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## **Department of Marketing, Strategy and Operations**

### **Reverse Roots Tourism in Argentina: Exploratory Research on the Italianity Overseas**

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Master of Science in Tourism Development & Culture – Erasmus Mundus

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Dr. Marie Avellino, Associate Professor,  
University of Malta

Third supervisor:

Dr. Michael Humbracht, Research Associate,  
University of Glasgow

July, 2023



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## Dedications

*A mis viejos,  
gracias por ser mi apoyo incondicional y fuente de inspiración*

## Acknowledgments

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Words cannot express my gratitude to my family, especially to my parents, Claudia and José Luis. You taught me about commitment, perseverance and social justice. You also opened the doors to the world for me, as you have instilled in me my passion for travelling, which through the years, transformed into this professional commitment that led me to be here publishing this dissertation. Thanks, Cris, for taking care of mum and dad. *Y gracias pa, sos el primer turista de raíces que conocí.* Thanks to your passion for Asturias and Spain I could understand, when I was a child, that place attachment does not fade at distance and it is transmitted through generations. Thank you also for taking me on an adventure to get to know grandma's house in Amago, and to experience first-hand the journey to my roots. *Y gracias a mi familia al otro lado del océano por recibirme con los brazos abiertos.*

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## **Resumo**

Esta dissertação explora o fenómeno do turismo de raízes invertido italiano na Argentina, abordando lacunas significativas na literatura existente sobre o turismo liderado pela migração. Com evidências de observação participante e não-participante, pesquisa documental e entrevistas em profundidade, este estudo investiga a dinâmica de um segmento específico do turismo de raízes, do lado da procura e da oferta.

Ao examinar a intersecção entre património pessoal, turismo e migração, esta tese lança luz sobre as interconexões entre laços ancestrais, afinidade cultural e imaginários sociais baseados em formas alargadas de parentesco no desenvolvimento do turismo.

Este estudo identifica as motivações e as experiências dos turistas italianos que se dedicam à pesquisa genealógica ou à ligação com o património italiano na Argentina. O trabalho de campo no Museu Nacional da Imigração serviu para examinar as formas de envolvimento dos turistas italianos com a sua ancestralidade. Além disso, este estudo analisa o envolvimento de várias partes interessadas no turismo de raízes invertidas, através de entrevistas em profundidade com especialistas do Museu, associações culturais italianas e agências de viagens. A análise temática é utilizada para processar os dados recolhidos, permitindo a identificação de temas-chave, variações e padrões.

Esta dissertação mostra a importância da investigação genealógica no âmbito do turismo de raízes invertidas, revelando segmentos distintos que vão para além das práticas genealógicas clássicas. Além disso, demonstra como o conceito de italianidade na Argentina serve como um imaginário social que influencia a origem étnica dos turistas italianos e molda a sua experiência turística.

## **Palavras-chave**

Turismo de raízes, turismo étnico, turismo de diáspora, turismo cultural, migração

## **Sistema de Classificação JEL**

Z32 Tourism and Development, Z390 Tourism: Other

## **Abstract**

This dissertation explores the phenomenon of Italian reverse roots tourism in Argentina, addressing significant gaps in the existing literature on migration-led tourism. With evidence from participant and non-participant observations, desk research, and in-depth interviews, this study delves into the dynamics of a specific segment of roots tourism, from the demand and supply side.

By examining the intersection of personal heritage, tourism, and migration, this thesis sheds light on the interconnections between ancestral ties, cultural affinity, and social imaginaries based on extended forms of kinship in the development of tourism. Furthermore, it identifies the motivations and experiences of Italian tourists engaging in genealogical research or connecting with Italian heritage in Argentina. Fieldwork at the National Immigration Museum served to examine Italian tourists' forms of engagement with their ancestry. The research undertaken revealed the involvement of various stakeholders in reverse roots tourism, through in-depth interviews with experts at the Museum, Italian cultural associations, and travel agencies. Thematic analysis is employed to process the collected data, enabling the identification of key themes, variations, and patterns.

This dissertation shows the significance of genealogy research within reverse roots tourism, uncovering distinct segments that go beyond classical genealogical practices. Furthermore, it demonstrates how the concept of *Italianity* in Argentina serves as a social imaginary that influences Italian tourists' ethnic background and shapes their tourism experience.

## **Keywords**

Roots tourism, ethnic tourism, diaspora tourism, cultural tourism, migration

## **JEL Classification System**

Z32 Turismo e Desenvolvimento, Z390 Turismo: Outros

## Table of contents

<b>Resumo</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Table of figures</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Overview.....	1
1.2 General objective. ....	3
1.3 Specific objectives .....	3
1.4 Research questions .....	3
1.5 Justification.....	4
<b>2 Theoretical Foundations and Methodology</b> .....	<b>6</b>
2.1 Literature review .....	6
2.2 Theoretical framework.....	10
2.2.1 Roots tourism and cultural heritage.....	10
2.2.2 Geographies of genealogy in the roots tourism experience .....	12
2.2.3 Reverse roots tourism: an operational definition .....	14
2.2.4 Italian Immigration and Italian tourism in Argentina .....	17
2.2.5 Italianity as social imaginary.....	18
2.3 Methodology .....	20
2.3.1 Research design and sampling .....	20
2.3.2 Data collection and analysis .....	21
2.3.3 Scope and limitations .....	24
2.3.4 Ethics .....	25
<b>3 Analysis of Italian reverse roots tourism in Argentina</b> .....	<b>27</b>
3.1 The National Immigration Museum: towards the immigrants' footsteps .....	27
3.1.1 Relevance of the National Immigration Museum .....	29
3.1.2 The Italian tourists' experience at the museum.....	29
3.2 Reverse roots tourism beyond the museum.....	38
3.2.1 Many practices within genealogical research .....	38
3.2.2 Ethnic tourism .....	40
3.3 Potentialities on reverse roots tourism development .....	46
3.3.1 The stakeholders' perspective.....	46
3.3.2 Other potentialities .....	49
<b>4 Conclusions</b> .....	<b>51</b>
4.1 Summary of findings.....	51
4.2 Further research directions.....	54

<b>References</b> .....	<b>56</b>
<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>65</b>
Appendix A– Interview flexible guides .....	65
A.1. For Italian associations .....	65
A.2. For experts at the National Immigration Museum .....	65
A.3. For tour operators:.....	66
A.4. For Italian tourists (with family background of migration to Argentina).....	66
A.5. For Italian tourists (without family background of migration to Argentina) .....	67
Appendix B – Photographies .....	68
Appendix C – Interview transcripts .....	70



**Table of figures**

**Figure 2.1.** Framework to understand the links between roots tourism and visiting friends and relatives' tourism..... 14

**Figure 2.2.** The conceptual model of the types of roots tourism ..... 15

**Figure 2.3.** Dimensions within reverse roots tourism and exemplary terms within it ..... 16

**Figure 3.1.** Entrance to the National Immigration Museum ..... 27

**Figure 3.2.** Recreation of the original rooms at the National Immigration Museum ..... 32

**Figure 3.3.** Searching in the migration records at the main desk in the National Immigration Museum ..... 35



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

The former *Hotel de los Inmigrantes* [Immigrants hotel] in Buenos Aires was the first contact that millions of Italians had with Argentina. Located in the city's old port area, it seemed to have been built not only as a transitory home, but as an architectural work that symbolically attempted to replicate the idea of progress proposed by the emerging national state. This way of imagining the nation, inspired by nineteenth-century positivist ideas, turned Argentina into a space where not only different languages coexisted, but fundamentally diverse cultures, political ideas, artistic perspectives and a profound syncretism between the old and the new world.

Located in what nowadays is one of the most expensive areas of the country, the Immigrants hotel is now the *Museo Nacional de la Inmigración* [National Immigration Museum]. It is a hot morning and I encounter Italian tourists at the museum. I like to believe that they did not travel to escape from wars, fascism and famine but from the Italian winter. The promise of positivist progress vanished many decades ago but now, “The Paris of South America”, which has much more of South America than of Paris, promises a unique experience: a cultural landscape where many tourists who have never set foot in Argentina find familiarity. Much of their personal histories are there, in the photos, archives, letters, shipping records, but also beyond, in the cafes, bookshops, names of the shops that bear the same surnames as their grandparents, their cousins or friends. This discovering of familiarity in a distant land, led me to reflect on how roots tourism prompts connections in multiple ways, shaping a type of tourism that I call *reverse roots tourism*, moulded by the memories built by those that left Italy and settled down in Argentina to *fare l'America*.<sup>1</sup>

Roots tourism is a sub-category of cultural and heritage tourism that implies travelling to a place significant to one's familiar, ancestral or ethnic background. Roots tourism not only awakens strong emotions and underpins and shapes identities, it also offers a sustainable, personalised, and emotional experience to travellers (Alexander et al., 2016; Bryce, 2017; Newland & Taylor, 2010). Associated with the growth in heritage tourism, the nostalgia market (Bartoletti, 2010; Marschall, 2012), and interest in genealogy research (Meethan, 2004; Timothy & Kay Guelke, 2008; Winter, 2007), roots tourism is a niche that has been growing over the last decades (Alexander et al., 2016; Ferrari et al., 2022; Mehtiyeva & Prince, 2020; Nicotera, 2021; Pelliccia, 2018; Timothy, 2011, 2014; Scheyvens, 2007; Tomczeweska-Popowycz & Vas Taras, 2022).

While most studies have focused on the traditional flow of roots tourism from the receiving country to the homeland, I have identified noticeable gap in the existing literature which does not

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<sup>1</sup> This concept embodies the notion of economic prosperity and enhanced social status. For a detailed analysis of its construction in the Argentinian case, see Bravo Herrera (2023).

address other dynamics within this segment (Dwyer et al., 2014; Li, et al., 2020; Seetaram, 2012). Thereby, this dissertation aims to contribute to filling this hiatus by exploring the current and potential development of Italian reverse roots tourism in Argentina. This is a specific form of roots tourism, which refers to the journey of Italians to the land where their compatriots, relatives or ancestors emigrated. Argentina is a compelling case study given its history as a migration-receiving country especially from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, mostly conformed by Italians (Di Tella, 2011; Germani, 1966). Thus, this study offers a distinct opportunity to broaden current understanding of the complex interaction between migration, culture and tourism.

