



Family Storytelling and Local Development

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ABSTRACT

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As is known, for many years now, the economic and social development of urban areas, whether large or small, has been increasingly linked to the presence and level of diffusion of the tourist phenomenon.

In such contexts, it is therefore extremely important for public governance to spend as fully as possible in creating situations that make one's urban area capable of attracting an adequate shares of tourist flows (Semi, 2015). There is, however, an awareness that competition is now played out on a global and transmedia level (Jenkins, 2007), also through the design and provision of services and solutions that add value to the quality of local life (Nuvolati, 2007) and to the promised tourist experience (Augé, 1999). There is, moreover, an increasingly widespread belief that through place branding processes people's sense of belonging and territorial identity can be strengthened (Rizzi et al, 2018).

The need to intervene is even more pressing in cases where urban areas have lost weight and relevance (Scattone, 2000), due to an economic and social structure that has not been able to adapt promptly to the changes undergone by society (Harvey, 2010). In fact, in these cases, we are faced with the problem of a reorganisation of public governance (Honh, Neuer, 2006) that also aims to recover the centrality and/or visibility of the place, as well as to mitigate the negative impacts that the 'crisis' has generated on the fabric of the city (unemployment, urban decay and abandonment, gentrification issues, etc.).

In fact, in these cases, competition is even fiercer at the international level. For example, already more than thirty years ago, the Italian Fordist cities in crisis, in order to recover, had identified the tourism phenomenon as the sector in which to invest and, therefore, started urban regeneration processes that included the reconversion, reorganisation and reuse not only of abandoned urban areas, but also of some former industrial sites (for example, a well-known case is that of Genoa; Gazzola, 2006).

Today, however, all this is no longer enough, and destinations wishing to compete in the national and international tourism market must also focus on building what is usually called place branding. That is, they must activate a mechanism of public governance capable of bringing out the emotional and experiential qualities of places, which can be summed up in a system of values with a clearly identifiable meaning.

In this paper, we will deal with an element that we consider to be very special and not well known in the construction of place branding, which is what we call here "family storytelling".

In particular, we intend to highlight the importance that "family storytelling" plays in the formation of place branding and the consequence in the local development of the destination. In this regard, we will make use of the case study of a particular and interesting tourist demand, which is that of those who travel to their family's places of origin, and the results of a qualitative survey involving a foreign community of Italian Americans.

KEYWORDS

Storytelling
Family storytelling
Place branding
Root tourism
Transmedia storytelling

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Sommario

9. *Editorial*

Place Branding: Connecting Tourist Experiences to Territories
Fabio Corbisiero

11. Paola de Salvo, Marco Pizzi
Pablo Gómez Iniesta, Juan Luis Manfredi-Sánchez

Contributi

15. City Branding and Place Branding in the Metaverse:
how real cities build their virtual image and how virtual cities do it
Pavel Sidorenko Bautista

33. Branding the City through Mediterranean Identity:
Local Cosmopolitan Ideologies and Narratives of Exclusion in Napoli, Marseille, and Rijeka
Emilio Cocco, Pietro Sabatino, Marianna Ragone

49. The role of Destination Management Organizations in co-creating local territory brand identity:
a comparative analysis in Italy and Argentina
Mario Coscarello, Ida Ruffolo

65. The rhetoric of development in rural areas:
the branding places processes in the earthquake-affected Central Apennines
Davide Olori, Enrico Mariani

79. Family storytelling and local development
Tullio Romita, Antonella Perri

89. Place Branding in the Gastro-populist Age.
Navigating through Giorgia Meloni's and Matteo Salvini's exploitation of the symbolic nature of food
Giovanni Starita

107. Neighborhood branding and residents' engagement:
evidences from NoLo - in Milan - to TomTom - in Istanbul
Silvia Mugnano, Özlem Tepeli Türel, Alessandra Terenzi

123. "Damn, Norway": Place Branding as a Function of Local Campaigns and Global Actors
Jessica Yarin Robinson

141. Visual narratives for local development. understanding local development
through local place branding: an Italian case
Paola de Salvo, Marco Pizzi

157. Attractiveness and Coastal Cities in Southern Italy.
Flows and Consumption of International Tourists in Naples, Bari, Cagliari, Messina and Reggio Calabria
Carlo Colloca, Licia Lipari

