					
	<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third</i>	<i>Fourth</i>	<i>Other/unknown</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Bureaucratic difficulties</i>	3.8	0.7	0.9	0.9	3.1	1.2
<i>Financial difficulties</i>	75.0	71.3	71.6	75.4	50.0	71.9
<i>Organizational problems within the family/work/ time</i>	13.5	19.3	20.6	15.6	40.7	19.3
<i>Absence of strong emotional ties with the homeland</i>	0.0	2.0	1.6	1.9	3.1	1.7
<i>Another reasons</i>	7.7	6.7	5.3	6.2	3.1	5.9
<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: direct survey

Those who have not taken a trip to one's own country of origin appear to be, however, strongly connected to Italy: well over 84.4 percent state to be considerably or greatly attached to Italy (Table 3.20).

Table 3.20 Intensity of the emotional connection⁴⁷ with Italy

<i>Emotional connection with Italy</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>None</i>	3.3
<i>Weak</i>	2.9
<i>Moderate</i>	9.4
<i>Strong</i>	29.0
<i>Very strong</i>	55.4
<i>Total</i>	100

Source: direct survey

Clearly, the connection with Italy is different from the connection with one's own town or region. It is, therefore, interesting to see to what degree the respondents would like to live in their region of origin if they had the opportunity (Table 3.21). A large majority of the tourists would greatly (55.7 percent) or considerably (22.9 percent) enjoy this. A percentage this high again shows strong attachment to one's own origins, not only in emotional terms, as well as the desire to share culture and lifestyle.

⁴⁷ Reclassified on a scale 1-10 as follows: none (1-2), weak (3-4), moderate (5-6), strong (7-8), very strong (9-10).

Table 3.21 The desire to live in one's region of origin if given the opportunity

<i>Desire to live in the region of origin</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>None</i>	5.9
<i>Moderate</i>	3.9
<i>Sufficient</i>	11.6
<i>High</i>	22.9
<i>Very high</i>	55.7
<i>Total</i>	100.0

Source: direct survey

Surprisingly, the desire to live in one's own region of origin crosses various generations, with an expressed degree of interest that is always very high. Indeed, the comprehensive data of those who desire this as much or greatly, vary slightly from one generation to the next; if those who greatly desire it, among the respondents of the first and second generations are respectively 58.7 and 61.1 percent, in the subsequent generations, the percentage is reduced only by a few decimal points, respectively to 52.9 percent for the third and 52.7 percent for the fourth. These are values that remain very high for individuals who were born and raised far from their countries of origin and are aware of it only indirectly, through family stories and sharing on social media (Table 3.22).

Table 3.22 The desire to live in the region of origin by generation (percentage values)

<i>Desire to live in the region of origin</i>	Generation				
	<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third</i>	<i>Fourth</i>	<i>Other/ I don't know</i>
<i>None</i>	4.9	4.8	7.0	4.5	13.0
<i>Moderate</i>	3.1	3.4	4.1	4.5	4.3
<i>Sufficient</i>	11.7	11.1	11.6	12.7	8.7
<i>High</i>	21.6	19.6	24.4	25.7	19.6
<i>Very high</i>	58.7	61.1	52.9	52.7	54.4
<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

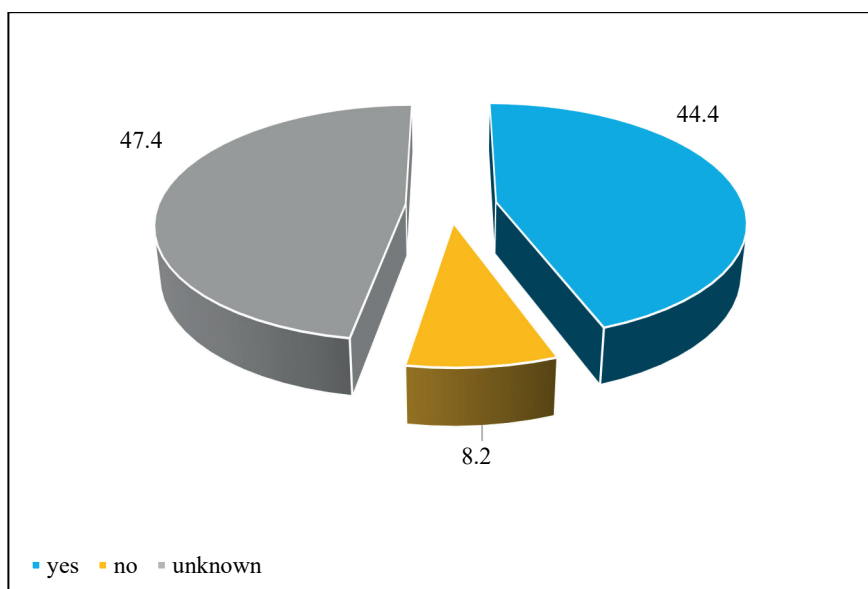
Source: direct survey

Those who had never been to Italy and those who have been to Italy within the last 10 years, thereafter, were asked if they still had family in their regions of origin. The presence of family members in one's homeland of origin was a relevant factor to whether the individual had or had not visited. In Figure 3.10, it can be observed that those who have not been to Italy or who have not returned claim to not have family

members in 8.2 percent of cases, and in 47.4 percent do not know. Overall, 52.6 percent does not have family in the region of origin or does not know whether or not they do.

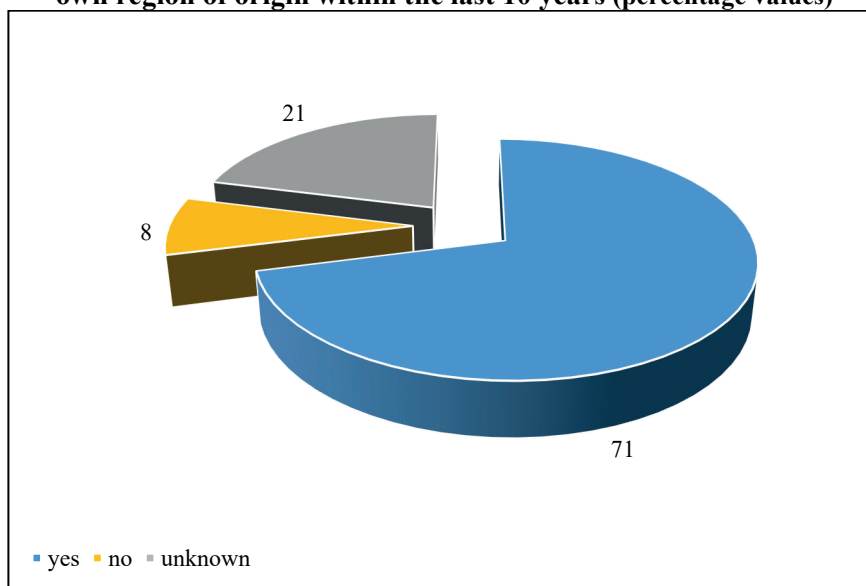
Among those who have been to their homeland of origin within the last 10 years, the percentage of those who do not have family in the region is practically the same (8 percent), while those who do not know represent only 21 percent, and those who have relatives in the region are the majority (71 percent) (Figure 3.11). It would appear that still having family members in the region of one's roots is a strong stimuli to visit on a vacation. However, it should be emphasized that in this case the comparisons should take into account that those who have been to Italy have been able to verify the presence of relatives or to find those whom they did not know that they had. This explains why those who have been on vacation in their homeland of origin are less uncertain of the existence of family members (only 21 percent state that they had any) compared to those who have never been (in this case, the percentage, which is double, reaches 47.3 percent).

Figure 3.10 The presence of family members for those who have never been in their own region of origin (percentage values)



Source: direct survey

Figure 3.11 The presence of family members for those who have been in one's own region of origin within the last 10 years (percentage values)



Source: direct survey

Among those who have never been or who have never returned, even the contact with the homeland is infrequent. In fact, only a third continue to maintain contact, specifically, in 83.9 percent of cases with one's own family (Table 3.23 and 3.24)

Table 3.23 Maintaining contacts in one's own region of origin for those who have not ever been there

	%
<i>Yes</i>	33.2
<i>No</i>	66.8
<i>Total</i>	100.0

Source: direct survey

Table 3.24 Individuals with whom those who have never been there maintain contact in their own region of origin (percentage values)

<i>Contacts</i>	Yes	No	Total
<i>Relatives</i>	83.9	16.1	100.0
<i>Friends</i>	22.4	77.6	100.0
<i>Acquaintance</i>	14.6	85.4	100.0
<i>Work contacts</i>	3.5	96.5	100.0

Source: direct survey

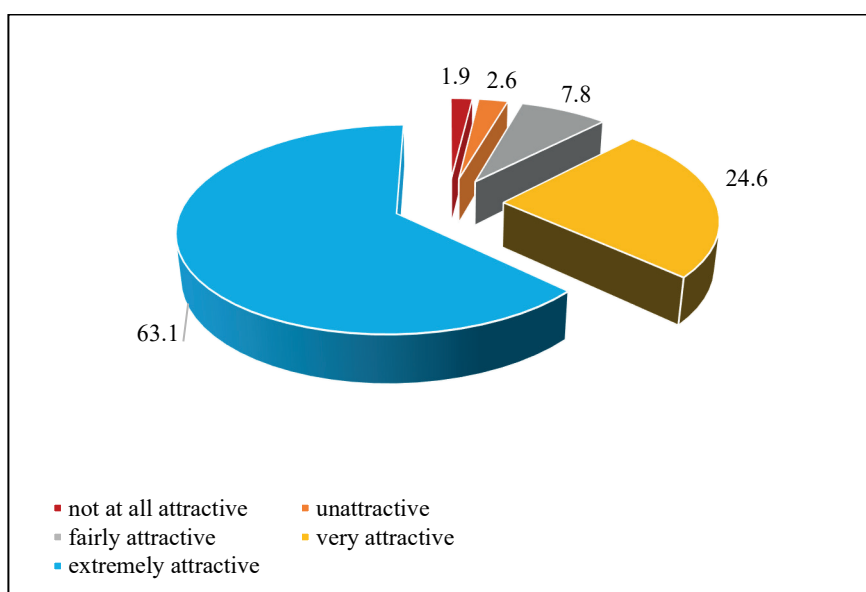
3.3.4 The image of the homeland and the measures for maintaining ties with the emigrants and their descendants

The fourth research question concerns the impression perceived by Argentine compatriots of their Italian regions as tourist destinations, as well as the awareness, among the respondents, of the possible activities implemented in the areas of origin in order to maintain ties with Italian emigrants and their descendants in Argentina (means of communication, events and other initiatives).

According to 87.7 percent of respondents, the Argentines consider their regions of origin very or extremely appealing (Figure 3.12).

In Table 3.25 the average values illustrated are attributed to the various Italian regions of origin in terms of tourist appeal as perceived in Argentina; these show very high values, in certain cases higher than 9, as in the cases of Marche, Sardinia, Tuscany, Lazio and Sicily.

Figure 3.12 Tourist appeal of the Italian regions of origin for the compatriots in Argentina (percentage values)



Source: direct survey

In regards to being informed on the methods of contact with those who have emigrated abroad carried out in their own regions of origin, 40 percent of the respondents state that they are not informed about the use of the channels of communication proposed in the questionnaire (Table 3.26). In particular, the analysis of data shows that those who know less about this issue are the respondents of origin from Liguria (55.4 percent) and those of origin from Lombardy (almost 50

percent), while the most informed are the respondents originating from Trentino Alto Adige (Table 3.27).

The first generation of emigrants appear to be those who best know the methods of communication used to interact with the Italians in Argentine (Figure 3.13). Moreover, those who have been on vacation in their regions of origin are clearly more knowledgeable compared to those who have never taken a trip of this nature (Table 3.28).

Table 3.25 Tourist appeal⁴⁸ of the various Italian regions of origin for the compatriots in Argentina

<i>Italian region of origin</i>	<i>Average score</i>
<i>Abruzzo</i>	8.0
<i>Basilicata</i>	7.0
<i>Calabria</i>	8.6
<i>Campania</i>	8.8
<i>Emilia Romagna</i>	8.6
<i>Friuli Venezia Giulia</i>	8.8
<i>Lazio</i>	9.3
<i>Liguria</i>	8.4
<i>Lombardy</i>	8.6
<i>Marche</i>	9.7
<i>Molise</i>	7.9
<i>Piedmont</i>	8.9
<i>Puglia</i>	8.5
<i>Sardinia</i>	9.6
<i>Sicily</i>	9.2
<i>Tuscany</i>	9.4
<i>Trentino Alto Adige</i>	9.0
<i>Umbria</i>	--
<i>Valle d'Aosta</i> ⁴⁹	--
<i>Veneto</i>	9.3

Source: direct survey

⁴⁸ Scale 1-10.

⁴⁹ Figures for Umbria and Valle d'Aosta are not provided due to the small sample size.

Table 3.26 Knowledge of possible initiatives of the region of origin for creating and maintaining contacts with the emigrants abroad (percentage values)

<i>Method</i>	Yes	No	Total
<i>By direct contacts</i>	14.6	85.4	100.0
<i>Through associations abroad</i>	30.9	69.1	100.0
<i>By the organization of specific events</i>	8.1	91.9	100.0
<i>Bestowing recognition on the emigrants who visit Italy</i>	4.2	95.8	100.0
<i>With specific publications</i>	5.9	94.1	100.0
<i>By the website of the municipality or other website</i>	9.6	90.4	100.0
<i>By social media</i>	23.0	77.0	100.0
<i>None</i>	9.6	90.4	100.0
<i>Does not know. is not informed</i>	40.2	59.8	100.0

Source: direct survey

Table 3.27 Lack of knowledge of initiatives to create or maintain contacts with the emigrants abroad, by region of origin (percentage values)

<i>Italian region of origin</i>	Does not know/lack of information
<i>Basilicata</i>	45.2
<i>Calabria</i>	41.1
<i>Campania</i>	41.0
<i>Emilia Romagna</i>	37.0
<i>Friuli Venezia Giulia</i>	30.3
<i>Lazio</i>	25.0
<i>Liguria</i>	55.4
<i>Lombardy</i>	49.6
<i>Marche</i>	39.6
<i>Molise</i>	29.3
<i>Piedmont</i>	45.7
<i>Puglia</i>	40.8
<i>Sardinia</i>	44.4
<i>Sicily</i>	45.0
<i>Tuscany</i>	34.5
<i>Trentino Alto Adige</i>	8.7
<i>Umbria</i>	--
<i>Valle d'Aosta</i> ⁵⁰	--
<i>Veneto</i>	36.7

Source: direct survey

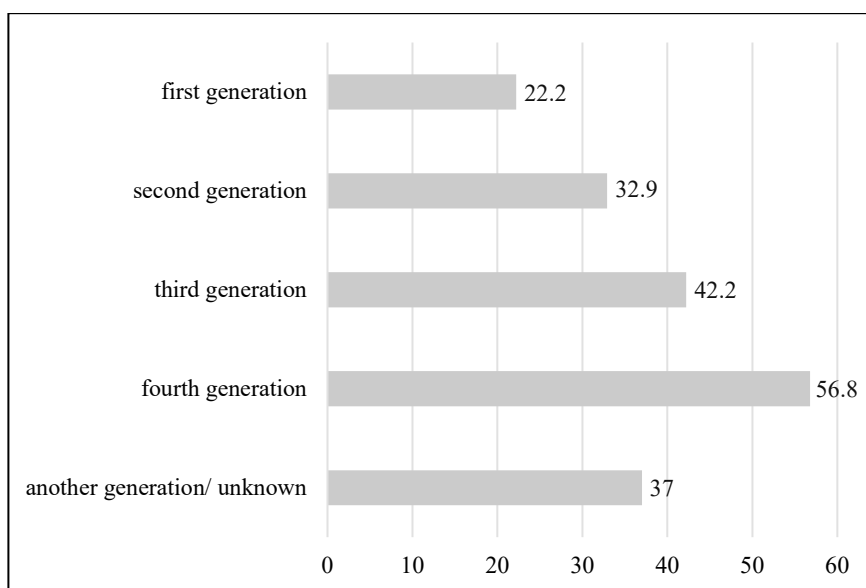
⁵⁰ Figures for Umbria and Valle d'Aosta are not provided due to the small sample size.

Table 3.28 Lack of knowledge of initiatives for creating and maintaining contacts with emigrants for those who have or have not engaged in roots travel (percentage values)

<i>Never been or never returned to the region of origin?</i>	Does not know/lack of information
<i>Yes</i>	30.9
<i>No</i>	49.7
<i>Total respondents</i>	40.2

Source: direct survey

Figure 3.13 Lack of knowledge of the initiatives to create and maintain contacts with emigrants, by generation (percentage values)



Source: direct survey

It is noted in Table 3.26 that the methods mostly indicated are by the associations of emigrants abroad and social media. Given that the Italian associations abroad often have a geographical connotation that refers to a specific region of Italy, this data was analyzed referring to the regions of origin of the respondents. The same was done for social media, the official channels of a public entity intended as social media, such as the Region or the municipal administrations that are within the regional territory, but also the social media pages of private entities that are aimed towards this target group. Table 3.29 shows how the contact with the Italian associations

abroad are very relevant for those who emigrated from Trentino Alto Adige (60.8 percent of those suggest this tool) and from Tuscany (for 48.3 percent). The answers on the communication through social media vary little among the various regions of origin, even if an increased incidence for the original respondents of Molise can be seen (36.2 percent specified this tool).

Table 3.29 Knowledge of the contacts with the emigrants by Italian associations abroad and through social media, by region of origin (percentage values)

<i>Regions</i>	Contacts	
	<i>By Italian associations abroad</i>	<i>Through social media</i>
<i>Abruzzo</i>	33.3	25.6
<i>Basilicata</i>	30.1	20.5
<i>Calabria</i>	26.5	22.6
<i>Campania</i>	27.4	23.9
<i>Emilia Romagna</i>	34.2	30.1
<i>Friuli Venezia Giulia</i>	48.7	21.8
<i>Lazio</i>	28.1	28.1
<i>Liguria</i>	21.5	26.2
<i>Lombardy</i>	21.6	16.0
<i>Marche</i>	32.1	19.4
<i>Molise</i>	34.5	36.2
<i>Piedmont</i>	32.4	19.7
<i>Puglia</i>	40.8	28.6
<i>Sardinia</i>	38.9	22.2
<i>Sicily</i>	25.6	22.3
<i>Tuscany</i>	48.3	22.4
<i>Trentino Alto Adige</i>	60.9	30.4
<i>Umbria</i>	--	--
<i>Valle d'Aosta</i> ⁵¹	--	--
<i>Veneto</i>	38.3	13.3

Source: direct survey

The Italian associations abroad play a very important role as they serve as a connecting bridge with the communities abroad. Hence, it is necessary for the territories of origin to strengthen the relationships and the collaboration with such organizations. Even social media represents a tool to be taken full advantage of, especially for the involvement of the new generations who use these digital channels

⁵¹ Figures for Umbria and Valle d'Aosta are not provided due to the small sample size.

much more, and for fostering the interactive exchange of useful information and experience that is capable of becoming viral.

The study highlights how much is still needed to invest in other methods of communication in order to create and reinforce ties and to engage with this important tourism segment, in particular in events of a certain factor of attraction. However, in the open question written on the events dedicated to the Italian emigrants in the region or in the municipality of origin, signs of interest have not been disclosed. Additional ways to take Italians abroad into consideration are the awards, such as an award ceremony or simply a meeting with the mayor of the municipality of origin, to which the roots tourists particularly care about. Even this tool appears to have been neglected. The respondents' comments do not imply that the Italian regions do not accomplish this and other initiatives dedicated to roots tourists, but that the Italian emigrants and their descendants do not know enough about them and that, therefore, there could be a gap in communication that reduces their effectiveness.

In reference to specific services offered by the areas of origin (regions or municipalities) to the roots tourists, there are not many who have responded, which is a sign that the offer of such services is still rather limited. The tourist services (information, reservations and discounts in hotels) are mainly indicated in the open responses, but also study trips and scholarships in some regions (for example, Tuscany), trips for seniors and in groups (such as in Lazio and Abruzzo), exchange programs among youth of Italian descent (in Trentino), and support to obtain citizenship.

The respondents were asked to provide potential information to attract a larger number of roots tourists. Almost everyone replied to this open question giving valuable information. It seems an expression of the willingness of these individuals to give their own contribution and desire to 'have a voice', as they have often expressed. The most common response is relating to the promotion. The respondents ask, in fact, to carry out a stronger and more focused marketing communication, creating direct relationships with the roots tourists, even through email marketing, especially using social media and better publicizing the areas and their appeal. The suggestion was to organize specific tours (that include well-known destinations) and some individuals asked to offer accommodations within families, that would be more inexpensive and even more interesting for these visitors, who desire to savor authentic atmospheres. In addition, many have suggested to create specific deals for this sector, with discounts, in particular in airfares and hotels, and payment deferrals. During this time of pandemic, the necessity for financial assistance (even through purposeful regional funding) is deeply felt. Finally, it was proposed to offer scholarships and exchange programs for youth, in addition to the support for a faster acquisition of Italian citizenship.

3.4 Conclusions

The qualitative research conducted in Italy and Argentina display similar and coherent results. Clearly, the interviews that were conducted in South America visibly show specific aspects of local culture, preferences and lifestyles. An example of this is the notable interest in obtaining Italian citizenship, which is one of the main motivations that propel descendants of Argentine origin in our country to undertake genealogical research, and often, to visit their family's place of departure. It is similarly noted that in Argentina there is interest for a form of roots tourism that can be defined as 'recall tourism', that is, incoming tourism flows that arise following nostalgic travels in Italy. The strengths and weaknesses in our country as a roots tourist destination results exactly the same in both surveys. The first are connected above all to the welcoming capacity and the warmth of the population, the second to essential tourism services and infrastructure (information, transport, etc.).

The results of the statistical survey that was conducted in Argentina are coherent with the results of the qualitative surveys conducted there and in Italy. In fact, the results confirm the strength of the relationship that bonds the emigrants with their descendants, spanning all generations to the country of origin, even though that connection tends to become weaker with time and the subsequent generations. The emigrants are those who largely maintain relationships with friends and relatives in the homeland, while the descendants of the following generations are most interested in genealogical research in order to know their family history, but also to obtain Italian citizenship.

Roots tourism draws everyone due to the great love for Italy and its lifestyle, but only around half of the respondents have made this trip and they are, above all, part of the first and second generations. Those who have not travelled were unable to do it primarily because of financial problems. Discounts and promotions are among the main suggestions proposed for developing roots tourism; these are aimed for this target group as well as specific contributions. However, in order to attract new generations, there should also be a focus on scholarships and projects for studying the Italian language and culture, in collaboration with educational institutions and universities.

The bond with the homeland of origin would be reinforced after this travel experience. Furthermore, the level of satisfaction of the roots tourists would encourage them to return, as well as to create positive word of mouth, which is very effective in the promotion of the territory and its products abroad. The trip is primarily designated to visit the places of origin, which can be experienced with family and individually organized; the stay is primarily in the summer, is rather long and the preference is to stay in a hotel or the home of friends or relatives.

Even those who have never engaged in roots travel are connected to Italy, and almost half of the respondents would live here, including the recent generations. The image of the places of origin are very attractive as tourist destinations; this result partially contrasts with the results of the qualitative survey conducted in Italy, in which

Calabria has shown not to be well known abroad as a holiday destination and in which there is limited tourism information.

A difference between the qualitative survey conducted in Italy and the quantitative survey conducted in Argentina concerns online communication. The subjects interviewed highlighted difficulties finding information on the digital channels regarding one's homeland or that of one's ancestors in the phase preceding the trip; in contrast, those who responded to the questionnaire specified social media as one of the most commonly used informative tools for remaining in contact with emigrants and their descendants. The modest contribution of the websites and portals merges the results of the two research activities, while they should represent a stable structure of contents in the places of origin. These results are partly confirmed by the web research that is presented in Chapter 5.

With regards to the phase prior to the trip and the formation of expectations, in view of the results, it is clear that further hard work must be done regarding the genealogical research. In fact, this could serve as a stimulus for the reconstruction of family history and to subsequently take the trip. Furthermore, as it will sequentially be seen⁵², some countries like Ireland and Scotland have made *genealogical tourism* a national tourism policy of great success, and this has drawn roots tourism. The use of these two nations as an example, is noteworthy that one of the neglected aspects in Italy, as confirmed by the quantitative survey, regards the offer of events; that is not referring to organized events from individual municipalities⁵³, but to large and important events with a national or regional basin of reference.

It is clear that there is still much to be done regarding the communication, as well as the creation and reinforcement of relationships that are not casual but long-lasting with the emigrants abroad and their descendants. However, the increasing awareness of tourist operators and public administrators on the importance of this market segment suggests that the investments in this area will see growth in the future.

⁵² Please see Chapter 5.

⁵³ This subject is addressed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Roots tourism in the south of Italy: the role of the municipalities⁵⁴

SUMMARY: 4.1. Main focus and methodology of the survey. 4.2. The survey of the municipalities in Calabria. 4.3. The survey of the municipalities in Puglia. 4.4. Comparisons and conclusions. 4.5. Some case studies in Sicily, Calabria, Puglia and Tuscany.

4.1 Main focus and methodology of the survey

In this chapter the main results of a quantitative survey that was conducted by all the municipalities in the regions of Calabria and Puglia are presented. The goal is to more thoroughly understand the behaviors and levels of awareness of the local administrators in reference to the phenomenon of roots tourism. The survey is exploratory and preliminary in nature. It represents the basis for future research and aims to observe the municipal representatives' perceptions and knowledge with reference to roots tourism and to its potential for the development of the territories. The questionnaire's responses are based on the opinion of the public administrators and are not, therefore, objective information and data, but, on the contrary, they are subjective viewpoints. However, they provide useful information for reaching the survey's objective.

It has already been stated how it is crucial that Italy aims for, like other nations, roots tourism, by adopting adequate strategies and programs. Together with the national government, even the local government should plan political tools to aspire to promote the increase in roots tourism in addition to implementing educational, exchanges and hospitality programs for the members of the community who have

⁵⁴ While having shared the objective, methodology and results of this part of the research, coordinated by the Università della Calabria, the authors of the paragraph 4.2 are Sonia Ferrari and Tiziana Nicotera (both Università della Calabria); Nicolaia Iaffaldano and Vito Roberto Santamato are authors of the paragraph 4.3 (both Università di Bari). The paragraphs 4.1 and 4.4 are the results of the work of all the authors.

emigrated and their descendants (Ferrari and Nicotera, 2020). There are numerous initiatives that the town administrations can undertake in order to nurture the form of tourism in consideration and to expand the level of satisfaction of the ancestral tourists. It is therefore advantageous to know the situation in some of the territories, in order to determine if the phenomenon has been understood in all its potentiality, how much attention the local administrations dedicate to it, what efforts are made so that the flow of roots tourists increases and if the tourist segment in consideration is regarded a primary target or not. For this reason the decision was made to dedicate a survey for the municipalities of the two regions that have been greatly interested in the past and present migratory phenomena.

The voluntary census survey was based on the compilation of a questionnaire addressed to the municipal administrators. The questionnaire was sent to all the Calabrian and Apulian municipalities. The sampling unit, that is those who completed it, were the mayors themselves or their delegates (in general, the tourism assessors)⁵⁵. The preparation of the questionnaire was along the lines of a previous qualitative survey implemented by means of in-depth interviews to various categories of stakeholders, among these were various local administrators; this survey identified the main themes and questions of the research.

The questionnaire is organized into 26 questions, all multiple choice, except for 3 open-ended questions, that are dedicated to the description of targeted services and events organized by the municipality for roots tourists and the gathering of suggestions for the development of this type of tourism. The subjects addressed are many. A first selection is dedicated to the towns, seen as tourist destinations. The administrators are asked for an assessment of the local tourism vocation, which are the main tourist resources, if these attract roots tourists and to what measure. Thereafter, we focus on the roots tourists, asking the mayors about the purchasing and consumer behavior of these visitors (where they come from, in what time of the year do they travel, where do they stay, if they repeat the visit and with what frequency, how long do they stay, if they have relatives and friends in the area, if they want to buy a home, to what generation of emigrants do they belong and so forth). We then ask about the roots tourists' main motivations and what types of activities they engage in during their vacation. We try to also understand how these visitors interact with the local community, what are their levels of satisfaction with reference to the travel experience and if they express any desire to promote the region as a tourist destination once they return home. In another section, the objective is to know what are the municipality's offered services to the tourists in consideration, while trying to understand how the municipalities remain in contact with the compatriots who have emigrated abroad, if they organize events for them and if they are offered specific services. By dealing with the aspects of roots tourism as a tool

⁵⁵ Possible sources of non-sampling error are due to the self-selection on the part of the respondents; it is not possible to evaluate in what measure the subjects who have responded are representative overall, even those who have not completed the questionnaire.

for nurturing the development on a local level, we examine the assessments that the mayors completed from their points of view and on the most significant facets (the promotion of local products, interest in making investments, etc.) to then conclude by asking how the increase of the flow of tourism of origins could be fostered.

The municipalities have been subdivided into five *dimensional classes* on the base of the resident population (Emanuele, 2011) :

- Class A: ‘very small municipalities’ (population not exceeding 5,000 residents)
- Class B ‘small towns’ (from 5,001 to 15,000 residents)
- Class C: ‘municipalities in a metropolitan area’ (from 15,001 to 50,000 residents)
- Class D: ‘medium-sized urban centers’ (from 50,001 to 100,000 residents)
- Class E: ‘big cities’ (more than 100,000 residents).

We also kept in mind another variable, other than the size of the municipalities, that is their *physical marginality*, an evaluation on the basis of the distance from the main airports and the provincial capital municipalities.

This research has been conducted since 2019 in Calabria by the Università della Calabria. In the first phase of the research, the Osservatorio sul Turismo della Regione Calabria and ANCI Calabria collaborated. The response rate was equal to 47.3 percent, a percentage rather high considering the elevated number of Calabrian municipalities that are placed under receivership. Such a percentage is sufficient for the sample survey to be considered significant. 191 municipal administrations⁵⁶ of a

⁵⁶The following Calabrian municipalities completed the questionnaire: Acquaformosa (CS), Acquappesa (CS), Acri (CS), Alessandria del Carretto (CS), Altomonte (CS), Amantea (CS), Amaroni (CZ), Andali (CZ), Antonimina (RC), Aprigliano (CS); Badolato (CZ), Bagnara Calabria (RC), Belmonte Calabro (CS), Belsito (CS), Belvedere Marittimo (CS), Bianchi (CS), Bisignano (CS), Bocchigliero (CS), Bonifati (CS), Bova Marina (RC), Bova (RC), Calopezzati (CS), Caloveto (CS), Campana (CS), Careri (RC), Carfizzi (KR), Cariati (CS), Carlopoli (CZ), Carolei (CS); Carpanzano (CS), Casabona (KR), Casali del Manco (CS), Cassano allo Ionio (CS), Castiglione Cosentino (CS), Castrolibero (CS), Castrovillari (CS), Catanzaro, Caulonia (RC), Celico (CS), Cellara (CS), Cerenzia (KR), Cerisano (CS), Cerva (CZ), Cetraro (CS), Chiaravalle Centrale (CZ), Cinquefrondi (RC), Cittanova (RC), Civita (CS), Colosimi (CS), Corigliano-Rossano (CS), Cosenza, Cotronei (KR), Crosia (CS), Crotone, Curinga (CZ), Dasà (VV), Diamante (CS), Dipignano (CS), Domanico (CS), Fabrizia (VV), Fagnano Castello (CS), Falconara Albanese (CS), Falerna (CZ), Feroletto della Chiesa (RC), Filadelfia (VV), Filogaso (VV), Fiumara (RC), Fiumefreddo Bruzio (CS), Francavilla Angitola (VV), Francica (VV), Frascineto (CS), Fuscaldo (CS), Gasperina (CZ), Gerocarne (VV), Gimigliano (CZ), Gioia Tauro (RC), Gioiosa Ionica (RC), Grimaldi (CS), Grisolia (CS), Guardavalle (CZ), Guardia Piemontese (CS), Isola di Capo Rizzuto (KR), Jacurso (CZ), Lago (CS), Lappano (CS), Lattarico (CS), Laureana di Borrello (RC), Longobucco (CS), Lungro (CS), Magisano (CZ), Malito (CS), Mangone (CS), Marano

total of 404 responded. This represents a 67 percent of the resident population in the region (data ISTAT 2019).

In Puglia, the research was conducted in 2021 by the Università di Bari with the support of ANCI Puglia, the municipality leading the research product on roots tourism, Rutigiano, and the IV Commissione Consiliare della Regione Puglia (Council Commission of the Region of Puglia). The response rate was equal to 52 percent, the sample size being acceptable enough for this to be significant. 134 city administrations⁵⁷ out of a total of 257 responded. This represents a 72 percent of the resident population in the region (data ISTAT 2019).

Marchesato (CS), Marano Principato (CS), Marcellinara (CZ), Marzi (CS), Melicuccà (RC), Melissa (KR), Mendicino (CS), Mesoraca (KR), Miglierina (CZ), Mileto (VV), Mongiana (VV), Montalto Uffugo (CS), Montauro (CZ), Montegiordano (CS), Montepaone (CZ), Morano Calabro (CS), Mormanno (CS), Mottafollone (CS), Nocera Terinese (CZ), Oriolo (CS), Orsomarso (CS), Palmi (RC), Paludi (CS), Panettieri (CS), Paola (CS), Paterno Calabro (CS), Pentone (CZ), Petilia Policastro (KR), Petrizzi (CZ), Piane Crati (CS), Pianopoli (CZ), Pietrapaola (CS), Pizzo (VV), Platania (CZ), Praia a Mare (CS), Reggio Calabria, Rende (CS), Ricadi (VV), Rocca Imperiale (CS), Roccaforte del Greco (RC), Roccella Jonica (RC), Rogliano (CS), Rombiolo (VV), Rose (CS), Roseto Capo Spulico (CS), Rota Greca (CS), Rovito (CS), San Benedetto Ullano (CS), San Calogero (VV), San Demetrio Corone (CS), San Fili (CS), San Giorgio Morgeto (RC), San Giovanni in Fiore (CS), San Lucido (CS), San Marco Argentano (CS), San Nicola Arcella (CS), San Pietro in Amantea (CS), San Pietro a Maida (CZ), San Pietro in Guarano (CS), San Sostene (CZ), San Vincenzo la Costa (CS), Sangineto (CS), Sant'Agata del Bianco (RC), Sant'Agata d'Esaro (CS), Sant'Eufemia d'Aspromonte (RC), Sant'Onofrio (VV), Santa Caterina dello Ionio (CZ), Santa Maria del Cedro (CS), Santa Severina (KR), Santa Sofia d'Epiro (CS), Santo Stefano di Rogliano (CS), Santo Stefano in Aspromonte (RC), Saracena (CS), Scalea (CS), Scandale (KR), Scido (RC), Scigliano (CS), Sellia Marina (CZ), Serra San Bruno (VV), Sersale (CZ), Settingiano (CZ), Soveria Mannelli (CZ), Spezzano della Sila (CS), Squillace (CZ), Stignano (RC), Tarsia (CS), Taverna (CZ), Terranova da Sibari (CS), Terravecchia (CS), Tiriolo (CZ), Torano Castello (CS), Trebisacce (CS), Tropea (VV), Umbriatico (KR), Verbicaro (CS), Vibo Valentia, Zagarise (CZ), Zambrone (VV) and Zupanò (CS).

⁵⁷The following Apulian municipalities completed the questionnaire: Accadia (FG), Acquaviva delle Fonti (BA), Alberobello (BA), Alberona (FG), Alessano (LE), Alezio (LE), Alliste (LE), Altamura (BA), Andria, Anzano di Puglia (FG), Apricena (FG), Aradeo (LE), Bagnolo del Salento (LE), Bari, Barletta, Biccari (FG), Binetto (BA), Bisceglie (BT), Bitetto (BA), Bitonto (BA), Bovino (FG), Brindisi, Candela (FG), Cannole (FG), Capurso (BA), Carapelle (FG), Carlantino (FG), Carpino (FG), Casalnuovo Monterotaro (FG), Casalvecchio di Puglia (FG), Casamassima (BA), Cassano delle Murge (BA), Castellana Grotte (BA), Castelluccio dei Sauri (FG), Castelluccio Valmaggiore (FG), Castelnuovo della Daunia (FG), Castrignano de' Greci (LE), Castro (LE), Cavallino (LE), Ceglie Messapica (BR), Cellamare (BA), Celle di San Vito (FG), Cerignola (FG), Chieuti (FG), Cisternino (FG), Conversano (BA), Copertino (LE), Corato (BA), Corigliano d'Otranto (LE), Crispiano (TA), Cutrofiano (LE), Deliceto (FG), Faeto (FG), Faggiano (TA), Fasano (BR), Foggia, Francavilla Fontana (BR), Gagliano del Capo (LE), Galatina (LE), Galatone (LE), Gallipoli (LE), Gioia del Colle (BA), Grottaglie (TA), Ischitella (FG), Isole Tremiti (FG), Laterza

The processing of the research results was conducted with the statistics software SPSS and R. Four main themes were identified in the content analysis of the results:

1. *administrators' awareness concerning the flow of roots tourism in their own municipalities;*
2. *administrators' awareness on the potentiality and the effects of roots tourism in their own municipalities;*
3. *provision of services for maintaining contacts and for satisfying the needs of roots tourists within their own municipalities;*
4. *knowledge on the preferences and the behaviors of this category of tourists.*

The main results of the research are reported below.

4.2 The survey of the municipalities in Calabria

The large part of municipalities that responded are small and therefore reflect the dimensional structure of the Calabrian municipalities⁵⁸. 73 percent of the sample consist of 'very small municipalities', while 19 percent is represented by 'small towns', the 6 percent of 'municipalities in an urban area' and 2 percent of 'medium sized urban centers'. Only the metropolitan city of Reggio Calabria, with 174,885 residents, belongs to the class of 'big cities'. Consequently, in the analysis relating to Calabria, the last class will not be considered and will be incorporated with the previous one.