By following the contributions of critical genealogy and the concept of *genealogical geographies* coined by Nash (2017), I argue that within reverse roots tourism exist many dynamics that are not limited to genealogical research. The reverse roots tourism phenomenon involves diverse segments, including not only classical genealogy practices but also extended forms of kinship that exceed the familiar and ancestral levels. They underpin travellers' ethnic and national belonging, affinities and sense of proximity regardless of genealogical blood ties. Acknowledging the powerful effect of social imaginaries in tourism development, I claim that *Italianity* mediates in the Italian tourists' experience in Argentina, constituting a form of reverse roots tourism traversed by ethnicity. Following Tomczeweska-Popowycz and Vas Taras' (2022) framework for roots tourism, I will delve into these diverse segments and analyse them in relation to the level of personal relatedness with the destination and the emotional responses raised by the experience.

Ethnicity is a dynamic, movable concept, which exceeds pre-fixed identities (Clifford, 1994; Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1990). This implies acknowledging different levels in which reverse roots tourism can shape individuals' identities, through a variety of social, cultural, and historical connections to places. Drawing on Anderson's (1993) and Salazar's (2012) concepts of imagined community and social imaginaries respectively, I will explore how Italianity as social imaginary forms a significant dimension of their tourist experience, sustaining the idea of a transnational imagined community. I argue that in some tourism experiences is the underlying notion of belonging and kinship that sustains the idea of a transnational imagined community. Thus, when Italians visit Argentina, the cultural symbols, narratives, and practices, associated with Italian heritage, derived from its immigration history, create a sense of shared history and belonging that creates or reinforces a connection among them.

The qualitative approach of this research is appropriate to explore the diversity of perceptions, motivations and practices within reverse roots tourism, both from the supply and the demand side. In-depth interviews, informal conversations and observations were conducted at the National Immigration Museum, and online. Purposive sampling identified significant cases aimed at maximising differences among cases, to fully capture a wide range of manifestations. The data collected was

analysed using thematic analysis, which allowed me to identify key themes, patterns and variations among reverse roots tourists.

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. Following this introductory chapter, chapter 2 describes the state of the art and the theoretical framework, as well as the methodology to approach the issue. The literature review starts by contextualising roots tourism in the cultural heritage dimension, focusing on the characteristics and trends of this segment. The theoretical framework situates roots tourism within the rise of personal heritage, describes different geographies of genealogy and postmodern notions of ethnicity that underpin reverse roots tourism. The methodology includes the design, data collection methods and analysis procedures, as well as scope and limitations of the study and ethical issues. The data analysis is explained in chapter 3, which explores the dynamics of reverse roots tourism in Argentina and identifies the key stakeholders involved, including the National Immigration Museum, Italian-Argentinian associations, and tourism agencies taking Italians to the museum. The chapter then delves into the insights on Italian reverse roots tourists in Argentina, including their emotional responses, personal relatedness with the destination, and genealogical search experiences. Finally, conclusions are found in chapter 4, in which I present key findings about the current state and potential of Italian reverse roots tourism development in Argentina. The chapter then explores the implications of these results for tourism practitioners and policymakers, and also presents the limitations and weaknesses of the study, including suggestions for future research.

## **1.2 General objective**

To explore the current development of Italian reverse roots tourism and its potentialities, identifying Italian reverse roots tourists' motivations and experiences.

## **1.3 Specific objectives**

1. To explore reverse roots tourists' experiences, identifying their motivations, the level of relatedness with the destination, and emotional responses arising from their experiences.
2. To determine whether a perception of belonging to a transnational community exists among Italian roots tourists and Argentina and how it is perceived by them.
3. To identify stakeholders' current involvement in reverse roots tourism and their perspectives on the development of this niche.

## **1.4 Research questions**

- What are the motivations among Italian tourists visiting the Immigration Museum, engaging in genealogical research, or visiting Italian cultural associations in Argentina?
- What is the importance of genealogy research among reverse roots tourists?

- Which are the segments within reverse roots tourism?
- How does Italianity motivate Italians' journey to Argentina and their experience?
- Is there a specific seasonality for reverse roots tourists? If so, what is it related to?
- Who are the stakeholders involved and what is their relevance?
- What are the potentialities for development of this form of tourism in Argentina?

## 1.5 Justification

Two personal experiences are the catalysts for writing this thesis. First, the impetus for the investigation into ancestry tourism has its origin in my personal experiences and observations as a root tourist both in Spain and Italy. Tracing the steps of my grandparents was not only a curiosity, but a discovery of myself. What is more, it gave me the opportunity to reflect on how migration is perceived *on the other side*, of those that have been left behind. Particularly remarkable was the reaction and responses from people I met in Italy. There, they would tell me that they had relatives in Argentina (and even asked me if I knew them). Besides, they tended to show a great interest in the country, which went beyond a general curiosity; in fact, it implied happiness and solidarity, sometimes involving memories of nostalgia due to the country's emigration history. On the other hand, in a recent trip to the south of Brazil, I had the opportunity to visit cities with a significant presence of Italian immigration which deeply influenced the culture of the region, such as Urussanga, Orleans and Nova Veneza. There, Italianity has been heavily marketised and constitutes something worth seeing for domestic tourists but also for some foreigners, mostly Italians.

With regard to my professional motivations, my goal is to contribute to optimising reverse roots tourism development in Argentina and encouraging further research on this topic. I have identified two main gaps to which I expect to contribute with this thesis. First, the intersection between tourism and migration has not been extensively studied, most of the attention being focused on the VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives) sources of tourism demand. A few studies highlight that the non-VFR source is relevant and the link between them needs to be further explored (Dwyer et al., 2014; Etzo et al., 2014; Fourie & Santana Gallego, 2013; Nicotera, 2021; Seetaram, 2012). Similarly, Teti (2022) and Sommaro (2022b) agree on the lack of research on the side of those that remained in the homeland and propose to understand roots tourism in other directions.

A second relevant gap was identified in the analysis of Italian outbound tourism towards Argentina. The study made by Etzo et al. (2014) demonstrates the relevance of the non-VFR tourism on both holiday and business travel market in Italian outbound tourism. Specifically, the authors found out that Italians residing abroad exert a positive influence on outbound tourism across various travel purposes. Investigation in this area is relevant for policy makers in countries with large Italian communities, which “should take into account the dependence of Italian tourism demand on the stock

of migrants” (p. 247). The study of tourism-migration links is relevant for other stakeholders as well, who can create new opportunities in this segment (Etzo et al., 2014), in a context of growing interest in migration heritage, both in Argentina and in Italy (De Menna, 2011). Also, the inclusion of stakeholders’ perspectives contributes to filling the lack of research on the supply side of roots tourism experiences (Alexander, et al 2016; Li, et al., 2020; Timothy & Boyd, 2003).

My thesis aims to contribute to tourism studies in two critical and under-studied aspects: the intersection between personal heritage and tourism and the intertwining of tourism and migration. In that regard, it will provide a better understanding of reverse roots tourism not solely based on ancestral ties but also on ethnic belonging and cultural affinity, exploring the relevance of social imaginaries based on extended forms of kinship. Ultimately, this research will provide insights to policy makers, researchers and stakeholders into the experiences of individuals involved in reverse roots tourism as well as the potential for further development of this promising niche.

## 2 Theoretical Foundations and Methodology

This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first one presents the literature review, starting with a contextualization of roots tourism phenomenon within the rise in intangible cultural heritage. Then, it identifies traditional flows and less-studied dynamics within roots tourism. The second section describes the theoretical framework, offering a working definition of reverse roots tourism, considering levels of relatedness with the destination and emotional responses. Additionally, this section presents how Italianity works as a social imaginary, based on Italian immigration in Argentina. Finally, the third section of this chapter presents a comprehensive account of the methodological approach employed.

### 2.1 Literature review

Roots tourism is one of the emerging niches in what has been called *new tourism* (Novelli, 2005; Poon, 2003). In opposition to mass tourism, it can be referred to as a special interest tourism segment within cultural tourism (Agarwal, et al., 2018; Mehtiyeva & Prince, 2020; McCain & Ray, 2003). Cultural tourism has been growing steadily as has the variety of assets on which this tourism is based (Richards, 2003, 2014). Cultural tourism is “a form of tourism that draws on the cultural heritage of a destination and transforms it into products that can be consumed by tourists” (UNWTO, 2018, p. 6). Thus, it encompasses a wide range of experiences of the lifestyle, heritage, arts, and people of the destination (Government of Australia, 1994). This broad definition implies that the motivation itself is not an appropriate criterion for defining cultural tourism, as motivation-based conceptualizations do (Du Cros & McKercher, 2020; UNWTO, 2017).

As a marker of regional identity, heritage is the source of specificity that determines similarity and difference between destinations (Bessièrè, 2013; Nuryanti, 1996). Cultural heritage includes a wide range of products that express different aspects of the life of human communities, including tangible and intangible aspects of culture. While tangible culture refers to physical expressions of culture, such as buildings, artifacts, and monuments, intangible culture encompasses non-material aspects such as beliefs, practices, rituals, traditions, and language (UNESCO, 2014). Whereas a definition of heritage emphasises its inheritance from the past (ICOMOS, 2005), many authors have recently adopted a constructive perspective for which the decision on what deserves to be recognised as heritage speaks of a process of selection and articulation (Bessièrè, 2013; Davallon, 2002; Lenzerini, 2013; Vecco, 2010). From this perspective, scholars highlight the subjective dimensions of heritage and in that regard, the cultural heritage experience is not much about the heritage site itself but depends on the connection between the traveller and the place (Park, 2010; Poria et al., 2003). This approach is similar to Smith’s agency-based approach on the interaction between tourists and the site in the heritage



meaning-making process. In that sense, heritage is an emotionally charged action, which involves performative acts of constructing meaning for the present, which implies that museums as well as other heritage sites are sites of *heritage-making* (Smith, 2020). Within cultural heritage, roots tourism is a category within migration-led tourism, a wide phenomenon that encompasses travel related to the tourist's family or ethnic migration history (Seetaram, 2012).