171. The UNESCO Serial Property of Arab-Norman Palermo.
An Assessment from a Sustainable Development Perspective
Mariaclaudia Cusumano

SEZIONI A 3T - LETTURE FUORI LUOGO

183. Levine, Myron. A. 2020. *Urban Politics*. New York: Routledge.
Antonio Alejo

185. Bill Baker. *Place branding for small cities, regions and downtowns:
the essential for successful destinations*. Independently published, 2019
Mariavittoria Cicellin

187. Trejo Nieto, A., Niño Amézquita, J.L. (2021).
Metropolitan governance in Latin America. Abingdon: Routledge.
Pablo Gómez Iniesta

SEZIONI A 3T - INCONTRO FUORI LUOGO

191. Territorial Governance and Place Branding. Interview with Olga Kolotouchkina
Marco Damiani

SEZIONE FUORI LUOGO

197. University, Peripheral Neighbourhoods and Social Innovation: the Case of 'Rete 3B' in Milan
Luca Bottini, Monica Bernardi

211. Participatory practices in energy transition in Italy. For a co-productive, situated and relational analysis
Monica Musolino

227. Perceptions and Attitudes Towards the Use of Treated Wastewater in Agriculture a
Case Study from Beit Dajan Community, West Bank
Elena Giacomelli, Pierluigi Musarò, Valentina Cappi

Family storytelling and local development²

Introduction

It has been evident for many years now that the economic and social development of urban areas, whether small or large, has been closely linked to the presence of the tourist phenomenon diffusive. Indeed, there is an intense international competition.

For example, more than thirty years ago, the Fordiste Italian cities in crisis, in order to recover, had identified in the tourist phenomenon the sector in which to invest and, therefore, started processes of urban regeneration that also included the conversion, reorganization and reuse of abandoned urban areas, along former industrial sites (a known case is the one of Genoa; Gazzola, 2005).

In this context, therefore, the awareness that competition is now played at a *transmedia* and global level (Jenkins, 2007), also throughout the design of projects that, will offer services and solutions that add value to the quality of local life (Nuvolati, 1998) and the promise of the "tourist experience" (Augé, 1999).

The need to intervene with a public governance is even more stringent now specially in cases where urban areas have lost relevance, due to an economic and social structure that has not been able to adapt promptly to the changes experienced by society (Harvey, 2010).

In these cases, it has been experienced the issue of the public governance reorganization that aims to recover centrality and/or visibility to the place, in the increasingly widespread belief that it is useful to implement place branding processes, also useful for strengthening the sense of belonging and territorial identity of people (Rizzi *et al.*, 2018).

In this context, place destinations that intend to compete on the tourist market, national and international, understood that at the traditional actions must necessarily add those aimed to the construction of what is usually called *place branding*. Indeed, they must activate a public governance mechanism capable of bringing out the emotional and experiential qualities of places, which can be summarized in a system of values with a well-identifiable meaning (ie brand identity).

In this paper, we will work with a "tool" that we consider unique for building the *brand image of the place*, which is called a "*family storytelling*".

Initially, we intend to highlight the relevance that "family storytelling" plays, or could play, in the formation of place branding and then consequently how worked in the local development of the destinations through the so-called "roots tourism".

We will take in consideration a specific study case of this particular type of tourist demand that regards an Italian-Americans family who travel to the places of its family origins.

1. Narration and Storytelling

Storytelling is an activity that has always been used in the history of the human being in order to attribute meanings, beyond the shared norms, everything happened around him and to the living experiences; it represents a way that the human being possesses to present himself to the world, telling the happening of its own story.

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In the modern era Narrative had found its moment of crisis, however, for some year now it has been taken more spaces and relevance among social science scholars: collecting stories, studying and interpreting them has become a frequent way to study some aspects of society, to attribute and communicate concepts and contents, to produce memory, to reflect on the processes of social change.

According to some scholars, we are the result of the stories we have heard and experienced (Taylor, 1996), we express thoughts orientations that are connected with the narrative of events meaning and what actually surround us (Kaneclin, Scaratti, 1998). Throughout the storytelling we dispose, and govern what we know about the world (Bruner, 1991).