The first theme examined is the *administrators' awareness concerning the flow of roots tourism in their own municipalities*. With the desire to know the tourist positioning of the municipality as perceived by the mayors, they are first asked to

(TA), Lecce, Locorotondo (BA), Lucera (FG), Margherita di Savoia (BT), Martina Franca (TA), Mattinata (FG), Melendugno (LE), Mesagne (BR), Minervino Murge (BT), Modugno (BA), Mola di Bari (BA), Molfetta (BA), Monopoli (BA), Monte Sant'Angelo (FG), Monteleone di Puglia (FG), Montemesola (TA), Morciano di Leuca (LE), Motta Montecorvino (FG), Mottola (TA), Nardò (LE), Neviano (LE), Noci (BA), Noicattaro (BA), Oria (BR), Orsara di Puglia (FG), Ostuni (BR), Otranto (LE), Palo del Colle (BA), Pietramontecorvino (FG), Poggiardo (LE), Poggio Imperiale (FG), Polignano a Mare (BA), Porto Cesareo (LE), Presicce-Acquarica (LE), Putignano (BA), Racale (LE), Rignano Garganico (FG), Rodi Garganico (FG), Roseto Valfortore (FG), Rutigliano (BA), Ruvo di Puglia (BA), Salve (LE), San Giovanni Rotondo (FG), San Marco in Lamis (FG), San Marco La Catola (FG), San Michele Salentino (BR), San Severo (FG), San Vito dei Normanni (BR), Sava (TA), Soletto (LE), Spinazzola (BT), Stornara (FG), Stornarella (FG), Surbo (LE), Taranto, Taviano (LE), Trani, Tricase (LE), Trinitapoli (BT), Troia (FG), Tuglie (LE), Turi (BA), Ugento (LE), Veglie (LE), Vico del Gargano (FG), Vieste (FG), Volturara Appula (FG), Volturino (FG).

⁵⁸ In the region almost 90 percent of Municipalities has less than 5,000 inhabitants (Source: tuttitalia.it).

express an opinion on the extent to which their town had a tourist vocation. The mayors' or delegates' responses display an elevated average score, equal to 8.2 percent out of 10, especially in larger municipalities (where it scored at 9.4). They were then asked to indicate the main tourist resources in their territories. The results are as follows: events (34.4 percent), history (33.9 percent), food and wine (31.7 percent), sea (29.5 percent), parks/nature (25.1 percent), archeology (19.7 percent), religion (13.7 percent) and other (4.9 percent). 66.1 percent of respondents consider that one of the two main appealing factors is tied to 'tradition' (food and wine, events, religion). 51.9 percent of the respondents consider that between the two main appealing factors in one's own municipality are: the natural resources (sea or parks) and almost half (49.2 percent) indicate an element that is connected to the history of an area (history or archeology). The weight of 'tradition' and 'nature' is greater (almost 30 percent) in the municipalities that estimated to have the majority of roots tourists among their own visitors.

Thereafter, they were asked to estimate, on the basis of opinions and personal knowledge, what total percentage of the tourism flow represented roots tourists in their own towns. For all of the respondents, it is an important form of tourism. It can be noted that, according to the mayors, in almost one third of smaller municipalities, roots tourism represents more than 50 percent of tourist arrivals. Instead, in centres of greater dimensions, the form of tourism studied is considered less relevant (see Table 4.1). The representatives of the municipalities that are less geographically isolated estimate a greater roots tourist presence. Indeed, the 54.9 percent of mayors of municipalities with low physical marginality and 58.1 percent of those with mid physical marginality indicate a percentage of roots tourists higher than 30 percent of the total. The annual flow of roots tourists in particular is estimated between 100 and 500 units by 35 percent of respondents; the segment 100-500 units is specified by the majority of the respondents (for example, only for 13.7 percent of mayors, the roots tourists did not exceed 50 units a year).

Table 4.1 Estimate of roots tourists' percentage of total arrivals in the municipality

% roots tourists	Demographic size of municipalities				
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>0-5%</i>	19.2	13.9	20.0	20.00	18.2
<i>6-30%</i>	21.5	41.7	20.0	80.00	27.1
<i>31-50%</i>	27.7	25.0	30.0	0.00	26.5
<i>More than 50%</i>	31.5	19.4	30.0	0.00	28.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: direct survey

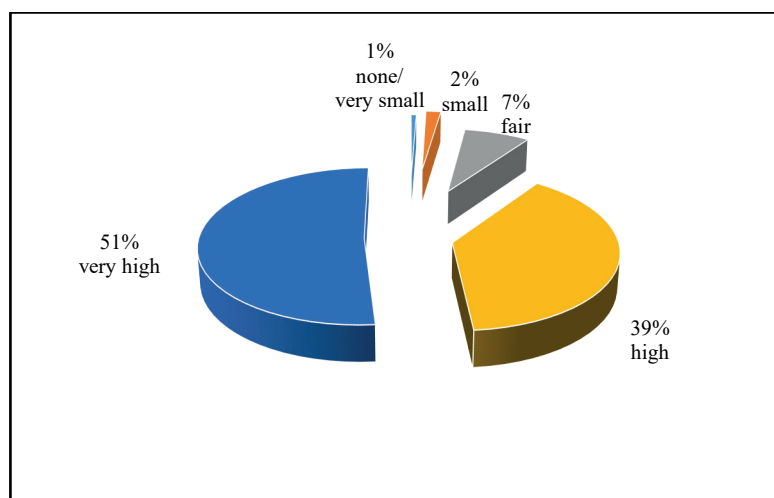
Regarding the attractiveness of the municipalities in reference to roots tourism, a very high percentage of respondents (85.4 percent) consider it very relevant (good for 45.3 percent of respondents and optimal for 40.1 percent). The perception of being an attractive destination for ancestral tourists grows if the municipality is in a seaside location; this is not surprising because in Calabria the main tourist destinations are seaside. With reference to the dimensional classes, the mayors of medium sized municipalities consider their territory to be excellent in terms of appeal (it is considered excellent by 50 percent of the total of mayors of municipalities of classes B and C).

Concerning the second theme, the *administrators' awareness on the potentiality and the effects of roots tourism in their own municipalities*, among the positive effects of the phenomenon in consideration it is noted that the 'word of mouth' should not be disregarded as these visitors engage in it once having returned to their country of residence. This is very significant and can have a favorable influence on the image and reputation of the place of origin of the roots tourist. A very relevant percentage of administrators (95.4 percent) consider that the roots tourists use word of mouth positively, promoting Calabria as a tourist destination on a high (30.3 percent of respondents claims this) or very high scale (65.1 percent). Such a result does not change with the size of the municipality nor with its physical marginality level. These responses illustrate the mayors' knowledge of the positive effects in terms of promotion that can be generated by those who desire to support their own homeland of origin, even if indirectly. Let us not forget that word of mouth is one of the most effective tools of communication for the promotion of tourist destinations and the image's adjustment or reinforcement.

With regard to the impact of roots tourism on the local socio-economic fabric, the next question focuses on the importance that the administrators attribute to these tourism flows as a driving force of the area's development. The majority think that this could be favorable (39.1 percent) or greatly favorable (51.7 percent) for the area's development (see Figure 4.1). Even in this case, in the administrators' opinions neither the physical marginality nor the size of the municipality make a difference.

These last results show how the phenomenon in consideration has not been completely undervalued by the local Calabrian administrators; in fact, they seem to be quite conscious of the potential of these tourism flows in terms of the material and non-material impact. Instead, this data is interesting and encouraging, considering that a few months prior the theme was largely neglected by the public opinion, the local mass media and the political debates, and that the supply of initiatives and services aimed at this target group are still limited.

Figure 4.1 Importance of roots tourism as a development factor for the municipality (percentage values)



Source: direct survey

The questionnaire provides for a further level of in-depth analysis of potential development factors linked to roots tourism in the various municipalities surveyed. Such factors have been extrapolated by in-depth interviews that were conducted in the first phase of the qualitative survey to various stakeholders, including some local administrators and the same roots tourists, in regards to interests, preferences and behaviors of the ancestral tourists. The identification of these aspects have a dual objective, in line with the goal of the survey: the first is to observe the level of awareness of local administrators and also to reinforce it by means of the survey, in other words, to sensitize them on the possible positive effects that this form of tourism can generate. The second is to verify if an overlapping exists or rather a disconnection between the roots tourists' perceptions and those of the hosting community, represented by the opinion of the local administrators. Table 4.2 shows the factors that have been presented to the administrators, inviting them to value each one in terms of importance with a numerated scale from 1 (lowest importance) to 10 (highest importance).

This part of the survey indicates a partial inconsistency regarding the answers related to the general observation by the respondents of roots tourism as a significant factor for the municipality's growth. In fact, despite the average score attributed to this form of tourism in its entirety, equal to 8.4 out of 10, only the first three elements were considered moderately appreciated (with an average score higher than 6).

Table 4.2 Main factors of development⁵⁹ for roots tourism within the municipality

<i>Development factors</i>	Demographic size of municipalities				
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Tourists' disposable income</i>	6.1	6.4	6.3	6.8	6.2
<i>Activation of positive word of mouth</i>	6.7	6.8	8.0	8.0	6.8
<i>Promotion of local products</i>	6.3	7.1	7.2	7.6	6.5
<i>Network building among tourists</i>	5.0	6.1	4.7	7.6	5.3
<i>Interest to invest</i>	4.3	4.7	3.5	6.0	4.4
<i>Interest to purchase real estate</i>	4.0	4.2	3.4	5.8	4.0
<i>Arrivals even in off season</i>	4.2	4.5	5.0	8.2	4.4
<i>Longer average stay</i>	5.1	5.3	5.3	7.4	5.2
<i>Proposals of ideas and projects</i>	4.1	4.7	4.5	7.4	4.3
<i>Preservation of old traditions</i>	4.8	5.5	4.9	6.8	5.0

Source: direct survey

Different points of view, however, are recognized in municipalities that are larger, that do not only attribute higher scores to these three items in relation to the smaller municipalities, but consider quite relevant all the factors indicated. Considering the municipalities in particular with more than 50,000 residents, the highest score was given to the opportunities connected to the visits even during the low season, a sign that the larger municipalities probably offer greater recreation and event opportunities even during the low season, opposed to smaller towns, and from a tourist viewpoint these opportunities are available throughout the year.

All the respondents, independent of the dimensional category of the municipality, express a small interest for the item related to the purchase of real estate. This extensively shared opinion contrasts, as seen later, with the responses given to a specific question in the survey on the purchase of residences in the municipality of origin by the roots tourists. One interpretation may be that even though there is an interest in this case by the tourist, the municipality administrators do not consider the possible purchase of real estate by this specific target group of origin as a factor of great relevance for the local area's growth. Another interpretation may derive from the discrepancy between purchase 'interest' intended as a trend, and a property that has already been purchased. Some of these emigrants might already possess their own home and a prospect of a growing market is non-existent for the buying and selling of real estate. Limited interests to make investments and to buy homes

⁵⁹ Scale 1-10.

persist, according to the mayors' opinions, even in centres located near the seaside where one might expect, instead a greater inclination to buy and invest because of the presence of an higher tourist attractiveness. The mayors' opinions do not change even if the variable relating to proximity to airports and provincial capitals is taken into account. In general, physical marginality does not seem to affect the degree of awareness and knowledge of roots tourism. It is reasonable to suppose that the more or less easy accessibility does not influence the visits of tourists to their towns of origin, as the main motivation for the trip is connected to an ancestral bond with respect to which there is no competition for the choice of the destination.

In conclusion, it is recognized that while there is a certain sensitivity on the issue as a whole, the opportunities deriving from this form of tourism expressed by the set of factors listed in the research question are not fully understood; this is also demonstrated by the high rate of non-response for the various factors, oscillating between 20 and 40 percent (precisely the item relating to the interest in buying real estate by roots tourists reaches 40.4 percent of non-response).

The subject of the second theme of research includes an open question on the potential proposals by the administrators for the encouragement of the tourist demand of this specific target. A few interesting suggestions are mentioned, such as: services for genealogical research, events beyond the summer vacation period, training and educational projects for the new generations of emigrants, tours to the geographical areas of one's descendants, specialized tours, cultural exchanges and twinnings with cities abroad, closer contacts and affiliations with the Italian and Calabrian associations abroad, information to the emigrants' families on the social and non social activities of the city of origin, networking among the various municipalities for connecting roots tourists and offering combined travel packages and dedicated web portals. More broadly, they indicate also a greater spread of local traditions and place characteristics, an increase on the knowledge of the phenomenon, the tendency to consider these tourists as an integral part of the community of origin, a higher accommodation capacity and the possibility to have these tourists stay in residences in the historic centers, the improvement of transportation services and the organization of specific events.

In regards to the third theme of the survey, that is, the *provision of services for maintaining contacts and for satisfying the needs of roots tourists*, in this section of the research the desire is to evaluate the attention and the proximity of the municipal administration to those who are originally from the same community and the emigrants abroad. For this purpose, they were asked to indicate with which among the listed modalities in Table 4.3 would they maintain contact. The roots tourists often report a feeling of abandonment by the places where they were born, that could be filled by improving the relationship with them in all phases of the tourist experience, from the pre-journey to the post-journey.

Table 4.3 Main tools adopted by the municipality for establishing contacts with emigrants and their descendants (percentage values)

<i>Modality</i>	Yes	No
<i>Direct contacts</i>	45.4	54.6
<i>Through associations abroad</i>	31.1	68.9
<i>Organization of specific events</i>	20.2	79.8
<i>Acknowledgement of the emigrants during their visit</i>	13.1	86.9
<i>Specific publications</i>	12.6	87.4
<i>Website of the municipality or other website</i>	36.6	63.4
<i>Social media</i>	44.8	55.2
<i>Other</i>	7.1	92.9
<i>Not at all</i>	4.4	95.6

Source: direct survey

Independent of their size, almost all the municipalities (95.6 percent) work to cultivate the relationship in some way with their emigrants and their descendants. Social media and direct contacts are the tools that are most widely used, indicated respectively by 44.8 percent and 45.5 percent of mayors, followed by the website of the municipality (or in some cases from amateur websites by academics, enthusiasts, etc.) for 36.6 percent. The associations of Italians abroad, categorized in Calabrian associations and/or of the specific town, that may represent important key interlocutors, are attested as channels indicated by little more than 30 percent of the respondents. Every item concerning the actual visits to the area, as special events or varied recognitions (for example, awards and certificates), is unstructured in terms of offer, as well as the printing of specially made publications such as magazines, newsletters, volumes, etc.

Two of the 26 questions from the questionnaire call for open responses and are specific for the gathering of information on events and services for emigrants and their descendants. This context is rich with content. There are many events organized for the roots tourists in the various municipalities; some historical, others recently planned, often these are festivals with some occurring during the patron saint festivities, others combine aspects related to religion, folklore, food and wine, culture, art and so on.⁶⁰

To reinforce the ties between the emigrants around the world and the towns or villages of origin, some administrators have specified other viable policies, like the twinning and friendship pacts with towns abroad that are the current residences of

⁶⁰ Refer to the paragraph 6.7.

the emigrants. Cited, for example, are the twinnings of Badolato and Amaroni with some Swiss municipalities, those of Marano Marchesato with various cities in the United States and Verbicaro with some German municipalities. Some interesting initiatives are the awards and recognitions designated for members of the community of emigrants abroad. Among others are the international awards Terra Calabria di Cetraro; in Altomonte, Cariati, Grisolia and Tropea every year a person of local origin who has established him/herself in a new place of residence is given an award. In Miglierina the tourists are considered temporary citizens and the focus is on the development of roots tourism through a specific project (Ferrari and Nicotera, 2020). There are few examples, instead, of services offered that are currently targeted at this type of tourist. The Municipality includes some forms of institutional reception (which the emigrants state are particularly important for them), itineraries with an accompanying tour guide, access to historical municipal archives or other structures (libraries, etc.). The Municipality of Lago reports the activity of the Associazione Laghitani nel mondo (Laghitani Around the World Association), that is involved with the support and accompaniment of roots tourists. Some municipalities, like that of Bisignano, have decided to construct a relations office for citizens abroad, that is a sort of municipal consult; or, as in the case of the municipality of San Pietro a Maida, an information office has been organized for emigrants. In addition, in San Vincenzo La Costa there is a house-hotel called 'Casa Emigrante' (Emigrant Home), property of the municipal administration.

Concerning the last research theme related to the *knowledge on the preferences and the behaviors of this category of tourists*, the following have been examined:

- generation of emigrants to which one belongs
- country of current residence
- main motivations of travel
- frequency of visits
- period of stay
- average length of stay
- type of accommodation chosen
- interests in the purchase of a home
- presence of relatives or friends in the place of origin
- relationship with the local population
- level of satisfaction relative to the travel experience.

Even if the association to the various categories of generations of emigrants proposed is rather fragmented, 'first and second generations' together are indicated by the mayors as the most present category (for 23 percent of the respondents). The lowest values are solely attributed to the 'third generation' and to the 'first, second and third generations' (both indicated by 6 percent of mayors). Only 1.1 percent does not know/does not answer.

‘To meet relatives and friends’ is considered the main motivation of the trip of the roots tourist, followed by ‘doing research on the family’, ‘finding documents’, arriving at ‘other’ and ‘to learn the Italian language’ according to the degree of importance in the Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Main motivations⁶¹ of the trip

<i>Motivations of trip</i>	Demographic size of municipality				
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Meeting relatives and friends</i>	8.9	8.9	9	9.2	8.9
<i>Finding documents (birth certificate, etc.)</i>	7.0	7.3	7.2	8.2	7.1
<i>Doing research on the family</i>	7.3	7.6	8.6	8.5	7.5
<i>Learning the Italian language</i>	5.4	5.7	5.0	4.0	5.4
<i>Other</i>	7.8	6.3	9.0	-	7.3

Source direct survey

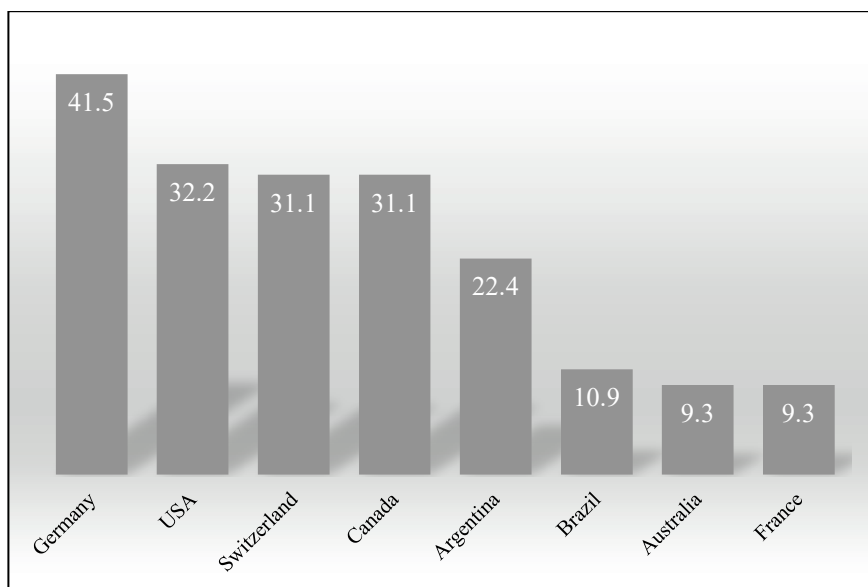
According to its mayor, the municipality of Orsomarso specifies this category ‘other’ as ‘to breathe the air of home’. Almost all of the respondents consider that the roots tourists have relatives in the area (based on 94.5 percent of the total of the respondents) and friends (based on 89.1 percent) (Ferrari and Nicotera, 2020). The origin of roots tourists is illustrated in the Figure 4.2, which displays Germany in the lead, according to 41.5 percent of administrators, followed by the USA and Canada. The intense seasonality of the tourism demand in Calabria appears to be confirmed even by the tourism flow associated with roots tourism. According to 89.1 percent of the respondents, the months in which the emigrated and their descendants choose to go on vacation are July and August; this contrasts with the statements made in the various in-depth interviews from the same tourists, who are interested in traveling even during periods not concentrated during the summer. The discrepancy is perhaps due to shortcomings in the offer, which make the off-season trip difficult and unattractive.

This type of tourist returns regularly (indicated by 86 percent of mayors) and, seeing where they come from, it is not difficult to imagine that the usual reentry is more probable for native Calabrians who are residents in Germany and Switzerland, for example, given that these are countries that are close to Italy. These tourists tend, with an overwhelming prevalence, to spend the night in the town of origin (according to 91.8 percent of respondents), with an average length of stay (according to 72.1 percent of mayors) of more than a week, up to two weeks and in some cases, even a month. Regarding the type of accommodation, two responses can be provided; the

⁶¹ Scale 1-10.

option largely indicated by the respondents is the accommodation in one's own home (indicated by 65 percent of mayors) or with relatives and friends (for 46.4 percent of mayors) (see Table 4.5). The differences are observed among municipalities with greater or smaller dimensions. For example, in towns with a number of inhabitants larger than 50,000, the roots tourists' preferred choices are: an overnight stay in a B&B as well as hospitality in the homes of friends or relatives (for 60 percent of mayors), followed by an overnight stay in a hotel (for 40 percent).

**Figure 4.2 Countries of provenience of roots tourists
(percentage values)**



Source: direct survey

In response to the specific question pertinent to whether roots tourists are interested in the purchase of a home, as already anticipated, the respondents attribute a good degree of interest to 63 percent, in contrast with the views expressed on this issue regarding the development factors linked to this type of tourism. However, if the roots tourists already owns their own home, this could signify for the municipality that there are no additional opportunities connected to the buying and selling of real estate, or in any case none such as to constitute this activity as an element of economic growth associated with this type of tourism.

Table 4.5 Types of accommodations preferred by tourists according to the category of municipality (percentage distribution)

<i>Type of accommodation</i>	Demographic size of municipality				
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Agritourism</i>	9.2	0.0	20.0	0.0	7.7
<i>Hotel</i>	14.5	16.2	10.0	40.0	15.3
<i>Bed & breakfast</i>	26.0	32.4	20.0	60.0	27.9
<i>Rented house</i>	23.7	10.8	20.0	20.0	20.8
<i>Own house</i>	68.7	59.5	60.0	20.0	65.0
<i>With friends-relatives</i>	32.8	12.2	18.9	60.0	46.4
<i>Other</i>	3.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2
<i>No answer</i>	12.2	18.9	40.0	0.0	1.1

Source: direct survey

A facet that is being studied refers to the activities that the emigrants or descendants mainly devote their time to during their visit. Assigning a rating from 1 to 10 with two possible answers among those proposed, there does not seem to be any substantial difference between the items indicated, with a score ranging on average between 4 and 5. Assessments higher than 6 are revealed in larger towns, in particular in the class C municipalities regarding the participation in religious events and local food tasting (score of 8.4 and 8.7) and in the municipalities of class D, always with reference to the local cuisine (score of 7.7) and tours of the region (score equal to 7.6) (please see Table 4.6).

The tourists seem to establish, according to the points of view of the municipal administrators, an excellent relationship with residents; in fact, in this respect, on an evaluation scale from 1 to 10, the average value results equal to 8.9. This last data confirms that this segment of tourism has a positive impact on the socio-cultural fabric of the destination and could be considered ‘sustainable’ from this point of view⁶² (Ferrari and Nicotera, 2020).

In conclusion, the level of satisfaction of the roots tourists’ visit experience in their own municipality is considered high with an estimated average score equal to 8.4 out of 10 (very high satisfaction for 53 percent and high for 36.6 percent).

⁶² Please see paragraph 2.2 on this subject.

Table 4.6 Main activities⁶³ conducted during travel

<i>Activity</i>	Demographic size of the municipalities				
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Knowledge of local history and culture</i>	5.6	5.7	5.7	6.0	5.6
<i>Experiencing popular traditions and folklore</i>	5.4	4.8	6.5	3.7	5.3
<i>Participation in religious events</i>	5.6	4.6	8.4	4.0	5.5
<i>Participation in other types of events</i>	4.4	3.3	4.7	3.0	4.2
<i>Local food tastings</i>	5.5	4.8	8.7	7.7	5.6
<i>Purchasing local products</i>	4.2	4.6	4.3	5.0	4.3
<i>Touring the region</i>	5.3	4.0	7.0	7.6	5.2
<i>Other</i>	1.2	0.7	0.0	2.0	1.1

Source: direct survey

4.3 The survey of the municipalities in Puglia

The greater part of the municipalities that responded are small and medium sized villages and towns and these reflect the dimensional structure of the Apulian municipalities⁶⁴. To refer to the dimensional classification proposed earlier, 29 percent of the sample is represented by ‘very small municipalities’, while 34 percent is represented by ‘small towns’, 27 percent of ‘municipalities in a metropolitan area’, 7 percent of ‘medium sized urban centers’ and 2 percent of ‘big cities’. The cities of Bari, Foggia and Taranto belong to the class of ‘big cities’. It should be noted that for the best usage of the charts and the consequent analysis, these last three cities were added to the previous dimensional classes.

The first investigated theme is the *administrators’ awareness concerning the flow of roots tourism in their own municipalities*. With reference to the tourist positioning of the municipality, as it is perceived by the mayors, the responses show a medium high score, equal to 7.9 out of 10, that increases in larger municipalities (amounting to 8.5). Relatively to the main tourist resources in the territory, the responses were as follows: events (63.4 percent), history (64.9 percent), food and wine (84.3 percent), sea (32.1 percent), parks/natural areas (47.7 percent), archeology (44.7 percent), religion (38.8 percent) and other (12.6 percent). An outstanding percentage of the administrators who responded, according to the multiple selections expressed,

⁶³ Scale 1-10.

⁶⁴ In the region 33 percent of Municipalities have less than 5,000 inhabitants, 41 percent have from 5,000 to 15,000 inhabitants, 21 percent has from 15,000 to 50,000 inhabitants, 4 percent of the Municipalities have more than 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants, 1 percent of the Municipalities have more than 100,000 inhabitants (Source: tuttitalia.it).

considers that among the possible attractions in their municipality there is an element that is connected to tradition (food and wine, events, religion: 92.5 percent) and to the history of the area (history or archeology: 78.4 percent) while 62.0 percent of respondents specified a natural resource (sea or parks).

With regard to the estimate of the percentage of the total tourism flows represented by roots tourists in a municipality, the replies show that for all administrators roots tourism has a significant weight. For a little less than one third of the mayors of the smaller municipalities it represents more than half of overall flows, while increasing the size of the municipality the higher percentages are recorded in the class ‘from 6 to 30 percent’ of the total (please see Table 4.7). It does not appear, however, that there is a relationship between the estimate of the percentage of roots tourists and the size of the municipality. The analysis of the answers from the administrators by the basis of the level of geographic isolation of their municipalities reveals that the presence of roots tourists in a ratio ‘up to 30 percent’ of the total of arrivals is estimated by 61.3 percent of the administrators in the municipalities with low physical marginality; it rises to 72.0 percent in the municipalities with a medium physical marginality and to 68.7 percent in the case of high physical marginality. Around 17 percent for the municipalities with average to low physical marginality estimates ‘more than 50 percent’ of the total amounts; the percentage drops to 12.5 percent for those with a high physical marginality. In request for a quantification in terms of arrivals, it is noted that the flows per annum of roots tourists are estimated between 100 and 500 units from the highest number of respondents, equal to 35.8 percent, followed by 20.1 percent that estimates them at more than a thousand a year.

Table 4.7 Estimate of roots tourists’ percentage of total arrivals in the municipality

% roots tourists	Demographic size of the municipalities				
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>0-5 %</i>	12.8	19.6	22.2	30.8	19.4
<i>6-30 %</i>	33.3	43.5	55.6	53.8	44.8
<i>31-50 %</i>	23.1	21.7	13.9	7.7	18.7
<i>More than 50 %</i>	30.8	15.2	8.3	7.7	17.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: direct survey

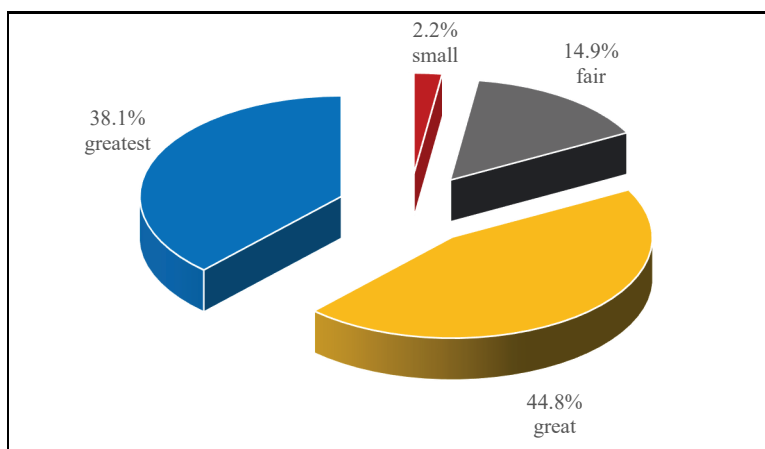
Regarding the attractiveness of roots tourists in the municipality, an elevated percentage of respondents (75.5 percent) considers it very relevant (good for 50.8 percent of respondents and optimal for 24.7 percent). In particular, the highest rating is attributed by the class A municipalities (28.2 percent) and B (34.8 percent), while

the lowest ratings outweigh in the greater sized classes (C equal to 30.6 percent and D equal to 38.5 percent).

The following question confronts the second theme, that is the *administrators' awareness on the potentiality and the effects of roots tourism in their own municipalities*. With reference to this, it is also shown that within the Apulian municipalities among the positive effects of roots tourism the word of mouth initiated by the roots tourists when they return home takes on a considerable importance. According to a very high percentage of administrators, the roots tourists give rise to a positive word of mouth promoting Puglia in terms of tourism on a high (47 percent of respondents rated it from 9 to 10) or very high scale (equal to 10 for 41,8 percent). This last result is due, above all, to the municipalities with a size up to 15,000 inhabitants, since two thirds of the responses with a maximum rating originate from classes A or B municipalities (68 percent), that are the municipalities with a greater risk of depopulation. These replies show how the mayors of smaller municipalities are aware of the importance of the word of mouth in terms of tourist promotion.

The following question addresses the theme of how much these tourist flows are seen as a driving force for the local development. The majority of respondents consider that these could be very (44.8 percent) or greatly favorable (38.1 percent) for local development (please see Figure 4.3). Particularly, they are considered very important development factors by the administrators of class A and B municipalities. This shows that even the local Apulian administrators are clearly aware of the role that these flows could play in terms of tourism development if they are encouraged in the proper way.

Figure 4.3 Importance of roots tourism as a development factor for the municipality (percentage values)



Source: direct survey

The aspect of potential factors of development connected to roots tourism is subsequently addressed by proposing to the mayors the development factors shown in Table 4.8 and encouraging them to allocate to each one a value in terms of importance by means of a numbered scale from 1 (lowest importance) to 10 (highest importance).

Table 4.8 Main factors⁶⁵ of development for roots tourism with the municipality

<i>Development factors</i>	Demographic size of municipalities				
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Tourists' disposable income</i>	7.7	7.5	6.8	7.3	7.4
<i>Initiation of positive word of mouth</i>	8.2	8.6	7.9	8.0	8.2
<i>Promotion of local products</i>	8.1	8.4	8.1	8.5	8.2
<i>Network building among tourists</i>	7.8	7.9	7.1	7.0	7.6
<i>Interest to invest</i>	6.4	6.7	5.9	5.4	6.3
<i>Interest to purchase real estate</i>	6.1	6.3	5.7	5.0	5.9
<i>Arrivals even in off season</i>	5.3	6.0	6.4	5.2	5.8
<i>Increased average stay</i>	7.4	7.0	6.5	7.4	7.0
<i>Proposals of ideas and projects</i>	5.9	5.5	5.0	5.7	5.5
<i>Preservation of old traditions</i>	6.3	6.3	6.2	5.8	6.2

Source: direct survey

The results of this part of the research shows a certain cohesion as compared to the answers related to the general consideration, on the part of the municipal administrators, of roots tourism as an important element for the development of the municipality. Indeed, the average score attributed to this form of tourism in its entirety is equal to 8.0 out of 10; this signifies that almost the entirety of the aspects are considered on average very valuable (two items have an average score greater than 6, three a score greater than 7 and again two a score greater than 8) and shared, independent of the size of the municipality. By examining in detail the single factors of development and to explore *the administrators' awareness of the potential and the effects of roots tourism in their own municipalities*, the positive characteristics of the word of mouth by these visitors as they return to their countries of residence are highlighted. This consists of a very interesting aspect, that can have a beneficial influence on the image and the reputation of the places of origin of roots tourists,

⁶⁵ Scale 1-10.

inspiring interests even in ‘new’ tourists. An outstanding percentage of administrators (97.0 percent) state that roots tourists implement a positive word of mouth, promoting Puglia as a tourist destination to a high extent (30.3 percent of respondents stated this) or very high (44.0 percent). This result does not change with the variation of the size of the municipality nor of its degree of physical marginality. These responses show how much the mayors are conscious of the positive effect in terms of promotion that can be generated by roots tourists.

Proceeding to examine the factors considered of greater importance, the promotion of traditional products receives a consistent score from the administrators of each class. Different points of view are registered, however, in relation to the interests to invest in real estate or to purchase it: the mayors of the largest municipalities, in fact, report a reduced interest to invest in real estate or to purchase it, probably because of the awareness of the average higher cost of the same real estate in larger areas. In contrast, the smaller municipalities frequently support initiatives for incentives connected to restoration of the real estate assets in order to attract non-residents. There is, however, another consideration to address the theme in a more comprehensive way. The degree of purchasing interest could have been subject to the consideration that some of the emigrants could already possess their own homes, are in the process of inheriting them or already have their full availability, and so they might not be interested in making an investment.

Concerning the opportunity connected to accommodations even in the low season, the mayors of the municipalities of metropolitan areas seem to perceive greater possibilities compared to colleagues, and probably this is dependent on the fact that it concerns towns that are very close to the sea and point to this aspect as a greater attraction, being able to rely on the mild Apulian climate even during the off season. The physical marginality does not appear to have an effect on the level of awareness and knowledge of roots tourism. Even in Puglia, probably the greater or lesser accessibility of a municipality is not considered a factor that influences the choices of roots tourists regarding destinations.

In regard to the open-ended question on the proposals to stimulate the target demand segment, suggestions of considerable interest were gathered related to creating dedicated websites and social media networks for the promotion of the local territories. Additionally, it has been reported that it is necessary to improve the transportation services, to promote a collaborative intermunicipal network, to boost the quality of life of the community and to build networks among the various municipalities in order to attract roots tourists and to offer them travel packages, itineraries and integrated services. Some mayors explain that closer contacts are necessary between the municipality and the Italian and Apulian associations abroad; to promote through the associations of emigrants in the areas in which important Apulian communities are present, perhaps during important occasions in the counties of origin; to create radio connections or even through web tv, thanks to the support of associations, on the occasions of the patron saints festivities and fairs that are strongly felt by the emigrants, allowing the participation to a traditional

celebration experience and at the same time promoting the territory. It is suggested to stipulate a growing number of friendship pacts and twinings with the cities abroad in which emigrants live, cultural and economic exchanges and internships for youths and students. It is important to increase the path of exploration or tour of the ‘rediscovery’ of the birthplaces and the services for genealogical research, as well as educational and training projects for the new generations of emigrants. The assessor of tourism of the municipality of Mola di Bari says: *Contacts with our emigrants are always constant, especially with the Molese community residents in Brooklyn numbering around 20,000 compatriots. A small Mola in New York, where the many clubs and associations of emigrated Moleses abroad hold an ongoing role of very important social connections, promoting the organization in foreign countries of our patron saint festivities dedicated to Maria SS. Addolorata or the celebrated Sagra del Polpo (Octopus Festival).*

There is a tendency to encourage the Apulian emigrants to return to their country of origin throughout the year through the organization of events and not only in the summer. There are incentives for promoting homes at low prices and for the restoration of buildings owned. The advertising of films on famous emigrated personalities, for example that dedicated to Ralph de Palma, an emigrant from Biccari to the United States, who became a motor sports champion winning (the only Italian to accomplish this) the Indianapolis 500 in 1915. This history of sports and of emigration is making a name for the small village of Biccari in the United States, with articles and events of presentations in the American mainstream media.

In the part of the survey dedicated to the *provision of services for maintaining contacts and for satisfying the needs of roots tourists within their own municipalities*, the respondents were asked to indicate through which, among the listed methods in Table 4.9, they maintain contacts with the community of emigrants abroad. Almost all of the respondents (equal to 91.8 percent), independent of the size of the municipality, try to maintain and reinforce these contacts with different methods. The tools that are widely used are social media and direct contacts (indicated respectively by 66.4 percent and by 43.3 percent of the total), followed by the website of the municipality or in some cases, by amateur websites from enthusiasts (38.8 percent). The Apulian associations and /or of the specific municipality abroad are indicated by 23.9 percent of the respondents. All the aspects relative to on-site visits with events and recognitions are not widely used (respectively 21.6 percent and 14.2 percent), as well as the targeted publishing (9 percent).