Academic literature on the topic of roots tourism has focused on the travel of individuals from the country of settlement to the country of origin of their ancestors (Etzo, et al., 2014; Dwyer et al. 2014; Fourie & Santana Gallego, 2013; Seetaram, 2012). Among them, Basu (2004, 2007) examines the phenomenon of roots tourism in the context of journeys made by individuals of Scottish Highland descent, living in countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, to places associated with their ancestors in the old world. For the author, roots tourism refers to family history-related cultural tourism. In the case of Scottish diaspora tourism, he considers this a response to the crisis of belonging in post-colonial societies, and explores how the notion of the *Highland clan* "re-roots an existentially homeless people in a landscape other than that in which they live their day-to-day lives" (Basu, 2005, p. 125). Diaspora tourism has been often used as a synonym of roots tourism (Tomczeweska-Popowycz & Vas Taras, 2022). For instance, in their seminal work on the intersection of tourism and diasporas, Coles and Timothy (2004) define *diaspora tourists* as members of diasporic communities that "make trips in search of their roots and their routes" (p. 14), to reaffirm and reinforce their identities, with a deep study on the meanings and implications of dislocation on the construction of the self.

Sheffer (1986), Safran (1991), Cohen (2008) develop extensive research on diaspora and propose comprehensive definitions of the phenomenon. Although they are not identical, they share critical components, including a history of dispersal, the presence of myths and memories associated with the homeland, a desire to return home, experiences of alienation and solidarity in the host country, and a collective identity influenced by these shared experiences. Postmodernist interpretations of diaspora help to de-essentialise the notion of diaspora and ethnicity, emphasising their relational and dynamic nature, highlighting the importance of cultural and historical processes in shaping contemporary ethnic identities (Clifford, 1994; Cohen, 2008; Hall, 1990; Gilroy, 1997). Li, McKercher and Han (2020) claim that diaspora tourism has not been properly addressed, so they call for the need to develop an exhaustive taxonomy on diasporic tourists.<sup>2</sup>

Continuing with the different concepts associated with roots tourism, *legacy tourism* is much narrower, and refers to individuals that travel to sites where they have a "personal connection with

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<sup>2</sup> Depending on the migration history in the country (reasons to migrate, closeness of the migration phenomenon, and specificities of the place of origin), the level of acculturation (including dynamics of assimilation or multiculturalism), and variations in the sense of place (attachment to certain locations).

their heritage beyond a general relationship of collective ancestry” (McCain & Ray 2003, p. 713), either to engage in genealogical endeavours, or to feel connected to their ancestors. Even more specific are *genealogical or family history tourism* (Coles & Timothy 2004), which involve travelling to destinations that make available resources that support family history research. Genealogical tourists tend to be more detailed and purposeful, driven by intrinsic motivations (Santos & Yan 2010). What all definitions have in common is that roots tourism has a spiritual and emotional component, since it mostly involves emigrants or their descendants travelling to experience locations and peoples associated with their own personal or familiar past (Alexander et al., 2016; Basu, 2004, 2007; Ferrari & Nicotera, 2021; Leite, 2005; Timothy, 2014).

Salazar (2012) reflects on the connections between the creative use of seductive and selective *social imaginaries* about peoples and places in tourism development. Studies that explore the imagination process that intermediates roots tourism, focus on the imagined ideas created by the immigrants and their descendants. The ancestral tourist knows their ancestors' land through an imagination process, built with the memories of others and genealogy research (Basu, 2004, 2005; Bryce et al., 2017; Leite, 2005; Powers, 2011; Prince, 2021; Timothy, 2011).

Lowenthal (1975, 1979) claims that appreciation for one's community and family legacy has been increasing, and consequently there is a growing interest in the search for roots and personal and family history's identity. In the surge of enthusiasm for one's ancestry, many scholars highlight the influence of “Roots”, a highly acclaimed television miniseries first broadcasted in 1977. The series, based on the novel “Roots: The Saga of an American Family” by Alex Haley, depicts the history of African Americans from their capture as enslaved people in Africa to their liberation in the United States. As one of the most widely watched television broadcasts in history, “Roots” sparked a renewed interest in genealogy research (Hjorthén, 2021; Marschall, 2017; Nash, 2002; Santana Pinho, 2018).

Meethan (2004) presents an in-depth literature review about the context in which people engage in genealogy research and genealogy travel. Following this author, globalization allows new diasporic identities to emerge, linked to multiple points of origin and multiple significant places, challenging classical ties between people and places. Moreover, roots tourism is expected to continue its expansion as it merges many growing trends such as rural, nostalgia, dark, events, and gastronomy tourism (Ferrari, et al., 2022) and can prompt “authentic” experiences (Alexander et al., 2016; Bryce et al., 2017; Lacher et al., 2013; Mehtiyeva & Prince, 2020; Ramshaw, 2014).

Many authors study the relationship between cultural heritage tourism and personal and social identities (Basu, 2004; Marschall, 2015; Park, 2010; Timothy, 2011), giving special attention to its role in the shaping of national identities (Palmer, 1999; Park 2010; Pretes, 2003; Winter, 2009). In that vein, some scholars have studied the support of governmental programmes specifically targeting emigrants and their descendants, for generating economic benefits or reinforcing national identities (Basu, 2004,

2005; Hjorthén, 2021; Nicotera, 2021; Saxe, et al., 2006; Scheyvens, 2007; Timothy & Kay Guelke, 2008). The most well-known examples are Israeli and Scottish endeavours to target their diaspora and for descendants to visit the homeland of their ancestors (Alexander, et al., 2016; Basu, 2005; Cohen, 2008; Mehtiyeva & Prince, 2020). Ancestral tourism also plays a relevant role in Irish tourism development (Nash, 2002), as well as for African countries such as Ghana, Senegal, South Africa, and Nigeria (Santana Pinho, 2018). Nordic countries have also developed homecoming programmes (Hjorthén, 2021). In 2018, Italy launched the *Turismo delle Radici* [roots tourism] programme, targeting more than 80 million Italians and Italian descendants abroad (Ferrari & Nicotera, 2021). Over the last years, there has been a surge of conferences and publications (Borsa Internazionale del turismo delle origini, n.d; Raíz Italiana, 2021), the most noticeable being the launch of the “First Report on Roots Tourism in Italy” (Ferrari & Nicotera, 2021), which dedicates a full chapter to Argentina.<sup>3</sup> In 2023, the Italian government presented a new roots tourism project, which not only aims at recovering the tourism sector but also to make roots tourists “ambassadors” in their countries of origin (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, 2023).<sup>4</sup>

Although the most studied trajectory of roots tourism involves travelling to the place of origin of the ancestors, other travel directions can be traced in roots tourism dynamics. Academic literature has “overlooked other significant types such as the travel of residents in the original homeland to diasporic spaces, and the travel of diasporic members to the spaces of transit or dispersion”, which are becoming “increasingly important for their significance in linking different groups, places, and identities” (Li et al., 2020, p. 2121). In that regard, King (1994) explores how broad notions of belonging take place in diaspora tourism, which he defines as a form of ethnic tourism -in opposition to conventional ethnic tourism that is motivated by the exoticism of cultural difference (Smith, 1977, p. 2).

Similarly, Santana Pinho (2018), claims that diaspora tourism is not limited to visiting the homeland of the ancestors or ethnic groups; on the contrary, it involves travels between diasporic lands. Drawing on King's conceptualization, she studies the phenomenon of *lateral diasporic* trips, which take place between diasporic lands. In that vein, she suggests that diaspora tourism may be triggered to experience similarities with the destination community, rather than the differences. In the same line, Nash's (2002) study about genealogy tourism in Ireland, explores relatedness between travellers and hosts and concludes that when visiting countries or places where their ancestors lived, some tourists have the feeling of “seeing faces in the crowd just like their family members” (p. 37).

Other authors have referred to other forms of reverse roots tourism, such as trips made by

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<sup>3</sup> Other initiatives under this project include the support of the creation of a university masters' level degree in the organisation and management of roots tourism (Università della Calabria, n.d.).

<sup>4</sup> Similarly, many authors posit that roots tourism is a relevant tool of cultural diplomacy and *soft power* (Luke 2013; Nicotera, 2021; Ferrari, et al., 2022; Hjorthén, 2021; Newland & Taylor, 2010).

those that live in the country of origin, to the lands to which their ancestors were re-located. Timothy and Coles (2004) describe this phenomenon as diaspora tourism *in reverse* (p. 15), referring to residents in the homeland that travel “to diaspora spaces to discover how co-members of the diaspora, perhaps even their friends and relations, have adapted to life and conditions in another place” and experience “home” in the diaspora (p. 15). Examples of this are the Japanese tourists visiting Japanese towns in the United States and Canada; Italian tourists visiting cities with significant Italian immigration in the south of Brazil (Savoldi, 2001); and Welsh tourists travelling to Chubut in Argentina, where the Welsh settled by the end of the nineteenth century (Berg, 2018a, 2018b; Schlüter, 1999). Berg has identified a case of reverse roots tourism in Chubut, Argentina, which takes place among Welsh that travel “to reunite with those who have been constructed through heritage events and literature as *long-lost* Welsh brothers and sisters” (2018b, p. 4). The author explains how this process, which is more significant than the traditional roots tourism flow between Chubut and Scotland, diverges from previously studied diasporic-homeland relational flows. For her, “these processes exemplify a type of reverse diaspora tourist where nationals of the homeland visit the diaspora community to gain new perspective on their own identity constructions” (2018a, p. 157).