In fact, the act of narrating is generally considered as the most used way by people to describe life experiences, which concern the past and present of their family, friends, known places and facts. As well as to renew the memory of significant moments in our lives and the world around us, thus also helping us to become aware of how we see ourselves and others. The narrative maintains and sends real knowledge that affects the behave of human beings and, therefore, draws a relevant means of transferring knowledge and acquiring it in those who receive it.

For these qualities, "narration" is again a conceptual and methodological reference *tool* for understanding social action. Wilhelm Schapp (1953) considered people as radiating centers of different stories in which they were daily engaged, and which continually changed their way to be and behave.

Alfred Schütz (1974) also argued that studying and knowing people's actual experiences with a view to understanding social action (phenomenological approach), considering the narration, made by persons with life experiences, a skilled and trusted source of reliability.

In any case, as we have already written above, the value of storytelling in the study of social transformations is growing that the scholar starts to talk about a narrative breakthrough in the social sciences (Kohler Riessman, 2001; 2008). Especially as a tool for scientific investigation (mainly in qualitative research) that enhances the point of view of those who, enunciating clippings of their history and everyday life, simultaneously transfer information to subjects involved in a given space-time context (Poggio, 2004).

We follow then the definition that a "narrative" is such when the reporter connects events in a consequent succession for subsequent stories to influence the meaning as the speaker wants to communicate to those who will listen to it (Atkinson, 1998). There are several examples of thematic areas of application and analysis in which the narration is used by the scholar and among them we concentrate on the emigration studies, of the memory and identity stories.

The research context to which we refer here is the one where the scholar acquires the narration directly from the narrator. In this way, therefore, it will assume primary qualitative information collected by itself, which it will elaborate and analyze for its own research purposes.

When, on the other hand, the narratives used by the scholar are those reported or made available by other people, the narration assumes the character of "secondary information" and in this context, it is relevant to know the narrative source and the purpose for which the narrative was produced/used.

This is a methodologically and reflection-relevant aspect on narrative content, as the narrative process involves not only a narrator, but also the presence of different ways of narration. Precisely this last aspect recalls the technique of *storytelling*, which is a way of constructing or communicating stories that in recent years has found relevant space, and that, in common language, and in certain circumstances, we mistakenly tend to use as a 'narration' synonym.

In fact, the term storytelling must be understood as a "persuasive way" of telling a narrative, that is, a communication technique that targets the emotional sphere of the listener, stimulating the imagination of the recipient sometimes also using non-real and fantasy stories. Therefore, while storytelling is an art that uses storytelling to persuade, push, motivate, someone to perform an action, narration on the other hand, is a way through people tell how they see themselves in relation to the world they live in being the writer of the narrative.

However, in this work we evidence that the narration may have the same role of storytelling. As a matter of fact, the person who is directly narrating its story is nevertheless an interpretation of itself and even it is narrated by seeking objectivity and balance, the result obtained, perhaps unconsciously, will be to direct the recipients of the story towards their own way of seeing and interpreting the world we live.

Eventually, telling the own story life personally to others can represent the art of storytelling, that is, when those who tell a story (consciously or unconsciously) still aims to recognize their behaviors, their actions, the relationship with their loved ones, their beliefs and their experience, even their way of seeing reality. This is, for example, the case of the emigrant that when tells his own life story to his family and friends tends to highlight the virtues of the place of origin (food and wine and cultural practices, folk traditions and religious rites, environment and natural qualities, etc.). In this way it keeps the memory alive and stimulates the need for knowledge, even among those who, in the family, have never personally lived or visited the narrated place of origin: this is the case of what we call *family storytelling* and on which our paper work wants to propose an attentive reflection.

2. Family storytelling

Considering what it has been analyzed above, we would like to confirm that with the expression *family storytelling* we mean the fact that *narration* and art of *storytelling* together represent not only a methodological tool that can be used to understand the society in which we live, but also a valid technique to support the economic and social growth of the territories, which can be declined in different ways, and in particular in the development of *place branding* and also on the local tourism.