There are two open ended questions concerning events and services for roots tourists. The answers reveal important information. Even in this region there are many events that are dedicated to roots tourists in various municipalities, some are modern events and others are from old traditions. Many mayors have been organizing the ‘Festa dell’Emigrante’ or the ‘Festa dell’Accoglienza’ (the Festival for the Emigrant or the Festival of Hospitality) for many years. The mayor of San Marco in Lamis states: *Every year, in the month of August, the labor day is organized and celebrated in Puglia, and we address our compatriots that have gone abroad to work.*

Table 4.9 Main tools adopted by the municipality for establishing contacts with emigrants and their descendants (percentage values)

<i>Modality</i>	Yes	No
<i>Direct contacts</i>	43.3	56.7
<i>Through associations abroad</i>	23.9	76.1
<i>Organization of specific events</i>	21.6	78.4
<i>Recognitions to visiting emigrants</i>	14.2	85.8
<i>Specific publications</i>	9.0	91.0
<i>Website of the municipality or other website</i>	38.8	61.2
<i>Social media</i>	66.4	33.6
<i>Other</i>	13.4	86.6
<i>By no means</i>	8.2	91.8

Source: direct survey

The assessor of tourism in Arandeo explains that *the Festa del ritorno (Return festival) is a music, storytelling and photo exhibits event, accompanied by the conferment of an award to our emigrants who have been distinguished by professional, business and cultural expertise everywhere*. Other festivals are organized, like the ‘Ceglie Food festival’.

Even here to strengthen the ties with emigrants there are initiatives like twinning and friendship pacts with foreign cities. They cited, for example, the twinning of Roseto Valfortore with Roseto in Pennsylvania in the United States and with Toronto in Canada, of Deliceto with Toronto, Castrignano de’ Greci with some Swiss municipalities, Cisternino with Kreuzlingen in Switzerland, Palo del Colle with Biebesheim am Rhein in Germany, etc. There are numerous awards and recognitions reserved to members of the community of emigrants. For example, cited are the ‘Cerere’ awards, dedicated to those emigrants from Biccari who have been distinguished around the world, and the award ‘Minerva’, for the Minervians who have become known all around; even in other areas, among which Locorotondo and Noci, where every year personalities of local origin who have established themselves in their new areas of residence are awarded.

The Apulian mayors, like their Calabrian colleagues, state that the services aimed at these types of tourists are scarce. The administrators reference in this regard to a type of institutional welcome by the Municipality, of the access to archives and itineraries and guided tours with accompaniment. There are numerous tourist communication activities, like an information point (in particular, in Celle di San Vito there is a language desk for Franco-Provençal) and dedicated web portals, even

in more languages (in Volturino there is an instant messaging service through the application ‘telegram’ for smartphone).

With a reference to the last theme in the survey, *the knowledge on the preferences and the behaviors of this category of tourists*, primarily, the aspect of the generation of emigration has been discussed. This appears even here, as in Calabria, rather fragmented; nevertheless, ‘second generation’ and ‘first and second generation’ are indicated as the most applicable categories. They are followed by ‘first, second and third generations’ and ‘second and third generations’, that are indicated as a fairly mentioned category of visitors (both by 16 percent by the mayors). ‘To see relatives and friends’ is indicated as the first motive for a trip; it is followed at a considerable distance by the motive ‘to do research on the family’ and on the same level ‘to acquire documents’, while ‘to learn the Italian language’ represents a motive of little reference (please see Table 4.10). Almost all the mayors suggest that the roots tourists have relatives in the area (according to 91 percent of the total) and friends (for 77.6 percent).

Table 4.10 Main motivations⁶⁶ of the trip

<i>Motivations of the trip</i>	Demographic size of municipalities				
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>See relatives and friends</i>	7.9	7.8	7.4	7.0	7.7
<i>Find documents (birth certificates, etc.)</i>	5.1	4.3	4.1	4.5	4.5
<i>Doing research on the family</i>	5.4	4.0	4.2	4.6	4.5
<i>Learning the Italian language</i>	4.1	3.8	3.6	3.5	3.8

Source: direct survey

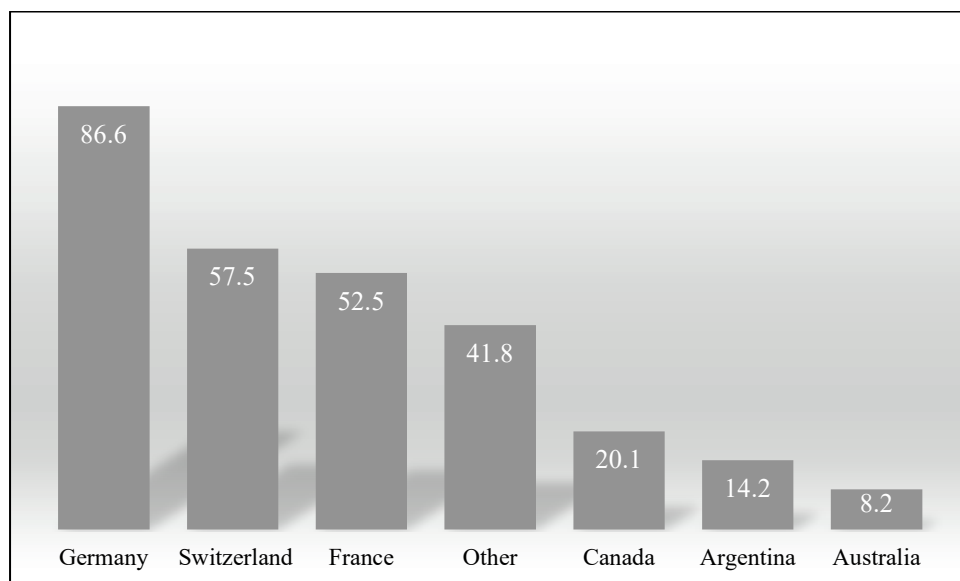
Thereafter the administrators were asked to specify what their opinion would be regarding the leading countries of provenience of the roots tourists, and they could choose more than one option. Figure 4.4 shows Germany to be at first place (indicated by 86.6 percent of the mayors), followed by Switzerland (57.5 percent) and, always according to the multiple choices expressed by the administrators, France (52.5 percent), USA (33.6 percent), Canada (20.1 percent), Argentina (14.2 percent), Australia (8.2 percent) and Brazil (5.2 percent).

According to 76,1 percent of the respondents, the months that the emigrants and their descendants prefer for vacation are July and August, while 13.4 percent indicate that they chose May and June, and 9.7 percent chose September and October. This is consistent with the elevated seasonal nature of the tourist demand in Puglia. Roots tourists tend to return on a regular basis (according to 76.1 percent of the mayors),

⁶⁶ Scale 1-10.

even if those who live in countries that are closer do so with greater frequency, as for example, native Apulian who are residents in Germany and Switzerland.

**Figure 4.4 Countries of provenience of roots tourists
(percentage values)**



Source: direct survey

Regarding accommodations, these tourists remain overnight mainly in their municipalities of origin (according to 87.3 percent of mayors) for more than a week (47.7 percent), up to two weeks, in some cases, even a month. Following the average stay that lasts from 4 to 7 days (according to 35.8 percent of mayors) and from 2 to 3 nights (11.9 percent). Considering the type of accommodation, providing more answers, the principal option indicated by respondents is an accommodation in a B&B (64.2 percent of the mayors thus stated) or one's own home (59.7 percent of mayors) or with relatives and friends (for 56.7 percent of mayors) (please see Table 4.11). Differences are valued among the towns that are larger or smaller. For example, in the municipalities with a number of inhabitants larger than 50,000, an overnight stay in a B&B as well as hospitality in the home of friends or relatives are the preferred choices of roots tourists (for 77 percent of mayors on various possible options), followed by an overnight stay in a hotel (for 23.1 percent).

In responding to the measure with which roots tourists are interested in the purchase of a house, 45.5 percent of mayors speculate that there is a fair amount of interest, along the lines with what was expressed on this aspect in the context of the development factors for this type of tourism.

Table 4.11 Types of accommodations preferred by tourists according to the category of municipality (percentage values)

<i>Type of accommodation</i>	Demographic size of municipalities				
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Agritourism</i>	12.8	19.6	8.3	7.7	13.4
<i>Hotel</i>	17.9	13.0	22.2	23.1	17.9
<i>Bed & Breakfast</i>	61.5	58.7	69.4	76.9	64.2
<i>Rented house</i>	59.0	47.8	36.1	38.5	47.0
<i>Own home</i>	69.2	67.4	44.4	46.2	59.7
<i>With friends – relatives</i>	41.0	56.5	66.7	76.9	56.7
<i>Camping</i>	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.7
<i>Other</i>	2.6	4.3	2.8	0.0	3.0

Source: direct survey

Among the activities that these tourists primarily engage in during their trip, they seem to appreciate the differences amid the indicated items, attesting to the highest score of 8.9 regarding ‘sampling local foods’ and 9.1 ‘purchasing typical products’. The mayors attribute even scores to ‘participating in religious events’ and ‘discovering popular traditions and folklore’ (Table 4.12). In the average data disaggregation on the basis of the size of the municipality, in general, there are slight differences, except for the higher priority attributed by the mayors of the smallest municipalities for the appreciation of popular traditions, folklore and religious events.

Table 4.12 Main activities conducted during travel

<i>Activity</i>	Demographic size of municipalities				
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Discovery of local history and culture</i>	7.2	7.0	6.7	6.7	6.9
<i>Experiencing popular traditions and folklore</i>	7.7	7.9	7.3	7.8	7.7
<i>Participation in religious events</i>	7.9	7.8	7.5	7.3	7.7
<i>Participation in other types of events</i>	7.7	7.6	6.7	7.1	7.3
<i>Local food tastings</i>	8.8	9.1	8.7	9.0	8.9
<i>Purchasing local products</i>	8.8	9.3	8.9	9.3	9.1
<i>Touring the region</i>	7.0	7.5	7.5	7.3	7.3

Source: direct survey

The tourists seem to establish, according to the points of view of the mayors, an excellent relationship with residents; in fact, in this respect, on an evaluation scale from 1 to 10, the average score results equal to 8.6. This result confirms that roots tourists are not detrimental to the local socio-cultural fabric, on the contrary, they can make a positive contribution.

In conclusion, the level of satisfaction of the roots tourists for the visit experience in their own municipality is considered high with an estimated average score that is equal to 7.8 out of 10 (very high satisfaction for 29.8 percent and high for 55.9 percent).

4.4 Comparisons and conclusions

Even if the dimensional structure of the municipalities in the two regions in which the survey was done is different, with an average size significantly larger in Puglia, where the number of municipalities is also lower, the results of the responses to the questionnaires show notable similarities.

With reference to the aspect of the tourist vocation in one's own municipality, the mayors consider them on average higher, especially in urban centres that are larger. The administrators who responded consider factors connected to tradition as the main attractions both in Calabria as in Puglia, following almost in equal measure a natural resource (sea or parks) in Calabria and an element connected to the history in Puglia. In both regions, roots tourism is considered an important tourist segment, even in prospective terms, by the administrators who responded, especially in small towns; the mayors indeed suggest that their own municipalities are attractive tourist destinations for roots tourists, especially in the case of medium sized municipalities and at the seaside in Calabria, and in medium to small towns in Puglia.

All seem to consider that word of mouth is a very effective tool set in motion by means of these tourists, especially for the small towns, according to the Apulian mayors. The majority of the administrators, furthermore, believe that this type of tourism can be a great or enormous enhancement to the community, in Puglia especially in those towns that are small or medium sized. This response is not overwhelmingly confirmed by the attributed importance of roots tourism as a driving force. These results being quite uniform for all the dimensional classifications of the municipalities, appear to show a greater awareness from the Apulian mayors on the potential of roots tourism in terms of socio-economic development for the territory. Despite the acknowledged importance of roots tourism, there still are significant endeavors to be implemented to reinforce contacts with the community of emigrants abroad. The representatives of the municipalities support them especially directly or through social networks (with a clear prevalence of the latter in Puglia), through websites and associations abroad. There is still much to accomplish regarding the organization of events, awards and local visits, tools that are very appreciated by the roots tourists that help them feel welcomed and part of the community. The events that are dedicated to the emigrants who return, in reality, are of great number in both

regions, but the mayors do not consider them to be very effective tools. Twinning and friendship pacts are also useful.

Everyone agrees that the services' offer aimed at this specific target group is, however, very limited. There is, consequently, the awareness of a gap that decimates the attractiveness of the destinations and that must be worked on in order to improve the tourist competitiveness of the regions and their towns.

Concerning the generation of emigrants who predominately would be roots tourists and who vacation in their own municipality, the mayors and their delegates state that the majority belong to the first and second generations. This demonstrates how the interest for travelling and for one's own homeland, as seen, reduces in the successive generations. Nonetheless, the data are mostly fragmented, showing that the other generations are present even in reduced measures as compared to the first two. A reflection is necessary even on this issue; programs must be planned and investments made. Some open ended questions show how many administrators are aware of this and are implementing initiatives to attract even the younger generations.

The main motivations of the trip are the same in both regions, in other words, to see relatives and friends (according to the mayors, the majority of tourists have family and friends in the area), to do research on the family, to acquire documents and so forth. It is interesting to note that in Puglia only the first motivation has a high score, while the others are specified by a much lower number of respondents. It is evident that the first motivation is distinctly predominant or others are not perceived, even though they are actually present. This means that if there are many actual reasons, as is highly possible seeing that in general these tourists have various motivations, there is no effort being done to satisfy the needs arising from them (e.g., language courses, assistance in researching documents).

The provenience is somewhat different in both regions. In Calabria, it has always been that tourism of German origin has been prevalent, followed by those originating from the USA, Canada, Switzerland, and Argentina. In Puglia, however, it is tourism originating from Germany, then Switzerland, followed by France, USA, Canada and Argentina. This is not surprising because the emigrants from one area tend to be concentrated in places in which they lean on each other for support and to form a community. There are no discernable differences in the two regions with regards to the stay, even if in Calabria the concentration in the months of July and August is greater, according to the municipal administrators; this is probably a consequence of the high tourist seasonality, therefore rendering some places unappealing during the off season. The interest in staying overnight in one's own home and eventually purchasing it was observed in both regions, perhaps reflecting a mentality in the process of overcoming that is still attached to the possession of real estate as a status symbol and as a way of connecting to one's homeland. There are many activities conducted during the trip. According to the Calabrian administrators, there is no clear prevalence for some, especially in smaller municipalities; in Puglia, however, it is noted that purchasing traditional products and tasting local foods are the preferred activities. This is definitely positive because it can foster the export of such

products towards international markets, where for many they represent elements of the culture of the place of one's childhood or of memories. Finally, the levels of the roots tourists' satisfaction are elevated; they desire to return and engage in the best possible way with the local population, an imaginable result given the positive attitude of these visitors towards culture, traditions and lifestyle of the host community.

4.5 Some case studies in Sicily, Calabria, Puglia and Tuscany

Some case studies are illustrated below. These regards small towns that have shown some interest in the phenomenon of root tourism. Not all are tourist destinations nor do they represent models or examples of best practices. They are simply places where interest has been shown for this research and where a certain sensitivity and awareness with reference to the topic has been detected. In these villages, some isolated and forgotten but always interesting and rich in culture, projects could be experimented with in the future to encourage the development of root tourism. The Apulian municipalities have been selected also because they fall within an area, that of the Sub Apennine Dauno, where the massive emigration caused, especially throughout the nineteenth century, a considerable depopulation of the urban centres. However, the loss of human capital has been balanced, in recent years, by an intellectual vivacity of the residents and their administrators that is reviving an economy now characterized by tourism, artisan and entrepreneurial connotations, that are able to bring back to life one of the most beautiful territories of the whole Puglia.

Basicò in a book of stories and memories written in Argentina⁶⁷

In Sicily, as in the rest of Italy, roots tourism is still rarely addressed in a systematic way, although historically, from the end of the 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s, this region was the point of origin of a migratory phenomenon of vast proportions. A strong reaction to overcoming the current crisis situation, especially in the era of Covid-19, can represent the positioning of promotional tourism policies of the territories abroad for the discovery of one's own culture and identity of origin by encouraging structural processes between the Sicilian community and the Sicilian community abroad for the creation of an effective action of 'brand protection'. A definite importance to roots tourism is given in the tourism development plan of the Sicilian Region. The Sicilian villages, the heart of the country, highlight the millenary presence of communities that are rich in history, culture and traditions; they represent a point of reference for the growth of an ethical, responsible and sustainable tourism, capable of creating authentic experiences, relationships and emotions for the traveler. The possibility of analyzing the roots tourism market not

⁶⁷ Filippo Grasso, Università di Messina, and Tiziana Nicotera, Università della Calabria.

as an incoming policy but as the ‘art of governance’ for the renewal of the areas to re-inhabit the territory requires a leap in quality in the development planning of the tourism system, with the purpose of increasing tourism sustainability in the villages (Benatti, 2021). The end objective is to guarantee a harmonious coexistence of the local community with its own cultural, naturalistic and environmental heritage and with the presence and experience of those who have returned and wish to establish themselves permanently in the areas that are regenerated by themselves. Roots tourism to be strategically effective should be materialized as a ‘governance system’, for the purposes of sustaining local development in a stable and long-lasting way.

Among the Sicilian communities that have numerous emigrated to Argentina, there is Basicò, a little village of 580 inhabitants, situated between the Nebrodi and Peloritani Mountains. On the basis of interviews with the municipal administration⁶⁸ it appears that, according to AIRE, Basicò is the first municipality in the province of Messina in terms of number of emigrants abroad. This enumerates diverse tourist resources of a historical, artistic and cultural nature, like buildings, squares, art and traditional museums and libraries; of a panoramic nature, various scenic locations; of an enogastronomic nature, connected to the production of dairy (among which exists the famous *provola* from Basicò) and the production of oil. Four main events, religious and secular, are organized each year. In addition, the municipality is set in an area with other attractions within the proximity of a few kilometers, one of them being the Santuario di Tindari in Patti. There are 5 accommodation facilities - hotels and other types of accommodations - reception points and association for welcoming tourists. The main tourist arrivals in the village are found during the summer period. The data discovered in 2019, before Covid-19, attested for nearly 1,000 overnight stays of families, groups, young couples of Italian and foreign origins.

Regarding roots tourism, the municipality of Basicò recognizes the potential of this type of tourism, even if it is still not structured with specific activities for this target group. This case study is unique, because Basicò nurtures the connection between the municipality of origin and the community in Argentina through the voice of a descendant of a Basicotana emigrant who appears in the book ‘Nonna Francesca’, written by Francisca Galeano and Vénera Mannino. The first author, born in Mendoza, is the granddaughter of the main character in the story, originating from Basicò and emigrated to Argentina, she returned to Sicily for a number of years and then emigrated again. The second author was born in Randazzo (Ct) and emigrated at 8 years of age with her family to Mendoza; in order to maintain ties with Italy, she graduated in Italian Language and Literature. The two authors met at an Italian language course. The book, in Italian and Spanish, is born from Francisca Galeano’s idea to leave a written record of stories passed down to her by her grandmother, fulfilling her grandmother’s desire. The grandmother, originally from Basicò,

⁶⁸ We wish to thank the ex-Assessor of Tourism, Filippo Cadili, and the Vice Mayor with responsibility for Tourism, Antonio Cotone.

confided to her that if she had known how to read and write, she would have written the story of her life that would have represented in some way the Sicilian culture of that era. This is a fictional narration based on a series of stories occurring in Basicò at the beginning of the 1900s. The story immerses the reader in a historical and cultural process, from the perspective of the daily lives of the inhabitants of Sicily. At the end of the story, there is a collection of Sicilian sayings and proverbs that contains experiences of the country of origin.

The book was presented during a conference on roots tourism that was organized in Messina on November 21, 2018 by the Università di Messina; the conference was focused on the research project that was launched by the Università della Calabria on the above mentioned theme. For the occasion of the event, the two authors filmed a video to play during the conference and also published on the Municipality of Basicò's Facebook page (<https://fb.watch/5aL-bOSw61>). The video shows important elements for reflection on the difficulty emigrants have when they arrive in a country that they do not know and with a new language to learn. The video displays these touching words: *Learning the Italian has allowed me to be close with my roots despite the distance; my heart has remained divided between Italy and Argentina, without sadness but with nostalgia; the first language I learned was the Sicilian dialect that my grandmother passed down to me, as well as her affection for the marvelous country that is Sicily and that I have had the fortune of visiting.*

The descendants of the second and third generations of emigrants, once having entered into the community that has welcomed them, and after having achieved certain economic wealth, undertake a return journey toward the rediscovery of their family origins, not only through travel or genealogical studies, but through a sort of intimate pilgrimage, made of inherited and later reworked stories to share with the community in which each person can recognize him/herself.

Bovino: A village open to the tourist-naturalistic network circuit⁶⁹

Bovino is a municipality in the province of Foggia of about 3,200 inhabitants. The municipal territory, predominately of hills, is situated among the Daunia mountains and the Cervaro valleys and displays around 3,000 hectares of forest and numerous springs. The name of the village comes from the Latin Vibinum, an Osco-Samnite area that was under the dominion of Rome when Hannibal encamped there in 217 B.C., before the Battle of Cannae. The village was fortified in the High Middle Ages and besieged in 969 by the Lombards. Among the various sites of historical-cultural interest there is the Castello Ducale, where the King Manfredi stayed. Majestic in size, in 1575 it became the residence of the Dukes of Guevara, who transformed it into a palatial aristocratic residence. In Bovino there are 16 tourists accommodating facilities with a total of 166 beds, specifically B&B and guesthouses. A spread hotel

⁶⁹ Nicolaia Iaffaldano and Vito Roberto Santamato, Università A.Moro di Bari.

equipped with six rooms is situated in diverse areas of the historic center, with a central facility for breakfast and reception.

Among the main events that are held during the year, there is the festival of the patron saint on August 28, 29 and 30. The highlight of the festival is on August 29: that morning is the reenactment of the historical parade, that begins from the Santuario della Madonna di Valleverde to the arrival in Bovino. The festival of San Celestino Martire is held on the second Sunday in October. Every year on the Saturday prior to this festival, the Sagra dei sapori d'autunno is held (Sagra festival of the tastes of autumn). The number of visitors is very high – around 15,000-20,000 people – both the day of the patron saint festival and the day of San Celestino.

The flow of tourists in 2018 was equal to 5,962 visitors, in 2019 to 5,511 and 2020 around 4,800, partly due to the pandemic. The data refers to the visitors registered in the B&Bs, while it is not known the number of the visitors in the guesthouses and private residences. According to the local administrators, the roots tourists represent a small percentage of the total visitors in the accommodation facilities, because in general they stay in the homes of relatives or have their own homes. The mayor affirms that the arrivals of roots tourists in 2018 were around 1,000, while in 2019 and 2020, it were around 1,500. The remainder of the tourists come primarily from the north of Italy, mostly from Milan, Bologna, Prato and Rome, but also from Puglia. The proximity tourists arrive with other visitors during the weekend, with arrivals from Lecce and Bari and even from Naples. Roots tourism is slightly in decline, in the sense that in the last ten years Bovino quadrupled its number of visitors during the summer period, attracting first and second generation emigrants; currently, however, unfortunately with the third and fourth generations of emigrants there has been a degrowth: as a consequence, training and educational projects are necessary to draw the new generations.

The nation in which there are the most emigrants of local origin is Germany, but the Bovinians have gone everywhere, to Canada, United States, Argentina, France and England. The municipal administration maintains many direct relationships with its emigrants, in particular with a group that has created a committee in Canada for the Madonna di Valleverde. In August during the parade there is always a representative present from Canada. If the visitors come from Germany, that does not have a scholastic system similar to that of Italy, they are less concentrated and are spread out during the months of June, July and August; who can, come from the 15 to the 30 of August, for the festivities, that are very deeply felt among the emigrants. Those that have a second home remain for at least 15 days.

From the in-depth interviews conducted with a number of local stakeholders⁷⁰, it appears that the motivations that prompt an emigrant in Germany or in Canada to return to Bovino are few but strongly felt: those who have parents return because of a sentimental connection, many desire to relive the memories of childhood that they

⁷⁰ We wish to thank the Mayor, Vincenzo Nunno, the Assessor of Tourism, Luana Grasso, and all those who were interviewed for their availability.

experienced here, to participate in the patron saint festival and to see friends whom they have not seen for awhile. The motivation for research of certificates and other documents is considered noteworthy, because when emigrants make enquiries of this type the municipal administration always responds and sends the certificates by email to Argentina, the United States or elsewhere.

The emigrants integrate themselves with residents, even through social media. The Bovinians abroad are avid followers of the events of Bovino on social media and interact with the compatriots of the place of origin through these channels. They keep informed, thanks to the official social pages on the life in the village and encourage the local administrators to favor the development of the community. They feel nostalgic but many do not go on vacation because it is expensive, especially for those who live overseas, that return every two to three years.

The Pro-Loco operates very well, the mayor claims that it is among the best in Puglia and works in accordance with the administration, implementing numerous activities. There are other cultural associations in the Municipality of Bovino, like the Archeoclub, the cultural association Florestano Rossomandi and the Unire-Università for seniors, where the elderly pass down, through theatrical productions, the dialect and the traditional culture so as not to lose the elements of identity of the local community. Bovino has received the recognition of the Bandiera Arancione by Touring Club Italiano⁷¹ (Orange Flag of the Italian Touring Club) and belongs to the association of the Borghi più Belli d'Italia⁷² (The most Beautiful Villages in Italy); through these networks they organize numerous events, among which is the Notte Romantica (Romantic Evening), on the second to last weekend of June, and the Plein Air, the national gathering for camper owners, that travel to the Bandiera Arancione municipalities during the weekends of October. The small village seeks to participate in all of the initiatives of the networks of villages at least until the end of October; in December, Christmas markets are organized and the village is decorated with Nativity scenes until the end of the month. Thereafter, other events are resumed, offering at least one event of regional interest every month.

In regards to the activities that the roots tourists engage in during their stay, the municipal administration seeks to promote a slow tourism, therefore nature walks with the licenced guides are organized, samplings of local dishes like 'pizzelle e acc' (a dish with handmade pasta of durum wheat with celery and cherry tomatoes), a pork sauce (that has received a Slow Food recognition) and traditional products (like olive oil, *caciocavallo*, *mozzarella*). The cooking of the village is a feast of

⁷¹ The Bandiera Arancione (Orange Flag) is a trademark of tourist-environmental quality attributed by the TCI to villages of excellence.

⁷² The Association I Borghi più Belli d'Italia (The Most Beautiful Villages in Italy) was born with the impetus of the Consulta del Turismo dell'Associazione Nazionale dei Comuni Italiani (Council of Tourism of the Association of Italian Municipalities) for the appreciation of the great heritage of history, art, culture, environment and traditions present in small Italian towns and villages.

delicacies, made from simple dishes, prepared with poor but genuine ingredients that preserve the intense flavors of rural traditions.

The history and memory of a family and of a village: Buriano – Castiglione della Pescaia⁷³

A volume like an unbreakable thread that connects Italy, precisely the village of Buriano in Tuscany, to Argentina. Here is where the project on roots tourism begins⁷⁴.

Buriano, a characteristic village in the Maremma in Tuscany, is part of the municipal territory of Castiglione della Pescaia (in the province of Grosseto). The municipality, that accounts for 8,500 inhabitants, is a renowned seaside resort, noted for its beautiful beaches and also for its large pine forests, immersed in an extensive 'green lung'. The ancient fisherman's village is one of the summer's main tourist destinations in the region, frequented by Italian and foreign tourists. It boasts many tourist attractions: from the Rocca (or Castello) that dates from the XV century, to sailing sports, nature trails, traditional dishes and products and other characteristic events like the Palio Marinaro and the Palio di Velutonia. Besides Buriano, there are also other little villages: Punta Ala, Tirli and Vetulonia. There are many accommodation facilities in the municipality: 34 hotels, 8 tourist-hotel residences, 33 guest houses, a resort, a residence apartment, 21 holiday homes, a historical residence, 8 campsites and 72 agrotourism lodgings. The arrivals and overnight stays relative to 2019, that is, before the pandemic that drastically reduced the tourism flow, were 230,788 and 1,619,248 respectively, with a concentration above all in the period from June to September.

Recently, a 'widespread tourist reception' project was initiated in Buriano, involving public and private individuals and community residents for the transformation of the village as an organized tourist product. Housing units were assembled and allocated for extra-hotel accommodation, and the mapping of infrastructures, services, etc. was carried out. The objective is to create value for the village on a tourist level, leveraging on the architectural, real estate, historical, cultural and anthropological heritage. The residents are the central ring of the project, as an active part of living in a community, sharing the designated program and the lifestyle. In this way the local community becomes the creators of the construction and the development of a local ecosystem, capable of managing the services, the entertainment, and the experiences to be lived in the area, also transmitting its authenticity and historical memory.

Within the confines of this extensive project, that about roots tourism plays a part, which began from the work developed by one of the residents during the

⁷³ Tiziana Nicotera, Università della Calabria

⁷⁴ We wish to thank Giancarlo dell'Orco, Renzo Ronchi, the mayor, Giancarlo Farnetani, and the Assessor of Tourism, Susanna Lorenzini, for their collaboration.

reconstruction of his own genealogical tree, and then of the genealogical trees of the families from Buriano who emigrated to South America, particularly Argentina. From the story of one family, many other family stories began to intersect, and the work broadened within the whole town of Buriano. This study was based on the consultation of municipal and historical archives, of parish and curia records, and private funds and antique manuscripts. All this meticulous work, carried out with historical precision, has merged into a volume entitled 'History and memory of a family and a village' by Renzo Ronchi. The book substantiates the memory of a town and its roots, without outlining a story but instead exposing it as a bare document: it describes the organization of the community from 1398 to today, the origins of the church and its altars, of the castle and the court of law, the inscriptions and the streets, the religious festivals, the court documents and current events, and the family origins and genealogies. All of this is illustrated by the striking images of the photographs gathered in the homes in Buriano.

Later the figure of the author interweaves with that of a destination manager, that through the widespread tourist reception project plans to attract the new target group of Buriano emigrants throughout the world. The design for reception services, the living experiences in the village connected to the historical memory of the small area and the structuring of an offer of travel proposals from 5 to 8 weeks is beginning to take form, allowing for the roots tourists to experience a return to one's origins. Buriano is preparing to launch an innovative product for tourism, aimed at the families with origins from the village, never thought of before this extraordinary historical and genealogical activity. The first step was to send a copy of the volume to various emigrants and descendants discovered in Argentina (around 20 families), each family shared with the municipality a photograph of themselves with the book they received. In the meanwhile, the village is working in preparation, in the alleys, on a permanent exhibit and an itinerary that narrates the stories of the families from Buriano who emigrated to Argentina.

The incentive to make a journey of return to the birthplace or of discovery of the roots of one's own family, by those residing in another country, often starts from genealogical research by using more than one source. A book that gathers the historical memory of a place can represent the answer to this desire. If starting from the local host community is a winning strategy for a tourism project, in the case of roots tourism this perspective is even more important. Who has local origins is not a tourist, he/she is part of the community, even if many years have passed and even if he/she does not live in the area anymore; and the residents, conversely, are very pleased to help reconstruct the family history of these individuals, strengthening their identity heritage.

Casalnuovo Monterotaro: a village for slow tourism⁷⁵

Casalnuovo Monterotaro is a municipality of 1,404 inhabitants in the province of Foggia, that a few years ago became a part of the association 'Borghi Autentici d'Italia'⁷⁶ (Authentic Villages in Italy); its urban layout is of Medieval origins. During the Roman period, it was a village that was predominantly used with a defensive function given its position on high grounds. Following the fall of the Empire, it underwent various dominions: Bizantine, Lombard, Norman and Swabian. The current site took shape at the end of the XIV century.

Immediately after the Second World War, there was a heavy emigration towards northern Italy and central Europe and a demographic decline began, that unfortunately has continued to the present day. Until Vatican Council II, Casalnuovo belonged to the Diocese of Benevento. At the beginning of the last century, a heavy emigration to Argentina, United States, Australia and Canada began. The land that the Casalnuovo emigrants abandoned was acquired by those who came from Benevento and its area. Subsequently, the inhabitants of Casalnuovo continued to emigrate, while those who were of Benevento origin remained, since the area in the beginning of the century offered firewood and also because of the proximity to the trail of Foggia-Celano for the transhumance; this made the territory prosperous with agricultural and livestock businesses. Therefore, Casalnuovo has also been a territory of immigration, a phenomenon that has, in part, compensated the large demographic decline attributed to emigration; in fact, until last year, the inhabitants of Benevento origin with respect to those from Casalnuovo were almost 50 percent.

Today, the major part of the tourist numbers is due to the many emigrants who return for the summer period. They also come back because they often own second homes where they spent their childhoods. In addition, they frequently invite friends and acquaintances to visit Casalnuovo. Over the past several years, due to word of mouth, tourism is increasing and is the outcome of a broader knowledge and promotion of the programs for August that features hiking activities along the mountain trails, folkloristic events, the peculiarities of an inland territory that is characterized by mountains and numerous forests, by small antique rural villages that alternate with seaside areas as vacation sites, that are increasingly attracting 'slow tourism'.

⁷⁵ Nicolaia Iaffaldano and Vito Roberto Santamato, Università A. Moro di Bari

⁷⁶ Borghi Autentici d'Italia (Authentic Villages of Italy) is an association among territories established in 2004, that, through the dedication of people, entities and community, aims to oppose the decline of small communities, seeking to value their resources to create new growth opportunities. The association has, among its objectives, the appreciation of the characteristic villages of Italy, whether they are small or medium sized municipalities, including the rural areas and their fractions, with particular reference to the architectural, urban, cultural, tourist and social heritage. It includes around 200 amid villages and associations of disseminated municipalities around our nation.

By a series of interviews conducted with various local stakeholders⁷⁷, it emerged that the flow of tourism in 2018 was equal to around 2,000, arrivals in 2019 to 3,000, and in 2020 there was a decline because of the pandemic. Concerning the number of roots tourists in relation to the total of visitors, in 2018 they were estimated equal to 50 percent of the total, in 2019 around 45.5 percent and in 2020 there were very few. The accommodation facilities currently present are a B&B, that has been active for around 10 years, and a guesthouse, and in the coming months other two facilities will be completed. The majority of roots tourists who come here during the summer are home owners, as mentioned above, or are renters.

The main events that are held in the village during the year take place predominantly during the summer period, like the Festa della Madonna. In the summer, mid August, the patron saint festival of the Madonna della Rocca is celebrated, then during the first Sunday of August is the occasion of the 'Festa dell'Accoglienza' (Hospitality Festival), that has repaired the divide between the resident and non-residents citizens that has occurred throughout the years. The ayor has identified the motive for it in the pride that the emigrants possess, because they have been confronted with difficulties, having lived in distant places and even under certain hostile circumstances; this has made them proud and a bit eager to demonstrate of having made it. The situation is changed due to the Festa dell'Accoglienza, in which the compatriots who were able to achieve a path in life that is worthy of recognition and appreciation on the part of the community of origin are invited. Every year, in fact, two or three emigrants are singled out to give them the recognition of 'distinguished citizen'. These are people who have distinguished themselves for their dedication in various professional fields and for their connection to their roots and the traditions to their homeland. The feast is an occasion to reunite with childhood friends, and with the passage of time they have rekindled these relationships with excellent results. Thus, the roots tourists mingle with the residents, the relationship with them is very strong and well established, and that moment of separation has now passed. There have been 25 editions of the Festa dell'Accoglienza, without any interruption. The association 'Festa dell'Accoglienza', existing in the area now for 25 years, was created specifically for reinforcing the link of continuity between the past and the present, among the compatriots who, reluctantly, have had to leave their homeland and who have remained, between the old and new generations. Every year perpetuates, through cultural initiatives and events, the process of memory of the popular traditions, of the customs and habits of long ago, so that they are not lost. Likewise, annually in the month of August an event on the theme of emigration is organized by the association. Instead another important event takes place in autumn, on the first Sunday of October, when markets were held in order to buy the essential goods for winter.

⁷⁷ We wish to thank the mayor, Pasquale de Vita, and all those who were interviewed for their collaboration.

The majority of roots tourists come from northern Italy (Piedmont and Lombardy), but a considerable number of visitors arrives from Germany, France and England. The tourists who come from northern Italy usually return almost every year, even twice a year (in summer and Christmas), and their duration of stay varies from around a week to a month. There are also exceptions: those who have their own home stay for over a month. Conversely, those who are from other parts of Europe or overseas return every 2, 3 or also 4 years and stay for a pair of weeks. The second generation of emigrants abroad speak Italian, having learned it from their parents, or dialect. While only until 20 years ago, those who were part of the first generation spoke mainly in dialect, currently the second generation has difficulty in remembering it and speaks only a few words.

The main motivations of the trip to discover one's origins are to visit relatives, to revisit childhood places and the house in which one was born. A minimal percentage returns to conduct research on the ancestors, inquiring with the Municipality to ask information about the family, consulting historical municipal archives, and also to acquire documents, such as birth or marriage certificates of grandparents or ancestors.

The municipal body is very attentive and sensitive to the theme of roots tourism. With the collaboration of the present in the territory associations, it does its utmost to increase the offer of events that evoke ancient popular traditions (such as the harvest with antique methods, the grape and the olive harvest), with a special reference to agri-food processing of the past that relate the transformation of pork meat and dairy products. The intent is to network with other realities present in the territory, with the objective of putting in place synergies for the development of tourism, with a special focus on roots tourism. With the help of social media and of websites created for the promotion of local tourist proposals, it is encouraged a new form of sustainable tourism that is based on hospitality and tranquility, where the visitor can be welcomed and can feel as 'part of the family'.

The municipality of Casalnuovo entered into a friendship pact with the community of Alpignano, in the province of Turin, where many local families have emigrated; thanks to the association of Casalnuovans in Alpignano, the patron saint festivities have also been able to be celebrated there, with the support of the municipal administration of Casalnuovo. The mayor is a firm believer in this cultural bridge with the municipality of Alpignano and would like to do the same with the hinterland in Milan, where many Casalnuovo compatriots live.