Similarly, Savoldi (1998) described how the process of revitalization of Italian culture and traditions in cities of the south of Brazil motivated the arrival of Italian tourists and researchers, who encounter an Italian culture that “has been lost” in Italy (p. 48). Since the 1990s Brazilian cities in the south of Brazil with a high history of Italian emigration, such as Orleans, Urussanga, Nova Veneza, Piriápolis, have organised welcomes to reverse roots tourists visiting these cities. The gatherings are held in Parish halls, clubs, cemeteries, among others. Sometimes they involve the discovery of “new relatives” and are motivated by an attempt to reconstruct personal and community history, whereas sometimes they are based on an idea of kinship between both communities (Savoldi, 2008).

## **2.2 Theoretical framework**

### **2.2.1 Roots tourism and cultural heritage**

In the context of what Giddens (1991) calls *late modernity*, traditional ties between people and place, as well as national boundaries and identities become blurred and adopt dynamic forms and directions (Hall, 1991; Hollinshead, 2004). Individuals are increasingly looking for stronger connections to their distant past to reduce the uncertainty prompted by mechanised, impersonal relations (Lowenthal, 1975; Timothy 1997; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Late modernity prompts a crisis of memories (Bertoletti, 2010), from which sentiments of nostalgia arise and foster a *memory boom*, characterised by a popular interest in genealogy and family research (MacDonald, 2013; Meethan, 2004; Winter, 2009). These forms of reproducing the past influence the ways people travel (Nuryanti, 1996). Thus, roots tourism

growth responds to the need of the individuals to answer questions such as “who am I?” and “where do I fit in?”, as attempts to “find oneself” (Palmer, 1999, p. 316), which has become a life-imperative (Giddens, 1991). By knowing and feeling the past, roots tourism helps to cope with the present and finds stability and belongingness in an insecure and unstable world (Lowenthal, 1975).

The conceptualization of heritage as a process highlights its dynamics of creation, recreation and transformation in the present (Bessière, 2013; Davallon, 2002; Frew & White, 2011; García Canclini, 1999; Lenzerini, 2013; Nuryanti, 1996; Smith, 2006, 2020; Vecco, 2010). This definition is useful to understand how the growth in roots tourism responds to the context created by late modernity, which prompts the heritage-making process to adopt new dynamics, giving greater importance to living cultures, vernacular and everyday life (ATLAS, 2007; Richards, 2003, 2014; Timothy, 2014) as well as personal and familial heritage (Marschall, 2012; Prince, 2022; Timothy, 2011).

Following Timothy (1997, 2011, 2014), heritage tourism takes place at four different levels (global, national, local, and personal), which imply different degrees of attachment between the traveller and the destination, commonly prompting more emotional experiences in the personal and local levels. Personal heritage includes people, places and events relevant for the individual through an individual connection with them.<sup>5</sup> Its resources include tangible and intangible assets, including objects of everyday life, music and poems, elements of the cultural landscape, and family stories (Marschall, 2015). Levels of heritage may overlap with each other, when places of personal heritage can simultaneously be national or world heritage sites, underpinning personal and collective memories (Marschall, 2012; Timothy, 1997, 2011). However, most of the times personal cultural heritage is outside the traditional heritage tourism destinations (Alexander et al., 2016; Basu, 2004).

Personal heritage tourism is the foundation of visits to the ancestral homeland, genealogy tours and on-site family history research, visiting archives and libraries, cemeteries, old houses and farms, schools as well as other places where the ancestors may have been present (Timothy, 1997, 2011). In that regard, roots tourism is a form of personal-heritage based tourism, because it implies the visit to places significantly relevant for the individual's familial, ancestral or ethnic background. In that line, genealogical travel allows people to see the locations, objects, and people behind the names and dates provided by the deskwork of genealogy. The fact of *being there* not only allows the traveller to be in touch with a materiality that cannot be felt through deskwork, but also allows an exploration of information that cannot be traced at home (Longmore, 2010; Santos & Yan, 2010).

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<sup>5</sup> Global level includes sites and monuments globally recognised with international visibility. The national level appeals mostly to citizens of the countries where they are located, usually national pride. Local or regional levels of heritage include the majority of attractions around the world, despite not usually attracting people from very distant locations unless they have a personal connection to the place.

With regard to the ethnicity involved in roots tourism, I follow the contributions made by King (1994), who first defined ethnic reunion as one manifestation of migration-led tourism. For him, *ethnic reunion* is a form of ethnic tourism which is motivated by identification with the similar instead of the search for difference, as the classical definition of ethnic tourism proposes (Smith, 1977). In that line, Fourie and Santana Gallego (2013) posit the importance of the existence of *cultural affinity* between host and guests in those destinations sharing a history of migration. “The shared cultural attribute may refer to several spheres of the tourist's experience: from a familiar language, style of architecture, food or music, to the more banal similarities of skin color or ethnicity” (p. 413). Diasporic identities are not essentialist, neither defined by blood lineages or soil origin, but they must be interpreted in terms of the complex and multiple dynamics in which they are inserted (Hollinshead, 2004; Gilroy, 1997). What underlies this perspective is a postmodern definition of ethnicity, which is considered as a product of social relations and interactions between the sending regions and the settler community (Clifford, 1994; Hall, 1990; Gilroy, 1997).

### **2.2.2 Geographies of genealogy in the roots tourism experience**

Underlying the core of my definition of reverse roots tourism is a critical conceptualization of genealogy (Nash, 2002, 2017). Genealogy is a historical practice in which, under its classical assumptions, the family tree serves as a model for depicting family relations through successive generations. Inquiries into one's genealogy implies addressing relationships that extend from backwards in time to the present, drawing on a range of historical records as primary sources. Critical genealogy follows Deleuze's and Guattari's conceptualization of *rhizome* (2004), which refers to a non-linear, uncontrolled and decentralised network in which a multiplicity of nodes connects with each other. In a rhizomatic structure, there is no clear hierarchy or central point of control, and different elements are connected in multiple ways. Applied to the genealogy realm, rhizomatic thinking suggests that the history of a lineage or family tree cannot be understood as a linear progression from one generation to the next, but rather as a complex network of linkages and relations. From this perspective, genealogy is not simply about tracing one's ancestry or descendants, but about exploring the multiple, intersecting lines of influence that make up a subject's identity and sense of belonging.

Following Nash (2002, 2017), genealogy can prompt rigid, essentialist identities determined by linear blood links, or it can uncover flexible, multi-located identities. In the first case, genealogy reinforces ideas of exclusivity and purity. It is a registration of empirical facts, and the practice of “discovering” and making visible relations that were already there. This has several consequences such as racialised notions of belonging, and subjugation of minority groups. However, genealogy also involves an imaginative exercise, which requires constructing and interpreting narratives about the past. This approach follows Foucault's (1977) conceptualization of genealogy, for whom the pursuit of

descent does not involve the establishment of foundational structures. On the contrary, it disrupts and fragments the presumed unity of what was once deemed consistent. Two *geographical imaginaries* sustain genealogical practices, which refer to ways in which people imagine and understand the social, cultural, personal, and political significance of places. The first one establishes a symmetry between place, culture, and belonging, in a continuous and unbroken line of authenticity and lineage. The second one considers multiple places of origin and the connections among them (Nash, 2017).

Similarly, Ingold (2000) posits that non-western epistemologies have a relational model which offers different forms of genealogical conceptualizations which are not linear. Following this idea, he challenges the classical definition of genealogy as a line of descent. In his model, the shared past of relatedness through blood is replaced by the intertwining of people with shared life stories or following particular places or similar paths. Classical genealogy overlooks complex forms of kinship, which include forms of relatedness that appear from solidarity and exchange, shared residence, friendship networks, mutual support, alliance and co-operation (Strathern & Franklin, 1993). The wideness of genealogical practices has relevant implications for understanding the limits of roots tourism and the experiences that can be considered part of this segment.

The above-mentioned geographical imaginaries play a significant role in ancestral tourism. Despite the importance of these places for genealogy, their significance has often been overlooked by genealogists. However, the movements and connections between these locations are just as crucial as family history and dates themselves (Nash, 2017). Place assumes great significance in roots tourism due to its association with unique and deeply meaningful locations that carry emotional and historical weight. These places are intimately tied to personal heritage, evoking nostalgic, personal, and spiritual forms of tourism (Poria et al., 2003; Timothy, 2014).

In that vein, place attachment theory is useful to understand the connection between people and their ancestral destinations. This theory suggests the existence of an emotional bond between individuals and specific places, which can be influenced by genealogy (such as links to family and places of origin) and experiences of loss (such as those resulting from disasters or migration), among others. In that line, Poria, Butler, and Airey (2003) classified heritage tourism based on the travellers' relationship and identification with the destination.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Smith (2020), acknowledging the individual's agency, classifies the different levels of engagement at heritage sites, ranging from deeply emotional to shallow forms of engagement, and describes the meanings visitors construct and the political consequences of the heritage-making process (2020).

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<sup>6</sup> They distinguish between (1) tourist is not aware of the attributes and significance of heritage, (2) tourist knows the significance but it is not the reason for the visit, (3) the tourist is motivated by the heritage attributes of the site but does not consider them as part as their own heritage, (4) the traveller understands the significance of the site and considers it as part of their own heritage.

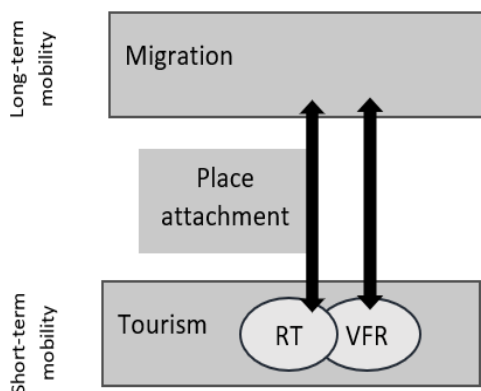
### 2.2.3 Reverse roots tourism: an operational definition

From the foregoing, it can be readily understood why I follow a broad perspective of roots tourism, which works as an umbrella term (Tomczeweska-Popowycz & Vas Taras, 2022), which involves visits to places which allow a connection with the individual's familial, ancestral or ethnic past. This definition allows different types of experiences, such as the search for factual evidence of ancestral heritage (through genealogy tourism), or wider affiliations and narratives, such as ethnic.