Indeed, it has been known for a long time now that the general point of view from which we start is that the economic and social development of places and territories, small or large, is closely linked to the presence and level diffusion of the tourist phenomenon diffusive. Therefore, for public governance (Romita, Perri, De Ruggiero, 2020) becomes extremely important to create and build situations that enables the territory capable of encouraging adequate tourist flows (Semi, 2015).

In this regard, we can evidence that while in the past the tourist competition was played out, almost exclusively, on landscape qualities and above all on the services and products available in the touristic destinations or aspired to be touristic, today this is no longer enough. In fact, in contemporary society the greater or lesser tourist performance will depend, also and above all, on the real qualities of the places, that is, on the ability to express emotional values, to communicate them and to satisfy them with honesty and responsibility. This means that for a local place development must be added the necessary processes of cooperation and change that lead to generating a plan for the resources revaluation present in the territory.

In this context, an important role is played by the governance not only by telling a story specially how to communicate the places. It is quite evident that narratives and storytelling can have a significant role in the processes of local communities growth, including tourism!

In this work, we intend to assert that *family storytelling*, with exclusive reference to the one generated by Italian communities emigrants residing abroad or in other places of the Italian country, plays a decidedly interesting role. In fact, it is known that the members of these communities have been very active in the continuous storytelling of their memories such as the constant exaltation of the places of origin (Romita, 2015).

In this way they produce storytelling that generously contributes to stimulating in others, family and non-family members, the interest in the knowledge (even direct) of their roots places. The potential for local development attributable to this situation has also been intuited by the Italian

government which, for some years now, has been promoting actions aimed at facilitating the so-called "roots tourism" (Perri, 2017; Romita, 2017;) (among other things, a specific action has been dedicated to this theme within the so-called National Recovery and Resilience Plan - PNRR). The social and cultural mechanism by which family storytelling produces positive effects for local development and for the strengthening of personal identity confirms what we have previously briefly highlighted in the written above.

Transferring stories about one's life to others, through narratives, has a dual function: "transmitting individual and collective experiences and memories" and "connecting past, present and future" (Poggio, 2004, p. 19).

Their role is, therefore, not only to transmit the experience, but also to make people reflecting on themselves, as unique subjects, considering that it is also through narratives that the individual builds his own identity and "learns to recognize the world and to name it, elaborating representations of others and of himself" (Poggio, 2004, p. 11). The mental representations of the emigrant on the country of origin are manifold, and the nostalgic image (Paerregaard, 1997) of a "...place immune from the negative influences of modern society" (Arace, Occelli, 2007, p.188) represents of some relevant importance.

These stories often do not stop only at the events that happened directly to those who tell them, but they are feed on elements that reduce space for time, indeed narrating what is remembered of the stories heard by parents and grandparents, thus creating a bond between generations, a glue that unites the family network.

Telling about the own life to children, grandchildren and/or great-grandchildren creates a deep bond with them, as in addition to presenting themselves and own life experiences, sharing with others everything that has significantly marked one's life, and is done by presenting it through procedures typical of the culture to which they belong (Poggio, 2004). It should be remembered that in this way a bond is also created with places, with people, with material (Romita, 1999) and intangible goods protagonists of the stories.

This type of narrative mainly concerns autobiographical memory (Rubin, 1986; Goodman, Melinder, 2007), which has, in fact, the function of creating and maintaining a social and emotional bond with people and places of the past. This leads us to think that there is some relationship between "reminiscing" (Fivush, Vasudeva, 2002; Reese, 2002) and attachment to the place of origin, with the people who live there, with the immaterial and material resources, constituting the latter "a concrete and palpable testimony of the personal and family past" (Leonini, 1991, p. 53).

These stories regard an interpretative process, a construction that relates events by attributing meaning to it; the same emigrant tells himself stories by choosing the elements and aspects he wants to highlight and leaving others out, based on what he wants to communicate. If the attachment to the place of origin is "very strong", the stories will have elements and aspects that will highlight the place, the people who live there, the events, the traditions, leaving out, or overshadowing the negative experiences and unpleasant memories doesn't want to face it. The emigrants will choose what and how to narrate, transferring not only the emotions but also the representations has of themselves and of the others.

3. Working hypothesis and methodological framework

In other words, this work considers *family storytelling* a decisive *tool* for maintaining the specific cultural characteristics of the places of origin and, consequently, a relevant factor in the local development processes of these places. The object of the research is, however, the path of social construction of personal identity.