San Giovanni in Fiore, emigration and the ‘petrification of salaries’⁷⁸

Emigration is a phenomenon that has characterized Italian history, even greater is that of Calabria and of the small and medium-sized towns and villages of the Calabrian inland, such as San Giovanni in Fiore. This small town in the province of Cosenza of 17,227 inhabitants, that emerges from the heart of the Sila National Park and represents its largest town, has given birth to important personalities, first among being the abbot Gioacchino da Fiore.

Its story is connected to the mass emigration from the end of the 1800s. The dream of those who emigrated was to be able to return, sooner or later, to their childhood home and to the country of their ancestors, even if for a brief period of time. Because of this strong sentiment, ‘roots tourism’ was born, to create bridges among distant lands, among people, giving life to new flows and new resources. It is the dream of returning that gave rise in the past to a phenomenon that is greatly evident in San Giovanni in Fiore of that which is defined the ‘petrification of salaries’; it means the investments implemented by the emigrants and their families in housing in their native country. The emigrants sent their own families back home part of their hard-earned savings to buy or build a house; this, that was seen as a way to demonstrate the economic prosperity achieved abroad, became a medium of social redemption. These investments were also motivated by the hope of returning, at least at the time of retirement, and created the enormous unused real estate assets that still characterize this mountain center today.

In the first half of the 1900s, the high rate of migration and the presence of a photographer made it possible to share any moment of daily life and every event in the town with those loved ones abroad, so as to experience life in San Giovanni in Fiore. It was precisely in this way that Saverio Marra witnessed the lifestyle of the town through thousands of photographs: weddings, funerals, baptisms, rural landscapes, laborers and farmers at work and many other aspects of daily life. Today his collection of photography is exhibited in the Museo Demologico, and represents a unique example of visual anthropology, that contains and displays the social, political, economic and cultural history of San Giovanni in Fiore during that era. Perhaps without emigration, these images would not have been captured and certainly would not have acquired the value that had assumed for many people that were withdrawn from the affection of their own loved ones for many years.

To emigration it is also dedicated the narrative museum, ‘La Nave della Sila’, in the neighboring town of Spezzano della Sila, as a testimony with how much the phenomenon has influenced these areas. The museum, a project of the Fondazione Napoli Novantanove curated by Gian Antonio Stella, inaugurated in 2005, has

⁷⁸ This case has been elaborated by Cristina Lio; it is the result of a thesis work that is being implemented for the Laurea Magistrale in Valorizzazione dei Sistemi Turistico-Culturali, Unical, with Sonia Ferrari as advisor. We wish to thank the mayor, Rosaria Succurro, and all those who were interviewed for the availability shown.

helped to fill a historical and civil memory gap in a region that has lived, more than the others, the dramatic experience of the migratory movement.

From a series of interviews that were conducted with various local stakeholders, including the mayor, the representatives of the Proloco and other local associations, a tour guide, the director of the Museo Demologico and the director of the Centro Studi Internazionali Gioachimiti, it emerged that dozens and dozens of emigrants from San Giovanni in Fiore, now mostly of third and fourth generations, return to their town of origin for short term vacations. The ISTAT data show in the last five years (2020 was excluded due to the problems connected to Covid-19) a number of tourist arrivals equal to 10,854 (2015), with a small increment at the end of a five year period (11,152 arrivals in 2019). In the same period there has been a decrease, instead, of overnight stays, equal to 40,527 in 2015 and to 29,701 in 2019. This makes it clear that the average stay has been greatly reduced in the last few years. In San Giovanni in Fiore, following the cited occurrence above, often those who return have inherited a home, staying in the home of one's parents or grandparents, or even as a guest with relatives or friends. The interviews have shown that on the average only 20 percent of tourists, generally those coming from outside of Europe, prefer to stay in hotels, the remaining 80 percent in private homes.

In terms of the tourist offer, the municipality of San Giovanni in Fiore in 2019 counted 12 extra-hotel accommodations (campgrounds and tourist resorts, agritourisms, Bed & Breakfasts and other accommodations) with 3,499 beds and 5 hotels (hotels 4 and 3 stars) with 347 beds, for a total of 17 tourist accommodations and 3,846 beds. Following the interviews, it was shown that in the historic centre, which is extraordinarily beautiful and rich with scenery, with impressive buildings and historical-artistic constructions of interest such as the Abbazia Florense, the association 'Heritage Calabria', with the collaboration of the director of the 2005 urban development plan of San Giovanni in Fiore, has purchased and restored three buildings, now equipped with 40 beds entirely available to the emigrants. Its president stated: *Heritage is an association of Calabrian emigrants, created with an objective: to remember the diaspora and foster the gathering of the emigrants*, and it is for this reason that these cottages belong to the association and to the municipality. Every roots tourist who so wish can remain there. The association has embarked upon many initiatives, including partnerships with universities abroad for student exchanges, twinning and friendship pacts with foreign entities. They are, above all, the associations that support the roots tourists before and during their trip to San Giovanni in Fiore. For example, the president of the association 'Un Sorriso agli Emigranti' (A Smile for the Emigrants) stated that they organize coaches from Rome (the first stopover for transcontinental flights) to drive and accompany the tourists to the most beautiful cities in our country and finally reach San Giovanni in Fiore, where they will begin their journey of memories.

With the arrival of tourists during the summer, the associations, the various bodies and the tour guides organize different events like the 'Festa della pacchiana' (a traditional and folkloristic market fair), book presentations, festivals, award

ceremonies such as ‘The Man of the year’ (organized by Heritage Calabria) in which the lovers of Calabria participate, or even commemorations to remember the citizens of San Giovanni in Fiore who lost their lives in certain tragedies, such as that of the mine of Monongah in the United States or that of the avalanche that buried the construction site for the dam of Mattmark, in Switzerland. Numerous connections and twinnings with West Virginia have been established, where there is a large community of San Giovannesi, that still today is in contact with the associations and with the tour guide that was interviewed. In 2006, Joe Manchin, the Governor of West Virginia, visited the town to see the birthplace of his grandparents, natives of San Giovanni in Fiore from where they emigrated to America to seek their fortune. It was a great event for the whole region.

The motivations that push roots tourists to return are mainly tied to the affection and the love for the land of origin, therefore to the connection to community, history, festivals, traditions, and all which is a part of the local culture that the emigrant carries with him/herself and that represents the base of the so-called ‘place attachment’. Pertaining to history, the village preserves legends and traditions, such as weaving and antique recipes (among these, it is remembered the *pitta mpigliata*, a typical San Giovannese dish), that the emigrants, actual carriers of traditions, knowledges and typical cuisine, continue to pass down even in their ‘adopted’ country. They are the local food and wine products (like salami, cheeses, wines, oregano), together with the fabrics and the goldsmith work from great and antique traditions in San Giovanni in Fiore, that are proven to be the goods that are primarily purchased and exported.

Roots tourism is a strongly growing tourism segment within the last few years, that could represent an important source of sustainable development for small Calabrian towns like San Giovanni in Fiore. Its mayor stated that, starting with the desire for research, rediscovery and hospitality consistent with the objectives of the Agenda 2030 for the European sustainable development, the Municipality is already initiating synergies with companies, academies and Local Action Groups to raise awareness of the origins of the San Giovannesi citizens around the world. By collaborating and creating not sporadic measures, San Giovanni in Fiore could become a cultural, other than tourist, destination, where to live and experience one’s own roots.

Deliceto and the Delicetans around the world⁷⁹

The municipality of Deliceto, in the province of Foggia, is situated on the first foothills of the southern Monti Dauni, in a privileged setting, that forms a geographic and cultural link between the Irpinia area to the south and Capitanata plateau in the north. Its particular orography creates a characteristic terrace from which you can dominate the Apulian territory. The natural system excels with two Sites of

⁷⁹ Nicolaia Iaffaldano and Vito Roberto Santamato, Università di A. Moro di Bari.

Community Interest, the forest named Difesa and the other Macchione, this last one being an object of tourist enhancement with events that are held throughout the year. The Medieval village is isolated on a hill, with its characteristic spiraled weave on which the majestic Norman-Swabian Castle overlooks, whose lines and curves have enchanted the attention and heightened the curiosity of many visitors. The Franciscan Convent and the annexed Church of Saint Anthony are elevated on a rocky terrace, where the eye extends onto a very vast territory.

From a series of interviews conducted with various local stakeholders⁸⁰, including the mayor, it is found that the flow of tourists in 2018 was equal to 889 visitors and in 2019 to 1,053; in 2020 there are no disclosures due to the pandemic. Concerning the number of roots tourists in relation to the total of visitors, it should be clarified that these visitors are poorly traceable, because the roots tourists in Deliceto generally stays with relatives or possess their own house. The roots tourists in 2018 were around 350, in 2019 around 400 and in 2020 there were very few. In the village there are few accommodation facilities: 3 guesthouses and a B&B. The offer of accommodation facilities in Deliceto is in phase of expansion, and private businesses are building 5 new accommodation structures (B&B and guesthouses); the municipal administration, on their part, has recently benefited from some funds for the construction of an evocative structure in the convent of Saint Anthony, a building from the 1500s that has preserved the typical organization of a convent, with small cells of 9 square meters. When it is completed, it will be possible to live in a unique context, connected to the spirituality that the village is steeped in because of its ties to the Saints who lived here. The objective is to obtain 100 beds to approach a more structured tourist vision that is capable of offering a complete set of hospitality services.

As in all of the little towns of the Dauni mountains, even here the classic summer program for the month of August is offered, when they organize an event, that is musical or theatrical, every evening, an all-night evening with the castle and the churches open, astronomical observations, the ‘Sagra del maiale nero’ (Festival of the black swine), or ‘Gusta il borgo’ (Savor the village), a food and wine event that has been established in the last few years. There are two celebrations for the patron saint festivities, one at the beginning of May and the other at the end of September; these are organized especially for roots tourism, because many emigrated Delicetans prefer not to return during the month of August but in September, when the patron saint ‘Feast of Maria SS. dell’Olmietello’ occurs. The patron saint feast in May is deeply felt, with a pilgrimage to the nearby convent of Maria SS. della Consolazione. Even the Christmas period is very lively and is when many visitors arrive.

In general, the Delicetans emigrated to Canada, where there is a very active community and with which the municipal administration is in contact. The emigrants founded a vibrant club, the ‘Canadian Social Club’ Deliceto of Toronto. *They reunite*

⁸⁰ We wish to thank the Mayor, Pasquale Bizzarro, the Assessor of Tourism, Adriana Natale, and all those who were interviewed.

every weekend, celebrate the birthdays of all the Delicetans who are there every month and even connect with the new media, with live calls and videos or sending videos to greet the relatives who have remained in Puglia, an individual who was interviewed explains and adds: This is certainly one of the more active associations, particularly in contact with the village. Many Delicetans, even young emigrants within the last few years, live in Germany, where however there is no established contact through an association. They often return to Deliceto, especially during the summer period. There are Delicetans also in Argentina and Venezuela.

The emigrants of second and third generation often speak with the residents the so-called 'italese', a mix between Italian and dialect, because within the family they learned more dialect than Italian. They do not know Italian well and therefore use dialectal expressions, but they speak it with the pride of those who want to show that they belong to the community.

The representative of an association states: *The older emigrants frequently return, every year or almost every year there are regular visitors even from Canada, because it is a tradition. Before they organized flights destined for them, while currently tourism is more individual, but anyway every year there are those people who arrive at the beginning of August and often leave after the patron saint feast in September; they frequently are retired that can stay for longer periods of time. Those of third and fourth generations are seen less and particularly it is difficult to meet those who do not speak Italian that return to the village, because who does not speak Italian has interrupted the link with the homeland and their traces are lost.*

There are also the new generations who come to spend vacation periods and love to visit the Apulian and Italian tourist destinations, such as Gargano, the Amalfi coast, and Rome, while using Deliceto as a logistic base; the younger tourists, basically, take advantage to see Italy and, hence, return for brief periods, staying in Deliceto perhaps a week and spending the rest of the vacation touring Italy. The majority of roots tourists return to see friends and relatives and to visit places and moments connected to the culture of the village and to childhood. Considered worthy of note, there is the motivation to research certificates, other documents or photos, because when emigrants make requests of this type over the Internet and social media usually the response is immediate. For example, a respondent tells us: *The association of Delicetans Around the World has opened a social platform called for by the Delicetans living in Canada, where they post photos and ask about the name of a classmate or who was the first in line in the old processions because he/she wants to know, because maybe he/she forgot the name of that friend and would like to restore a friendship, and often those same Canadians respond in broken Italian, but it is possible to well understand that they enjoy to rediscover the anecdotes, their history and their identity.*

The relationships with the residents are about total integration, for every age group. The residents are very welcoming and this characteristic puts at ease the visitor in general and especially the roots tourists; these tourists also participate actively in the organization of events and festivals: they are frequently the leading figures. There

are numerous cultural associations in Deliceto. First of all, there is the Pro-Loco, that has been active for over 50 years and that plays the role of coordinator other than the organization of the major part of the events. The local cultural associations (folk groups, theatrical associations, equestrian center) are the driving forces for the organization of events and often are also involved in folkloristic events that are tied to ancestral tourism whether in Italy or abroad (Germany, England, Canada). Many citizens participate in the associations so as to keep the popular and religious traditions of the village alive and passed down.

Roots tourism is not opposed, in respect, to other forms of tourism, and is a phenomenon that certainly enriches the small towns that are in danger of depopulation and abandonment. With this perspective, the position of the local authorities is that of implementing actions to stimulate this type of tourism. The main objective of the municipal administration of Deliceto is, as a consequence, that of coordinating the activities of the associations in collaboration with the Pro-Loco, creating a forum for the associations with the scope of involving them and collectively structuring the cultural and social programs and the activities for the promotion of tourism.

The call of Mussomeli around the world⁸¹

Mussomeli⁸², a municipality that emerges on a hillside area in the province of Caltanissetta, with a population of 10,885 inhabitants, shows a particular interest towards the community of its emigrants abroad. During the years from 1950 to 1970, the phenomenon of emigration was consistent, it suffices to think that the population in 1951 was equal to 15,872 inhabitants and in 1970 around 11,000. Many inhabitants from Mussomeli settled in England, the United States and France, and in northern Italy.

It is little town with tourist vocation, that offers its visitors an important tangible heritage, such as the Castello Manfredonico, the Santuario Diocesano Maria SS. dei Miracoli, the Via degli Oratori, the Antiquarium Archeologico and various other archeological sites, but also intangible, represented by traditions and events, in particular religious. In fact, Mussomeli is called the town of the Brotherhoods. In terms of accommodations, seven structures are present (five B&Bs and two agritourisms). Registered visitors were 6,284 in 2018 and 4,281 in 2019. A portion of the roots tourists stay in the homes of relatives and friends.

To give a boost to tourism, the project 'Case a 1 euro' (Homes at 1 euro) was started in 2017; it provides for the sale of unoccupied and abandoned real estate properties at the symbolic price of 1 euro, with the objective of encouraging the restoration of the historical center, giving impetus to local businesses and facilitating

⁸¹ Tiziana Nicotera, Università della Calabria

⁸² We wish to thank the mayor, Giuseppe Catania, and the director of the Tourism Department Aics Agrigento, Mario Gero Taibi, for their collaboration

repopulation, that is, the installation of new residents. The enquiries for these houses have been overwhelming: 170 real estate properties were sold predominately to foreigners (only two to Italians). The Municipality has reserved a website for this initiative (www.caseleuro.it), in English, in which the welcome message is: ‘Your new home in Italy’. The website shows, besides a presentation of the village and of Sicily, the houses that are still available, the procedures, the regulations and the necessary documentation, the services (technician services, like engineers and architects; construction and remodeling firms and businesses and other skilled workers; accommodations; interpreters). Although it is an interesting opportunity for the target market of roots tourists, at present none of the purchases have been made by emigrants from the municipality who are now residents abroad. From the interview with the Mayor, it appears, nonetheless, that giving propelling force to this activity of sale/purchase, it was the word of mouth from those whom he defines as ‘ambassadors’ of Mussomeli around the world.

On the segment of roots tourism the municipal Administration works with a specific plan to call the roots tourists back to their homeland and to establish relationships. To this a Facebook page ‘Mussomolesi nel Mondo’ (Mussomolesi around the world) has been dedicated; it is presented as a community for all those who were born, have origins or have lived in Mussomeli, especially through photographs of the past and present of people, events and places, shared by members. Some albums are evocative, such as those of weddings, of religious processions and of pieces of the local craftsmanship. The video section is abundant, with references especially of the patron saint feast, but also of ancient culinary traditions (for example, on how bread was made in the past), of historical reenactments (the performance of the Ghost in the Castle) and of an important celebration included in the Intangible Heritage Registry of Sicily (REIS): ‘Laments of the Holy Week’, performed rigorously in Latin by several singers specialized.

During Holy Week there is a deeply felt participation on the part of the emigrants. However, the festivity that mainly attracts the return of emigrants is the ‘Feast of the Madonna dei Miracoli’, the patron of the village. It is interesting to observe that the natives of Mussomeli perpetuate this event that they are so connected to in the foreign countries where they have settled. A day was created by the municipality ten years ago for the emigrants native of Mussomeli around the world during the week of celebrations of the Patron of Mussomeli, that falls on September 8th. Around 500 people of Mussomolian origin return to their birthplace, staying in the homes of relatives and spending busy days of celebration (those who do not have relatives there anymore stay in the village’s accommodation facilities).

Among the activities developed for maintaining contact with the emigrants, besides social networks, a full-scale data bank is being created of all the emigrants who have been distinguished for their merits in various fields. The data bank is organized in three main sections: subjects that cover institutional roles; artists and researchers; and entrepreneurs and professionals. An award, the Castello d’Oro, is given for the accomplishments achieved in various fields. The registered figures are given the

informal role of ambassadors, invited to return but also to promote the knowledge of the village within the communities abroad. In particular, a plan has been launched through the emigrants for attracting investments in the agri-food and tourism industry. Among the initiatives put forward by the municipality, we remember, in addition, those which the mayor defines as ‘reinforcing actions of the Mussomolian community in various territories’, that is, the tasks carried out by a delegation of the Municipality in London and in Buffalo in the USA, the home of numerous emigrants and descendants, in order to enable possible exchanges.

The stories from the local population, through the online sharing of important moments of the life of the village, fuel the emigrants’ desires to participate even from a distance. The emigrants become the spokespeople of the traditions of their village of origin and promote all the resources and initiatives that are offered in the territory, from real estate, food and wine, to travel and visits. In all of this, there does not seem to be any separation between who currently lives in the village and who has visited it in the past, in an exchange that enriches the whole Mussomolians wherever they may happen to be.

Roots tourism in Roccella Jonica⁸³

Roccella Jonica, with a population of 6,386 inhabitants, is a centre of the province of Reggio Calabria. The Ionian municipality emerges from the sea and boasts an important tourist port, the Porto delle Grazie, the only one in a radius of 100 kilometers. Its economy is built on tourism and food and wine. From a tourist point of view, it is a very significant destination, due also to the policies implemented in the years concerning the preservation of the environment. Indeed, since about twenty years ago Roccella is recognized with prestigious awards as the Bandiera Blu (Blue Flag) and the Bandiera Verde (Green Flag), as well as its port, that is awarded the Bandiera Blu dei Porti e degli Approdi Turistici⁸⁴ (Blue Flag of the Ports and Tourist Dockings). Roccella, in addition, is the home of important national and international events, like Roccella Jazz – Rumori Mediterranei and the Giro d’Italia a Vela (The Sailing Tour of Italy).

⁸³ This case has been prepared by Giuseppe Vottari. It is the result of the thesis work that is being implemented for the Laurea Magistrale in Valorizzazione dei Sistemi Turistico-Culturali, Unical, with Sonia Ferrari as an advisor. We wish to thank the mayor, Vittorio Zito, and all those who were interviewed for the availability shown.

⁸⁴ The Bandiera Blue (Blue Flag) is a voluntary eco-label awarded to the tourist seaside resorts that meet the criteria relating to sustainable land management. The international recognition is awarded by the FEE. The Bandiera Verde (Green Flag) is awarded by Italian pediatricians to the best beaches in Italy for families with children, from 0 to 18 years of age. The Bandiera Blue dei Porti e degli Approdi (Blue Flag of the Ports and Tourist Dockings) is an international recognition awarded by the FEE Italy to the ports that practice a strategy oriented to environmental education and management, to the services and safety and to the quality of water.

The small seaside town is among the few Calabrian entities that are interested in a particular type of tourism, that is, roots tourism. Throughout the course of its history, in particular the recent, the Ionian municipality has recognized the migratory phenomenon first hand. Many Roccellians, in fact, in the past decided to leave their own town to seek out fortune and better life conditions in other parts of the world. The major fluxes headed in the direction of the Americas, Australia and some European countries. In particular, two large communities of Roccellians are present today in Australia and Argentina.

To better understand the phenomenon of roots tourism in this town, its evolution and its impact, a series of stakeholders were interviewed, among whom being: the president of the municipal council, the vice president of Jonica Holidays⁸⁵, the president of the association 'Insieme si Può'⁸⁶, the provincial councilor of UNPLI⁸⁷, the manager of some important events and the president of the Pro-Loco. From the interviews conducted, the characteristics of 'Roccellian' roots tourism have emerged. The major part of these tourists come from the two communities stated above and their visit to the Ionian municipality is long around a month. The tourists who usually return to Roccella to see relatives and friends are mainly within the age ranges of 45-70. The older visitors are very devoted both to the area and to the traditions, even the religious traditions, that they continue in the countries that they have emigrated to. During their stay in Roccella, a good part of the tourists prefer to remain in the accommodation facilities; only a minority stay with relatives or friends. The connection with Calabria changes according to one's age; those over 40 are very attached to the area, while the younger are somewhat less. This is precisely one of the problems encountered, that is, the difficulty to attract the second and third generations. Despite this, however, the image that the emigrants and their descendants have of Calabria, regardless of age, is almost always positive and the desire to return resides in them. Often and willingly, they speak with their friends, triggering an important and positive word of mouth. When they are away, they follow Calabria on social media, from the websites of the various associations and in general through all the means of communication. Another factor that demonstrates their connection with Calabria is their love towards the local products and gastronomy.

⁸⁵ Jonica Holidays is a cooperative that includes Hotels, Tourist Resorts, Campgrounds, Residences, Agritourisms and Tourist Operators in the province of Reggio Calabria. The cooperative conducts a promotional action on the interior and overseas market, with the aim to publicize their resources and accommodations to the operators that are interested <http://www.jonicaholidays.it/>

⁸⁶ Nonprofit entity that is responsible for the concept of legality with innovative systems and significantly beyond the common standards. It promotes the figure of the police and of the law enforcement officers outside of the institutional time, in addition to meeting with students in various grades, assistance with the disabled and charity, benefit performances with Zelig and Colorado café comedians and artists of national significance.

⁸⁷ National Union of Pro-Loco of Italy.

In the years taken into account (2014-2019), an increase of foreign tourism arrivals is seen, since the year 2017, in combination with the adopted promotion policies regarding roots tourism. Specifically, in a period of five years, an average of 14,072 annual arrivals (87.55 percent) were from Italy, while in regards to foreign visitors, it is reported an average of 2,233 arrivals (12.45 percent) (data ISTAT). The arrivals are distributed over a total of 22 accommodation facilities, among which there are 4 hotels (a 5 star luxury hotel, two 4 star hotels and one 3 star hotel), while the other accommodation facilities are 18. These show an increase of 10 units from 2018 to 2019.

Regarding the role of the various associations, these latter enter into contact with the tourists both before the trip and during the stay in the Ionian municipality. There are many enquiries for information and services, for example, timetables and means of transport to reach the area, information on places of cultural interest, information on relatives or on one's own family. With respect to the impact on the socio-cultural fabric, these tourists integrate very well with the local people; in this sense there have never been observed incompatibility problems with the local community and vice versa. That which is most appreciated, other than the cuisine and the local products, is the reception that is given to these visitors.

The municipality is in direct contact with the managers of the Argentine and Australian Roccellian communities, with whom they seek to strengthen rapports through various initiatives. An example of this was the visit, in 2011, of two Roccellian delegations in Argentina and in Australia, on the occasion of the most heartfelt celebration for Roccellians, in honor of the Madonna delle Grazie. This is described as an important and powerful experience, in view of the reception given to the delegations, who were able to appreciate how the local traditions are brought forth thousands of miles away. This is confirmed by the fact that the main contributor for the restoration of the Sanctuary della Madonna delle Grazie is Australian. To strengthen and enhance cultural relations between the two communities, in 2019 a delegation of Australian administrators was welcomed, led by Mayor Wendy Waller, the first citizen of the Australian city of Liverpool. During the meeting the mayor of Roccella, Vittorio Zito, awarded a memorial plaque of the ceremony to Mayor Wendy Waller, who asserted that *Roccella lives even in Liverpool*.

For the roots tourists, the municipality organizes in the month of July, concurrently with the religious feast mentioned above, the event Meta Roccella, with moments of music and traditions and two evenings at the port during the event Porto Incantato (Enchanted Port). The tourists, in addition, are accompanied on a few tours in the nearby towns, with the objective to become acquainted even with the villages and the small attractions that surround Roccella. Now all these activities are closed because of the pandemic, but as soon as the situation returns to normal, there is already the promise and the willingness to organize a major event in Roccella, with the presence of the Roccellian emigrants.

All the stakeholders who were interviewed hope in this form of tourism as a driving force for local development for Roccella and for Calabria in general. They consider

it fundamental, because it can help to reduce tourism seasonality and also it is a type of sustainable tourism given the respect concerning the area of origin on the part of these visitors. To be more competitive and attractive, however, improvements on many issues are needed: it is necessary to invest in more modern hotel amenities, equipped for example with transfer services for the guests to facilitate the discovery of Calabria; investments in new leisure and non-recreational activities are necessary; the digitalization of the archives is important to facilitate genealogical research; there is a need to organize the travel to Roccella from the main Calabrian airports and much more; the offer of events or other attractions is important to enhance the interest of the younger generation to the area of origin of their ancestors.

Roseto Valfortore, an ancient countryside village as a nostalgic destination⁸⁸

Roseto Valfortore is a municipality in the province of Foggia, that arises on a hill of the westernmost ridge of the Dauni mountains of the high valley of the river Fortore. It is the nature that influences the harmony of the village, being enriched by the skillful work of the stonemasons and by the countryside identity that renders it one of I Borghi più Belli d'Italia⁸⁹ (The Most Beautiful Villages in Italy). Roseto, situated on the border with Campania, is a minuscule settlement that mirrors the construction methods of the Lombards.

By a series of interviews conducted with various local stakeholders⁹⁰, which include the mayor, in 2018 and 2019 the presence of roots tourists were estimated equal to 500-600, while the presence of other types of tourists are equal to around 200-300. This is a fairly significant tourism flow for the municipality, considering that the current population is around 1,000 residents. Tourism is becoming a leverage for the sustainable development of the small village, that is at risk of depopulation, and roots tourism, a fast growing sector in the last few years, could represent an important source of sustainable development for small villages like Roseto Valfortore. Concerning the year 2020, the roots tourists present in Roseto were only those from Europe, given that, due to the pandemic, there were no arrivals from overseas. The average length of stay in Roseto by roots tourists is a month. The visitors who arrive with tourist agencies from Canada, instead, stay for a few days or maximum a week, because they go on a tour of Italy. Generally, they coincide their stay in Roseto with the patron saint feast of the Madonna del Carmine.

⁸⁸ Nicolaia Iaffaldano and Vito Roberto Santamato, Università A.Moro di Bari.

⁸⁹ The Associazione de I Borghi più Belli d'Italia (The Association of the Most Beautiful Villages in Italy) was created on the impetus of the Consulta del Turismo dell'Associazione Nazionale dei Comuni Italiani (the Council of Tourism of the Association of Italian Municipalities) for the appreciation of the great heritage of history, art, culture, environment and traditions present in Italian small towns and villages.

⁹⁰ We wish to thank the mayor, Lucilla Parisi, and all those who were interviewed for their collaboration.

The tourist accommodations that are available in the small town are two hotels, four B&Bs and some guesthouses. Another four B&Bs are being constructed, and there exists the Villaggio Primavera with 10 bungalows, that will be opened soon. It is an accommodation of the municipality managed by a community cooperative.

The events that have been held in the village in the last 2-3 years, given both for the roots tourists and, in general, for all those who have gone to visit Roseto or to stay there, are connected to the pre-pandemic period, where there was a summer calendar that began in June and ended at the end of August; from the middle of June to the beginning of July events were held only on the weekends, everyday from July until the middle of August with programs for children, theatre, musical and cultural events connected to the traditions.

The three days that are dedicated to the emigrants (4-5-6 August) are very important and followed. The region of Puglia has established the 'Giornata dei Pugliesi nel Mondo' (Day of Apulians Around the World) on the 4th of August and awards those who are distinguished in their field or who have brought development to their country of origin. Furthermore, on the last Friday of July the 'Festa dell'Accoglienza' (Welcoming Festival) is held, because on the following Sunday falls the patron saint feast, that attracts an overwhelming number of emigrants. The patron saint feast of the Madonna del Carmine, to whom the Rosetans are very devoted, is held at the end of July, precisely to try to give the opportunity to participate to as many ancestral tourists as possible. The roots tourists are welcomed that day with a Holy Mass and afterwards they are offered traditional products at the town hall. Then in the evening, a musical show is held to involve them even more. In Roseto, many *sagre* (festivals) are held that take back to the farming community, such as the 'Festival of the grain' and the 'Festival of the calf', given that the village has an ancient livestock tradition; these are events that take place in the historic center and that re-enact the farmer's day, both in the cuisine and at work. Many events are enriched by the musical band of Roseto, due to the local band tradition that originates back to the beginning of the 1900s.

The Rosetan roots tourists predominately come from Canada and the United States, nations towards which the migratory phenomenon was the strongest. Some Rosetans also emigrated to Europe: France, Germany and England, but in reduced numbers. The first generation of emigrants travelled towards the Americas at the end of the 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s, then around the 1960s of the last century; the first who emigrated attracted their families to the new homeland. Slowly, the migratory flow subsequently addressed towards Europe and has never been interrupted. According the AIRE, Roseto Valfortore is, among the Apulian municipalities, the third for the number of emigrants residing abroad.

When the emigrants return to the village as tourists, they speak in dialect, the older generation express themselves in Rosetan dialect and then try to speak in Italian, but it is an Italian that can be described as 'mixed'. The language of the younger generations, instead, is English. Someone taught them a little Italian and a few words of dialect, but they would like to learn the Italian language in a more precise way. In

Roseto a school for English and Italian was opened, where summer courses are held. They are Italian courses for the younger generations of roots tourists that during their holidays want to learn a few simple phrases.

The motivations are many for the Rosetans who return: there are those who are searching for the documents of their grandparents or other relatives; there are others who return only to see the homes of their relatives; many arrive because of the emotional connection with the country of origin; others, still, the new generations, come more than anything else because of the stories from their parents and grandparents. A respondent explains: *The emotional connection impels the younger people to come the first time, but then the following year they return because they are surprised by what they have found in the village. They often imagined a completely different reality compared to the present, perhaps because of the stories from their grandparents, of those who are older, when they left their country of origin; it was the story of a poor area, where ten people lived in one room, it is especially this curiosity that pushes them to come.* When they arrive on vacation, however, they find a village that is completely changed, totally different, with events, services and they remain positively amazed.

The roots tourists interact well with the residents, even when they do not know them, and they always find someone to speak with, because as one of the respondents explains: *It is not that the genealogical tree ends, also because the village is small, so the residents wait for you to return and it is this connection that keeps them united. They integrate themselves with facility, obviously those who are older, the younger ones do it but inevitably with more difficulty.* During the stay, another states, *The older people get acquainted with the residents by playing cards, participating in tournaments, taking walks with the friends they have in Roseto. There is an 'elderly council' and for the most part these visitors spend every afternoon with the older people of Roseto, perhaps organizing the evenings with dinners and music, in which some play the guitar and the accordion, basically they spend their time together.*

The Pro-Loco coordinates the activities and the events of the Municipality. There is a summer calendar, the two entities coordinate it together and they share it even with the tourist operators and the other associations that are present in the territory. The Pro-Loco conducts nature walks and coordinates the tourist guides. Roseto works considerably with the initiatives that are implemented by 'I Borghi più Belli d'Italia', an association that it has belonged to since 2006, and organizes the 'Notte Romantica' (Romantic Night) and 'Cicerone per un Giorno' (Cicerone for a Day) in collaboration with the schools.

Chapter 5

Roots travel in the web: communication policies and ‘Internet listening’⁹¹

SUMMARY: 5.1 The compared analysis of the institutional web portals of some national destinations. 5.2 The web *sentiment analysis* in reference to roots tourism. 5.3 Conclusions.

5.1 The compared analysis of the institutional web portals of some national destinations

As illustrated in Chapter 1, in Italy the interest toward roots tourism is quite recent, but growing at a fast rate. Institutionally, we are working toward the development and the promotion of this type of tourism: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI - Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale). Through numerous initiatives, these entities, reinforce the connections of Italians and those of Italian ancestry residing abroad, ENIT studies the flow connection to roots tourism and other promotional activities and, finally, the Ministry of Tourism (Ministero del Turismo) with the new allocations of expertise on the relations with the European Union and international in the tourism sector (with the exception of the expertise of MAECI). Apart from a centralized level, it should be mentioned that there is an interest toward emigrants and their descendants even on the part of the local government, from the regional entities to the single municipal administrations. The commitment of organizations, such as, the Confederation of Italians around the World (Confederazione degli Italiani nel Mondo), is also of great importance. These organizations deal with many debates, projects and proposals on the theme of roots tourism. With reference to the tourist policies that are adopted in our country, the aim is to understand if and in what way Italy proposes itself on the Internet, that is considered the more extensive

⁹¹ Tiziana Nicotera (Università della Calabria) is the author of the paragraph 5.1. The paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 were written by Damiano De Marchi (The Data Appeal Company), Sonia Ferrari and Tiziana Nicotera (Università della Calabria).

and used tool, above all by new generations, as a travel destination for the exploration or the reclaiming of one's origin. The question here is which are Italy's branding policies for this tourism product and how these are being communicated online through official web portals to attract Italians around the world to embark on the ancestral journey.

It is undeniable the important role of the web portals in the processes of tourism communication, in establishing relationships with the market and in the enhancement of the capability of generating value for the tourist (Pencarelli et al., 2011). Italy, certainly, is not the only nation with a substantial migratory exodus. There is a need to make a comparison, with the initiatives adopted by other countries, in order to encourage roots tourism (Ferrari and Nicotera, 2020; Nicotera, 2021). In this respect, the migratory flow leaving Europe has been primarily examined, the flow that was voluntary born, in order to achieve better living conditions (financial migrants) when Europe began to experience a true mass migration towards the Americas and also to Australia, that is, at the end of the XIX century. After World War II (King, 2002), an abrupt halt occurred; it was a new turning point in the European migratory dynamics with a South-North axis, that was primarily internal within the European continent (Bettin and Cera, 2014). On the basis of the emigration rates, a series of countries other than Italy in which the outgoing migratory phenomenon was significant: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Great Britain⁹², Ireland, Norway, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and Sweden (Bettin and Cera, 2014; Hatton and Williamson, 2005; Massey, 2003).

Research consisted in a benchmark analysis, conducted on the web, that is a comparison between the brand Italy on roots tourism and the brand of other European countries on the same theme⁹³. Sees Table 5.1. This doesn't deal with competitive benchmarking, in order to evaluate the market positioning. In actual fact, roots tourism does not determine a competition between territories or destinations, or at least not directly. If the prevalent reason for the trip is to build and strengthen heritage identity, the latter is tied only to the country of origin and not to another. The objective is to make an assessment, considering the strong push of digitalization, of the marketing effectiveness of processes and products that are being promoted on an international level on the web. This revelation is based on a comparison with other nations, in order to identify the best results of the sector to strive for when planning future changes and improvements. The study is focused on 17 institutional web portals of national tourism promotion from which the adopted policies for communicating and promoting this type of tourism are derived; they can also be an instrument for understanding if subjects in charge for the tourist planning

⁹² The analysis has separately considered England and Scotland, also in view of the tourism policies that were adopted by the latter on the ancestral and genealogical tourism.

⁹³ The study was conducted between the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, and updated in 2021 (end of May of the current year).

and promotions of the various considered countries have adopted, and in which ways, any programs, in order to encourage travel for the discovery of the ancestors' origins by means of an effective *web based* communication.

The methodology used was a *desk* and *content analysis* qualitative research, conducted on a selected sample of portals, combined in part with a *field* analysis carried out through email contacts with the tourist organizations and other subjects of interest for the objective of the research: tourism promotion agencies, government portals, tourism information points, tour operators, genealogical research companies, guides associations, etc. The following main search keys were used: *genealogy tourism, roots tourism, ancestral tourism, legacy tourism, heritage tourism, diaspora, ancestry, family research, ancestral homeland, ancestors*, in combination with words such as: *tour, travel, journey, services*. A manual exploratory model of analysis of the portals (not automated by software) was used on the described theme through the search keys; the model was clarified according to a series of items, depending on the existence or less within the portals. An evaluation model of the web portals was not adopted, because it was not a part of the purpose of the analysis.

The limitations of the survey were due to the absence of a study related to the comprehensive plans for the tourism promotion of the various countries (with the exception of Italy), that are supported by digital tools. Nevertheless, it is presumable that online communication is concise and reflects the general tourism marketing strategies of the country. To remedy a possible separation, a direct contact with the entities and institutions by means of institutional emails was carried out. Another limitation is related to the choice to focus on the official national (and in some cases, regional) tourism portals, that represent the principal point of reference for the 'country' destinations, with the awareness that these are only a part of the realm of online information that influence the choice of the destination.