A tourism category that should not be confused with roots tourism is *Visiting friends and relatives* (VFR) which refers to travel that is motivated by the desire to visit friends and family members (Ferrari, 2022). Whereas VFR may overlap with roots tourism (Ferrari, et al., 2022; Tomczeweska-Popowycz & Vas Taras, 2022; Yousuf & Backer, 2015), not all forms of VFR tourism involve trips to places where the traveller has an ancestral or ethnic connection, therefore the concepts cannot be treated similarly (Figure 2.1).

**Figure 2.1.**

*Framework to understand the links between roots tourism and visiting friends and relatives' tourism*



*Note.* Adapted from Ferrari, S. (2022, April 6). Impacts of Second Home and Visiting Friends and Relatives Tourism on Migration: A conceptual Framework. *Sustainability*, 14(7), 1-13.

The proposed framework is highly relevant to this study, as it provides an exhaustive classification of types of roots tourism, based on two axes: (1) *personal relatedness* and (2) *emotional response*. The first one refers to the “proximity of the relationship between the traveller and the destination” (p. 251), and oscillates from *ethnicity, ancestors, family, myself* dimensions. Relatedness through ethnicity is the connection that travellers feel with people and places they consider themselves to be part of — regardless of the existence of a blood lineage connection. Ancestral link is the separation by more than two generations, in which the travellers have not met their relatives. Family link is an immediate family connection, whereas ‘myself’ implies travelling to a destination where the tourist is from.

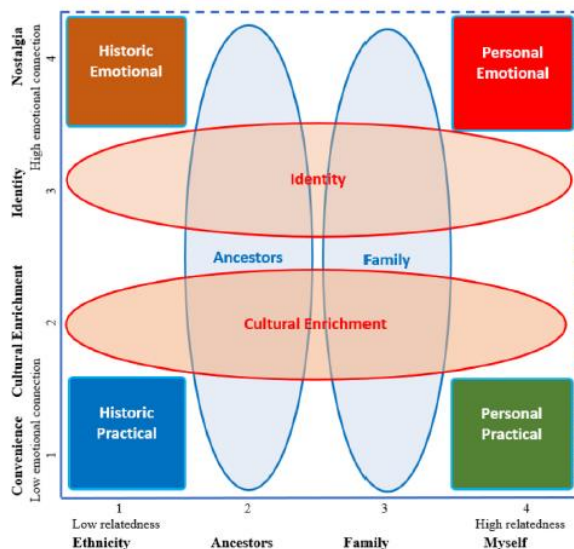


On the other hand, *emotional response* refers to the “degree of emotions that the travel elicits” (p. 251), ranging from *convenience*, *cultural enrichment*, *identity*, and *nostalgia*. Convenience refers to trips that do not involve any emotion with the destination, for example medical tourism. Then, cultural enrichment refers to a group of trips prompted more by curiosity rather than emotional needs, for example when tourists want to learn something about the culture of the country they visit. Identity, on the contrary, implies a personal connection with the destination. Finally, nostalgia raises a very high emotional response, either positive or negative, again, regardless of the level of relatedness.

Each location on the map constitutes a different dimension of roots tourism, which can be aggregated in subsegments (Figure 2.2). First, the *personal emotional* dimension relates to places with the highest personal connection, which involves travelling to places to which the tourist belongs. The next dimension is *historic emotional*, which takes place in destinations with great significance for the tourist’s ethnic group, usually involving strong emotional responses, such as slavery heritage and mass migration. To continue, *personal practical* denotes trips to destinations that the traveller has only chosen for convenience, for personal reasons, such as medical, or purely leisure trips. Finally, *historic practical* refers to trips to destinations to which the traveller is connected by ethnicity, can not trace a connection through relatives or ancestors, and where there is no emotional response.

**Figure 2.2.**

*The conceptual model of the types of roots tourism*



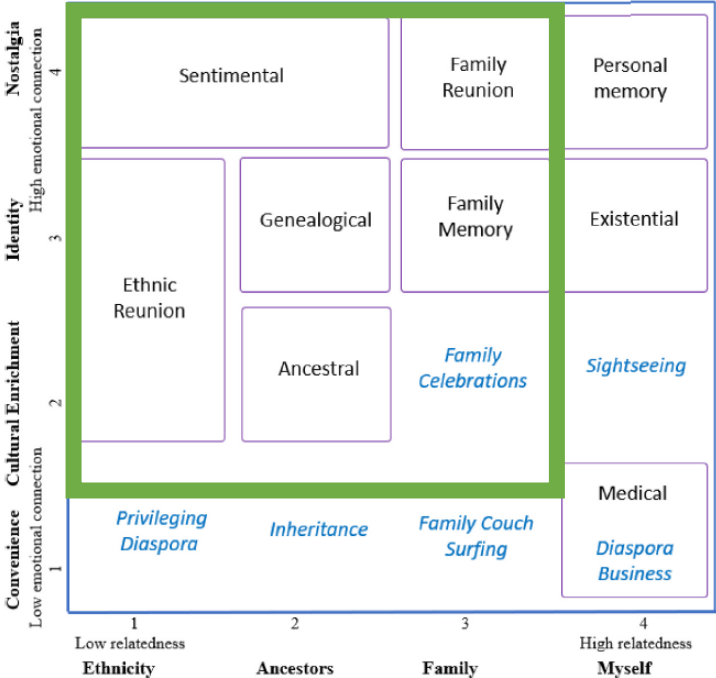
*Note.* From Tomczeweska-Popowycz, N., & Taras, V. (2022, March). The many names of “Roots tourism”: An integrative review of the terminology. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 50, 245-258.

In this framework, the authors identify significant gaps within roots tourism that constitute categories where there is negligible research in the literature. I argue that reverse roots tourism is one of these

segments, and refers to trips to destinations where there is some level of personal relatedness for the tourist (at the family, ancestral, or wider level such as ethnic or national), that creates some level of emotional response. Reverse roots tourism, consequently, involves travelling to a region where one's family or ancestors settled, but also where people that share an ethnic or national background are established. This implies leaving behind categories exclusively based on the individual level (the myself dimension in the above-mentioned framework). Besides, reverse roots tourism excludes the convenience dimension, for which the tourism experience is only used as a utilitarian tool to achieve something, that does not cause any emotional response (Figure 2.3).

**Figure 2.3.**

*Dimensions within reverse roots tourism and exemplary terms within it*



*Note.* Adapted from Tomczeweska-Popowycz, N., & Taras, V. (2022, March). The many names of “Roots tourism”: An integrative review of the terminology. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 50, 245-258.

The contributions on roots tourism *reverse* flows which I mentioned in the literature review are significantly relevant for this study since they have identified specific characteristics of the dynamics of tourism from the homelands to the location of settlement of the ancestors, which can be mapped within roots tourism, as found in the connection between Welsh tourists visiting the Chubut province in Argentina, and the Italians visiting cities in the South of Brazil. However, those studies do not provide an exhaustive definition of reverse roots tourism, and they both focus on rural and small-cities contexts.

Both Savoldi and Berg have identified the role of ethnicity and national belonging as a key element in the reverse roots' tourism dynamics, following the notion of ethnic tourism proposed by King (1994) and adopted by Santana Pinho (2018). According to this concept, the tourist's experience is influenced by a sense of kinship that is perceived by migrants and their descendants, and involve some sort of identification with the destination. This phenomenon corresponds to a form of roots tourism linked to ethnic belonging, which can involve strong emotions despite the generational and temporal distance (Tomczeweska-Popowycz & Vas Taras, 2022). In some cases of roots tourism, such as when the family members do not have track of the specific sites and/or people that refer to their family or personal heritage, the idea of ancestral belonging becomes blurred (Basu, 2007; Li et al., 2020; Santana Pinho, 2018). Compatriots' settlement in another country, contributes to its visitation and stimulation of business links (Dwyer et al., 2014; King, 1994; Seetaram, 2012). In that line, Dwyer et al. (2014) pointed out that "some non-VFR tourists may be induced to explore countries with which they have only an indirect familiarity because of the presence of a migrant community" (p. 139).

#### **2.2.4 Italian Immigration and Italian tourism in Argentina**

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, Italy faced a period of mass migration in which one in four Italians moved to another country, which led to the formation of significant Italian communities in the host countries and the rise of cultural, political, economic and diplomatic connections with Italy (Del Boca & Venturini, 2005). The emerging National State was highly proactive in encouraging immigration to populate the continent and to meet shortages of labour, but also to modify the composition of the population. Promotion of immigration was one of the three main pillars of the Nation State, in conjunction with the universal and mandatory education and modernization of the economy (Germani, 1966; Romero, 2012).

Argentina received the largest number of Italian immigrants during the mass migration era, only after the United States (Klein & Seibert, 1981). In fact, between the 1830s and the end of the 1950s, 3.500.000 Italians arrived in Argentina, the country with the highest Italian immigration in proportion to the resident population (Devoto, 2001). For more than six decades the Italians represented around 70% of the adult residents in Buenos Aires (Germani, 1966). Immigrants arrived from almost every region of Italy, from the north in the nineteenth century and from the south in the twentieth century (Dall'Agnola & Bevilacqua, 2010), being cases of *labour diasporas* (Cohen, 2008).<sup>7</sup> Argentina is the country with more Italians residing abroad, with a total of 903.081 citizens (Ministerio dell'Interno,

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<sup>7</sup> It is important to refer to multiple diasporas instead of one, since most of the Italian immigration in Argentina had affiliations with their region of origin but not with an "Italian nation", thus they kept the singularities from their specific homelands (Gabaccia, 2000; Savoldi, 1998; Zanini, 2004).