The main theoretical area of reference is partially the one indicated so far above. Actually, it has been the one that has stimulated further research activities that questioned the effects had, and/or that they had, the narratives of the emigrant (family storytelling) on their families, as well as on the identity and cultural level, also in the process of pushing towards direct contact with their country of origin. However, the process that led to the formulation of working hypotheses and the consequent field activity, is the result of a path that has provided for further conceptual insights.

In other words, it was taken into account that, in literature (Perri, 2020), it is highlighted that, on the basis of family stories, descendants conceive an "idyllic" image of the family's place of origin, and also that stories, tell of places under a special narrative, mythologize them, inserting them into the topography of the imaginary (Albertazzi, 2006, p. 17). This mental representation is therefore indicated as a possible factor that pushes the emigrant to visit the places related to narratives and the family past, thus reviving the weakened relationship over the years with the social and cultural world of origin, with a strong motivation for travelling, and with a predominantly tourist approach that (Cohen, 1974; Dall'Ara, 1995), however, does not go towards the only sightseeing.

In addition, of what analyzed until now, we emphasize another important aspect of the family narrative, which consists of the transmission of daily gestures and traditions of the places of origin. In fact, emigrants in their current daily lives tend to maintain behaviors typical of their own tradition (for example, culinary and linguistic models), to mitigate "nostalgia" and thus maintain links with the land of origin (Perri, 2020). These types of "narratives" are also handed down from generation to generation, undergoing, of course, few changes, as they are contaminated with the culture of the country that hosts them, and, in any case, tend to disperse over time (Perri, 2019). The preparation of typical dishes in a given period, just as it happens in the country of origin, is a concrete example of how you can tell the territories with their traditions, customs and traditions, to your children, grandchildren and/or great-grandchildren.

Finally, it was observed (Perri, 2020) that the family storytelling that is generated within the cultural associations of emigrants, represents a social and cultural space of growth and comparison for families, and at the same time the strengthening of their original individual and collective identity, through the comparison of the different elements that make up the story about the places of origin (lifestyles, experiences, relationships with relatives and family friends, traditions, traditional cuisine, etc.).

Finally, it has been considered that the current condition of society, what we mainly call post-modern, even if it is not possible to assign a unique meaning to the latter term (De Masi, 1985), profoundly affects the organization of a personal identity model. Bauman (2003) emphasizes this concept reasoning on the "identity" concept, believing that the uncertainty and indeterminacy that characterize today's society are reflected in the construction of people's identity and their relationship with the collective.

Consequently, the general hypothesis arose from this study and that underlies this work, the "family storytelling", represents a powerful basic tool for conveying and strengthening the personal identity of the emigrant, and post-modern society enhances its effects.

We also add that, in literature (Lawton, Windley, Byerts, 1982), is highlighted the presence of a relationship between strong affective bonds and people's life cycle, that is, the fact that those are determined with the places "lived" in childhood and/or adolescence, while on the other hand, are much less "stronger" of the bonds that are determined from places "lived" in adulthood.

Moreover, and as a corollary of the current presentation, the narratives shared with the family, since they are transformed into family stories, bring closer to the knowledge of one's family tree to the most significant experienced moments, traumas, joys, places, etc. (Demetrio, 1996). Each member of the family participates in the social construction of their origins by telling each other (Bruner, 1991), linking the past with the present, a journey from generation to generation of the family memory, which often reaches the (re) discovery and enhancement of its roots.

These further assertions support the second working hypothesis we thought of, which consists in believing that, depending on whether you emigrated from the first or second and third generation, "family storytelling" produces different effects both in "emotional" and "motivational" terms towards effective knowledge of the place of origin (Romita, Perri, 2009).

The hypotheses advanced have been subject to control through field research activities that have adopted a qualitative / interpretative methodological approach, or through "biographical interviews", that is, with a low degree of structuring, based essentially on the narration of the life story of the subjects interviewed (D'Ignazi, 2013), aimed at bringing out the different dimensions of life (cognitive, affective, value).

More precisely, the field activities started in 2012, in this phase application form, minimally structured, have been handed to Italian-Americans residing in New York, who could boast a common characteristic identified prior to the interview, in the returning, albeit occasional, to the family's places of origin more like "tourists" side (by behavior and expectations).