In Italy, the National Agency of Tourism (Agenzia Nazionale del Turismo – ENIT) launched a series of initiatives on roots tourism, conducted by its network for the promotion abroad of tourism in Italy. In its 2018 study report⁹⁴, ENIT cited, for example, the festival 'Buenos Aires celebrates Calabria' and the contest in Buenos Aires 'Travel to discover your roots', directed to the youth of the various communities in Argentina. The 'Annual marketing and promotion plan 2021' of ENIT⁹⁵ reports that the theme of ancestral tourism continues to be the core of the communication objectives and that pointing to the major markets of provenance of immigrants of Italian origin could create a process of strengthening the effectiveness of the activities of communication. In the same plan it is read: *In a Post-Covid19 setting, the theme of returning tourism is speckled with semantic platforms that are even more empathetic, also considering the movements of solidarity that Italy has*

⁹⁴ For further study please see: http://www.ontit.it/opencms/opencms/ont/it/focus/focus/Il_turismo_di_ritorno.html.

⁹⁵ Source: www.enit.it

spontaneously, been the subject of. The issue of the semantic, as is seen in the next paragraph, is an important factor for the conducted research on the web through 'Internet listening'.

Despite the initiatives that are put in place in the government portal *Italia.it*, that promotes the Italian incoming and the unified image of the Italian tourist offer through the 27 branches of ENIT around the world, there is still an absence of a product related to the possible travels at roots discovery. The travel ideas are anchored to the classification between 'Territory and Nature' (sea, mountain, lakes, nature and scenery), 'Culture, Art and History' (in which also falls entertainment and UNESCO sites), 'Wellness and Activity' (wellness, sports, tourism, tours aimed at cycle tourism and other tours for exploring the country) and the 'Specials' (where the Made in Italy, food and wine, places of faith and spirituality and specific events are included).

Virtuous examples are, from this point of view, Ireland and Scotland, that took roots tourism into account as a type of tourism to promote structurally, intercepting the target of reference, thanks to the new technology, by offering various contents and creating specific communication campaigns⁹⁶. Both governments included genealogical tourism within their strategies of tourism development. In Ireland, *The Gathering Ireland 2013*⁹⁷ deserves a special mentioning: thanks to which 5,000 events in every part of the country took place, even in those areas that would not have otherwise been tourist destinations, to call back to homeland the Irish emigrated and their descendants, with the support of the Fáilte Ireland and the Irish Tourist Board, but also of local authorities, state agencies, partners of the private sector and the community itself. The success was actually determined by the citizens' involvement and by the power of the personal invitations send to those who are of Irish origin and live abroad, with a notable impact, not only in financial terms but also in social terms, namely of a renewed community spirit. The web was used effectively for the registration of the *Gathering* events through the website and for the promotion through social media and digital platforms. Even the events that are not designed specifically for this target audience can became an occasion to attract the Irish living abroad, as occurred in the centennial *Easter Rising* in 2016⁹⁸. In Scotland a promotional campaign was launched in 1999 on genealogical culture aimed to emigrants, with the invitation to celebrate the coming in the new millennium in the homeland of origin, rediscovering one's own roots.

⁹⁶ For further study please see: www.discoverireland.ie/The-Gathering-Ireland; www.independent.ie/irish-news/news/new-gathering-bid-to-attract-easter-rising-2016-tourists-30557411.html; www.visitscotland.com/about/themed-years.

⁹⁷ The project was described in an analysis report of the event and of the results achieved edited by the Project Director Jim Miley in 'The Gathering Ireland 2013 – Final Report.'

⁹⁸Source: www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/our-work/casestudiesarchive/2015/april/ireland-2016-centenary-programme.

Table 5.1 Benchmarking on roots tourism among public tourist websites of some European countries

Country	Tourist website B2C	Area dedicated to roots tourism	Information and targeted services	Interaction and sharing experience	Contacts with business operators	Other activities carried out	Other public initiatives
Belgium	www.belgium.be/en/about_belgium/tourism						National Archives of Belgium (arch.arch.be)
Denmark	www.visitdenmark.com						Danish archive for immigration (Det Danske Udvanderarkiv)
Finland	www.visitfinland.com						Migration Institute of Finland (www.migrationinstitute.fi)
France	www.france.fr					Project for tourism cooperation	Commission franco-qubécoise sur les lieux de mémoire communs (www.cfqlmc.org) ; Cooperation project for genealogical tourism between Normandy and south Eure and the communities Hauts-du-Pérche e Marennes-Oléron
Germany	www.germany.travel	www.germany.travel/en/ms/german-heritage/home.html	Information on research, genealogy and archives, itineraries, historic sites, famous people, museums on emigration, traditional recipes, German emigration timeline, passenger lists	Testimonials	Mainly public: museums, archives, database, passenger lists, and archives of the German Evangelical Church. Tools for genealogical research by companies and private professionals		Census and civil registry (www.archivschule.de/content/23.html) ; Registries Evangelical Church (www.ekd.de/archive/deutsch/index.htm); Passenger lists embarkation ports (www.passagierlisten.de), etc
Greece	www.visitgreece.gr						

Italy	www.italia.it						ENT: Reoort 2018, Festivals and events abroad, competition for the new generations	Farnesina: technical committee, promotional spots, guide on roots tourism (brochures), support for scientific research projects
England	www.visitengland.com						Event campaigns: The Gathering 2013; Easter Rising Centenary 2016	Irish government sponsored website, specializing in genealogy irishgenealogy.ie; National Archives (www.nationalarchives.ie); Irish Family History Foundation (www.rootsireland.ie); General Register Office (www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/af7893-general-register-office), etc.
Ireland	www.ireland.com www.discoverireland.ie	www.ireland.com/en-us/things-to-do/themes/genealogy-and-ancestry/genealogy	Genealogical research and tour guide services, genealogical centers and archives on line and on site	Thematic communities themes (https://community.irel and.com); Video testimonial	Operators also private individuals by referring to websites: professional genealogical associations, genealogical research companies, etc.			
Norway	www.visitnorway.com	Any reference on the 1 theme of genealogy			Kapp documentation center and open-air museums			
Netherlands	https://www.holland.com							
Poland	www.poland.travel	www.poland.travel/en/heritage/reconnect-with-your-roots	Information on resources and tools for data research		Mainly public: Emigration Museums, genealogical companies, Polish State archives	Campaign: "Discover Poland to your neighbours!"	Project "Virtual Shetl" POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews (https://sztetl.org.pl/en) ; Emigration Museum in Gdynia (www.polska1.pl/en/); Polish State archives (www.archiwa.gov.pl/p1)	Conselho da Diáspora Portuguesa (www.diasporaportuguesa.org)
Portugal	www.visitportugal.com							

Scotland	www.visitscotland.com	www.visitscotland.com/see-do/research-your-ancestry	Genealogical research, ancestry e-book, itineraries, clan research, professions of the ancestors, museum of trades	Numerous packages offered by private individuals (tour operators and guides) and specialized research centers	Campaign: Homecoming Scotland 2014	ScotlandsPeople (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk), official website of Scottish government for the research of archives, request for certificates, etc.
Spain	www.spain.info					Website of the Andalusia region dedicated to discovery of the roots (www.andalucia.org/es/andalucia-tus-raices)
Sweden	https://visitsweden.com					
Switzerland	www.myswitzerland.com					

Source: direct survey

Scotland declared 2014 as ‘The year of the return to the homeland’ (*Homecoming Scotland*⁹⁹) to attract those of Scottish ancestry by organizing more than 1,000 events in the whole country and presenting the best of culture, art, food, history and local origins.

VisitScotland.com and also *Ireland.com* dedicate a part of the portal to roots research travel, with information on genealogical sites and online archives, private tours accompanied by guides or genealogists for discovering one’s ancestors, specific historical museums, digital brochures for the planning of ancestral travel. Any information included in the portals dedicated to those who have emigrated is a powerful appeal to conduct genealogical research and a continuous invitation to visit the country of origin. This implies that there is a great number of private entities that offer services for this segment, from historical family research to tourism tours.

On the *Ireland.com* portal, web pages intended for roots tourism are accessible with a URL that contains two keywords, these are *ancestry* and *genealogy*. The building of a family tree is shown as the first step to take remotely that must then lead to the trip: in fact, the trip is identified as a ‘return home’, in the place where there can be the beginning of a new chapter in one’s life. The textual information that is given in the home page of this very unique tourism product comprises of the concept of digital communication: *Genealogy isn’t just about finding out about the names connected to you and your loved ones. It’s about discovering what your ancestors did, how they lived their lives, the impact they had in their local community – and how brave they were to bid farewell to these green lands all those years ago, often starting their lives over again. These bits of information are the last pieces of a puzzle that spans lifetimes. What started with sepia-toned photographs handed down from generation to generation and searching online records, ends on the island of Ireland with a place you can call home.*

The content is expressed in a very engaging language, with great empathy, not inspiring what can be done or seen, but a sense of belonging, an ‘intimate’ work on oneself: *You can learn things about yourself and your family that you never imagined, discover relatives you never knew existed, and find a warm welcome and a home away from home in the land of your ancestors.*

In Ireland genealogical research is presented as a rather simple process, thanks to a vast number of online resources, support from official organizations, experts and even volunteers whose contacts and websites are provided. Many of these offer a free consultation (National Archives, General Register Office, National Library, Irish Genealogy are among these resources). Different events and conferences on the theme of genealogy are also organized. Direct testimonies of experiences lived in the reconstruction of one’s own family history and of the trip made to discover one’s origin, through video narrations, render this type of tourism even more exciting.

An interesting aspect that is noted from the analysis is the existence of a community where exchanging information and sharing experiences is possible; it is organized

⁹⁹ Source: Fonte: www.visitscotland.com/about/themed-years.

by themes and among them there is that of one's own Irish roots. The portal suggests helpful outside professionals, like the genealogists, with the possibility to create contacts with those interested. The genealogical research is considered so crucial that the Irish government sponsors a website for the access of databases.

The updating of the analysis conducted within the framework of this research from 2019 has shed light, nonetheless, on some of the aspects of the theme of roots tourism that were presented on *Ireland.com* but now are no longer available, for example, some lists of specialized tour operators, established itineraries and the possibility to obtain a *heritage* certificate.

The portal *Ireland.ie*¹⁰⁰ places specific attention on diaspora with an entry called 'Global & Diaspora', that suggests that the Irish who live abroad are considered a community on its own that does not converge within the generic target group of international demand.

The original and innovative campaign *Fill your heart with Ireland* of 2018¹⁰¹ that was promoted with great commitment on social media, was created on the basis of data obtained from the heart rate of a Swedish couple through sophisticated technology that monitored their experience observing their physiological responses during the trip to Ireland. Although addressed to all tourists, the campaign gives the idea of how a completely new approach, based on authentic emotions felt by visitors can be adopted, precisely, for roots tourism, a form of tourism with a greater emotional content compared to other segments.

In the VisitScotland.com portal the area dedicated to those of Scottish origin plays with keywords such as *ancestry/ancestors* and *connections*. Those of Scottish origin are invited to discover their 'Scottish ancestry DNA'. The proposal of travel is that of retracing the footsteps of one's ancestors, but not fully on a personal level in terms of family history: above all as an immersion into the past, in the history of the Scottish culture in general. The invitation, as stated on the web pages, is as follows: *Learn about where in Scotland the clans have their ancestral roots, or find which castles are connected to which clans and discover these stories for yourself. Plan the holiday of a lifetime where you can visit the towns, villages and streets where your Scottish ancestors would have once travelled. Or why not visit the variety of historic battlefields across the country, each offering a unique glimpse into the past?*

This personal scope involves the intimate sphere of one's own identity. Indeed, in another section in the portal it is read: *To follow in the footsteps of your forebears, pay tribute to obstacles they faced, the strides they made, and share in their culture,*

¹⁰⁰ The web portal *Ireland.ie*, which is managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs on behalf of the Irish government, has a different approach that could be defined as territorial marketing, not only tourism, with contents that range from culture and lifestyle to the attraction of investments for new entrepreneurs, commercial exchanges, research and study, up to the visit experience.

¹⁰¹ Source: www.tourismireland.com.

is not just to gain a deeper understanding of who they were and the land they came from, but of the person you are.

The research involves the surnames, the affiliation to clans and even to the professions of the ancestors. Everyone can reconstruct her/his own family tree, courtesy of the archives of the National Records of Scotland, and be supported in the ancestral journey by online resources, websites dedicated to the clans, companies specialized in the history of Scottish families and professional genealogists. For this purpose, even an explanatory video of a genealogist and a tour guide are posted. In 2001, a web portal, connected to the government site, was created and dedicated to emigration, research in the archives and enquire about certificates; its claim is *Find your Scottish Ancestors*.

The Scottish tourism agency seeks to inspire this journey to those who trace their family history, but also to those who desire to simply feel a connection with Scotland and the spirit of the country. A tourist guide in an e-book format¹⁰² illustrates the steps to take for an ancestral trip to Scotland, from the understanding of the history of emigration to the consultation of historical archives online, to continue the research at a later date directly in Scotland and to consult the archives locally, to literally walk in the footsteps of one's ancestors, thanks to the precise information on names and exact important places for them, or even to explore the Scottish land of the clans or to visit the places that have barely changed through the passage of time. The digital guide proposes living the daily life experience of the ancestors. Many attractions, such as historical museums or villages, in which the antique traditions have been preserved, offer a glimpse into the work and the customs of the ancestors of the present-day traveler. Even some important events¹⁰³, that celebrate the essence of being Scottish, could be occasions for establishing an ancestral connection.

The web becomes a tool to communicate, a way to have contact with one's ancestors through traditions, scenery, history and the Scottish people of today. The connection with one's birthplace is, then, offered in the form of different types of experiences: knowledge of the authentic Scottish cuisine, whisky tradition, visits to castle ruins, to old churches and other historical monuments, exploration of majestic landscapes, listening to traditional music, even through the participation in festivals and concerts. There are a variety of travel excursion packages that are promoted on the portal and offered by third parties; they can be filtrated through the topic 'ancestry' among the total number of tours available and some are strongly focused. To simplify the organization of the experience, the visitors can contact guides, tour operators and genealogists.

In Germany, the National Tourist Board cultivates the theme of 'German origins' in a website dedicated to the *heritage* within the portal *Germany.travel*. Just as for Scotland and Ireland, Germany is thinking about a preparation phase of the trip based

¹⁰² <https://ebooks.visitscotland.com/discover-your-scottish-ancestry>.

¹⁰³ Hebridean Celtic Festival, Cowal Highland Gathering and also others.

on the gathering of preliminary information, to then take a trip. The concept of roots tourism, in this case, is not so tied to the personal itineraries, as much as to identity itineraries of the German people who have experienced emigration to America. The keywords are *origins*, *heritage* and *roots*. The journey starts from an overview of the history of emigration towards America and is presented as the *Exciting Journey Back in Time*, addressing those who claim a German heritage. The section of the tourism portal dedicated to origin travel is articulated in some main themes. The first is *heritage*, presented with the headline: *Discover the routes to your roots*, that promotes the discovery of roots through the building of a family tree, the knowledge of the chronology migration history extending 400 years, the access to archives and online resources (even though the information on German emigration is of little consistency), such as civil registers, local websites, various tools for research, passenger lists and ports of embarkment. The second is that of the places where one's ancestors lived, represented by emigration museums, monuments and historical sites. The third theme is connected to the birthplaces of famous German-Americans, distinguished by area. The last theme is represented by the *Made in Germany* in different areas, in particular, a key to understanding the connection with one's origins through the recipes of traditional cuisine is offered. The itineraries are given by the narratives of the experiences of four Americans of German origin who visit the villages of their ancestors, explore museums and travel to the places where Gutenberg and Martin Luther worked. They complete the framework and itinerary of 'German heritage', which last from 7 to 9 days, each one with a different focus. The research reveals that even Poland invests in the direction of tourism connected to the Polish community around the world, in particular, to Polish-Americans, through a section of the *Poland.travel web portal*. The recurrent words are *heritage*, *roots* and *ancestral*. The experience is announced as: *This type of travel tends to create a very memorable, emotional and personal attachment to the country or location*. The incentive in taking the trip is provided by some information on emigration and the fact that many Poles are returning to their homeland of origin to research and sentimental reasons. Resources and tools are provided to reconstruct one's own family history courtesy of the Polish Genealogical Society of America (PSGA), the Polin Museum of History of the Jewish Poles of Warsaw with an interesting project called 'Virtual Shtetl', Emigration Museums and State Archives (with the criticism of the absence of information in foreign languages). The attention toward the phenomenon of the emigration of the past is confirmed even by the campaigns created by the Polish Tourism Organization (P.T.O) for the strengthening of the ties with the homeland, such as *Discover Poland to your neighbours!*¹⁰⁴, conducted during the occasion of the centenary celebration of the reconquest of Polish independence, that encouraged those of Polish origin who live abroad to visit the land of their ancestors. The adopted strategy is similar to that of Ireland for the

¹⁰⁴ Please see: www.pot.gov.pl/en/news/president-of-polish-tourist-organisation-presented-plans-for-2018.

event *The Gathering*, namely, personal word of mouth. For this occasion, the Polish Tourism Organization sought to attract young students for their role of ambassadors for Poland and Polish tourism in their countries of residence.

For the promotion of roots tourism in Spain, instead, it is not the official website for Spanish tourism but that of one of its regions, Andalusia, that dedicates to that an in-depth area: *Andalucía, Tus Raíces/Andalucía, Your Roots* within *Andalusia.org*. It is expressly communicated online that this initiative is focused on the offer of tourism products for that which is defined on the web portal as *roots* tourism, *ancestral* tourism, tourism that is based on *feelings* and on *emotional and family ties*, indicating thematic tours, experiences, events and types of roots (Latin-American, Sephardic, etc.)

The remainder of the countries that are the object of this comparative analysis do not appear to implement specific tourism marketing strategies directed to roots travelers, if not limited to a single project, that was not found through the analysis of the portals of government tourist destinations. They are the following initiatives: in France, a cooperative project related to territories for French-Canadian memorial tourism in a genealogical version¹⁰⁵ and the creation of the Commission Franco-Québécoise sur les lieux de mémoire communs; in Denmark, the Archive for emigration; in the Republic of Belgium¹⁰⁶, the National Archive; in Norway¹⁰⁷ a Center for documentation and some outdoor museums; in Portugal¹⁰⁸, the Council of the Portuguese Diaspora. In England, Holland, Finland¹⁰⁹, Sweden and Switzerland *roots tourism* does not appear to be encouraged by institutions and there are very few examples of private entities that operate in the sector.

Among the 17 websites of tourist destinations operated by the tourism offices of various countries considered, only a few include a web communication for the roots tourism market target that is derived by the definition of tourism focused strategies on a national level. The contact by email with the various entities had the goal of verifying if there was a gap between the adopted policies and communication on the

¹⁰⁵ For further study please see: www.rfgenealogie.com/s-informer/infos/nouveautes/desterritoires-francais-s-unissent-pour-miser-sur-le-tourisme-genealogique.

¹⁰⁶ Also in the websites of the regional and provincial tourism institutions (Fiandre, Vallonia, Lussemburgo: www.visitflanders.com, <http://walloniebelgiquetourisme.be>, www.visitluxembourg.com) there were no references concerning roots tourism.

¹⁰⁷ A study in Norway on legacy tourism, that is on those who are interested in ancestral tourism, with a focus on a specific sub-sample, states that VisitNorway.com contains suggestions for those interested, in particular, those with 'Viking ancestry' (Ray and McCain, 2009.)

¹⁰⁸ In study with a case history on the descendants of the Jewish population in Portugal, they affirm that, for the Portuguese Jewish roots tourists, Portugal has the particular emotional value of a lost homeland to where they return (Leite, 2005).

¹⁰⁹ According to a study on genealogical tourism, in Finland there is a clear distinction between genealogical services and tourism services, without any cooperation, for various reasons, among the organisms that offer them (Mehtälä, 2015).

web. From the information that was received, there does not seem to be a difference between the online and offline areas of activity. It would be useful in the future to conduct a study on the channels of the various official social media of the websites for the thoroughness of the analysis, the freshness of the contents and the capacity to create an interaction and sharing all the experiences of the trip, including those connected to roots. The last paragraph of this chapter will focus on the conclusion referring to the perspectives on Italy with regards to the web institutional contents towards the *consumer* target.

5.2 The *web sentiment analysis* in reference to roots tourism

The web has become essential in the daily life of millions of people on the planet. The last figures¹¹⁰ report that 6 out of 10 people around the world use the Internet, and the social media penetration has reached 54 percent, exceeding 4.2 million users. The continuous growth in 2020 registered a percentage never before seen, with more than 500 million people who began to use social media for the first time with their smartphones. This device is a type of appendage to the human body, it is so integrated that related bone and joint pathology now exist and it also has an impact on the mind, until the extremes of the compulsive usage of the mobile device, addiction and *no mobile phobia*¹¹¹. This became even more prevalent during the pandemic, in which humans were faced with uncertainty, changed behaviour, habits and interpersonal relationships. Some situations were subjected to a notable acceleration: such as the use of smartphones on a daily basis.

Within the last few years, the boost of web operators, from reservation websites to the more general platforms such as Google that continuously requests opinions on the places visited ('How was hotel X?'), has exponentially increased the number and quality of digital footprints of *human experience*, that is, of all those contents – reviews, evaluations, comments – that gather fragments of experiences about the vacations, purchases and relationships. There are hundreds of studies on correlation between *user generated contents* (UGCs) and sales (Bei et al., 2004; Daugherty et al., 2008; Ferrari, 2016); such contents, generated by web users, not only reduce uncertainty, but modify the same behaviour of the consumer toward the product or the brand in general (Wang et al., 2015), having a direct influence on the way one should approach a destination and experience it (Almeida-Santana and Moreno-Gil, 2017; Park et al., 2019) and, consequently, creating a process of involvement and trust which is the true key for success, in regards to operators and destinations. There is a constant revision in the process of monitoring, and elaborating, as well as analysing these contents (Doaa and Mohamed, 2016). It is a rather complex process that calls for analysis and specialized skills for such content to become a tool for

¹¹⁰ Hootsuite, We are social. (2021) *Digital 2021*. Global Overview Report.

¹¹¹ IPBES (2021), *Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Pandemics*. <https://www.ipbes.net/pandemics>.

interpretation of the reality and a significant base of strategic decisions of the policymakers, and all the key subjects that operate in a territory and a tourist destination.

The objective of the conducted study is that of assisting the desk analysis on roots tourism with the analysis of the big data online, showing what the application of extremely sophisticated and advanced systems is capable of producing; they are unique on the international scene systems, even on very specific and unusual themes, such as those that are connected to roots tourism. The last objective is to show how important it is to read this type of tourism through the scrutiny of digital footsteps. Consumers behaviour are always more influenced by digital channels, particularly, in a mobile oriented perspective. This aspect is crucial for all purchasing processes and in any sector, but especially in that of travel and hospitality; in the latter, in fact, because of the intangibility and heterogeneity of the offer and because of all the other typical characteristics of the service operations, the model *ZMOT (Zero Moment of Truth)*, recommended by Google (Lecinski, 2011), is the best application. With the emergence of the Internet, an initial phase is introduced in the buying process; it is subsequent to the transposition of the stimulus that starts the process, which anticipates the moment of truth. In this stage, the consumer, after having felt a need and a desire, begins researching information on the Web, pertaining to brands and products (please see Figure 5.1). This is the *ZMOT stage*, and in this digital location, the purchasing decision occurs. During the online research before the purchase is made, the *electronic word of mouth (e-WoM)* is also used as an information source for making a decision (Ertemel and Başçı, 2015). *The zero moment of truth* precedes the *first moment of truth (FMOT)*, in which the client enters into contact with the goods, material or immaterial) and the *second moment of truth (SMOT)*, in which the client enjoys the goods and verifies his/her degree of satisfaction, comparing expectations and obtained results). The post-purchase experience generates a continuous cycle that is useful for future decisions, going to the future *ZMOT* of the purchaser and of other potential consumers.

Nowadays, due to the sharing of experiences through reviews, ratings, feedback, comments and public posts on social media, the purchasing and consumption decisions of those who are looking for information on a certain brand, product or tourist destination can be influenced in a significant way. Companies have, therefore, the need to know when and where the research of information is born, how the buying process of potential clients functions and how that can be influenced by opinions and various contents generated from others on the web. An empirical research that was conducted on the application of this model confirms that the *ZMOT* is the most important phase in the purchasing decision process in all sectors, although the electronic sector proves to be the most influenced by the web (Ertemel and Başçı, 2015). Another study on the model shows that it is more likely that the clients who show a higher level of involvement in the information research and in the whole purchasing process seek a customization of the product, instead of a standardized version of it (Aichner, 2012). This is only one of numerous models, an

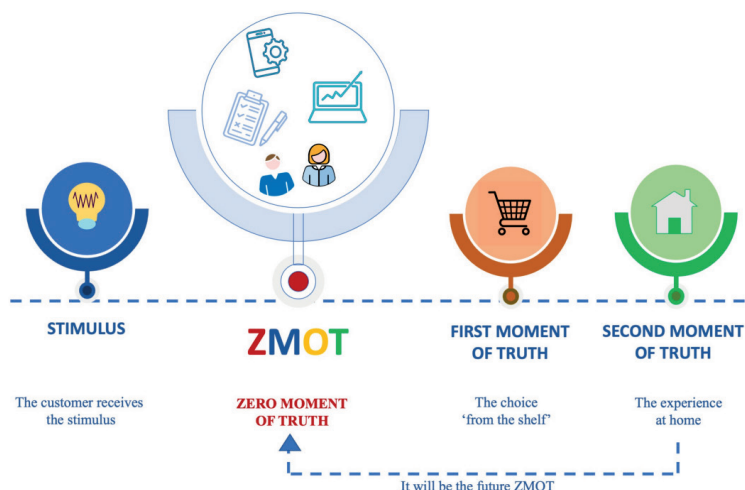
outcome of scientific studies that not only show the relevant function of the online contents in the buying choices, but a new way of approaching the territory during the visit.

The information role appears to be particularly important for roots tourism, if it is considered a product of a high emotional content and one that is often *tailor made*, because of its strongly tied to one's personal family history and to specific needs of the visitor. The roots trip is a product that is highly experiential, often sought after to reinforce one's own identity. In general, an elevated value is attributed to it, as a result of the relevant personal emotional engagement, of the uniqueness of the experience and of the economic commitment. If even the elevated perception of risk due to travelling often to another continent and in a place that probably one does not know is considered, the need to obtain numerous and valid information before the trip is understandable.

The question we tried to answer with the research activity conducted in this section is: do digital places exist in which some people speak about their desire to take a trip to discover the origins of their family or the experience that they have lived in this regard? How do they speak? With whom do they interact or who do they lean on? This type of analysis represents an absolute novelty in the overview of the study of the roots tourist phenomenon.

The analysis was conducted in Spanish, as well as in Italian with reference to the axis Italy-Argentina, in line with the quantitative and qualitative research that was developed as a focus on the Argentine market, which was chosen among many countries of residence of Italian emigrants and their descendants. The identified temporary perspective is from August 2018 to May 2021, taking into consideration the pandemic situation that suspended the possibility of travel, but attempting to understand the desire to travel during the aftermath of the pandemic. Indeed, it should not be overlooked that, as it was found in the prior analysis, often this type of travel is planned well in advance. Efforts have been made to grasp elements of interest that surround the trip (genealogical research that can prelude the trip, requests for remote services, etc.). The web channels that were analyzed were social networks, precisely Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, the review site Trip advisor and various other websites¹¹². Attempts were made to maximize the broadening of research that was exclusively conducted on online public content, present on accessible channels by anyone on the web, and this represents a limit.

¹¹² In the beginning phase, Booking.com was included, but it failed the screening of the selection phase in terms of results.

Figure 5.1 The new purchasing process model

Source: Lecinski (2011:17)

The applied **methodology**¹¹³ consists of a rather articulate multi-step process. The 'web listening' analysis is conducted on the basis of keywords, channels and geographical references, following a series of phases. The first phase of the survey is that of the **beginning**, that includes the study and the identification of a list of generic and specific keywords, including combinations among them, regarding the topic of interest. 350 *keywords* were taken into account in both the Italian and Spanish languages on the theme of roots tourism, derived from: desk analysis conducted on the online websites of various tourist destinations in Europe; results of interviews with tourists and other stakeholder categories; web researches relating to roots travels between Italy and Argentina; researches conducted with web exploration semantic tools for additional important elements.

In particular, the keywords are the outcome of a study that takes into consideration the various reasons for the trip, therefore, not only the vacation experience in itself, but, for example, the study of the Italian language, the reconstruction of a family tree and so on. In addition, the activities of interests conducted during the trip have been taken into account, as well as, consumption needs and preferences, such as, visiting the municipality of origin, the request for documents, etc. The keywords extend from general areas that regard tourism, travel and hospitality to specific references of possible desired or lived experiences, such as, information requested, the sharing

¹¹³ The analysis was carried out on a system of The Data Appeal Company, in whose working group were included Marco De Biagi, Andrea Mazza and Riccardo Ricci.

and testimonies with one's own network of virtual contacts or with other subjects (services providers, etc.).

By way of example, some of the keywords and combinations of keywords, around 350 utilized, are reported in Spanish: *viajes tierra antepasados*, *viajes tierra ancestros*, *viajes búsqueda de orígenes*, *viajes patria abuelos*, *viajes patria familia*, *revivir la historia familiar*, *reconstruir la identidad*, *origen italiano*, *ascendencia italiana*, *raíces italianas*; and in Italian: *Italian origin (and relative variations: Calabrian origin, Sicilian origin, Apulian origin, Venetian origin, etc.)*, *Italian ancestors*, *Italian grandparents*, *Italian relatives*, *visit to the municipality of birth in Italy*, *travel from Argentina to Italy*.

The second phase of the survey concerns the **research of the sources**, in which the keywords obtained allow the launch of semantic research tools that provide lists of web sources (sites, portals, social media pages, etc.) from which contents relevant for the survey are extracted. The sources' list is enhanced and in a certain sense is directed by precise references and can be managed to include or exclude some sources on the basis of their relevance. In the subsequent steps it was necessary to intervene with additional external sources (sites and social media pages in particular), in order to provide for the lack of relevant results in the first place. The work of identification of determined online resources was conducted for refining the research and producing as many pertinent results as possible. The identification of these additional resources was concentrated above all on Italian, Argentine and also international open pages, Facebook groups, blogs and websites, that represent a home for all Italian emigrants around the world, in which there is a designated space that focuses on Italy-Argentina (to cite a few, the Facebook group 'Juventud Italiana En Argentina'¹¹⁴, the Facebook page 'Celebra Italia'¹¹⁵; the websites <https://ancestrositalianos.com>, <https://faimitalia.org>, <https://mybellavita.com>, etc.). In addition, other pages were taken into consideration, such as, websites, social media pages and social media groups with reference to smaller geographic areas (Italian regions and Argentine cities), in which the sense of belonging is even stronger (for example, the Facebook group 'Descendientes de Italianos En Buenos Aires'¹¹⁶, the Facebook page 'Siciliani Nel Mondo'¹¹⁷, etc.). The choice to use social media was based on the intensity and interaction of posts that were made, as well as the number of followers.

The third phase is that of **exploration**, in which, through automatic navigation tools (*crawler*), all are useful contents recovered from the sources. This means extracting posts, comments, reviews and news.

The fourth phase comprises of first **selections**. The textual contents extracted from the channels were analyzed by a semantic filter trained to recognize words, phrases

¹¹⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/JuventudItalianaEnArgentina>.

¹¹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/CelebraItalia>.

¹¹⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/DescendientesDeItalianosEnBuenosAires>.

¹¹⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/SicilianiNelMondo>.

and concepts connected to roots tourism in the Italian and Spanish languages, that can be referred to the subject of the survey. This first macroscopic phase has allowed us to exclude irrelevant texts that have a high index of certainty. Whereas, contents considered potentially relevant move on to the next phase.

A fifth phase is usually applied to permit a second selection by introducing an additional and stricter semantic filter. The scope of the semantic filter is to **interpret content**, select and separate only the texts that are truly relevant to the survey's theme and to subdivide them by topic.

At the end of these selection phases, the *sentiment analysis engine* was launched; it is a specialized semantic tool instructed to comprehensively interpret all the nuances of the language that are related to the theme of roots tourism and to return qualitative data and orientations on the themes, the trends and the sentiment. Accompanied by this analysis was another web exploration tool, entitled *TAG*; it is a software system that extracts and highlights the main concepts that are expressed in a text, to correlate them and reveal connections and importance. This analysis aims at a different focus, namely, that of reporting a surface survey in the user's research process on the search engines concerning the theme in question. The result is a first base analysis of the web sources where the theme is dealt with, classifying them and creating lists of relevant and influential words, associations and concepts.

The process of *TAG analysis* of the single phrases of the text unfolds through some basic actions:

- Elimination of non-significant parts of the interpretation of the following concepts (ie: adverbs, idiomatic phrases, articles, prepositions, etc.);
- Normalization of the significant words by transforming them to the singular, placing the verbs into the infinitive form, etc.;
- Consecutive combination of up to 3 adjacent words, to compare them with those of a database that pairs them, with a certain weight, to a topic or concept;
- Sum of the weight of every topic to generate the classification of the most relevant topics that are present in every content;
- Memorization of the distance among all the concepts in the text to establish the relationship;
- Creation of a list of topics that are closely related and/or concepts, attributing importance, given by the distance (number or words) that divide them within phrases or periods;
- Ranking of the list for the evaluation of the relationships and to determine their importance;
- Production of tables with elaborated data for the creation of relationship graphics.

Regarding the results obtained, the analysis on the monitored channels are followed with the subsequent integration of sources and tools for obtaining a minimum number of relevant content, from which valid information on roots tourism can be extracted, thus reasons, expectations, experiences and every aspect of interest on the topic. This has generated a notable amount of information in the first instance, in particular, on the social media channels. In the exploration phase, namely, in the research of the keywords without the application of any semantic filter, Twitter took back 86,147 contents and Facebook 37,727. This derives from the fact that the number of combination of keywords on which it was operated is relatively substantial, thus allowing to obtain a notable database. The application of a selection through a first semantic filter, that is aimed to only obtain the potentially relevant results, greatly reduced the numbers; nonetheless, the database was sufficiently broad on the total of all the channels taken into consideration. (please see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Theme content of roots tourism selected for web channel

Twitter	Facebook	Tripadvisor	Instagram	Other ¹¹⁸	Total
120	198	173	4	140	635

Source: direct survey

From the database analysis, various results and signs of interest were extracted. Primarily, the quantity and the type of traced content indicate that roots tourism is still a concept far from being not only a tourism product, but also a definite and common notion. A large part of the contents, in fact, is not related to comments, reviews, and opinions in connection with an experience, but are popular, promotional and journalistic contents, that in a sporadic way and in a diversified form create the dialogue on the Internet. This is the only entity on which the analysis can be anchored and influences the results on the various channels: more results emerge on the channels where this type of content is easier to be conveyed.

This study is an initial approach and a point of departure for new future analysis. In fact, the results show that there must be a significant investment for an effective marketing strategy, in terms of branding policy and of the launch of the product in a web context, in order to give the due consideration to roots tourism and to its great market potential.

From a temporary viewpoint, it was possible to identify the distribution of contents within the months of the year (Figure 5.2 and 5.3). Only considering the pre-pandemic period, in order to avoid the questions that are connected to the restrictions/reopening, a temporary arch of greater concentration of content arises both between May and September, that collectively represent 56 percent of the total

¹¹⁸ The analysis includes various websites: italianside.it, ancestrositalianos.com, raizitaliana.it, faimitalia.org and others.

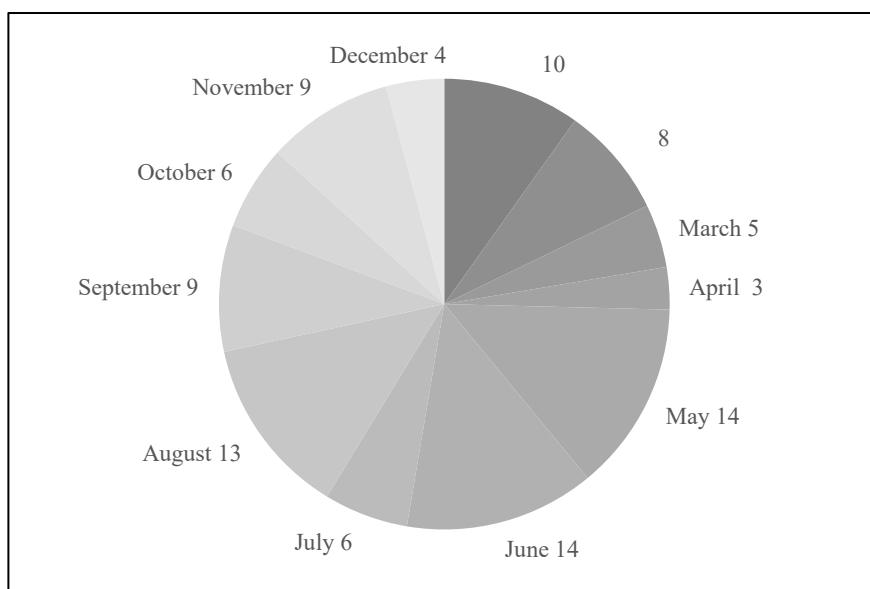
contents and 71 percent of those in Argentina (in which this period does not coincide with a vacation).

The *sentiment analysis* revealed that the percentage of negative contents represents less than 1 percent of the total content (precisely 0.8 percent). 21.2 percent is positive and 78.0 percent of the total contents is neutral. Neutral content is meant to be that which does not show any sentiment in terms of opinion or comment, in a neutral context (for example, this deals with sources such as scientific studies, press articles and so on).

In the Argentine market, the positive content represents almost 50 percent of total contents (exactly 49.8 percent), 49.7 percent of those are neutral and 0.9 percent are negative. Without a doubt, it is a good outcome, that helps revitalize an online narrative that is very limited, despite the potential and the sophistication of the tools used for the analysis.