2022).<sup>8</sup> The relation between the presence of Italians and outbound tourism (Etzo et al., 2014) is coincident with the relevance of Italian tourism in Argentina. The weight of the Italian market is significant (Mintel, 2007), considering that in 2019 Italians represented the fourth most important nationality of international tourists arriving in Argentina from outside the region. Regional tourists (from Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay) constitute 60% of the arrivals; followed by the United States (6%), Spain (3%), Italy (2%) and France (2%) (Argentina.gob, 2019). More than 80% of Italian outbound tourism is directed to European destinations. South America receives 2%, Argentina being the second most chosen destination in the region, after Brazil. If we consider Latin America, Argentina ranks fourth, after Brazil, Mexico and Cuba (GAET, 2015; p. 8). With regard to the tourists' motivations, following the most available recent report, the main reason for Italian tourists to Argentina was visiting families and friends (43%) (GAET, 2015; p. 2). This broad category does not delve into differences within this segment (Muñoz, et al., 2017), increasing the importance of researching the migration-tourism nexus.

### **2.2.5 Italianity as social imaginary**

As mentioned in the literature review, migration-led tourism analysis on roots tourism tends to focus on how social imaginaries are built and shaped (Basu, 2005, 2007; Berg, 2018a, 2018b; Leite, 2005). In the study of Italian reverse roots tourism in Argentina, it is fundamental to consider the linkages between nationhood and tourism, a significant element in tourism and migration studies (Palmer, 1999; Park Hyung Yu, 2010). Following Magnani (2007), I argue that in the Argentinian case, the foundational myth of the European legacy and influence in the construction of the nation is highly relevant to the understanding of reverse roots tourism by Italians to Argentina. Drawing on Anderson's concept of Imagined Communities (1993), many studies have focused on the role of tourism in the construction and support of national identities (Palmer, 1999; Pretes, 2003; Powers, 2011; Smith, 2006; Walsh, 1992). For Anderson, the nation is an imagined community, whose *imagined* character comes from the fact that members of any nation will never have the chance to meet each other, but in each of them “lives the image of their communion” (p. 6). What makes this connection possible is the imagination, which allows a sense of communion, as a spiritual principle of union (Renan, 2010). Museums, with censuses and maps, are cultural artifacts have a key role in this imaginative process, since they are vehicles for the representation of nations in themselves (Anderson, 1993). The idea of

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<sup>8</sup> As of December, 2021, Argentina registered the highest number of persons registered in the *Anagrafe degli italiani residenti all'estero* [Registry of Italians Abroad], which includes Italian descendants that get citizenship. It is important to consider that the economic crisis influenced the decision of Italian descendants to get citizenship (Fondazione Migrantes, 2022).

imagined community refers to a temporal simultaneity, which links past and present; and invokes shared collective memories (Halbwachs, 1992; Smith, 2006).

Salazar (2012) has studied the relationship between tourism and the creation and distribution of social imaginaries, defined “as socially transmitted representational assemblages that interact with people's personal imaginings and are used as meaning-making and world-shaping devices” (p. 864). Social imaginaries are real networks of social practices, that become tangible in institutions such as museums, social practices, media and cultural productions. In the literature review, I mentioned how these social imaginaries usually influence roots tourism, however, the role of these social imaginaries in their reverse forms, has not been explored. In that regard, I argue that Italianity operates as a powerful social imaginary that plays a central role in Italian outbound tourism towards Argentina. Following De Menna (2011) it is possible to speak about a collective and broad dimension of Italianity influencing Argentinian culture, reflected not only in tangible but also in intangible culture, such as ways to “live and make the city” (p. 33), in line with definitions of *associative landscapes* and *landscapes of ideas*. Following this argument, Italianity can be traced in the linguistic landscape (Calvi et al., 2021; Patat, 2011), architecture (De Menna, 2011; Franzina, 2011), gastronomy (Falcón, 2014), street art known as *fileteado* (Iarossi, 2018), music (Azzi, 1996), religion (Dall'Agnola & Bevilacqua, 2010), and political historical influences (Di Tella, 2011). Similarly, Marina Gabrieli, a specialist in Italian Argentinian roots tourism, argues that Italian culture is everywhere and not confined to a specific neighborhood in Buenos Aires (Giudice, 2019) and Devoto (2001) sustains that “almost everything” in Argentina can be connected to Italian legacy (p. 25). I argue that Italian-Argentinian identity was built as a result of a *hybridisation of cultures* through which immigrants and their descendants developed a diasporic identity marked by their mobilities (Bhabha, 2004; Canclini, 1995)

In that regard, Teti (2022) analyses the social and cultural implications of mass emigration in Italy. With an emphasis on those that “remain” in the homeland, his concept of *restanza* is useful in understanding the fracture that takes place in towns that have suffered from emigration. Restanza refers to “il viaggio da fermo di chi resta, e, contemporaneamente, sul radicamento archetipico ad un luogo di chi parte” [the steady journey of those who stay, and, at the same time, on the archetypal rootedness to a place of those who leave] (Teti, 2022, p. 168). Those that remain also feel dislocated and deterritorialised, because the place that suffers the fracture, will never be the same it was. Imagination recreates the homeland in the minds of the migrants, and also the land of settlement becomes an imaginary place filled with desire, hope, and the dreams of those that have not migrated (Teti, 2019). Following Teti (2022) this sense of loss has favored the museification of migrant memories, especially after the 1990s. Nowadays, almost all Italian regions have a museum of emigration, to preserve migrants' memories and give testimony of a phenomenon relevant for the local identity and history (Cicco & Rodríguez, 2015; Dragoni, 2015).

Immigrants take a cultural baggage that is recreated in the new land, creating a *paese doppio* [duplicated town] that is born from the fracture with the homeland and recreates its traditions, festivities, food, and music (Sommaro, 2022a; Teti, 1989). Following Teti, roots are mobile, meaning that migrants settle new roots in a *comunità derivata* [derived community] (Teti, 2017, p. 8). This community is barely known by those that remained, but has the potentiality to become a place of meeting and exchange, to create new relations and pacification (Sommaro, 2022b, p. 134).

## **2.3 Methodology**

### **2.3.1 Research design and sampling**

I follow a qualitative design to capture the nuanced perspectives of subjects involved in reverse roots tourism, allowing in-depth, holistic understandings of reverse roots tourism development. Qualitative methods are particularly well-suited for this because they capture the details of human experiences and interactions within a particular context (Flick, 2022; Patton, 2015). In that sense, I examine how individuals' actions and beliefs sculpt the reverse roots tourism practices. Exploring their tourists' experiences, motivations, level of relatedness with the destination and emotional responses, will be the foundation for providing a definition of the phenomenon, through the lens of social constructivism. This framework is notably relevant because it recognises the importance of perceptions and experiences associated to individuals' activities and their roles in collective constructions shaping social life (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Flick, 2004).

The research design includes cross-methods and data triangulation, which increase the understanding of the research topic (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007; Campbell et al., 2020; Denzin, 1989; Flick, 2018; Patton, 1999). Data triangulation is based on the assumption that diverse data pools allow extensive knowledge of a topic, increasing the validity and credibility of the research, due to corroboration of findings from different sources. This research includes the triangulation of data from different persons (tourists and stakeholders) and locations (the National Immigration Museum, Italian associations in Argentina, emigration museums in Italy, and tour operators).

Methods triangulation diminishes the drawbacks of applying one single method. Through online research, observations, analysis of documents, and semi-structured interviews, I constructed a wide range of verbal, and non-verbal data, with both primary and secondary sources. Triangulation allowed me to combine different methods to address the same issue from different levels -personal and institutional- and perspectives -tourists and stakeholders. Therefore, it served not only to obtain a wide range of data but also to go beyond the results from one method and get an integrated view.

### 2.3.2 Data collection and analysis

The core criteria for achieving quality in qualitative design aim to allow inter-subjective comprehensibility of the research process, through rigorous documentation that allows readers to know and follow each step.<sup>9</sup> Firstly, I gathered data from the qualitative systematic literature review and online research to summarise the findings of previous studies and identify trends, literature gaps and possible research paths. Online research was initially done to map the current development of reverse roots tourism in Argentina. Despite the results being rather limited, this provided me with useful insights into the cultural links between Argentina and Italy and the relevance of the Italian tourism segment.

To continue, I started my fieldwork at the National Immigration Museum in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Its symbolic relevance, and its practical genealogical function, as I will explain in the next chapter, make the National Immigration Museum the most appropriate place for conducting my fieldwork. Fieldwork allowed me to make detailed descriptions of the issue being studied at the time and place the phenomenon occurs (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007; Patton, 2015). I stepped into the museum and asked for information at the reception desk, where Bautista and Paula assist visitors that request general or genealogical information. Conversations are a major research technique within qualitative research; they are usually informal and not pre-arranged (Bergmann, 2004; Swain & King, 2022). My entry to the field quickly served to identify the presence of foreign tourists in the Immigration Museum and the relevance of the Italian segment.

I started my observations following an inductive approach which allowed me to perceive the dynamics taking place in the Museum and notice whatever emerged in the situation. I included observations in two physical spaces: the main hall, where the receptionists provide information about the immigration records to those who ask; and the exhibitions, during guided visits and without them. As part of my observations, I visited the exhibitions four times and took three guided tours. One was a regular group tour with museum permanent staff, and the rest were with the Italian groups. My visits to the museum revealed some patterns and dimensions of interest, which made me adopt a more deductive approach in my later visits to the field. Thus, I narrowed my focus and adopted a *selective observation* (Spradley, 1980), paying attention to interactions among Italian tourists and how they engage with the exhibitions, including their reactions and expressions. Besides, I observed how the information is presented and the narratives of migration, the place given to Italian immigration, its representation and its connection to the present concerning Italianity in Argentina.