More specifically, the interviews were carried out in three months directly in the field with the support of the "The Italian Cultural Foundation at *Casa Belvedere*" Foundation in New York (which also provided the address book, identified according to the criteria indicated by the research group). As result, 28 interviews were conducted, 27 in Italian and one in English. Of the 28 interviews carried out, 16 concern first-generation Italian-Americans (mainly women over 70 years old) and 12 concern second-generation Italian-Americans (equally divided by gender and with a higher age between 40 and 50 years old).

The narration by the interviewees, residing abroad, was organized with the aim of studying the way of life and perceiving the relationship with the community of the Italian-American citizens place of origin (first and second generation). The story should still have concerned the following: the reasons for emigration, their life in the USA, relations with the Italian community of origin, changes and life prospects, as well as some basic information about the interviewee and his family.

Particular attention was paid to the choice of the interview place. In fact, choosing the home of the interviewee, it was possible to put him at ease, and in this way the interviewer was able to control it and guide its completion through deepen questions for further study.

In addition to the above, part of the research has been carried out in the form of "participating observation", that consisting in sharing relevant parts of everyday life with some families of Italian-New York emigrants of first and second generation. The experience has been done from December 2012 to March 2013, consisted in living with them inside their homes and participating in each of their events. Every moment has been registered in notes, in a diary along a photographic reportage.

4. Results

The research activities have widely confirmed the conceptual framework about the usefulness of storytelling in the construction of personal identity and places such as the methodological value of the use of narration. This finding also applies to the researcher mentioned at the start of this article,

which explore different aspects of social action, accumulate memory, and analyze processes of social change

We also strongly think that the proposed theme of *family storytelling*, an expression used to indicate the narration of the life of the emigrant life, has been proven suitable as an effective communication tool for telling places and life stories throughout the construction of personal identity.

The results of the research have shown as the effectiveness of family storytelling depends precisely on the fact that when the emigrant telling the story himself initiates a "convincing" communication process, that reflects on the transfer and maintenance of his identity and therefore of the entire family, meantime stimulating the need of second and third generation family members to know more about the places of their origins.

The results of the research have shown as the effectiveness of the storytelling family depends precisely on the fact that when the emigrant himself tells the history, he initiates a process of "convincing" communication, who reflects on the transfer and preservation of his identity and thus of the whole family, stimulate the need for second- and third-generation people to learn more about their origins.

In fact, in the majority of the cases studied, interviewees who tell their stories tend to proudly manifest their Italian origins.

The associations they join, settled in the places of their actual residence, include people of Italian origin. Sometimes they are organized based on the same city of birth, and representing the nucleus around which they tell their life, their biography, thus taking shape and/or strengthening their identity. In fact, their strong identity is presented at The Christmas dinner where all the traditional dishes which originate from their Italian places are cooked and served, the pastries are the strongest representation.

The dinner itself is also a very long-awaited moment by the sons (and the children of the children), the same ones who then continue the traditions inherited by their parents, albeit with some concession to marginal curvatures determined by the cultural influence of the place where they were born and live. Even the language spoken daily in the family sometimes sees the Italian language as the protagonist, but more often you can hear the dialect of the place of origin, which over time tends to take on the connotations of a new slang.

Hence, a world in the world, made of nostalgia and pride, in continuous defense of their origins, even when this has created difficult living conditions forced the Italians to emigrate. In fact, the told pieces of life story such as the observed facts during the researches, showing the existence of a cultural bubble of origins, handed down from generation to generation, and which has continuously nurtured over the years through family narration.

Accordingly, of what analyzed, there is a substantial confirmation of the general hypothesis advanced, that "family storytelling" represents an important basic tool for the purpose of conveying and strengthening the original personal identity of the emigrant.

In this regard, it should be pointed out that "oikophobia" often manifests as a silent, creeping and omnipresent contempt for everything that represents its identity and history. The result of negative stereotypes generated by the counter narrative on migrants abroad and on lifestyles Italians also in the foreign filmography: Italians are all mafia, pasta and pizza, mum employees, seducers, etc...