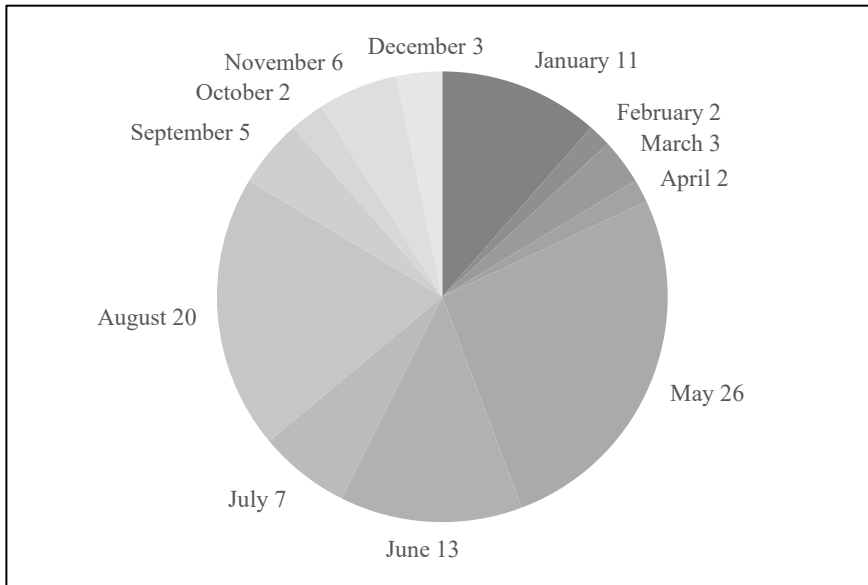
The distribution of keywords within the semantically analyzed content (Figure 5.4) reveals the issues of the online narration: roots tourism is based on research of the history of one's own family and is developed by genealogical research and cultural vacations.

Figure 5.2 Percentage of annual distribution of total contents



Source: direct survey

Figure 5.3 Percentage of annual distribution of contents in Argentina



Source: direct survey

Figure 5.4 Distribution of the main keywords



Source: direct survey

Another Internet exploration tool (*TAG*) was added to this analysis with a different focus: to simulate the online user's research process on search engines regarding the

theme in question. The first result is the identification of the most influential information sources; they are the *URLs* that have a major relevance in the exploration related to roots tourism, because they are better positioned in the inquiry results or because of the quantity of results obtained, both for the research in Italian and for the research in Spanish originating from the Argentine market (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 The most relevant URLs on the search engines on the theme of roots tourism

Italian	Spanish-focus Argentina
it.wikipedia.org	italia.it
viaggi.corriere.it	familysearch.org
ilviaggiatorecritico.blog	lanacion.com.ar
altreitalie.it	ancestrositalianos.com
enit.it	weekend.perfil.com
sanmarcoargentano.it	buenosaires.italiani.it
marketingdelterritorio.info	facebook.com
turistipercaso.it	comitesbuenosaires.org.ar
travelnostop.com	gestionistaitalia.com
unive.it	infobae.com

Source: direct survey

Results on the Italian front validate the information that was previously shown: roots tourism online for Italy is still a concept that is not very clear or effective, it is still today limited and fragmented; it is limited and divulged more to journalistic and scientific research than to tourist products or travel experiences. When they are present, the latter emerge as very relevant although related to very small local entities. One can observe this case as with San Marco Argentano, a Calabrian municipality in the province of Cosenza, in which an individual created a website offering a very extensive section dedicated to the relationship with the compatriots abroad and to the ancestral tourism of those who are of Sammarchisi origin, as was revealed and illustrated in the qualitative survey conducted in Calabria¹¹⁹.

Currently, the general narration of roots tourism on search engines is mainly fueled by symbolic episodes, conveyed by the online media news or by promotional initiatives, such as, those from ENIT or from other institutional bodies. The relevant *URLs* for the Argentine market have a much more precise approach, also already noted under analysis: the connection with one's own family roots originates either due to personal research, where being of Italian origin is a question of identity and pride of belonging, or for the seizing of an important opportunity, specifically, to demonstrate Italian ancestry for obtaining citizenship.

¹¹⁹ Please see Chapter 2 on this subject.

In the keywords analysis (Figures 5.5 and 5.6), the potential of roots tourism from Argentina to Italy is proven, but also from other locations on the American continent such as Brazil, Chile and the United States.

In addition, the dual function of genealogical research and travel for tourism is stressed, the latter function is significantly better situated in the search engines compared with the first. From the Argentine's market focus among the most frequent keywords the specific reasons of that country resurfaces, which is the possibility to obtain Italian citizenship because of ancestry.

In the subsequent research of the most significant connections among the terms that are related to roots tourism, research that is aimed at emphasizing those that have a greater weight in the search engines, it is seen how dominant terms are those that outline the world of travel in general: Italy–Argentina trip, vacation in Italy, tourism in Italy, etc. Among the most peculiar words regarding the matter at hand, the first five by relevance have been shown in the two languages, that validate the previous considerations (please see Table 5.4). In the Italian language, the main researches are related to the term ‘tourism’; that presumes a consultation of information that is pertaining to the offer, while in Spanish the words can be interpreted as an ancestral connection and as research with reference to a particular requirement from the point of view of the demand.

Figure 5.5 Word Cloud of keywords – Italy



Source: direct survey

Figure 5.6 Word Cloud of research terms - Focus Argentina



Source: direct survey

The step to take is to widen the information base, in quantitative and qualitative terms, and to find the correct point of contact between supply and demand. The digital footprints and web listening on various themes that are linked to the connection with Italian origins show how necessary it is to further and better invest in the communication and promotional opportunities in the world online.

Table 5.4 Connections between the words for research on roots tourism

<i>Italian</i>	<i>Spanish - focus Argentina</i>
Roots Tourism	Ancestry Italian
Return Tourism	Italian Roots
Genealogical Tourism	Ancestors Italian
Argentina Return Tourism	Italian Citizenship
Origins Tourism	Italian Surnames

Source: direct survey

5.3 Conclusions

The survey regarding the web enables to share some thoughts on roots tourism both on the supply and demand aspect. The analysis sheds light on the fact that in the future our country could support the initiatives already underway with effective promotional activities of this form of tourism on the web. In terms of digital tourism communication policies, it would be advisable to provide a general website dedicated to the travel proposals in the search of one's roots within the general

website, or better yet, connected to this but with a specific domain name, given that this would be an innovation on the European scene.

It is fundamental for this tourism segment to consider the genealogical research as an integral part of the trip, as the experiences from other countries demonstrate and as the research in the field with roots tourists confirms. As a consequence, it would also be important to include a greater and more structured collaboration activity with the State Archives and with all the organizations which for various reasons can give their own contributions, even online, in terms of genealogical research and of obtaining documents and certificates. This objective should be pursued even through agreements with the tourists' countries of origin.

The creation of a customized tourist product should also be reconnected with the offer of the Italian identity heritage, as an immersion in the *Italian lifestyle* that attracts tourists from all over the world, and can be even more appreciated by Italians around the world. Another objective to pursue should be the involvement of tour operators, agencies and specialized tourist operators whose offer is an essential prerequisite for creating and promoting targeted packages, tours and experiences.

The communication style should be based on the descriptions of authentic experiences, even entrusted to testimonials. The tourist experience cycle suggests, in addition, not to neglect the post-travel phase: it is extremely important to encourage the sharing of travel experiences through the creation of communities; it could be done also with the support of social media channels, that activate a positive word-of-mouth. The communities act as an incentive for other potential roots and non-roots tourists, and provide assistance for potential informative needs. By belonging to virtual communities, thus, the participants feel like members of a *contemporary tribe* (Cova and Cova, 2002; Ferrari, 2006), where they can share experiences and their social representations by the means of rituals. Thus, the private and personal act of consumption becomes a social act, a moment of cohesion with other individuals, an attempt to reinforce or create social ties (Maffesoli, 1996). In this type of an overview, the role of the Internet, social networks, communities and other tools of sharing information and experiences become more important day by day.

Although the scientific debate within the last few years has been very attentive to these themes and on an institutional level they are accomplishing considerable efforts to conduct research on awareness and support for those who intend to operate in the direction of the development of roots tourism, digital channels still do not appear to be adequately controlled for giving an important boost to this market segment. As in a spontaneous, unstructured and organized way emigrants and Italian descendants return to the homeland, in the same way a sporadic and scattered presence exists on the web of real and potential visitors who search for information and attest experiences while leaving traces there, as well as other entities and individuals who for various reasons consider Italy as a destination for discovering one's own identity heritage. The limitation of the related contents observed in the survey derives, perhaps, even from a not high participation of the visitors to the

information enquiry and research process during the pre-trip phase, as well as to the sharing of their experiences while on vacation and after the return home, or probably only in a private way. This sharing would allow other current and potential roots tourists (and even tourists who are not necessarily of Italian origin) to gather information, as a consequence influencing their decision making processes. The raising of awareness must clearly be conducted even towards the demand, not only towards the supply. The stimulus should not only be that of a calling of Italy to Italians in the world, but also that of transforming them in ambassadors of their places of origin, by using all the available means and channels, but above all the digital ones. The new model of purchase and consumption that has become established with the advent of the Internet and the new technologies show how, thanks to the *user generated contents*, today anyone can be influenced and can, in turn, influence many individuals in the new communication environment.

From Internet listening, informative, promotional and scientific contents primarily emerge, while those who are tied to the trip experience, that certainly are not many, do not make up a critical mass and are not easily identifiable through an automatic analysis. Each person narrates his/her experience individually, and the 'roots trip' is still not recognizable as a phenomenon in itself. The sentiment analysis currently explains a very high appreciation, and the items used as a research base have a great potential to maintain a high level of satisfaction. The data indicate the path to follow: to define a unique vocabulary, clear with which to speak about roots travel, that should be expressed in branding policy and in recognizable products; therefore, a narrative can be constructed beginning with the elements that already exist, for which a highly positive sentiment was observed (by keywords, connections with the search words, reasons on the basis of research and vacation), using the most relevant influential resources and channels, with the objective of raising awareness on the topic and at the same time promoting the production of contents by those who have already had these experiences. This will not only permit the researchers to have a more extensive database on which to conduct new and more in-depth analysis, but will start a positive cycle for promotion of operators and territories, given the great influence of these contents to orient the travel projects, the consumer behaviour and the feelings toward the destinations. It should not be overlooked that the elevated emotional involvement of the roots tourists determines a considerable commitment during the decision process, especially during the phase of gathering information. This renders the importance for the sources of electronic information even greater, extremely effective, multimedia and easily accessible.

The design of product policies will primarily affect the private sector, but it needs a public support that outlines general marketing strategies for shared destinations. Here as well the starting point can only be on the data: these represent the first steps in the development of a data driven conscience and a new analytical approach with the management and the development of tourist destinations, that will no longer be a mere container of receptive flows, but places to catch the change opportunities that originate from the digital world.

Chapter 6

Roots tourism and other consumption phenomena. Future lines of research

SUMMARY: 6.1 The interaction of roots tourism with other social phenomena: second home ownership, VFR tourism and new migrations. 6.2 The promotion of local traditional products by means of roots tourism. 6.3 Intellectual emigration and returning home for vacation. 6.4 *Wedding tourism* and roots tourism. 6.5 Calabrian dialect spoken in Argentina and the sound archives *L'Altra Calabria*. 6.6 Villages that are in the process of depopulation as possible research destinations on roots and identity. 6.7 Events as attractions for roots tourists. 6.8 *Educational-Tourism* and roots tourism: niche tourism and sustainability.

6.1 The interaction of roots tourism with other social phenomena: second home ownership, VFR tourism and new migrations¹²⁰

Tourism and migration are important international phenomena, in part tightly interdependent and with similar dynamics. Indeed, without hesitation tourism initiates migration flows (*Tourism-led Migration*) and vice versa (*Migration-led Tourism*) (UNWTO, 2009). Particularly, roots tourism appears to be correlated to tourism connected to assets or the possession of a second home, in addition to various migratory phenomena including, first of all, retirement, return and lifestyle migration.

The *second homes* or *residential tourism* is comprised of people who possess real estate and make use of it during free time and purposely for leisure (Hall & Müller, 2004; Marjavaara, 2008; Müller, 1999). In some areas, particularly in northern Europe, there exists a widespread tradition with possession and use of second homes in which to spend one's free time (Hiltunen & Rehunen, 2014). The word 'second home' consists of different types of accommodations (vacation homes, summer homes, cottages, weekend homes, etc.) and, therefore, in literature it is considered rather unclear (McIntyre, 2006; Roca, 2016). Given that a second home is not the owner's first residence, the owner can be defined as a 'permanent tourist', or

¹²⁰ Sonia Ferrari, Università della Calabria.

actually, according to some researchers, he/she can be considered a ‘new resident’ (Casado-Díaz, 1999; Cohen, 1974; Jaakson, 1986; Tombaugh, 1970).

This form of tourism in the 1980s was practically missing as an object of international academic research. However, from the mid-1990s of the last century, the globalization, the transition from an industrialized society to a post-industrialized society and the increase of the number of property homes abroad, even outside of Europe, have determined a renewed interest in this type of tourism. This phenomenon has had an important growth on a global level and today it not only concerns western countries but also many other destinations as well (Abbasian & Müller, 2019; Hall, 2014; Vagneri et al., 2011; Wagner, 2014).

Concerning the studies on this theme, the possession of a second home is probably considered the first connecting link between tourism and migration (Huete & Mantecón, 2012; Müller, 2002; Williams & Hall, 2000), even if second home tourism has been attributed only recently to this connection. In fact, social changes, migration, mobility and the growth of wealth leads to return on this type of tourism. The reasons for possessing a second home are mixed, complex and are attributed to many factors among which exist family ties with one’s homeland, personal plans regarding retirement, *return migration* and *lifestyle migration* (Kaltenborn, 1997 and 1998; Lofgren, 1999). One of the deeper motivations, that is ‘*place attachment*’, has been barely studied. It is the strong attachment to a place or a home that one is faithful to, influencing the vacation choices. Often, those who feel this are emigrants (Duval, 2004a and 2004; Stedman, 2006).

This emotional attachment to childhood places or family origin is one of the reasons to purchase a second home. The possession of a second home, therefore, influences the identity of the homeowner, that identity which is sought during the trip to discover one’s own roots. In the case of roots tourism, the reasons of such a connection are due to the tourist’s ancestral ties and the desire to be part of the hosting community. Frequently, this is so strong that it gives rise to the desire to belong to the host community to the point that one does not feel like a tourist and is neither perceived as one. Additionally, these ties drive the roots tourist to reduce the temporary nature of the visit, while he prefers prolonged stays, investing in economic and non-economic activities to the point of the acquisition of real estate, possibly the very home that one lived in or in which one’s ancestors lived. Hence, roots tourism and residential tourism intertwine. Roots tourists indeed have a particular conception of the idea of ‘home’, to which they attribute a very profound meaning that is expanded to the entire country of origin. Generally, for emigrants and their descendants the second home is the result of a real and typical ‘cult of nostalgia’, that recalls a place that is tied to one’s own family history. For the individual who had to forcibly leave her/his own place of origin, it represents a way of maintaining contact, recreating ties with relatives and friends, reclaiming childhood memories and returning to his/her own identity heritage (Abbasian & Müller, 2019; Jaakson, 1986; Müller, 1999).

Return migration examines the phenomenon of the returning home of migrants who have been away for a significant number of years (Bovenkerk, 2012; King, 2015). Post World War II, many emigrants believed to be able to return home after a certain period of time, and for this reason they built or acquired a residence in their home country. For those who were not able to return, that residence in general became a second home, which use and maintenance changed throughout the years. For the first generation, this represented a place to return to, a ‘home at home’ (Wagner, 2014:72), while, for the subsequent generations, it became a destination for vacations. If for the first emigrants buying a second home in one’s own place of origin was a symbol of success¹²¹ (Velayutham & Wise, 2005; Wise & Velayutham, 2008), for their descendants it is, instead, a way to learn more about one’s own roots (Colás et al., 2004; Williams et al., 2000).

Numerous studies show how currently the owners of second homes tend to use them for increasingly diversified purposes, ranging from purposes related to leisure time to use after retirement, or even relocation for a longer period of time or seasons (Hall & Müller, 2004; Williams & Hall, 2000). Consequently, the second home is usually bought in view of a future relocation, especially by those who wish to modify their lives and take advantage of cost differentials and of a better quality of life as compared to one’s own usual place of residence. This type of relocation gives rise to some cited migratory phenomena (retirement migration and lifestyle migration) (Benson, 2016; Benson & O’Reilly, 2018). These forms of migration were born in western countries and are initiating significant flows of residential tourism that are composed predominately of individuals, a type of retiree, who establish themselves in either a permanent or quasi-permanent manner in another area, at times in the countries of origin of one’s own family. Increasingly more frequent are the retirees and lifestyle migrants who decide to live in another country like Spain, Italy and France, and as of late, in Turkey, Portugal and Bulgaria (Gehring, 2019). They are often attracted to, other than the good climate and the local way of life, advantages of a fiscal and economic nature. They move either permanently or only for a few months during the year (Williams & Hall, 2002).

The flows of lifestyle migrants originating from northern Europe who have moved to live for periods of shorter or longer duration throughout the year on the Mediterranean coast, to savour the so-called ‘Mediterranean lifestyle’ (Huete, 2009), have induced the birth of a mass phenomenon, the *international residential tourism* (Huete & Mantecón, 2012). This results in a continuous growth, not only because of the elevated ageing rate of the population, but also because of the increase of active seniors. Furthermore, it is promoted by telecommunication technologies that stimulate resident migration and that favors remote work (Chalers, 2018). For decades it has had notable success in a few destinations like Spain, which from the 1960s welcomes retirees coming from all over Europe (Campos, 2018; Hudson,

¹²¹ Please see Chapter 2, paragraph 1.

2019). The covid-19 pandemic will probably also promote this phenomenon, thanks to the widespread use of smart-working and distance learning.

These described forms of migration are not to be underestimated since they generate significant travel flows, even of the residential type, and *visiting friends and relatives* (VFR). This last type of travelers can be described as temporary migrants or friends or relatives who are visiting emigrated persons (King, 2011a, 2011b; Williams & Hall, 2002). The VFR tourism is a type of vacation *in which the objective of the trip or the type of accommodation (or both) involve visiting friends and/or relatives* (Backer, 2003:4). This tourist segment is a hybrid cluster of travelers with various motivations who are interested in different types of activities during the holiday experience (Duval, 2003). Many of these tourists are permanently emigrated persons who have maintained firm ties with their homeland and from time to time visit it (Janta et al., 2015). They form a part of the segment as do the family members and friends who visit these same emigrants (Backer & King, 2015; Barnett et al., 2010; Gheasi et al., 2011; Jackson, 1990; Williams & Hall, 2000). This market segment is in continuous development (Backer & Morrison, 2015). In 2018, the tourists who travelled for different objectives other than business and leisure composed 27% of the total; their primary travel motivations were VFR, health and religion (UNWTO, 2019). Because of their various motivations, often the VFR tourists are considered part of another segment and are called *hidden VFR tourists*, eluding the official statistics (Kashiwagi et al., 2020).

Ultimately, migration can initiate diverse types of travel other than roots tourism (Huang et al., 2017): vacations of emigrants in the homeland, visits from relatives and friends to the new residences of the migrants, travels of those emigrated to visit members of their extended community or of the same ethnicity. All these forms of travel are a part of or even overlap with VFR tourism (Dwyer et al., 2014).

The roots and VFR tourism segments do not always overlap, since the principal reason of travel of the roots tourist could be other than that of visiting family or friends. The tourists of both segments can have many motivations (O'Leary et al., 1995). It is necessary to distinguish between VFR as a main motivation of the trip or as one of the many activities conducted during the holiday experience. Nevertheless, the first and second generations of immigrants manage in general to still maintain sufficiently strong ties with family in the countries of origin, and the desire to meet family members again is almost always one of the primary motives that lies at the core of the travel decision (Li et al., 2020; Rumbaut, 2004). In these situations, roots tourism could be considered a sub-segment of the more extensive segment of VFR tourism. It could also be the opposite; visitors of friends and relatives are only a part of roots tourism, and in this sense they could represent an aspect of the more expansive phenomenon of the return to one's country of origin during a vacation. The necessity remains to implement further studies regarding these two sectors and their interrelationship.

6. 2 The promotion of local traditional products by means of roots tourism¹²²

A brand's image is a personal perception, composed of a rational and an emotional component that derive respectively from functional elements relative to the performance and from elements that are actually intangible, which are tied to the image (Govers & Go, 2009; Keller, 1993 and 2001). This relates to a unique combination of the public's mental associations (Aaker, 1996: 68): a brand's cognitive and emotional associations composed of goods, places, destinations or companies that the client has memorized (Aaker, 1991; Batey, 2008; Keller, 1993; Marcotte et al., 2001). The combination of such associations has an essential role in the buying decision-making process and is therefore a very relevant variable in marketing (Diçoiu et al., 2014; Keller et al., 2008; Keller & Lehmann, 2006).

Every day consumers become more aware of the environment, they search for authenticity and are willing to pay more for this, in particular, for those products whose images or brands are tied to specific places (Carroll & Wheaton, 2009; Melewar & Skinner, 2018; Moulard et al., 2015). As a consequence, brands that have a controlled *designation of origin label* and local brands are becoming tools of increasing importance in marketing strategies of territories, tourist destinations, products and services, especially as instruments of differentiation (Flack, 1997).

In the decision making process, consumers frequently use references to compare and evaluate the various items, resorting to *cues*, surrogate indicators of the quality of goods (Richardson et al., 1994). These can be *intrinsic* (this refers to a physical characteristic of a product, such as the raw materials used) or *extrinsic* (that does not refer to the product in itself but to aspects such as the price, the country of origin and the brand) (Acebron & Dopico, 2000; Cox, 1967; Lim & O'Cass, 2001; Olson et al., 1972). The images that are formed in the minds of the consumer are the effects of these cues.

In marketing, the place image is a construct that possesses a strategic role in influencing the process of formation of the preferences and expectations of potential buyers. Places and products look for distinctive and unique positioning even through branding. (Caroli, 2011; D'Astous & Gargouri, 2001; Hoeffler & Keller, 2003; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008). Local brands are made by branding policies that aim at tangible and intangible features of an area. They are particularly effective in the case of territories that display relevant traditional products and peculiarities to be conveyed to the public through a brand (Anholt, 2007; Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2009; Hanna & Rowley, 2011; Kavaratzis & Kalandides, 2015; Marcotte et al., 2011; Wagner & Peters, 2009).

Brands have a powerful symbolic significance in the case of products that are strongly tied to a place, when they became *territorial brands* (Ferrari, 2020). With these brands, the perception of the consumer is deeply connected to the concept of authenticity (MacCannell, 2008; Sidali et al., 2015), that is often the starting point

¹²² Sonia Ferrari and Tiziana Nicotera, Università della Calabria.

of branding policies in which the narration of the place is the base reference (Gilli, 2009; Krystallis, 2017). This is particularly true when the area of the good's origin has a very strong image, as in the case of a *terroir* (Chang, 2004). Terroirs can transmit their distinctive characteristics to the goods related to them. This differentiates them in the marketplace and conveys the concepts of authenticity and sense of place (Ahmed & d'Astous, 1996 and 2008; Melewar & Skyner, 2018). These characteristics that initially refer to the land and microclimate, particularly referring to food production, today are based also on the local lifestyle, sense of place, history, identity and traditions. The idea was born in France, thanks to groups that sought to re-evaluate rural areas through their capitalization (Barham, 2003). Food agricultural industry products, in particular those of local traditions, are among those goods that are largely tied to the region, not only because of raw materials used but also because they reveal local production traditions and techniques and reflect the identity and the culture of the places of origin (Marescotti, 2006). They give life to forms of storytelling that are often tied to local traditions and cultures or to environmental aspects and to the return to nature (Sidali et al., 2015; Winter, 2005). The *sense of place* is the ensemble of material and non-material characteristics of a place and of the local natural and social-cultural elements that incorporates the place, converting it into a combination of social constructions that interact with the physical environment (Campelo et al., 2014; Hay, 1998; Lecompte et al., 2017). A true traditional brand can appear as a brand with a very strong relationship with its place of origin (Charters & Spielmann, 2014: 1). This creates a firm bond and represents its uniqueness or distinctive elements.

In this context, through roots tourism, local production could be promoted together within the same region. It should not be forgotten that the area or the country of origin is often one of the most important elements of reference for the evaluation of the quality of a product by the consumer; this creates a lasting bond between the region's brand and the good's brand image (Al-Sulaiti & Baker, 1998; Niss, 1996). Roots tourists love the place they visit, they are interested in knowing its traditions and characteristics. They want to help with the promotion of either the place itself, as a tourist destination, as well as its products. They are visitors who interact positively with the local community, and also with producers, trade and export operators, and so on. They become testimonials and promoters of the destination and of its traditional products and, like all emigrants, they are interested in *nostalgic products*, that is, traditional local products closely associated to the region of origin (Holbrook et al., 1991). *Nostalgia trade* is spoken of with reference to the acquisition of products/services of one's country of origin that have the *taste of home* (Orozco & Yansura, 2019).

The nostalgia trade is one of the transnational activities generated by emigration; it initiates a value chain, producing resources and favoring the development of the host country as well as that of the emigrant's origin, or the tourist's roots. Nostalgic products can be different types of goods, primarily food products that the emigrant loves for their taste and quality, but above all because they bring back memories of

the homeland. It should not be ignored that international tourism generates profit, demand and exportation for some local products (Fischer & Gil-Alana, 2009; Madaleno et al., 2019); in the case of roots tourism this phenomenon is certainly amplified. The contrary is also true, however: frequently it is the success of some traditional products that promotes the destinations that the goods originate from and that favors its success while improving its image. In this way, it can activate a true virtuous cycle, in which the product represents a resource for tourism and an element of the travel experience, influencing the image of the destination and vice versa (Madaleno et al., 2019; Telfer & Wall, 1996; Tellstrom et al., 2005). This impacts the future tastes and consumption patterns of tourists when they return home, determining changes in the preferences of the tourists and also of their friends and acquaintances through word of mouth (Henderson, 2009; Kim et al., 2009).

To reinforce this interconnection between roots tourism and *Made in Italy*, with a particular reference on food and wine, there is a thematic annual event dedicated to the promotion of quality Italian cuisine and the agriculture food industry, that is sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in the World: *The week of Italian cooking in the world*. The initiative encompasses the relationship that connects the Italian gastronomic heritage to its regions of origin¹²³. It is important to highlight that the Italian gastronomic culture has advanced because of past Italian emigration, creating a growing demand for products from our nation to even fulfill the supply of foreign companies. This has generated a problem to tackle, the so-called *Italian Sounding*, in other words the fraudulent imitation of the Italian excellence in food and wine. The Italian emigrants around the world, as ambassadors of the authentic Made in Italy, could make a contribution in the education of foreign consumers to recognize quality Italian products and implement a conscious purchase.

Even the Confederation of Italians in the World (C.I.M.)¹²⁴ has among its pursued objectives the promotion of the *Made in Italy* in all of its expressions, among which is the agriculture food industry, fostering the exportation of Italian products through joint-ventures between Italian companies and foreign companies created by local compatriot residents. The President of the C.I.M.¹²⁵ states: *Food and wine products are always more appreciated by our compatriots abroad, they become ambassadors and propagators of the quality and authenticity of Italian production*. The association ‘Miss Chef’¹²⁶ is a project for the appreciation of the Italian culinary excellence and tradition in the communities of Italian emigrants around the world. This is an all-women format that began in 2012 and is based on the competition of women chefs, all Italian professionals, being acknowledged with an award. The format of ‘Miss Chef’ is a travelling show with stops not only in various Italian

¹²³ Source: www.esteri.it

¹²⁴ Source: <http://confederazioneitalianinelmondo.com>.

¹²⁵ We wish to thank Angelo Sollazzo for his collaboration.

¹²⁶ Source: www.misschef.net.

regions but also in the United States at selected Italian restaurants. The competition involves a cooking show followed by the sampling of dishes, in the presence of a technical and institutional jury. The enhancement of the identity and traditions of the countries of origin, therefore, also involves food and what it represents in the culture of a territory.

The in-depth interviews conducted in the first phase of the qualitative research and the results of the quantitative survey completed in Argentina show, on the part of roots tourists, a great appreciation for Italian food and a strong interest in purchasing traditional products, even after one's trip. Cited within the scope of these interviews is the testimony of a descendant (from second generation emigrants) of Calabrian origins and resident in Australia¹²⁷, who writes of her desire to conduct food and wine tours in Calabria for groups of clients from her restaurant in Bungendore. The project was materialized in its first edition in September 2019, showing that not only are future generations connected to the homeland of their families and that the descendants are ambassadors and direct investors, but that food and wine encompass a deep meaning of identification with the countries of origin. This becomes a living experience that can be shared with individuals who do not have ties with those areas. The experience of sharing is perpetuated also in the country of residence and the family restaurant business. In a time in which it is not possible to travel, on May 1, 2021, a cooking class called 'Sapori di Calabria' (Tastes of Calabria) will occur for 15 teachers of the Italian Teachers Network. The interviewee, the owner of the restaurant, states: *What an incredible day, talking about my beloved Calabria. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my passion with Italian language teachers.* The review from the organizer of the group of teachers who participated in the Italian-Calabrian cooking lessons includes the sense of a strong emotional attachment to the region by way of food: *I had the immense and emotional experience of learning more about the birthplace of my mother: Calabria. Heartfelt thanks for showing me again the beauty and the depth of this region and some of the Sapori della Calabria that I had lost.*

6.3 Intellectual emigration and returning home for vacation¹²⁸

Intellectual emigration or *high-skilled migration* has characterized the last twenty years, with a notable increase on a global scale (Arslan et al., 2014). An unambiguous definition for high-skilled migration still does not exist, but in general terms it comprises individuals who have emigrated and who at the very least possess a university degree or post-degree training (Adams, 2003; Carrington & Detragiache, 1998; Docquier & Marfouk, 2006).

In a job marketplace that is increasingly global and competitive, in which nations compete among themselves to attract qualified talent, the phenomenon of intellectual

¹²⁷ We wish to thank Josephine Gregoire for her collaboration.

¹²⁸ Anna Cipparrone, Fondazione Giuliani, and Sonia Ferrari, Università della Calabria.

emigration maintains tenacious growth in every country of the OECD. This increase occurred around the mid-1990s when western industrialized countries began to concentrate on the knowledge economy, creating an ever-growing international demand for highly qualified workers who would support the transition towards a new model of economic development. In 2019 in Italy one out of four Italians possesses a university degree (for a total of 30,000 people), with a 23% increase as compared to the data from 5 years prior. This regards mainly individuals 25 years old and older; almost three out of four Italian citizens who have moved abroad in 2019 are 25 years old and older. 28,000 of them have a university degree (ISTAT, 2021).

This project was initiated by the Fondazione Attilio and Elena Giuliani from Cosenza. Anna Cipparrone, the director of the Museo Consentia Itinera, is the supervisor of this project. The objective is to explore the phenomenon of intellectual emigration generated by young Calabrians within the last twenty years. Even if the subject holds a consistent scientific-bibliographic foundation at the national level, it has been much less investigated if not entirely analyzed in Calabria. For this very purpose, the Fondazione Giuliani –extending the project on roots tourism, developed by Sonia Ferrari on behalf of the University of Calabria of which the Fondazione Giuliani is a partner – has decided to undertake this path. The team that is conducting this research on roots tourism is involved thanks to a signed agreement with the Fondazione relating to various initiatives. The project, based on a qualitative survey, pursues the scope of examining and narrating the personal spirit and motivations of why these young people have left their homeland and are excited about fulfilling their professional dreams in elevated institutional contexts. Above all, the aim of this project is to rebuild the professional rapport between Calabria and its sons and daughters, defining with it a designation of the diverse areas of discipline in which they belong.

One part of the survey is dedicated to the relationship that these emigrants have with their homeland of origin in reference to how they spend their vacation, with an attentive look at roots tourism. This regards a segment of tourists with specific characteristics, completely different in respect to those emigrants of the past and their descendants. For this reason the subject of this study highlights a particular interest by our team.

The survey began with a questionnaire presented to the intellectual emigrants of Calabrian origin, with whom the Fondazione came into contact. In the first phase, they were involved in a series of online meetings in order to understand the initiative and its aims, and also to have direct contact with the supervisors of this research and with other participants. This last group was identified by the chain method.

Today the survey is at its beginning stages and the number of interviewees is still rather limited (30). In regards to roots tourism, the interviewees were asked if they habitually return for vacation to Calabria and for which reasons, what primarily attracts them to the region as a tourist destination and why, if they promote the region as a tourist destination abroad and if they have attempted to introduce Calabrian

products overseas, especially those of food and wine industry. From the first responses received, it is deduced that 60 percent of those interviewed return regularly to Calabria for vacation, especially due to family bonds (100 percent), ties to one's homeland (66.7 percent) and friendships (40 percent). Given that these interviewees have recently moved overseas, they still have family who live in the region with whom they have a strong bond. All promote the region as a tourist destination and the majority (93.3 percent) also endorse Calabrian products abroad.

6.4 *Wedding tourism and roots tourism*¹²⁹

Wedding tourism and roots tourism are two classifications of travel that are often symbiotic. In fact, there are many stories of couples who have decided to say their 'I dos' in a destination that has a profound symbolic and emotional meaning for them. The wedding day becomes even more special if it is celebrated in an appealing location for the family. Returning to one's place of origin to celebrate the wedding ceremony is a growing trend; the stories of tour operators and wedding planners attest to this and often find themselves working for couples who come from different parts of the world and who desire to celebrate the ceremony in characteristic villages in which parents, grandparents or ancestors were born. Roots tourism intertwines with wedding tourism, giving life to exciting stories that are tied to family events; these stories are able to value small towns and villages, especially in Southern Italy. Wedding tourism is defined by Daniels and Loveless (2013) as the tourism flow generated by weddings that are celebrated in destinations in which neither the groom nor the bride are residents. According to diverse scholars, wedding tourism does not concern itself only with visiting a new location, but engages in the compliance of family obligations and the creation of social networks. It is therefore deduced that the family holds a fundamental role in regard to wedding tourism as well as roots tourism. According to Tauer and Ryan (2005) and Knudsen and Waade (2010), the choice of a wedding destination is usually based on a captivating image that is positive and moving, and that a couple perceives even before the wedding. This positive image will be reinforced after the celebration of the event itself. Given that roots tourism is a type of travel that shares family memories and strong ancestral ties among people and territory, the celebration of weddings in areas of particular interest for the bride and groom assume a series of profound meaning. Wang (1999) considers the wedding experience a form of family tourism perceived as an authentic experience, because it represents a background where individuals can feel a more sincere and genuine in comparison to everyday life. It is a type of family tourism of people who are *in search for a temporary 'ideal home' for the celebration of a family* (Bertella, 2015 : 398). This 'ideal home' is a place in which the family can live an extraordinary moment and enjoy mutual affection. Since weddings are important moments, the bride and groom can decide voluntarily to choose the

¹²⁹ Debora Calomino, Università della Calabria.

location of the family's place of origin for the celebration. The wedding, like all rituals, follows a specific script, and as the nuptials are celebrated in the place in which parents, grandparents or great-grandparents married, it is as if a past tradition is being continued. Being part of a family with parents, grandparents or emigrated ancestors can influence important decisions. For wedding tourism, in particular, the location's choice for the celebration is often conditioned by the family of origin. This preference is usually due to the place attachment. Rubenstein and Parmelee (1992) define place attachment and of feelings that are pertaining to a geographical location and that emotionally connects a person to this area, according to its role as an experiential setting. In the boxes that follow, two examples are given of two Calabrian tourism companies that organized weddings between individuals of local origin but who reside abroad.

Sposiamoci in Calabria

To better understand this phenomenon, this testimonial was gathered by Agnese Ferraro, Calabrian wedding planner of the start-up 'Sposiamoci in Calabria' (Let's Get Married in Calabria), who organizes destination weddings. Agnese recounts her experience with an English couple who chose Calabria as the location to celebrate their wedding. *The year was 2018, I was contacted by this couple who were of Calabrian origin and who live, work and have their family in England. They contacted me at the beginning of the year. Their objective was to get married in Calabria. She originates from Nardodipace in the province of Vibo Valentia, and he from Praia a Mare, in the province of Cosenza. The bride and groom wanted to celebrate a religious wedding in the Santuario della Madonna della Grotta in Praia a Mare (The Sanctuary of the Madonna of the Grotta), a place that their parents are very attached to on a sentimental level. The whole wedding was organized via Skype. We met a few weeks before the event. It was really a beautiful wedding; the staff and almost all the services for this wedding were Calabrian, just as the bride and groom desired. We paid homage to her town offering the typical sweets of the wedding day to the guests. We supervised the menu to be in English and Italian. We hosted the foreign guests to stay in the nearby hotels and the majority of them, except the relatives who live here, arrived with a flight landing at Lamezia Terme. The wedding was celebrated in June 2018.*

Autotrinidad

Another exciting testimony was given by Eddy Arena, the owner of Autotrinidad, a car rental and tourism service agency. Eddy recounts a nuptial event for which he organized a series of services and that remain engraved in his mind. *The last wedding I remember took place in September 2018 by Argentineans. The couple has been living there for over forty years and has a leather hides processing company. They are humble people and their roots are from the Sila. The peculiar*

aspect of this wedding was the meeting with relatives who were all reunited for the first time. A much-moved young Italian-Argentinean couple came to know their roots the day of their wedding, and the elderly present were on the edge of tears and spoke of the bride as if they had always known her. After the wedding, they spent two weeks in their town of origin with those relatives whom they had not known before but to whom they had deep sentimental ties. They had such a desire to discover and know the places and in particular the grandmother's house. I remember this as one of the most touching weddings I have ever attended.