During my observations, I employed multiple and overlapping data collection strategies, in full

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<sup>9</sup> This includes documentation of the researcher's previous understandings, expectations, justification for the methods used, data-collection contextualization, as well as documentation of information sources and analysis procedures (Steinke, 2004).

engagement with the setting, including an analysis of the museum visitors' book, a significant element that crystallises their perspectives when engaging with heritage (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007). Besides, my observations included informal conversations with three tour guides from the Italian groups, two guides -permanent staff- at the museum, two receptionists at the main desk, and several tourists. This allowed the emergence of “incidental ethnographic encounters” (Pinsky, 2015, p. 281) along with unplanned data and topics.<sup>10</sup> Thus, in some circumstances, not recording conversations was the best possible approach and the only way to obtain data (Rutakumwa, et al., 2020, Swain & King, 2022). I started my observations as a complete observer but, to get a full understanding of the interactions, I became a participant observer, assuming an overt role with full disclosure.<sup>11</sup> This not only allowed me to get immersed in conversations, obtaining rich, opportune, and diverse data that was not easily accessible, but also allowed me to identify significant cases for developing interviews afterwards.

I also undertook several in-depth semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A), which enabled me to delve into particular subjects while simultaneously offering participants the opportunity to freely articulate their perspectives and viewpoints (Flick, 2022; Galletta, 2013). At the museum, I conducted an interview with Bautista, who helps visitors engaging in genealogical research in the museum, and with Marcelo Huernos, with a vast trajectory researching Italian migration in Argentina<sup>12</sup>. This enabled me to create a thematic structure on reverse roots tourism, collect contextual information complementing insights from other methods, prepare the questionnaires, and identify cases to interview following a *snowball criterion* (Bogner & Menz, 2009; Patton, 2015). I also conducted two interviews with the travel agencies' representatives, three tour guides, Italian associations' representatives, and several tourists. Data triangulation with other institutions served as a method to increase the understanding of the phenomenon, drive more credible findings, and find more subjects for my interviews. Roots tourism usually involves prior communications between potential tourists and the destination, influencing tourists' expectations and experience (Alexander et al., 2016). Through online search, I could not identify any travel agency offering visits to the museum. However, diasporic associations play an important role in roots tourism promotion keeping cultural ties between them (Berg, 2018b; Li et al., 2019). For these reasons, I contacted Italian-Argentinian associations<sup>13</sup> in

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<sup>10</sup> Informal conversations provide a natural environment not interrupted by turning on the audio recorder and avoiding people feeling wary of being recorded (Swain & King, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> The attempt to avoid influencing the participants' behaviours constricted the emergence and interpretation of the data, since it doesn't enable getting to know the internal perspective from the field (Flick, 2022).

<sup>12</sup> Experts have technical and interpretative knowledge in their sphere of activity (Bogner & Menz, 2009), which allowed me to explore the stakeholders' perspectives and complement the information gathered during observations.

<sup>13</sup> Italian associations in Argentina have had a fundamental role in education, assistance, health service, and general support, which had no parallels in other countries taking into account the number of members and their social capital contribution (Bernasconi, 2018, p. 2).



the country. First, I sent emails in which I introduced myself, explained the topic of my research, and asked questions (1) to identify Italian tourists doing genealogy research, (2) to know if the association currently undertakes activities involving Italian tourists, (3) to explore their potential interest in tourism. Those that would offer relevant information because they had some kind of communication with Italian tourists were asked to conduct further conversations and/or interviews. My communications with Italian associations were a convenient way to explore some aspects of reverse roots tourism, especially with regard to those Italians with ethnic interests visiting Italian associations in Argentina; however, they were very limited in informing me about Italians undertaking specific genealogical endeavours.

My ethnographic work at the museum and my communications with Italian associations led me to identify Italian tourists to interview. Purposive sampling is the gold standard in qualitative research (Coyne, 1997; Patton, 2015), and it allowed me to explore diverse manifestations within reverse roots tourism. For constructing the sample, I selected significant cases depending on specific features of the individuals that made them relevant for the study. Thus, I identified typical cases, cases that offered a maximal variation, and cases that showed notions of kinship with Argentina or genealogical research interest. The interview flexible guides were exploratory and sought to reveal the characteristics of Italian tourists by enquiring about aspects of their experience, the level of attachment perceived, the places visited whether the visit included genealogy research or not, the level of emotions involved, the aspects that motivated the visit, and the personal relatedness with the country, in relation with emigration antecedents in their families. In my interviews I left room for spontaneous, personal stories to emerge, combining both semi-structured interviews with narratives, and I paid attention to non-verbal data, such as gestures, silences, and facial expressions. Most of these interviews took place online, because (1) most of the tourists at the museum were on a planned itinerary so they didn't have enough time for an in-person meeting, (2) previous tourists were no longer in Buenos Aires.

The analysis aims to explore the reverse roots tourism phenomenon in Argentina, by examining the subjective experiences of the tourists involved, identifying similarities and differences within this group, and the current dynamics and potentialities of this segment. Data analysis is done in an integrative cyclical process that includes data collection, interpretation, analysis, further data collection, codification and comparison between categories that emerged from the material.

Analysis in ethnography is linked to Grounded Theory since concepts and relations within them emerge from the data during the research (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007, p. 158; Flick, 2022). However, while Grounded Theory aims at generating theory with well-established categories and properties on the observed phenomenon (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 2017), my exploratory objectives are better suited to be accomplished with ethnographic codification. Field notes, interview recordings and transcripts (Appendix C), as well as photographs, were used to record

data. As a first step in the analysis, I allocated the raw material from conversations and interviews to different codes, and then selected, labelled and compared data on selective topics. Later, I interpreted and analysed the data in more specific codes. I focus on thematic coding to identify main themes, magnitude coding to analyse intensities relevant to my research, such as emotional engagement and personal relatedness; difference, to study diverse ways in which the phenomenon takes place; frequency, to measure the significance of different manifestations of reverse roots tourism; correspondence, to study relations with other activities.

### **2.3.3 Scope and limitations**

Ethnography presents flexibility in ways of collecting and analysing data, so the methods hold the risk of methodological arbitrariness (Flick, 2022). To prevent this, I have striven to reflect on my activity to be aware of the limitations of my study, critically examining my activity during the research process.<sup>14</sup>

There have been time constraints due to the seasonality of international tourism flows to Argentina. Informants at the museum explained to me that the arrival of international tourists to the museum corresponds to the flows identified for international tourism in Argentina, (high peak in the Southern-hemisphere Summer). This meant that the data-collection period was tightened. Besides, tour guides hardly ever pre-book a visit. Since it was not possible to reach the agencies by email, it was difficult to plan my visits to the museum beforehand. With regards to document analysis during my fieldwork, the completion of the visitors' book is rarely done. The book remains at the last section of the reception desk, and most visitors ignore its presence. Despite having requested all the records, I could only access the book for the visits from 2019 to 2023.

With regard to methodological limitations, triangulation allowed me to compensate for each method's disadvantages. Two main limitations for observations are (1) Hawthorne Effect or reaction to observation (the observed may change their behaviour because there are being observed), and (2) observer bias (Oswald, et al., 2014; Patton, 2015). With regard to the first one, this was balanced with unobtrusive observations, online ethnography, interviews, and archival inquiry into the visitors' book at the Immigration Museum. An attempt was made to diminish the second one by following a protocol for observations but also exercising reflectivity, being aware of the emergence of un-planned situations. Thus, I followed systematic approaches to sampling, taking field notes, and data collection, which are clearly specified in the previous section. However, the researcher always enters the field with sensitising concepts that guide the observations and shape the conceptual framework (Denzin, 1978). Besides, non-participant observation lacks the ability to get an understanding of why people

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<sup>14</sup> Reflexivity is a necessary step that enables researchers to reflect on their role, comprising not only the observation of the research subject but on the observation itself, recognising the limitations of emerging knowledge (Bourdieu, 2003, Guillemin & Guilan, 2004).

act in the way observed (Spradley, 1980), so becoming a participant allowed me to get a better comprehension of their experiences and reduced observer bias. As for informal conversations, sometimes their spontaneous nature didn't allow me to take notes. To prevent findings being contaminated by unconsciously mis-remembering particular words, main caveat of this technique (Spradley, 1979; Swain & King, 2022), I took notes immediately after finishing them. However, most of the times information from informal conversations aimed at understanding ideas, concepts, and feelings rather than making literal quotations.<sup>15</sup> Like conversations and other forms of data that emerge from talks, interviews rely on the individuals' ability to verbalise. When undertaking interviews, participants may not have a precise recall of past events or may be reluctant to share sensitive personal stories (Flick, 2022). The first issue was approached by making more than one question to address the same topic, and the second one was managed by establishing a relationship based on trust.

Besides, no significant cultural barriers were identified with the participants. The majority of the interviews were pre-arranged and scheduled according to the interviewee's preferences, mostly online. As a communication form mediated through a technological device, online interviews made it more difficult to analyse non-verbal elements of communication (Hine 2017; Spradley 1979). Most of the interviews and conversations with Italian tourists were conducted in Italian. Despite the researcher's intermediate competence in this language, it is possible that certain nuances and subtleties may have been missed or misinterpreted during the data collection and analysis process.

Finally, I must acknowledge the scope and impact limitations of this research, due to its strong regional and population focus. This research only delves into the specific segment of Italian tourists and does so from a qualitative approach that does not aim at providing generalisations or statistical insights. In that regard, the sample is very strict and findings cannot be extrapolated to all Italian tourists. On the other hand, during my fieldwork I observed tourists from a wide range of countries, such as Brazilians, Spaniards, Slovenians, Polish, French, Germans, English, and Venezuelans. Argentina's past and present immigration make reverse roots tourism a highly relevant phenomenon that deserves to be further studied taking into account the particularities of the international relations and cultural specificities of different nationalities.

#### **2.3.4 Ethics**

This study relies heavily on the participation of human subjects, thus ethical issues are strictly considered throughout the research process, following the Code of Ethical Conduct in Research (ISCTE, 2016). Ethnographic research involves many face-to-face ethical issues which require safeguarding

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<sup>15</sup> When conversations are not recorded, the academic community has to accept the honesty of the researcher on the basis of trust (Swain & King, 2022).

informants' rights, interests and sensitivities, and examining the implications of questions, attitudes, and behaviours (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007; Spradley, 1980).