This feeling is particularly strong among first-generation immigrants and in the first stage of integration into the cultural and social contexts of immigration.

However, the research has also led to relevant results regarding the formation of personal identity. In particular, the family narratives produced by Italian emigrants take an important role for the construction of the places identity and towards local development, whose effects are different depending by which type of emigrants has been told, first or second and third generation. The different effects can be summarized both in "emotional" and "motivational" terms towards effective knowledge of the place of origin.

Starting from the first-generation emigrants, family storytelling helps to build one's identity and communicate it to others, to remember places, people, situations, events that arouse that nostalgic feeling that will partly be filled by visiting the country of origin: emotions, flavors and scents that imprinted in the memory are a trace of a past that they try to find and retrace it. In the case of this type of narration, the value that is reflected in the places identity and the local development (i.e. the community of origin) is emotional, and the identity of the place is strengthened

as it is more directly associated with the construction of the narrator's personal identity. The narrator will continue to personally take care of social relations with the community of origin. Those results are clearly evident from the information acquired in our field research, through interviews carried out on Italian-Americans, on first-generation emigrants for whom, residing in places very distant from those of origin, the "regular" attendance of native places is problematic. However, thanks to new technologies, that allow visual communication in real time and at almost no costs (Skype, Whatsapp, etc.), emigrants can relate with friends and relatives who live in the city of origin continuously, in some cases daily.

Other ways to stay close to their community are invitations to weddings and sacred religious rites, participating in events dedicated to the Holy Patron City.

There has been also the economic remittances sent to the places of origin made in various capacities, some of them intended for the maintenance of the homes in which they born and lived, very often inherited, or built from scratch with the idea of the definitive return which, however, only happens in very rare cases. It has also been inferred that the return in a tourist key, mainly done during holidays or summer periods, generates economic flows that take on interesting aspects especially when the destination communities are small and / or located in inland areas.

Instead, in regards of the second and third generation emigrants, the family storytelling aims to making the family history known, but also represents the tool to push towards the knowledge and attendance of places of origins. In fact, in this case has been observed that the family storytelling has contributed to build in these types of emigrants an "idyllic" image of the place of origin, thus arousing further curiosity about these territories. This image pushes them to visit and get to know personally the places left years earlier by their family members to live directly those experiences, emotions and sensations, which they have heard of and transmitted through these stories.

As it has been pointed out, every time they return to those places, even if the appearance of the communities previously visited has undergone objective transformations, the perception will always be that of a social, physical and cultural space of which parents and/or grandparents have dreamed and talked.

Conclusion

Accordingly, the outcomes of the presented research, shows that "family storytelling" produced by people of Italian origin, emigrant, relatives of emigrants in their family environment, has taken on a relevant meaning.

The subjective representations of one's own history and places of origin told through "family storytelling", nourish the positive memory of people and, more generally, of a whole series of emotional contents pertaining to the place of origin of the narrator. Therefore, they appear a valid tool, in order to deepen the study of personal identity and also for use in local development and site marking processes.

In fact, the usefulness of this type of narration of stories, facts and places lies in the fact that the narration is carried out by bearers of strong family values, reliable witnesses, without external mediators and essentially oriented towards its reflection in the family sphere. When the stories concern the phase of the first socialization of the migrant at the place of origin, they are "soaked" with the identity of the place and the attachment of the place (Perri, 2021).

Moreover, these accounts, in addition to maintaining and reinforcing the sense of belonging to the migrant and his family to the social context of his roots, help also to stimulate the need for knowledge of other family members who are born and have lived in other territories.

Children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, from generation to generation, continue to proudly keep traditions and cultural events alive over time, passing them on to the next generation.

The return to the places of origin of the family for some emigrants is a mere aspiration because the presence of objective difficulties.

However, for the first, second and third generation the journey of the roots represents a reality especially because motivated by nostalgia or knowledge of places have been told through storytelling or already visited.

Obviously, that the return of the emigrants or their descendants represents a significant opportunity for the local development. This opportunity regards the growing of the identity collective of the place, but more over in terms of economic growth and social capital.

Finally, this type of travel done as tourists, is not conflictual and actually aims at a need for knowledge and would involve an important potential catchment area.

According to estimates from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, these tourists represent over 60 million Italian descendants.

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