6.5 Calabrian dialect spoken in Argentina and the sound archives *L'Altra Calabria*¹³⁰

The laboratory of Phonetics of the University of Calabria in the past few years has organized a series of collaborations and research projects with various Argentinean (Universidad Nacional de Rosario, Universidad de Buenos Aires or of Santa Fe, etc.) and Brazilian Universities (Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro), aimed at re-emerging or evaluating the Calabrian identity that is present among the first generation immigrants and their children and grandchildren born outside Calabria¹³¹ (Frontera 2018, 2019 and 2020).

The interest and especially the desire to preserve the traditions, cultures and languages tied to childhood, adolescence and above all to one's land and family are undeniable. Because of these projects, the Universities, the support of the Calabrian Associations around the world and to the Region of Calabria, it has been possible to organize Calabrian culture and dialect courses from the University of Calabria, the Universities or the Calabrian Associations in Argentina and also online by means of courses or webinars with Calabrian immigrants outside of Italy.

The first point of observation for this research concerns Argentina. The region of Calabria and the Argentinean territory have been interested in this well documented social cultural phenomenon which represents the main goal for migration flows originating from the areas of Cosenza and Catanzaro, from the end of the 1800s to the end of the 1960s (see Table 6.1).

Immigrants from every generation and engaged in any profession maintain ties with one's own land and identity, safeguarding scrupulously one's own traditions, recipes and above all one's language or dialect, because the feeling of belonging to the same community corresponds even to a linguistic identity. Indeed, it is not a coincidence that these same immigrants have preserved the use of dialect in family settings and, sometimes, even outside the home with friends and acquaintances when difficulty in expressing oneself in Spanish arises (Romito and Lio, 2007).

¹³⁰ Luciano Romito, Università della Calabria, Italy.

¹³¹ From our statistical analysis, in 2014 there were around 609 Calabrian students enrolled in the Universidad Nacional de Rosario.

Table 6.1 Composition of the Italian community in Argentina according to the regions of origin

Regions	Year 1973	Year 1983
Calabria	186,000	75,650
Sicilia	79,000	55,000
Friuli	29,000	26,300
Veneto	14,000	23,700

Source: ISTAT

If the earliest immigrants, often illiterate, used the various regional dialects as one's mother tongue while learning Spanish only in spontaneous and work-related contexts, the second generation who are literate, know Spanish well and learn the dialects within the family or through prolonged contacts with other immigrants and children of immigrants within Calabrian Associations. Considering that in Calabria dialects exist for each community or small town, the research question that we pose is the following: what type of dialect do the Argentinian Calabrians of today speak, and particularly if there still exists the diverse dialectical identities tied to the towns of origin, or over the years has this linguistic mixture given birth to a sort of (pan)Calabrian dialect, a new unified dialectical standard that does not exist in Calabria?

To respond to this question, we began a sound archive entitled *L'Altra Calabria* composed of the voices of our fellow compatriots who have emigrated abroad. The archive will gather recordings of stories, histories and experiences, all in dialect. We believe that a written description based on the printed words of the Italian language are insufficient in order to satisfy all the phonetic requirements of the Calabrian dialects that represent sounds that are different than and non-existent in Italian. Therefore, this collection of sound data will be in part the basis for a scientific comparison within the parameters of reference of the dialectological areas in Calabria and those observed in spoken dialect in the Calabrian communities of Argentina, and in part will be the testimony and memory of our Calabrian immigrants in Argentina and the rest of the world.

The largest number of Calabrians in Argentina are found in the Pampa Gringa, in areas of large urban concentrations with Buenos Aires and its extensive hinterland in the lead, as well as, along the coast of the of the Paraná River (Rosario, Santa Fe). Other cities that are outside of this area are the Mediterranean capital (Córdoba), the Andean city of Mendoza on the cordillera near the borders of Chile and Tucumán, in the north of the country.

There are two factors that distinguish the last migratory wave from the two preceding ones: the first is represented by illiteracy (immigrants from the end of the 1800s as well as those after World War I, for the most part, did not know how to read or write, and only spoke their dialect, as those of their koinè. The second is represented by the integration in the work force sectors; initially manufacturing and production,

followed by the service industry (the immigrants after World War II up until the end of the 1960s spoke at least some form of standard or non-standard Italian).

While the immigrants of the first wave were mostly allocated to the manufacturing and production work force, those of the subsequent migratory waves, having had access in their homeland to mandatory schooling, assumed positions that were more or less specialized within the industries, in this case engineering, which prospered in Argentina and reached its pinnacle during the government of Juan Perón, who conferred them optional Argentinean citizenship.

Over the years many of them opened their own businesses while others began businesses in the sectors of metalworking, mechanics, carpentry, electrical installations, etc. From simple laborers and tradespeople (one may think of the Spanish vocabulary of bakers and the high number of Calabrian dialect terminology that it contains) the Italians became part of the social and economic fabric of the country. Every Italian male immigrant chose to marry an Italian woman (even without ever having met) by post or by proxy, while maintaining cohesiveness within the community. The Calabrian Associations maintained an extremely important role throughout this process.

Today more than 70 associations exist throughout Argentina, naturally with concentrations in large towns and cities. The associations are recognized by the Argentinean legal system and can be compared simultaneously to the Italian mutual aid societies, charitable institutions or leisure centres. These are the gathering places where they can speak their own language, but also the cultural centres par excellence and the only means of preserving and maintaining traditions and folklore¹³².

Therefore, one's own dialect is preserved and transmitted, giving life to two specific forms when met with the Spanish language: *cocoliche* and *lunfardo*. *Cocoliche* can be defined as a sort of *pidgin*, a transition system of interlingual speech that modifies every level of linguistic production (phonetic-phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical) to the point that often the end result becomes incomprehensible. *Lunfardo*, instead, is an urban *argot*, which is constituted on the lexical level of many Italianisms. It was the slang used in the ghettos of Buenos Aires (today we find many *lunfardo* terminology in some of the famous Tangos).

Calabria is linguistically divided into two macro-areas on the basis of substratum; one is uniquely of Greek influence, the other of Latin influence, with relative distinctions in linguistic structures and predominantly determined in the dialects that evolved in correspondence to the different geographic areas (for example, by means of a lexical analysis, we will find in southern Calabria the word *cefrata* or *zafrata* of Greek origin for 'lizard', whereby in northern Calabria we have *licerta* of Latin origin). Moreover, every foreign dominance that succeeded the other throughout the centuries have further enriched and shaped the dialectal varieties with which the dominant language came into contact, creating facets, similarities and discrepancies

¹³² The Association often has its own folk dance group or musicians.

that have been mapped out and traced back to the areas of specific reference (Romito, Tarasi and Renzelli, 2011). The project's objective, therefore, is to verify conservation of these characteristics from the easily influenced levels (like phonetics) to the depths of language (like syntax) by analyzing lexical varieties connected to some areas of Calabria: verbal tenses, the syntactical construction of phrases, and the various target in the production of vowel sounds and specific consonants. The parameters utilized examine, for example, the use of the present perfect as compared to the use of the preterite tense as in: 'I went' which they say *signu jutu* in northern Calabria and *jivi* in the south; or, the existence versus the absence of the use of the infinitive as in 'I must eat' that is said *haju e mangiare* in northern Calabria and *haju mu mangiu* in the south. The use of the possessive in the pre-nominal position or as the suffix in the noun 'my father', which becomes *me patre* on the Tyrrhenian coast and *patrimma* on the Ionian coast. The use of the plural in nouns; in the furthestmost southern areas of Calabria the singular 'dog' and the plural 'dogs' is produced with the indistinct form *u cani* and *i cani*, rather without difference – if it were not for the use of the article. However, in central Calabria, the difference that produces *u cana* in the singular and *i cani* in the plural are maintained. A pilot study in which a group of first generation immigrants became the protagonists who arrived in Rosario (Argentina) during childhood or adolescence and are now elderly, revealed that the speakers delineated a double tendency in the use of dialect. Many of the characteristics of the dialects of one's own towns of origin are strongly respected, for which there exist deep linguistic roots. Nevertheless, in other cases our compatriots use sounds or expressions which are not in the least typical of their dialectology areas, but closer to other areas. In the course of the interviews there occurred more times that the same person pronounced sentences based on the expected results and characteristic of the area of origin, however, a short time later, he/she would use a form that would most likely be found in other dialectology areas. For example, in a few cases the production of 'onion' or 'chicken' as *cipuda* or *cipulla* and *gaddina* or *gallina* in dialect were found when the forms should be *cipuddra* and *gaddrina* and vice versa. These are all tangible tracings of a possible influence carried out from the Italian language as well as from contact with other Calabrians, and a possible hypothesized tendency for linguistic unification that, if not regarded by the elderly of the first generation, could become manifested among those of Spanish mother tongue who would learn the dialect as a second or third language.

This pilot study demonstrates that the linguistic parameters of reference of the four Calabrian dialectal areas delineate an uncertain tendency: we are witnessing a sufficient maintenance of some parameters and the loss of others. So we do not detect the phenomena characterizing the four areas, but there is a mixture of different linguistic systems. Consequently, the creation of a pan-Calabrian should not be observed, meaning a common language in which all immigrants of Calabrian origin independent of their dialectology of provenance speak. Instead, it is hypothesized that the dialects of the informants are influenced by Argentinean Spanish, Italian and

the dialects used in the areas of origin. This data is what we have in our possession up to this point (Romito et al., 2016). These studies demonstrate the necessity of the *L'Altra Calabria* sound archive that should be substantial and which represents a large number of immigrants that span various generations, diverse countries of origin and perhaps in the future can include not only the spoken language of the Calabrians of Argentina but of Calabrians around the world. The sound archive has a scientific value for linguistic, sociological and cultural analysis but also a historical and memory value of the first and second generation of Calabrian emigrants.

6.6 Villages that are in the process of depopulation as possible research destinations on roots and identity¹³³

Asmef, Associazione Mezzogiorno Futuro, has been occupied for years with the activities of research and study on the theme of return in tourism. We organized the first national conference in Vatolla, at the Palazzo de Vargas, offices of the Fondazione G.B.Vico, our scientific partner. We were in Cilento in the summer of 2017. In November of the same year, we sponsored a meeting at the Camera dei Deputati, hosting members of Parliament, universities, journalists and important people of the sector. Among others, Luigi Maria Vignali, the general director of the Department for Italians Abroad at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MAECI) was favorably impressed by the effectiveness of the event and by the proposed themes, so much so that he decided to organize an international convention on March 29th, 2018 at the Ministry and a permanent committee from which the sector can be studied, to promote supporting actions and suggest proposals. From that moment, Asmef is a founding member of the committee and is a partner with, in addition to MAECI and the Italian RAIZ Association, ENIT (the Italian National Tourism Agency), important Italian regions, universities and organizations of the sector. The initiative's success was immense; there was great enthusiasm, proposals, exchanges of information and material to revisit and put forth again. The initiative was so enthusiastically met that every year, May 27th, the meeting is organized by the MAECI. Last year and this year unfortunately, because of the pandemic, the meeting was a webinar. The topic is stimulating and full of meaning, it revolves around social, economic, urban and demographic themes. However, let us begin in order. To try to understand the motives why villages are in the process of depopulation, and this could be the goal for emigrants who are wishing to return to the homeland to explore their roots, a few steps backwards must be taken; a step towards the many departures from the ports of Naples, Genoa and other scenarios of escape to far away lands. From 1861 onwards. Because it was with the Unity of Italy that this great social phenomenon began to grow and is the history of the Italian emigration. At that time, people left most of all because of hunger. They arrived in distant lands, like Argentina, Brazil, the United States, and Australia. But also here in Europe;

¹³³ Salvo Iavarone, president Asfem.

Germany and Switzerland above all. Today one also leaves in search of better professional opportunities, and even researchers and managers are choosing more preferable places.

The departure towards the difficulty to survive is not yet over. All these reasons, naturally, in a post-covid era. In pandemic times it is hard to leave, imagine to emigrate. Today there are nearly 5,600,000 Italians enrolled in AIRE (Association of Italians Residing Abroad). However 70-80 million expatriates with Italian origins, even from third and fourth generations, exist scattered abroad. If one stops to think, in Argentina alone, among its forty million citizens, nearly half are numbered to have Italian origins. As I stated prior, in order to understand the phenomenon of villages as natural attractions for remigrating tourists, it is necessary to retrace one's footsteps and begin to understand where our brothers left from, uprooted from their homeland. If we study our emigration, it can be noted that the immense majority left from small, scattered villages and towns from the North and the South. In order to understand this reality well, it is necessary to know the provincial town, small and poor; but always alive and always near to its children, wherever they may be. Even there, lights and shadows, like everywhere, in life and in the world. The true dimension of emigration, which is clear and prevalent, is given by the relationship between the individual who abandons the province and the new life that not uncommonly allows him to grow socially, by ten thousand distant miles. Even from the cities many left, as is occurring also today, but they disappear and no one hears about them. The villages that remain empty fabricate their tales and stories. To try to define the social reality of a country, I would like to begin with how a writer of great merit, Valeria Parrella, defines the opposite reality, the city. Valeria states that *The city embraces you, but immediately afterwards lets you fall into emptiness*. All this *letting go and picking up* on one hand creates uncertainty, difficulty; and on the other hand, it creates energy to grow and improve. As much as a city like New York is modern and successful, it has its down falls in social welfare programs, perhaps they exist more in Naples, rather than in Cairo. A country is a whole social welfare program; it embraces you once, without letting you go. When you are born. But it is a mortal embrace, one that deprives you of any social dynamism. Basically, it protects you, it pampers you. But it prevents you from looking from the top towards the bottom to him/her who was socially born higher than you were. If you are the son of a lawyer, be a lawyer. The same as for a pharmacist. There are exceptions. But it is necessary to confirm the rule. And in addition to the exceptions, there is America. The system that allows the seventh child of a poor family, with a retired father, grandmother and aunts to care for, to find fortune, buy a house and send their children to college. And to return to the village for Christmas festivities with a gold Rolex on the wrist, to boast in the bar of the village square, having coffee with the family's lawyer, finally without reverence, being treated to coffee. This is America. But it could be Argentina, or Canada. Wherever the emigration destination. And this is the country that lets its children leave. I have been reasoning in this way, in order to demonstrate how strong the bond is that unites millions of our expatriates with

the many villages and small towns that are scattered along the national territory. There are more than five thousand communities with less than two thousand inhabitants. Many villages. And especially in the South, but not only, in the process of depopulation. If not already empty. The return tourism, intensive as the roots research, love for the homeland of origin, attraction for the land that established the dawn of one's own existence; return tourism can consist of a stimulus of incredible energy in order to try to give some practicality to the national program that seems to be taking shape, on the verge of recuperating its villages. More voices are heard in that direction. Vittorio Sgarbi initiated this, when he was the mayor of Salemi, offering apartments at the nominal fee of one euro to whomever would be available to renovate them. Many have followed his example. The community of Taranto has recently propagated an announcement to recuperate neglected apartments, places in the historic center, with similar methods. But also in Ganci, Sassari, San Bartolomeo in Liguria. The mayor of Teora, in Irpinia, has made real estate units available for rent to be paid by the town council to those who have the intention to move to the town. There are other examples here and there. I think that the case is to evaluate this great national direction, to take the responsibility of this phenomenon that, as I stated at the beginning of this article, is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon. The villages can be possible destinations for emigrants who wish to have a base in their town or village of origin. But today, in times of Covid and remote working, they can become useful destinations for those who are searching for somewhere else on a more human scale, away from the cities that they have grown tired of. The State should encourage this great project. Meanwhile, Wi-Fi usage in many towns, for the moment, is not available. Wi-Fi today is a must. There is also a need to build infrastructures. A village can be beautiful and pleasing. But if it takes hours to arrive there, then it becomes inconvenient. In other words, dreams can become reality. But one has to believe it, and be committed to it, on many levels. One must team together and produce a common energy so that this part of Italy, a little forgotten, a little decentralized, can become repopulated and reinvigorated. Many traditions and cultures cannot wait to be reintroduced to the world. Let us attempt this.

6.7 Events as attractions for roots tourists¹³⁴

Events, whether they are large, special, community-based or simply private or with family, are leisure activities of increasing importance even in touristic terms. In this regard events increase the attractiveness of a destination and, frequently, represent one of the reasons for travel, if not the main reason. This gives rise to a type of tourism entitled *event tourism* (Ferrari, 2018; Huang et al., 2017), that in many cases is tied to the segment of *special interest tourism* (Weiler & Hall, 1992). This last segment consists of those who travel in order to satisfy distinctly personal interests, the pursuit of personalized services and unique experiences.

¹³⁴ Sonia Ferrari and Tiziana Nicotera, Università della Calabria.

Often emigrants and their descendants return on vacation to their homelands of origin in order to participate in public or private events and festivities of a more or less important nature. Those events are increasingly aimed at this target group; they are organized by different groups or individuals (City/Town Halls, Pro-loco, Regions, associations, etc.). The purpose of some of these entities is to enable individuals of local origins who have emigrated abroad years prior to gather together, establish connections with residents and feel part of the community. When these are private events, they are moments of family gatherings, on occasion of, for example, weddings, baptisms or funerals.

The events that attract roots tourists are usually *community events* (Ferrari & Faenza, 2015). This concerns local community events, occasions that reflect the traditions and culture of the area and may regard celebrations, religious ceremonies, or traditional festivities like Christmas or Easter. The events are useful tourism and place marketing tools, effective not only with the objective of stimulating roots tourism flows but also in order to modify them. They are able to attract visitors at any time of the year, for example, during the off seasons, which favors seasonal adjustments (Janta et al., 2015) and may also attempt to prolong the duration of one's stay. Events can also have positive effects in terms of the place image and of the impact on the area's social fabric by reinforcing and promoting local culture and identity, in addition to favor the social cohesion within the community.

By means of the events that are intended for the emigrants of local origin and their descendants, the community and the tourist destinations can pursue, therefore, the following objectives:

- attraction for tourists, roots tourists and other type of visitors
- differentiation of the image of the destination;
- increase in satisfaction for roots tourists;
- flow attractions in particular times of the year, with seasonal adjustment;
- the possibility of gatherings for roots tourists to meet among themselves with an increase in satisfaction and interest in the initiative;
- promotion of local products through positive word of mouth;
- the possibility of networking with other areas that organize similar events;
- prolongation of the duration of the visit and an increase in pro-capita spending;
- interest in specific investments and financing, whether public or private;
- increase in tourist reputation and promotion of the area;
- participation of the local population, reinforcement of the social fabric.

The results of the survey given in this volume based on the compilation of questionnaires that were directed to Calabrian municipal administrators¹³⁵ show that there are a great number of events¹³⁶ in the region that are directed to roots tourists and, more generally, to the emigrants of local origin. This confirms that the migratory phenomenon is a significant component within the local culture, and the awareness of the importance of ties with Calabrians abroad should be strengthened and promoted. A few festivities are already consolidated as, for example, the Festa del Ritorno di Carfizzi (XXV edition), the events from Rogliano (which have been taking place for 20 years), the Festa degli Emigranti that is organized in August by the association Laghitani nel Mondo at Lago, or the Festa dell'Emigrante of Fiumefreddo (that began 37 years ago) (Ferrari and Nicotera, 2020). There are others, however, that are in their initial stages, like the Prima Festa dell'Emigrante that was held in Magisano in 2019. In some communities the initiative dedicated to emigration is a festival (Acquaformosa) or a series of musical events which are folkloristic, cultural and gastronomic like in San Pietro in Maida. Some examples of these are: the ethnic music festival Paleariza in Bova, the event Ricoglitevi-Ritroviamoci in Mangone, a festival rich in music, culture and art, that is organized during the weekend of the patron saint festivity, or even the Festa Italo-Brasiliana that began in Morano Calabro in 2019 and is dedicated to the 20,000 residents in Brazil of Morano Calabro origin. The municipality of San Pietro in Guarano encourages those who are abroad to follow the local events on streaming service, especially through social networks, and are promoting the area with the objective of attracting roots tourists.

However, as it has already been observed in this volume¹³⁷, it is in other countries, in particular, in Scotland and Ireland, that most of the attention is dedicated to the organization of events on a national level that are directed to the emigrated compatriots. In 1999, the Scottish Parliament identified roots tourism as one of three niche markets that can be addressed through a specific tourist strategy. Following this selection, a series of events were organized, some niche and others of a standardized nature and destined for mass markets. One may remember, for example, the *Orkney Homecoming*, that in 1999 attracted numerous Canadians of Orcadian origin. They traveled together to their islands of origin in order to take part in a week-long tour that was enriched with conferences, concerts and a special service in the Cathedral of St. Magnus that was dedicated to the visitors' returning

¹³⁵ Please see Chapter 4.

¹³⁶ Among the many examples, the events remembered are usually held or have been held in the past in: Amantea, Amaroni, Amendolara, Antonimina, Badolato, Bova Marina, Caloveto, Castrolibero, Cerva, Chiaravalle Centrale, Fagnano Castello, Feroletto della Chiesa, Gasperina, Gimigliano, Grimaldi, Jacurso, Laureana di Borrello, Malito, Montegiordano, Morano Calabro, Padula, Petrizzi, Rombiolo, San Marco Argentano, Santo Stefano d'Aspromonte, Tarsia e Zagarise. Almost all are held in the month of August.

¹³⁷ Please see Paragraphs 1.2 and 5.1.

home. Other events are organized by Scottish associations abroad and offer visits to those places associated to the history and traditions of various clans, often culminating in parades in which the symbols and the flags of clans are displayed (Basu, 2017). In 2009, a large event named *Homecoming Scotland*, that is dedicated to roots tourism, was organized for the first time (Iorio and Corsale, 2013).

Regarding Ireland, a particularly interesting example with reference to the topic examined is *The Gathering*. This involves a tourist initiative that in 2013 lead many Irish to organize gatherings and celebrations in order to, attract friends and family from around the world (Quinn and Ryan, 2019). Thanks to this widespread event, more than 5,000 meetings of highly heterogeneous dimensions emerged. Many were mostly family celebrations.

In addition to the organized events in the homeland to summon the diaspora and dedicate to it a designated celebratory space, it is also interesting to be acquainted with the Italianness events abroad, that is, events conducted in the countries of current residence of the emigrants and their descendants, created as an objective to commemorate the ties with one's native land. It is a question of preserving, even from a distance, various types of traditions, above all religious but also in a general sense in order to reinforce a sense of belonging and an identity of pride in reference to the nation of Italy, encompassing a specific region or municipality of origin. That which is particularly deserved to be mentioned is the *Settimana della lingua italiana nel mondo*¹³⁸ (the week of Italian Language in the World), with the XX edition that took place from the 19th-25th of October 2020, organized by the diplomatic consulate network and the Italian Cultural Institutes with MiBACT, MIUR and the main partners for the linguistic promotion in Italy. An enriching program of exhibits, conferences and gatherings is provided every year on a different theme in about 100 countries. To this initiative is added, as always part of the program, '*Vivere all'Italiana*' (Living the Italian Way) of the MAECI, the most recent being the *Settimana della cucina italiana nel mondo*¹³⁹ (the week of Italian cuisine in the world) 2020 having been the V edition.

Even the C.I.M. (Confederation of Italians in the World)¹⁴⁰ have events (conferences, exhibits, concerts, sports events, etc.) for gathering together the emigrants abroad. The world convention takes place every year in a different foreign country; its aim is to increasingly involve those of Italian origin in the world. There are many initiatives that aim for the spread and promotion of the Italian culture abroad; among these being, the *Festival della Canzone Italiana* in Belgium¹⁴¹ (Festival of Italian Song), organized since 1979 by the Belgian Association 'Movimento Arte & Cultura'.

¹³⁸ Source: www.esteri.it.

¹³⁹ Idem.

¹⁴⁰ Source: <http://confederazioneitalianinelmondo.com>.

¹⁴¹ Source: www.festival-della-canzone-italiana-in-belgio.be.

In Argentina, the most important event from the Italian community is the traditional Italian festival *Buenos Aires celebra Italia* (Buenos Aires celebrates Italy), that has been in effect for eleven years and usually takes place in the month of October (in 2020 it was online due to the Covid-19 pandemic), and recreates a ‘little Italy’ with music, traditional dances and culinary arts. The event is organized by the Dirección de Colectividades de la Subsecretaría de Derechos Humanos y Pluralismo Cultural of the city of Buenos Aires, in collaboration with the Comisión Organizadora de BA Celebra Italia, the support of the Federación de las Instituciones Italianas de la Circunscripción Consular de Buenos Aires (FEDIBA) and the offices of ENIT Buenos Aires¹⁴². In the month of April, the largest Calabrian festival in South America for paying homage to the most numerous Italian community residing in Argentina takes place, which is the Calabrian community: *Buenos Aires celebra Calabria*¹⁴³. The festival was founded by the Liga de Mujeres Calabresas in collaboration with the F.A.C.A. (Federazione delle Associazioni Calabresi in Argentina) and is organized by the Subsecretaría de Derechos Humanos y Pluralismo Cultural of the city of Buenos Aires. The event occurs during the course of the day of the Calabrian immigrant which is remembered on April 2nd (the same day that San Francesco di Paola, patron saint of Calabria, is celebrated), and which aims to promote the typical traditions, culture and cuisine.

Other events in a few cities in Argentina celebrate Italian customs, such as: in Mendoza, the *Festa della Vendemmia* and the *Festa in Piazza* (Festival of the Grape Harvest and Festival in the Square), the latter is declared by the province of Mendoza as an Intangible Cultural Heritage¹⁴⁴; in Rosario, the *Fiera delle collettività* (Community Fair); in Oberà, the *Festa Nazionale dell’Immigrato* (National Festival of the Immigrant); in La Plata, *Italia para todos* (Italy for everyone). Regarding specific Italian regions is cited *Cammina, Molise!*¹⁴⁵ (Walk On, Molise!), an initiative of urban hiking for the promotion of the region of Molise, that has been in effect in Argentina for five years (Mar de Plata, Rosario, Cordoba, La Plata, Buenos Aires). The Argentine edition’s objective is to stimulate the desire to return to one’s region of origin and to the area of one’s own ancestors by means of a simple and pleasant walk, from Molise one arrives in Argentina, for the involvement of the community of Molisans and their residents.

¹⁴² Source: www.facebook.com/CelebraItalia/; <https://buenosaires.italiani.it/>.

¹⁴³ Source: www.facebook.com/Buenos-Aires-Celebra-Calabria-775174919230939; <https://buenosaires.italiani.it/>.

¹⁴⁴ Source: <https://mendoza.italiani.it/>.

¹⁴⁵ Source: www.latterra.org/.

6.8 Educational-tourism and roots tourism: niche tourism and sustainability¹⁴⁶

Tourism for educational purposes (*educational-tourism*) is a type of tourism that is widely studied and analyzed in literature (Richie, 2003). Even before its conceptualization and academic definition, individuals through ‘travel’ have always been propelled towards the pursuit of knowledge in *latu senso*, considering culture as a form of liberation and human, economic and social growth. Consider, for example, the role of ‘travel’ in the education of young people, where different centers of ‘acculturation’ (from the ancient Alexandria to the modern Boston, passing through Athens, Rome, Istanbul, Toledo, Florence, Paris, London, Amsterdam, Saint Petersburg, etc.) provided and provide academic and humanistic training for the new generations. In this regard, UNESCO (2015) defines educational-tourist as *an internationally mobile student, an individual who has physically crossed an international border between two countries with the objective of participation in educational activities in the country of destination, where the country of destination is different from their country of origin*. The ‘educational activities’ include not only the contents of the lessons, but the whole process of ‘inculturation’ (Castillo, 2018), that is belonging to a new community, sharing and exchanging practices, customs and experiences.

Alipour et al. (2020) define educational-tourism through the lens of globalization, not only for the ease of travel that distinguishes our day and age, but for the calling and the attitude to change the world ‘bio-socially’. Although the connections between educational-tourism and globalization are strong, educational-tourism cannot be considered a form of mass tourism, not to mention the innumerable implications in terms of sustainability. From a residents’ point of view, for example, the relative perception of the impact of educational-tourism on the local community is positive for certain aspects (with reference to the economic impact) and critical for other aspects (for example, in terms of *gentrification*) (Alipour, 2020).

The uniqueness of educational-tourism is manifested in its structure, in terms of immersion of the educational-tourists in the university towns that generate both spatial implications (for example, sharing with the residents of the same area for the whole duration of the stay) and temporary implications (for example, the long term relationship that is a product of the interaction between the educational-tourists and residents) (Alipour, 2020).

Literature has shown diverse drivers on the base of educational-tourism. MacMahon (1992) identifies the levels of economic wealth of the countries of origin and its limited availability in terms of educational opportunities as push factors; the level of social-political and economic involvement among the countries of origin and the countries of destination, and the greater availability of educational opportunities in the countries of destination as pull factors. Along the same lines, Abubakar et al.

¹⁴⁶ Emilio Velasco, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid, and Giuseppe Emanuele Adamo, EAE Business School, Madrid.

(2014) highlight that the reputation and the quality of the educational system, as well as future employment opportunities, are to be considered as the drivers of educational-tourism. Jason et al. (2011) contend that the use of the same language, alongside the sharing of historical connections (colonial relationships, for example) among the countries of destination and the country of origin can be considered as drivers of educational-tourism.

Rahaman et al. (2016) have analyzed the role of *nostalgia* as a key to decipher the various motivations at the moment of choosing the destination of educational-tourism. Nostalgia here must be understood as an ideal or idealized imagery of something (person, place, fact, action), that generates a positive attitude toward an unknown, partially unknown or in a certain sense idealized reality. Nostalgia is a postmodern concept on the base of different forms of tourism (Chen et al., 2014; Holbrook & Schindler, 2003; Schindler & Holbrook, 2003; Yeh et al., 2012).

On the basis of the above, the connections between educational-tourism and roots tourism are clear. Roots tourism, indeed, supports much of the motivations of educational-tourism, from the research of the places of origin with the learning of habits and local customs, directly to the nostalgia of the places in which one has lived or the induced nostalgia of the places that one has heard spoken about (Acho, 2017; Coles & Timothy, 2004; Huang et al, 2016; Otoo, 2021). In that line of interpretation, certain types of tourism have begun to take part in roots tourism, like *diaspora tourism* (Huang et al., 2013), in which, an ethnic-national group that has been forcibly scattered desire to return and reconnect with their own land of origin (Coles & Timothy, 2004), and *heritage tourism* (Nkwanyana et al., 2016), a segment of tourists who love to relive authentic experiences of the places that they have visited, including stories of people, food, music and artifacts.

Acho (2017) empathizes how nostalgia is the basis for creating tourism opportunities in countries that are economically less developed, where there is a large majority of the population that has been removed due to a diaspora. Gil-Alana (2021: 4686), for example, has shown how the motivation of roots tourists in Ghana is not only the eagerness to know an ancestor's place of origin, but also the desire for social justice, *a sense of heightened civic commitment to social justice as a result of the travel experience*.

Spain endured a diaspora in the XX century, during the civil war (1936-1939), when many civilians, especially intellectuals, writers and politicians, emigrated to Latin America in order to escape Francoist persecution. In the same way, even other European countries in the first half of the 1900s saw many intellectuals and scientists, belonging directly or indirectly to ethnic minorities, relocate from Europe to the Americas (for example, Enrico Fermi, Nobel prize for physics, from Italy to the United States).

In today's day, entire generations, children of the generations who were interested in the diasporas, economic, social and political emigrations, are seeking to rediscover and strengthen the ties with the past and with their own countries of origin, through travel and brief experiences but also through long-term stays, as for

example, types of educational-tourism. In the host country they find a story/depiction of their identity and a sense of belonging.

Future studies could, therefore, be aimed at highlighting and characterizing the ties between educational-tourism and roots tourism, and the role of nostalgia, in addition to verifying if roots tourism could be considered a facilitator of educational-tourism or vice-versa, by amplifying the cultural contact between students and residents. Additionally, it would even be of interest to analyze the impact of these forms of tourism on the educational-hubs in terms of economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Chapter 7

Dissemination activities and general conclusions¹⁴⁷

SUMMARY: 7.1 The activity of communication. 7.2 Conclusions and practical implications. 7.2.1 *The vision*. 7.2.2 *The four areas of intervention for an effective marketing policy for roots tourism*. 7.2.3 *The functional implications*

7.1 The activity of communication

Although this is not part of the actual research, a series of communication and dissemination activities were planned and regarded, as necessary for the successful outcome of the project itself. Amongst these are included: seminars/webinars, conferences, radio and TV interviews and the implementation of a multimedia project, namely, a testimonial video.

The specific pursued outcomes are: to engage with people of Italian origin around the world; to be a reference point for the industry operators and local authorities, who are interested in utilizing the possibilities of this particular form of tourism, beginning from scientific based data; creating contacts with other researchers and scholars regarding this topic, in order for the research to become more extensive and richer in content; and to acquaint the different stakeholders of the motivational work of roots tourism, that is conducted by the Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale (MAECI) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy).

All of the conferences and seminars that were held in a telematics modality, such as webinars, were conducted online due to the problems related to Covid-19, which made onsite attendance impossible. In order to efficiently disclose all of the initiatives, a Facebook page was created (<https://www.facebook.com/turismodelleradici>) that has almost 1.500 followers. The *domain name* www.turismodelleradici.info was also registered for the creation of a website that is intended to outline the results of the current and future research. The website is currently in the design phase and contains the implemented video-testimony, which is described later on.

¹⁴⁷Sonia Ferrari and Tiziana Nicotera (Università della Calabria).

Many of the communication and dissemination activities were organized collectively with the Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, with various partners in the project and several other entities, both in Argentina and in Italy. The objectives of the numerous events are as follows: the education of the various stakeholders on the theme both in Argentina and in Italy; the presentation of the project with the partners and the support from MAECI; the dissemination of the research activity conducted that began in 2017, and of some of the first results with a focus on the tourists, local administrators and tour operators; the presentation of future activities, in particular, the quantitative survey; an invitation to other subjects to collaboration and contribution in terms of new partnerships, an online publication of the study, etc.; and debates for gathering potential inspirations, suggestions and new ideas.

The following is a concise list of the various implemented initiatives in terms of dissemination, which include webinars, conferences, panels and so forth, and in terms of education, a list is included in chronological order, beginning from the most recent, in addition to publications on the theme by the research team.

Events organized on the theme of roots tourism or presentations/interviews:

- *June 23, 2021*: webinar ‘Destination Management’, II edition ‘Territori e Italianità (Territories and Italianness), panel Italianità, organized by Andrea Succi (destination manager).
- *June 23, 2021*: webinar ‘Turismo di Ritorno. Un’esperienza unica calabrese’ (Return Tourism. A unique Calabrian experience), organized by Domenico Boi (tour guide specializing in roots tourism).
- *June 8, 2021*: webinar ‘Turismo delle radici come opportunità di sviluppo per i borghi e le destinazioni minori’ (Roots tourism as a development opportunity for villages and minor destinations), organized as part of the initiative ‘Progetto Borghi’ (Village Project) by Giancarlo dell’Orco (destination manager).
- *June 4, 2021*: onsite event and streaming ‘Firma del protocollo per la diffusione del Turismo delle Radici’ (Signing of the protocol for the dissemination of Roots Tourism), organized by Orazio di Stefano (sociologist), the Municipality of Palmoli, Roccavivara, Tufillo and Dogli, Istituto Omnicomprensivo del Fortore Riccia – S. Elia, Pmi Services, Istituto Italiano Castelli, department of Molise.
- *May 27, 2021*: participation of the IV Edizione del tavolo di coordinamento tecnico sul ‘Turismo delle Radici’ (IV Edition of the Technical Coordination Round Table on ‘Roots Tourism’), organized by the Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy).
- *May 21, 2021*: event ‘Conferenza sui turismi’ (Conference on tourism), organized by IlTrigno.net.

- *May 18, 2021*: online meeting with the president of the Asociación Calabresa de Chile (Calabrian Association of Chile) and representatives of the University of Valparaiso in Chile.
- *May 18, 2021*: webinar ‘Il turismo di ritorno alla riscoperta delle radici: una grande opportunità per i borghi (return tourism for roots rediscovery: a wonderful opportunity for villages), organized by the Associazione I Borghi più Belli d’Italia and by the Confederazione degli Italiani nel Mondo (Association of the Most Beautiful Towns in Italy/ Confederation of Italians around the World).
- *May 1, 2021*: webinar ‘Lavorare in Calabria compie 1 anno’ (To Work in Calabria celebrates 1 year).
- *April 30, 2021*: interview on Radio Esaro Italia.
- *April 29, 2021*: Salvo Iavarone, president ASMEF, interviewed on Tg2 Italia cites the research.
- *April 6, 2021*: discussion in the Consiglio Generale della C.I.M. (General Council of the C.I.M.)
- *April 1, 2021*: participation in the ClubHouse meeting: Tourism & Territory, organized by BeCal, Calabria.
- *March 18, 2021*: webinar ‘Turismo de las raices: de los flujos migratorios a los flujos turisticos’ (Roots tourism: from migratory flows to tourism flows), organized by the Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, with the participation of representatives from MAECI, Argentine authorities and representatives of the University, etc.
- *March 10, 2021*: online programme ‘Il turismo della sera’ (evening tourism) with Fabio Sinnati and Isa Grassano.
- *March 2, 2021*: meeting ‘Dai flussi migratori ai flussi turistici’ (from migratory flows to tourism flows), organized by the Università di Bari and ANCI Puglia for the research presentation in Puglia to the municipalities in the Provinces of Brindisi, Lecce and Taranto. The speakers are Sonia Ferrari, Vito Roberto Santamato and Nicolaia Iaffaldano.
- *February 25, 2021*: meeting ‘Dai flussi migratori ai flussi turistici’ (from migratory flows to tourism flows), organized by the Università di Bari and ANCI Puglia for the research presentation in Puglia to the municipalities in the Provinces of Foggia, BAT and Bari. The speakers are Sonia Ferrari, Vito Roberto Santamato and Nicolaia Iaffaldano.
- *February 23, 2021*: webinar ‘Fare Turismo in Rete con Aics’ (OnlineTourism with Aics), organized by the AICS province of Agrigento with the participation of over sixty experts originating from Lombardy, Lazio, Calabria and Sicily, tour operators, travel agencies, accommodation facilities and agencies that work with the production of traditional local products.

- *February 22, 2021*: webinar ‘Emigrazione della Calabria nel mondo’ (Calabrian Emigration around the world), organized by the research partner Fondazione Giuliani.
- *February 16, 2021*: Sonia Ferrari and Tiziana Nicotera are guests on the marketing blog Penna in Viaggio.
- *January 27, 2021*: webinar ‘Il ruolo dei territori per lo sviluppo del Turismo delle Radici’ (The role of the regions for the development of Roots Tourism – 1.501 views on Facebook), organized with Lavorare in Calabria and Unpli Calabria. Speakers: Sonia Ferrari and Tiziana Nicotera; President of Unpli Cosenza, Antonello Grosso La Valle, and President of Unpli Calabria, Filippo Capellupo; Consigliere della Direzione Generale per gli Italiani all’Estero del Maeci, Giovanni Maria De Vita; journalist of Il Sole 24 ore, Claudio Visentin; CEO of Lavorare in Calabria, Vittorio Andreoli; Mayors of various municipalities: San Giovanni in Fiore (CS), Rosaria Succurro; Roccella Jonica (RC), Vittorio Zito; Mangone (CS), Orazio Berardi; President of the Municipal Council of Belvedere Marittimo (CS), Vincenzo Carrozzino.
- *January 23, 2021*: interview for the web radio of the Associazione Esaro Italia.
- *January 22, 2021*: webinar ‘Turismo post Covid: quale future per la Sibaritide?’ (Post Covid Tourism: what is the future for the Sibaritide?).
- *December 22, 2020*: webinar (1.421 views on Facebook) ‘Dai flussi migratori ai flussi turistici: il turismo dell radici’ (From migratory flows to tourism flows: roots tourism), organized by the Federación de Sociedades Italianas Mar del Plata y zona, research partner. Speakers: Sonia Ferrari, Tiziana Nicotera, Ana Maria Biasone, Daniel Antenucci (Vice President of the Università Nazionale of Mar del Plata), Giuseppe Spinelli (Federazione Italiana Circoli Calabresi), Pasquale Guaglianone (Giornalista), Giovanni Maria De Vita (Head of Department I of the Direzione Generale per gli Italiani all’Estero-MAECI).
- *December 21, 2020*: guests on the Sicilian web tv Diretta Giovani.
- *December 18, 2020*: interview on the web radio of the Associazione Esaro Italia.
- *December 18, 2020*: interview with Meet & Work Catanzaro.
- *December 17, 2020*: interview on Radio Azzurra program conducted by journalist Pasquale Guaglianone to explain the research.
- *December 12, 2020*: discussion with the Consiglio nazionale della CIM Confederazione Italiani nel Mondo.
- *December 10, 2020*: interview on the TV channel of the Università Nazionale di Mar del Plata.
- *December 9, 2020*: webinar ‘Partire, tornare, restare. Il turismo delle radici come forma di sviluppo sostenibile e i rapporti tra vecchi e nuovi fenomeni

migratori e turismo' (Leaving, returning, remaining. Roots tourism as a form of sustainable development and the relationship between the old and new migratory phenomena and tourism - 3.131 views on Facebook), organized along with the association Io Resto of Crotona.

- *December 5, 2020*: interview with Ana Maria Biasone and Sonia Ferrari on Argentine radio Brisas.
- *November 27, 2020*: interview with Ana Maria Biasone and Sonia Ferrari on Argentine TV El Nueve.
- *November 20, 2020*: RAI ITALIA program 'L'Italia con Voi' which speaks about the research project in an interview with Sonia Ferrari.
- *November 12, 2020*: Mar de Plata, at the headquarters of the Federazione delle Società Italiane of Mar del Plata, president Marcelo Carrara, vice president Sergio Patrino, treasurer José Oyanto and secretary Daniela Atlante organized a meeting with professor Ana Maria Biasone of the Università Nazionale di Mar del Plata with the objective of explaining the research project.
- *November 4, 2020*: webinar organization on the launch of the project with the support of MAECI 'Dai Flussi migratori ai flussi turistici: il Turismo delle radici' (From migratory flows to tourism flows: roots tourism - 4.362 views on Facebook). Participation with the representatives of the Università della Calabria, Mar del Plata and Turin, a representative of the Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale and other entities that have signed specific agreements: journalist of RAI Italia, FACA Argentina, Centro Italo-Calabrese of Tucumán. Other stakeholders of interest that represent the media and participated in the debate are the Università di Bari and the ASEMF.
- *October 17, 2020*: webinar 'Turismo de las Raíces Calabria' (Roots Tourism Calabria), organized by the Asociación Calabresa de Chile.
- *November 21, 2018*: conference 'Turismo delle radici: segmento importante per lo sviluppo sostenibile' (Roots tourism: important sector for sustainable development), organized by the Università di Messina.
- *May 26, 2020*: participation in the III edition of the Technical Round Table Coordination by the Farnesina.
- *April 7, 2020*: online event 'Tè Digitale' (Online Tea) organized by the Facebook Group Il senso del tempo. Il valore di un posto, Cosenza.
- *May 29, 2019*: participation in the second edition of the technical coordination round table of the Farnesina.
- *May 14, 2019*: Conference participation 'I figli dell'Italia che ritornano: Turisti per caso? ', (The children of Italy who return: tourists by chance?) organized by ASMEF.
- *January 22, 2019*: participation in the Forum on Tourism, organized by the Municipality of Cosenza with the presentation 'La Calabria destinazione di

un viaggio alla scoperta delle proprie radici' (Calabria: the destination of a trip on the search for one's roots).

- *January 18, 2019*: participation in the conference 'Turismo delle radici: un'opportunità sostenibile?' (Roots tourism: a sustainable opportunity?) , organized by FIDAPA division of Cosenza and division of Rende.
- *September 25, 2018*: organization of the conference 'I Calabresi nel mondo– Il valore del Turismo di ritorno – Idee e strumenti per un turismo delle radici' (Calabrians around the world – the value of roots tourism – Ideas and tools for roots tourism).
- Participation in several webinars on tourism with an emphasis on roots tourism research (for example, organized meetings by the GAL del Savuto).

Education on the theme of roots tourism

- Lesson on the theme 'Tecnico superiore dell'enogastronomia' (Food and Wine) organized by the Fondazione Pinta di Cutro (KR) (March 2, 2021).
- N.2 seminars part of the Marketing del Turismo e Marketing Territoriale course for the degree in Scienze Turistiche and in Valorizzazione dei Sistemi Turistico-Territoriale (Marketing for Tourism and Territory Marketing, degree courses in Tourism Sciences and Development of Tourism-Territorial Systems – March 29, 2020 and November 30, 2020).
- N.3 degree thesis with the Università della Calabria on roots tourism (2020-2021, lecturer Professor Sonia Ferrari).
- Developmental Project on the theme developed by students in the teaching context of Marketing del Turismo e Marketing Territoriale of the Università della Calabria (Tourism Marketing and Territorial Marketing –2019-2020, 2020/2021).
- Instruction on roots tourism for the course 'Esperto dei Borghi AICS Italia' (Expertise on Villages AICS Italy - 24/06/2021).
- Training meeting with the Calabrian Pro Loco (June –July 2021).
- N.2 training session for tour guides (June-July 2021).
- Study program for the educators of the Istituto Omnicomprensivo del Fortore Riccia-S. Elia as part of the curriculum for the organization of roots tourism training.

Future planned initiatives

In addition to the project's launching activities and consolidation of its development, subsequent initiatives to the publication of this book are planned for the dissemination of the research results through the direct organization or the participation from the departments of MAECI and the universities involved in conferences, seminars and meetings, as well as other institutional partners (C.I.M.,

UNPLI Calabria, Italian Associations in Argentina, etc.) and entities (among these are a few municipal administrations). Among the events planned in September 2021 the Università of Messina will host a study conference entitled ‘Idee economiche per lo sviluppo del Mediterraneo: casi di studio sul turismo delle radici’ (Economic ideas for the development of the Mediterranean: case studies on roots tourism).

Implementation of a video-testimonial

A very emotional video was created by adopting the storytelling technique. A young descendant of Italian emigrants, who had a Calabrian grandmother and a Sicilian grandfather, recounts an authentic story of her travel experience in search of roots.

The testimonial presents itself as a reliable source of inspiration and is credible, captivating and emotional. The voice of the protagonist captivates the audience and creates empathy in potential roots tourists who can easily identify with and emerge themselves in this experience, in a very personal way.

The video offers two versions (an extended version and a short version that is geared to digital channels) in Italian with Spanish subtitles. The video encompasses both a sense of pride and language identity. The young girl discovered the homeland of her ancestors due to a study course on the Calabrian language, culture and traditions.

The video is accessible with the QR Code, that is found at the beginning of this book and will be distributed at conferences, seminars and in all the planned activities for the presentation of the research results, and especially on the web and in social media. These are all tools that are available for sharing, particularly by the new generations who intend on travelling to discover their own roots.

Press release

- June 18, 2021: newspaper article in Il Sole 24 Ore, vacation insert
- May 29, 2021: online newspaper article in Calabria Live
- January 27, 2021: newspaper article in Il Quotidiano del Sud
- December 3, 2020: newspaper article in ‘Borghi d’Europa’
- November 25, 2020: daily newspaper article in Il Sole 24 Ore
- November 22, 2020: online newspaper article in Calabria Live
- November 6, 2020: broadcast of the webinar from November 4, 2020 ‘Dai Flussi migratori ai flussi turistici: il Turismo delle radici’ (From Migratory flows to tourism flows: Roots tourism) on the television station RTI Calabria – channel 12
- November 4, 2020: daily newspaper article in the Gazzetta del Sud
- November 3, 2020: daily newspaper article in Il Quotidiano del Sud
- June 26, 2020: magazine article in Fuori Quadro

- June 1, 2020: online newspaper article in Calabria Live
- December 1 2019: newspaper article in Il Sole 24 Ore
- June 29, 2018: online newspaper article Il Sole 24 Ore.

In addition, a large number of articles have appeared in online newspaper publications.

Publications

- Ferrari, S., Hernández-Maskivker, G., & Nicotera, T. (2021). Social-Cultural Sustainability of Roots Tourism in Calabria, Italy: A Tourist Perspective. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13567667211020493>
- Nicotera, T. (2021). Roots Tourism: Opportunities for the Territories Deriving from Identity Journeys of Italian Emigrants. In Grasso, F. & Sergi, B. (Eds), *Tourism in the Mediterranean Sea. An Italian Perspective*. Bingley (UK): Emerald Publishing, 199-216.
- Ferrari, S. e Nicotera, T. (2020). Il turismo delle radici in Italia: dai flussi migratori ai flussi turistici. Un focus sulla Calabria. In CNR and IRIS (edited by), *XXIII 2018/2019 Rapporto sul Turismo Italiano*. Napoli: Rogiosi editore, 577-594.
- Ferrari, S. e Nicotera, T. (2018). Il turismo delle origini in Calabria: indagine sulla domanda e sull'offerta per lo sviluppo di strategie di destination marketing. In Regione Calabria, Assessorato al Turismo. *Calabria 2018. Quindicesimo rapporto sul turismo*. Catanzaro: Regione Calabria, 119-169.
- Ferrari, S., & Nicotera, T. (2018). Roots Tourism: viaggio emozionale alla scoperta delle proprie origini. *Turistica, Italian Journal of Tourism*, 4, 33-48.
- Call for Papers - Sustainability Special Issue "Roots Tourism: A Sustainable Path?" editors: Ana Maria Biasone, Sonia Ferrari, Anna Lo Presti, Tiziana Nicotera

7.2 Conclusions and practical implications

The research proposed in this book is the result of years of dedication to several studies and was developed with the objective of outlining a series of ideas and suggestions for the industry's operators. The objective was to establish guidelines that could be subsequently elaborated on and developed to serve as an initial reference for future tourism-territorial marketing plans for the promotion of the growth of roots tourism. Consequently, a highly concrete and targeted approach to the planning aspects of marketing has established options and paths for this research work.

7.2.1 The vision

Roots tourism will be able to represent a strategic sector in the mid-term for the development of some of territories and will have a significant role for tackling the problems of depopulation and the quality of life in the small urban centres, becoming a key element in the economic and social regeneration in Italian villages. Today, the situation still appears to be strongly undervalued and neglected in the tourism planning policies by the proposed entities, although institutions are now seemingly more interested.

Presently, there are, however, some **weak points that** exist and are listed below;

- Limited consideration by operators and institutions, as well as the local community;
- Limited number of tourism companies and specialized tour operators;
- Lack in the services' offer aimed at this target group, that is often limited regarding specific and personalized needs, with assistance before, during and after the trip;
- Lack of commitment in communication, both traditional and online;
- Moderate consideration by the institutions for maintaining contact with the emigrants and their descendants;
- High vacation costs, especially for those who travel from abroad;
- Lack in the provision of training for the operators who in many ways must handle the proposal and management of roots travel (among whom are tour guides);
- Limited consideration to genealogical research, especially concerning the access to online resources.

On the current international scene, there are several **opportunities** that could foster the development of roots tourism:

- The possibility of development by collectively combining the offer to other forms of *special interest tourism*, such as wedding tourism, event tourism, educational-tourism, etc.;
- The growth of new forms of migration, such as, intellectual, retirement and lifestyle migration;
- The possibility of participation from the local community, facilitated by the positive attitude of tourists;
- Minor seasonality of current and future flows of roots tourism, with the possibility of a further off season by a growth of tourism offers beyond peak season. This would also be possibly due to the wonderful climate of many Italian destinations, especially in the south;

- Changes in tourism demand, especially after Covid, with a growing attention to authenticity, sustainability, *slow* offer and the pursuit of secure and uncrowded locations;
- Notable interest by present-day visitors, and above all, by roots tourists for a vacation experience that could represent an element of great differentiation for many Italian destinations, particularly, if the vacation is planned in an effective manner;
- The emigrants' and their descendants' attachment to Italy and a positive image abroad of the Italian lifestyle, the Made in Italy brand, and above all, the optimism in terms of tourism and the export of local products due to word of mouth of Italians around the world;
- Possible investments in financial activity and philanthropic initiatives by Italian communities abroad;
- Focus attention to tourism sustainability. The type of tourism in consideration is significantly sustainable by all viewpoints: environmental (because roots tourists do not require specific and intrusive accommodations, on the contrary, they are interested in village life and lodging in local accommodations); economic (because roots tourism gives life to important multiplicative economic implications) and social-cultural (due to the positive interaction with the host community, which has already been mentioned).

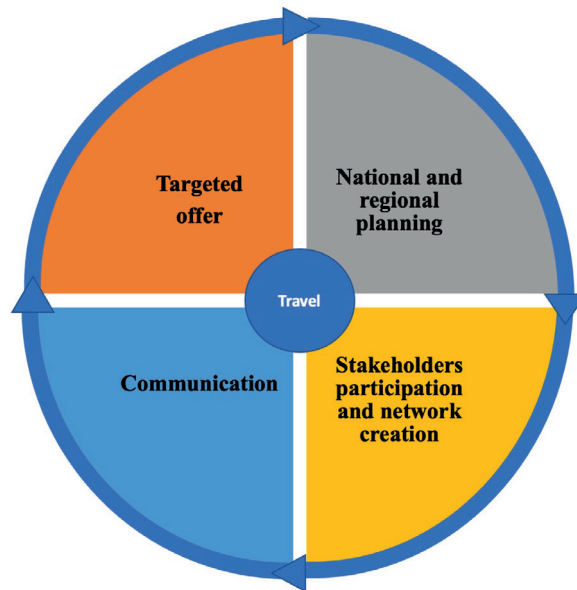
7.2.2 The four areas of intervention for an effective marketing policy for roots tourism

In light of the research results, a series of marketing activities are suggested to favour the development of roots tourism in the following years in our country (see Figure 7.1). They are four different settings:

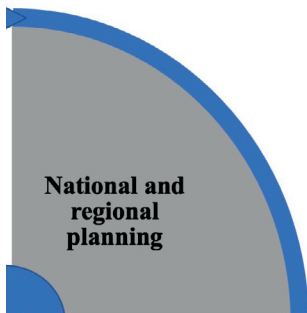
- *National and regional planning;*
- *Targeted offer;*
- *Stakeholders participation and network creation;*
- *Communication.*

They will be detailed below individually in details.

Figure 7.1 The areas of focus of an effective marketing policy for roots tourism



Source: authors design



A strategic marketing plan is essential on a national and regional level for hypothesizing a series of balanced and coordinated initiatives that promote the development of tourism in Italy. As previously discussed, these choices were already made in a few countries with favorable results. A plan must constantly gather, elaborate and monitor statistical and non-statistical data and other

information on: the development of the demand and its qualitative-quantitative changes, market trends and ongoing social-cultural themes, evolution of the supply and so forth. This information should be selected on the basis of the informational needs of the various stakeholders and should be made accessible to all those interested in a way that they serve as a support in the decision making processes and strategic planning, and marketing implementation and control.

It is also essential to conduct a continued benchmarking activity as compared with other countries that are affected by roots tourism flows for an in-depth understanding of their choices and marketing policies, to identify their strengths and weaknesses to study effective best practices, etc.

In light of the analysis of the characteristics of the supply and demand that is related to the tourism under consideration, it is necessary to identify a targeted offer, that is a 'tourism product' with a specific marketing-mix to satisfy the needs and expectations of the roots tourism segment. This consists of a *customized offer* created such as the following:



- Positioning and characteristics of the product;
- Pricing policy;
- Communication before, during and after the experience (a subsequent section is dedicated to this);
- Commercial distribution both on and offline.

In regards to the first component, the positioning strategy should undoubtedly be based on the specific elements of Italian and local culture and lifestyle and can represent, now more than ever, important differentiation elements for tourist destinations. The minor destinations are, in fact, increasing in appeal. These are lesser known peripheral destinations and have not been included in the itineraries of mass tourism which MacCannell defines as *back region* (MacCannell, 1973), in which, the visitor desires to understand the *real life* of the people who live there and looks for *authenticity*. That, which reflects the culture of the host location is *authentic* for the tourist (Ferrari and Adamo, 2005; Gottlieb, 1982). *Authenticity* must be the leitmotiv of the product offered to the roots tourist, as well as the experiential aspects and close contact with the local community. All these factors are among the most important results of the survey in terms of expectations and satisfaction for the roots tourists. There are many complex tourism product components that need to be adapted to the demands of this sector of travellers. Firstly, it is necessary to provide personalized assistance to them in every phase of the experience, beginning from the genealogical research prior to the trip. It is, often, necessary to accompany tourists to their own towns of origin, considering the difficulty in transportation and their lack of knowledge of the language and the area. In regards to transportation, an improvement in infrastructure and services is recommended for some areas, especially during low season. Inland transportation should be particularly improved (given that roots tourists must often reach small towns that are not well known and are isolated), as well as public transportation that

is outside of these areas. Tourist information and the creation of networks among operators, tours and, so forth, should also be enhanced. This theme will be discussed later on. Influx seasonal adjustment can be encouraged by making the appropriate decisions. Even the offer of events should be targeted, better promoted and increasingly distributed throughout the year, precisely in order to achieve the objectives of reducing seasonality or at least of a more balanced distribution of the organized events that occur throughout the year.

Because the tourists have several interests and motivations, it is important to offer them attractive resources and interesting activities that they can take part in during their vacation, in order to increase satisfaction levels that lengthen their stay and that encourage their return. Naturally, these resources should be consistent with the current image of the destination that is sought after, and should be based on the local culture and traditions, and on all the elements of the Italian lifestyle that are famous throughout the world and loved by Italians everywhere.

A suggestion would be to aim for trips that are not only personalized but that include visits to specific towns of origin and are also related to the discovery of the region as an historical memory, history of emigration and past and present Italian identity. This could create a connection between the Italian community abroad and the residents, in order to reinforce a sense of belonging.

It is important to take into consideration, as the results of the research have shown, that roots travel is often experienced as a family vacation and includes children and teenagers, and they could, in contrast to their parents, have a limited interest in visiting an area and seeing relatives and friends. It is, therefore, necessary to offer services and amenities/entertainment to them, that can make the vacation enjoyable, fun and/or beneficial to learning, for example, for the improvement of one's knowledge of Italian. Another idea is to implement specific events, that are valuable for a younger age groups, in addition to scholarships, classes, company internships and summer schools, for learning the local expertise and excellence, including cuisine, design, fashion, high quality artisan products, art, wine production, cultivation and transformation of agriculture food products, and so forth.

All this combines with the need to address the recent generations of descendants of emigrants who have gradually distanced themselves from their country of origin, although they love Italy and are eager to see it. It is, therefore, important to help the current and potential Argentine roots tourists to obtain Italian citizenship and during their vacation experience to have them feel a part of the community.

One idea could be to promote a certain important theme and specialization of each destination, and the rediscovery of history and local traditions, such as, significant artisan traditions (weaving, jewelry techniques and woodcarving), film and fiction, literature, myths and legends and so forth.

It is, also, necessary to attend to features related to hospitality and lodging. With regards to the first issue, the entire community should be educated, in order to welcome the roots tourists as members of their community. Formal greetings and celebratory events, should also be organized with the delivery of certificates and

acknowledgements by the mayors. It is also important to support these guests in their research activities before and during their stay. It should not be forgotten that during their stay the roots tourists desire to savour the daily life of their area of origin and to lodge in the historic center in direct contact with the residents. This may consist of spread hotels, B&B, house exchanges, couch surfing, co-living or other forms of hospitality that promote interaction with the local community. Even home restaurants could be enjoyable for the roots tourist who are eager to try the local cuisine of their ancestors. The rapid diffusion of the *sharing economy* advances toward these tourism organizations and amenities and its significant environmental and social-cultural sustainability is obvious.



The premise of success in tourism is a good host-guest relationship. It is, even more important in the case of roots tourism, because these tourists are eager, as it has been mentioned before, to be warmly welcomed as members of the community. It is, therefore, necessary that the stakeholders and particularly the public administrators, citizens and tour operators are exceptionally aware and careful. On the other hand, the love that urges the roots tourists to visit their homeland of origin is the

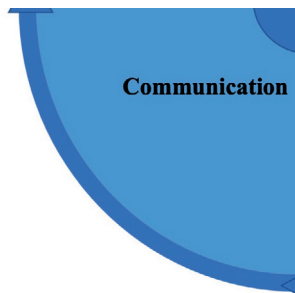
guarantee of a positive approach to the local social-cultural fabric. The impact of the tourist's presence on the community is positive, and the assurance of social-cultural sustainability is the favorable interaction between residents and tourists during the vacation.

Therefore, it is important to invest in internal marketing activities that inform the stakeholders in regards to the significance of this tourism segment and the correct approach for engaging with these visitors. Participation is a necessary prerequisite to ensure that the efforts of all the entities involved, both public and private, and those who work in the tourism industry are coordinated and converge on the same position toward shared objectives, such as, seasonal adjustments and the attraction of specific roots tourism niches, of emigrants in retirement, families with children and so forth. It would also be useful to organize trips abroad by bringing the Italian spirit to the current countries of residence of the emigrants and descendants of Italian heritage through promoted events by local organizations, and in collaboration with producers of Italian and regional made products.

In conclusion, the creation of networks of resources and/or of tourist destinations would be, an important strategy to enhance the attraction of an area. The network would make it possible to offer tours, comprehensive experiences and itineraries. In this way, it would be possible to accommodate a tourist who has travelled to his/her own area of origin, or when he/she is there, would like to become better acquainted with Italy and to live unforgettable experiences. Therefore, a more comprehensive and satisfactory visit can be offered to the roots tourist, with many activities to

engage in and places to visit, given that the roots tourist in general has numerous interests and desires to have a vacation experience that is rich and varied.

The policies of Strategic Marketing Communication of a destination or an operator should have several objectives when directed to the roots tourists target group. First of all, it should aim to create a lasting connection between the Italian community abroad and the town or region of origin. This regards those individuals who wish to promote their places of origin and their products, and to support them



different initiatives, from direct investments to the funding of philanthropic work and the implementation of a positive word of mouth. It is, therefore, essential to reinforce this relationship through conventional means, such as twinnings, visits, regular publications and awards, but also by the new web communication channels. Social networks, forums, newsgroups, blogs and virtual communities allow for interactive and multimedia communication that are significantly engaging and of great efficiency. This is particularly suitable for the younger generations, who are becoming increasingly separated from the homeland of their ancestors and consequently, it is necessary to reach out to them with further efforts. Particularly, as seen from the specifically related research on the web that was illustrated in Chapter 5, it is essential to build a national institutional tourist destination website that is dedicated to this sector, an Italian brand for roots travel to be conveyed online with specific resources, such as itineraries, genealogical research and web communities for the exchange of information among Italians around the world, operators and residents, and the sharing of experiences, that is able to influence other future travel experiences. Direct marketing tools and email marketing might also be useful.

Another objective should be the implementation of marketing communication activities, in order to promote specific destinations or travels. It is very important to have famous testimonials from celebrities or well-known individuals, who may originally be from the town or village to be promoted or vacation spots, as well as organizing educational tours to introduce the areas to bloggers and influencers. Even virtual tours and social media photos and videos, that are often shared by the users, are particularly effective.

Tourism promotion can be targeted, in addition to the growth of tourism flow, to other objectives such as seasonal adjustment, relocation, extending of the average vacation stay, growth of tourist loyalty with consequential recurrences of travel, and attracting a specific public (such as youth, retired, etc.). It is, therefore, very important that communication is targeted and incorporated in a wider Strategic Tourism Marketing Plan.

Creating a governance model is strategic for the territories that encompass approximate extended area (a region, province or district) and the various towns and villages can be the junction point that have all the available resources (tourist attractions, companies, associations, tourist accommodations and restaurants, churches, libraries, government archives and professionals such as historians, genealogists, etc.), to create an interconnection with the other network's towns to implement collaborations (such as tours, development projects and so forth). In this regard, the research conducted in this first phase in the Calabrian and Apulian municipalities should be continued in the near future in other Italian regions, especially those in the south.

This should be a bottom-up approach, in order to support the commonality among residents, who are engaged, either directly or indirectly, in this tourism category, in the experience of the visitors, namely within the reconstruction of the area's historical memory. This could be defined as a community model, in which, the same roots tourists become part of, without there being a boundary of exclusion between the resident and the guest but a perfect fusion between the two entities.

7.2.3 The functional implications

The primary functional initiatives have already emerged from the research project due to the awareness of the individuals, municipalities and associations, and the sharing of the first results. The most relevant concerns the implementation of the protocol agreement for the dissemination of roots tourism and the professional training on the theme. The protocol, that was signed on June 4, 2021 with the municipalities of Molise and Abruzzo (Palmoli, Agnone, Tufillo, Roccamandolfi e Dogliola), the Istituto Omnicomprensivo del Fortore Riccia-S. Elia, the Centro di formazione Pmi Services and the Istituto Italiano Castelli del Molise, emphasizes the involvement in the work pursuant the significant models within the scientific research. In particular, the latest regarding the educational work constitutes the following:

- Organization regarding the IPSASR roots tourism teaching program through projects and/or in-depth analysis of the subjects;
- Organization of online and in-person advanced training courses to transfer knowledge, skills and valid qualified credits within the Italian territory;
- Proposals for online and in-person training courses with certifications for accredited qualified professionals that would be valid throughout Italy for tour guides and operators for promotion and tourist reception;
- Planning by the municipalities for in-person *summer schools* that would be available for the children of Italians around the world, with the focus being on teaching about the community and the dynamics of Italian emigration.

In addition, the coordinator of the research is also the promoter of the creation of a network of Italian and foreign academic institutions for implementing educational courses and studies, regarding sustainable development and tourism, including roots tourism. Among those who are interested in this work are included the universities involved in the current research and a few Argentine and Chilean institutions.

The present research has facilitated the creation of the Associazione Radici Calabresi (Calabrian Roots Association). The objective is to develop in Italy the role that the Italian associations (in this case, Calabrian) around the world have abroad. The focus is to gather the opportunities that have arisen from the development of roots tourism by offering on-site and remote assistance to emigrants and Italian descendants (before and during the trip) and the municipalities that support the services that are reserved for this target group along with the coordination of other stakeholders.

Many Italian municipalities have proposed collaborations with the research group for potential projects that are connected to roots tourism and to develop studies in the specific communities (the case studies that are presented in Chapter 4 are an example).

Various Calabrian tourist operators have established a network association called T.O.C. Although they are still not trained in the topic of roots tourism, they have begun to formulate travel proposals considering this target group based on the possible advantages that have emerged from the research and the contacts within the network of the Calabrian associations abroad. Even if the proposals mentioned above are not exclusively designed for the emigrants and their descendants, this is at least, a first step. The desire is, however, to dedicate an area of the growth of the supply to this market sector so as to include among the roles of the ATS (Associazione Temporanea di Imprese – Temporary Association of Companies) a special delegation on roots tourism to a representative of the research group. An investiture on roots tourism was also proposed by the C.I.M. to the same representative of the research group as vice president of the Dipartimento Comunicazione e Turismo (Department of Communication and Tourism).

A few companies that cover the interior of the Calabrian GAL territory (that work in the sectors of agricultural food, tour operators, tour guides, tourism accommodations and tourism advertising personnel) presented a project by participating in a competition for the PSR Calabria 2014-2021, connecting rural tourism to roots tourism through the gathering known as ‘Calabrian Roots’ in which a few members of the research team are leaders.

Initiatives in Italy and abroad have been inspired by the research and dissemination activities. A recall project is planned for July 2021 in Calabria by women over 50 from Australia of Calabrian origin. This project consists of tours that are centered on visits within Italy and on historical narrations of Italian emigration which has shaped the lives of many families in Australia.

The research is now witnessing its initial results. Many Italians around the world are voluntarily offering to contribute their time, in order to promote the research so that it continues. Many testimonials are being added and, thanks to studies such as this,

these individuals feel less neglected and are grateful because a voice is being given to their needs and desires. The following statement from an Italian descendant in Australia is symbolic: *If you intend to create tourism products for 'us', then, you should get to know us and listen to our stories which are all different. I would like, to help you, to build a bridge of understanding between the Calabrians in Calabria and the emigrants in Australia.*

The hope is that this research continues, in order to, deepen new aspects, by giving life to the local development due to roots tourism, and ensuring that the practical application of the observed principles and the obtained results fosters the study by enabling a genuine virtuous cycle.

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List of Tables

Table 3.1 Level of observation of customs, culinary traditions and Italian festivities or from the region of origin (percentage values)	73
Table 3.2 Average score attributed to the respect for customs by type of tradition and by generation	73
Table 3.3 Contacts and research on the family by generation (percentage values)	74
Table 3.4 Main reasons for genealogical research	75
Table 3.5 Intensità del legame con l'Italia per regione di provenienza	76
Table 3.6 Intensity of the connection with the homeland of origin for the second, third and fourth generations who have or have not taken a trip to discover one's roots (percentage value)	77
Table 3.7 Frequency of travel in the regions of origin within the last 10 years by those who have taken at least one trip	78
Table 3.8 Frequency of travel in the regions of origin within the last 10 years per generation of emigrants (percentage values)	79
Table 3.9 The importance attributed to the various motivations of travel per generation of emigrants (average score)	80
Table 3.10 Intensity of the experience lived during the vacation per generation of emigrants (average score)	81
Table 3.11 The desire to return to the places of origin per generation of emigrants	83
Table 3.12 Distribution of the roots tourists by generation and propensity to promote the region of origin and/or its local production	83
Table 3.13 Distribution of roots tourists for vacation in the areas of origin and tendency to promote the region of origin and/or its local production (percentage values)	84
Table 3.14 Preferred period to travel (percentage values)	86
Table 3.15 Distribution of roots travel by length of stay	86
Table 3.16 Type of preferred accommodation	87
Table 3.17 Distribution of roots travel in the accommodations specified for a longer period of stay	87

Table 3.18 Distribution of the percentage of roots travels by the length of stay and by the type of accommodation	88
Table 3.19 Reasons of the missed trip for the various generations (percentage values)	90
Table 3.20 Intensity of the emotional connection with Italy	90
Table 3.21 The desire to live in one's region of origin if given the opportunity	91
Table 3.22 The desire to live in the region of origin by generation (percentage values)	91
Table 3.23 Maintaining contacts in one's own region of origin for those who have not ever been there	93
Table 3.24 Individuals who maintain contact in their own region of origin who have never been there (percentage values)	93
Table 3.25 Tourist appeal of the various Italian regions of origin for the compatriots in Argentina	95
Table 3.26 Knowledge of possible initiatives of the region of origin for creating and maintaining contacts with the emigrants abroad (percentage values)	96
Table 3.27 Lack of knowledge of initiatives to create or maintain contacts with the emigrants abroad, by region of origin (percentage values)	96
Table 3.28 Lack of knowledge of initiatives for creating and maintaining contacts with emigrants for those who have or have not engaged in roots travel (percentage values)	97
Table 3.29 Knowledge of the contacts with the emigrants by Italian associations abroad and through social media, by region of origin (percentage values)	98
Table 4.1 Estimate of roots tourists' percentage of total arrivals in the municipality	108
Table 4.2 Main factors of development for roots tourism within the municipality	111
Table 4.3 Main factors of development for roots tourism within the municipality	113
Table 4.4 Main motivations of the trip	115
Table 4.5 Types of preferred accommodations of tourists in the municipality (percentage distribution)	117
Table 4.6 Main activities conducted during travel	118
Table 4.7 Estimate of the percentage of roots tourists' arrivals in the municipality	119
Table 4.8 Main factors of development for roots tourism in a municipality	121
Table 4.9 Contact with emigrants and their descendants by the Municipality (percentage values)	124
Table 4.10 Main motivations of the trip	125

Table 4.11 Types of accommodations preferred by tourists according to the category of municipality (percentage values)	127
Table 4.12 Main activities conducted during travel	127
Table 5.1 Benchmarking on roots tourism among government tourism portals of some European countries	157
Table 5.2 Theme content of roots tourism selected for web channel	171
Table 5.3 The most relevant URLs on the search engines on the theme of roots tourism	174
Table 5.4 Connections between the words for research for roots tourism	176
Table 6.1 Composition of the Italian community in Argentina according to the regions of origin	191

List of Figures

Figure 2.1 The needs of the roots tourists	40
Figure 3.1 Percentage distribution of the respondents for the depth stated of the emotional connection with Italy	71
Figure 3.2 The depth of emotional connection with Italy stated by generation (percentage values)	72
Figure 3.3 Respondents having or not having gone on vacation in the regions of origin by generation (percentage value)	77
Figure 3.4 Main destination of travel (percentage values)	79
Figure 3.5 Level of satisfaction by the experience lived during the trip (percentage values)	82
Figure 3.6 Method of organization of roots travel (percentage values)	85
Figure 3.7 Percentage distribution of roots tourists by type of group with whom they have travelled	86
Figure 3.8 The intention to travel to Italy within the next 5 years (percentage values)	89
Figure 3.9 Motives for which an individual has never visited his/her country of origin (percentage values)	89
Figure 3.10 The presence of family members for those who have never been in their own region of origin (percentage values)	92
Figure 3.11 The presence of family members for those who have been in one's own region of origin within the last 10 years (percentage values)	93
Figure 3.12 Tourist appeal of the Italian regions of origin for the compatriots in Argentina (percentage values)	94
Figure 3.13 Lack of knowledge of the initiatives to create and maintain contacts with emigrants, by generation (percentage values)	97
Figure 4.1 The importance of roots tourism as a factor of development for the municipality (percentage values)	110
Figure 4.2 Countries of provenience of roots tourists (percentage values)	116
Figure 4.3 Importance of roots tourism as a development factor for the municipality (percentage values)	120
Figure 4.4 Countries of provenience of roots tourists (percentage values)	126

Figure 5.1	The new purchasing process model	168
Figure 5.2	Percentage of annual distribution of total contents	172
Figure 5.3	Percentage of annual distribution of contents in Argentina	173
Figure 5.4	Distribution of the main keywords	173
Figure 5.5	Word Cloud of keywords – Italy	175
Figure 5.6	Word Cloud of research terms - Focus Argentina	176
Figure 7.1	The areas of focus of an effective marketing policy for roots tourism	215

First Report on Roots Tourism in Italy

From migratory flows to tourism flows: strategies of destination marketing for a 'recall' to the homeland of the Italian community around the world

This book is also available in Italian as well as in Spanish. It encompasses a series of themes regarding roots tourism and is a piece of work carried out by various scholars, throughout the last several years. In the first nucleus, it is composed of studies conducted through the University of Calabria by Sonia Ferrari and Tiziana Nicotera. At a later time, they were joined by other numerous researchers in this ambitious project. The objective is to fill the gap regarding knowledge of the phenomenon of marketing policies for roots tourism development. A mixed approach was adopted in the research. Qualitative and quantitative studies were conducted, with a focus on Argentina, as well as specific cases and analyses that were elaborated for the web. The objective is to provide a complete view and guidelines to individuals responsible for tourism planning in territories as well as to businesses and operators. This volume is directed toward Italian associations around the world and to emigrants and their descendants; it may be on an emotional journey to discover their roots.

Sonia Ferrari is associated professor at University of Calabria, where she teaches Tourism Marketing as well as Territorial Marketing. She is author of many publications regarding services, tourism marketing and event marketing. Her main research interests involve other themes as well, such as: wellness tourism, green tourism, sustainability. She has created an international network of researchers and experts on the roots tourism theme.

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