I distinguish between procedural ethics and micro-ethics, which guide the practice in the fieldwork with spontaneous decisions where explicit participant consent is not possible. Special attention was paid to reflectivity on those *ethically important moments* — which implies identifying the ethics of the ordinary, everyday research practice (Guillemin & Guilan, 2004; Swain & King, 2022). Therefore, I disclosed my identity as a researcher and the objectives of my study in all the conversations I kept, and all participants engaged voluntarily. For interviews, explicit written and oral consent was asked for recording the interviews, and confidentiality was guaranteed for all participants. For those cases in which there might be a possibility of being identified because of their institutional role, signed consent was asked for to include their names and their associations' name. Also, no risk or harm of any type was induced to the participants.

This section has presented a comprehensive account of the theoretical foundations and the methodology employed in this research. Furthermore, I have described the limitations and drawbacks of each method, and I have thoroughly discussed ethical principles and explained how the research has been conducted responsibly and ethically. In the upcoming chapter, I will present and examine the data collected from different sources and methods, to delve into the experience of Italian reverse roots tourism in Argentina.

### 3 Analysis of Italian reverse roots tourism in Argentina

#### 3.1 The National Immigration Museum: towards the immigrants' footsteps

As I stepped into the National Immigration Museum in Buenos Aires, I felt like I was travelling through time. A cobbled street led me to the entrance of the magnificent building, with more than a hundred years of history. Just outside the main entrance was a vast black and white photograph of immigrants walking down the street I was crossing (Figure 3.1). They were carrying their suitcases in the few metres that separated the landing pier and the old Immigrants' Hotel, which functioned between 1911 and 1953 in the Retiro neighbourhood in Buenos Aires.

**Figure 3.1.**

*Entrance to the National Immigration Museum*



*Note.* Picture of the arrival of the immigrants walking entering the immigrants hotel. Image taken by the author.

Since the 1850s, before the formation of the Argentinian state, immigration was seen not only as an essential factor in the country's economic growth, but also as a means of civilising and introducing habits of work, order, and education (Alberdi, 2017; Germani, 1966). During the period of mass-migration (1880-1930), Argentina was the second largest destination for immigrants after the United States, with more than 6.6 million immigrants arriving between 1850 and 1930 (Klein, 1981). Despite efforts to attract northern European settlers, the overwhelming majority of arrivals came from the regions of present-day Italy, followed by Spain (Devoto, 2001). To a lesser extent, immigrants also arrived from other European countries and the Ottoman Empire (Wolf, 2016).

Created by resolution in 1985, the museum was erected in the building of the former Immigrants Hotel, which hosted foreigners arriving in Argentina through the port of Buenos Aires between 1911 and 1953 (Di Liscia, 2018). The hotel was part of the government's open-door policy, in which the Immigration and Colonization Act played a crucial role, offering newcomers assistance in finding a job,

free transport to their final destination, and a free five-day stay at the hotel (Law n° 817, 1876). The building, designed by Italian architects, responded to the practical need to organise the significant number of arrivals, as previous migration facilities were not large enough (Swiderski & Farjat, 2000). Not only its name as “hotel” instead of “asylum”, but also its magnificent structure, conveyed a message of grandeur to the more than one million people who were accommodated in the hotel.<sup>16</sup>

Sometimes referred to as “the first home for many Italians in Buenos Aires” (Giudice, 2018), the building has followed a long journey through the heritage-making process, starting with its declaration as a museum, and the creation of an archive and library of migration in 1985 (Ministerio del Interior, 1985). This was deemed a recognition of the immigrants that shaped Argentinian identity (Di Liscia, 2018; Wolf, 2016). In 1990, it was declared a National Historic Monument due to its architectonic structure and crucial function during mass migration (Presidencia de la Nación, 1990). However, it was not open continuously until 2013, when it was taken over by the Tres de Febrero University (Wolf, 2016), a public national university. The museum, which is free to visit, opens from Tuesday to Sunday, from 11 am to 6 pm, all year round except in January, which coincides with the University holidays. The new administration restored the building, considered an emblematic place for the social memory of the country, making up cultural and historical tourism in Buenos Aires (MUNTREF, 2023). In an attempt to preserve the characteristics of the building, transit spaces such as corridors and staircases, as well as the third floor, have been integrally restored respecting the materials and the original configuration, evoking the memory of the site, as announced on the museum website (MUNTREF, 2023a). The third floor preserves its original spatial distribution: a large corridor leads visitors to a central area with two long pools with their water spillways on the side walls. The memory of the site recalls what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) defines as an in-situ museum display, which gives the visitor the feeling of being in the Immigrants Hotel as it once was.

The restoration of the museum took place in a global context of the revitalisation of migration heritage since the end of the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup> The creation of immigration museums in recent years exemplifies a growing awareness of the importance of immigrants in shaping national identities (Dragoni, 2015; Lopes, 2011; Maddern, 2004). These museums recognise the contributions of migrants and their diversity to the host societies, and attempt to counter stereotypes about migration. These museums therefore have a crucial political and social role, as places for dialogue between different cultures and generations (UNESCO-IOM, 2006).

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<sup>16</sup> The 22-meters-high building was one of the first in the country to be made of reinforced concrete, the walls were covered with European mosaics and the stairs were made of Carrara marble. The hotel, with a capacity for 3,000 guests, was part of a complex that included a hospital, an employment agency, a post office, and an administrative building (Lopes, 2011; MUNTREF, 2023a).

<sup>17</sup> For instance, migration museums in Ellis Island (1990), Sao Paulo (1993), Adelaide (1986), and Melbourne (1998). For a deeper review of migration museums, see Dragoni (2015) and Cicco and Rodríguez (2015).

### 3.1.1 Relevance of the National Immigration Museum

The National Immigration Museum was the best location to conduct my ethnographic fieldwork due to (1) its social and symbolic significance and (2) its socially recognised archival function. First, the museum maintains the collective founding memory of an Argentine nation characterised by its immigration history and its influences on the national culture (Magnani, 2007). Transit spaces that functioned as points of departure or entry, such as ports, immigration depots and customs houses, become representative heritage sites implicated in the diasporic episodes (Timothy & Cole, 2004). Moreover, they usually acquire a ritual function once their practical use is abandoned (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1992) —as in the case of the Immigrants Hotel. No other place could serve as a site for the museum with the same symbolic significance and ritual function as creator and defender of the collective memory of the emerging national state (Lopes, 2011; Magnani, 2007). Secondly, the National Immigration Museum provides genealogical information based on the most complete database of immigrants who arrived in Argentina through the Port of Buenos Aires between 1882 and 1960. Visitors can consult the records and receive a printed certificate with an immigrant's details.<sup>18</sup>

During my fieldwork, I noticed how the heritage-making process at the National Immigration Museum, gave this site “a second life” as heritage, paying attention to how the displays not only *show* but also *do*, following Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998). In that sense, the creation of the museum and its designation as national monument, are significant pillars in the reproduction of an imagined community in which European immigrants, predominantly Italians, were a founding, vital part of Argentinian society. The museum exhibitions, tours, and genealogical research evoke personal, family and national memories that mobilise Italian tourists who feel part of that history.

In the following section, I will explore how Italian tourists' experiences at the museum fit into Tomczeweska-Popowycz & Taras' framework for roots tourism (2022), considering its dimensions of personal relatedness and emotional responses. Tourists feel identified and connected with the history of the constitution of the national state, based on the personal, familiar, or national stories, that they encounter at the museum. Consequently, the museum is a prime venue for engaging in reverse roots tourism. This is achieved by means of its exhibitions, which foster a sense of affiliation among Italian visitors, as well as through genealogical investigations, as elucidated in the subsequent discussion.

### 3.1.2 The Italian tourists' experience at the museum

Upon entering the museum, visitors will find a bookshop and souvenir shop, the reception desk, and a small rest area with a coffee shop. The bookshop offers a wide variety of books on Argentine history,

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<sup>18</sup> The certificate includes date of birth, nationality, age, sex, marital status, religion, occupation, port of departure, ship, and date of arrival. The records are hosted in the Centro de Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos website [Center for Latin American Migration Studies], which can be accessed online at <https://cemla.com/buscador/>

migration, cultural diversity, and other titles published by the Universidad Tres de Febrero. At the main desk, which is supported on ancient suitcases, two employees, Bautista and Paula, provide information and help with genealogical research using the digitised records of arrivals at the port of Buenos Aires between 1882 and 1960. During my first conversations with them, they informed me about the influx of foreign visitors to the museum. They mentioned that the number of foreign visitors is significantly lower than that of local ones, but since the museum does not maintain any records of visits by nationality, this information was unfortunately unavailable. However, they affirmed that tourists of various nationalities visit the museum, the majority of whom are Italians (as I could also notice from my observations), especially during the summer season.

On my first visit to the museum, I read the visitors' book. The Italian tourists' comments highlight that the experience is very emotional and linked to personal, familial and ethnic backgrounds. In this respect, one visitor commented that it was "Un'esperienza commovente entrare qui, su i passi di dei miei antenati" [A moving experience to enter here, into the footsteps of my ancestors] (Alberto, Udine, July 2022). Similarly, another wrote that the museum is "Un museo molto toccante, soprattutto per quelli come me che hanno lasciato la propria terra" [A very touching museum, especially for those who, like me, have left their homeland] (illegible name, December, 2022).

At the museum, I encountered tourists travelling on their own and others taken by tour agencies. Among the first ones, the majority were either in pairs or in small groups, predominantly individuals aged 60 years and above. Some mentioned that the museum was not recommended in any tourism guide, but they had heard about it through conversations with friends or other travellers (Mateo, personal communication, 7 February, 2023). On the other hand, there were Italian tourists brought by travel agencies. During my observations and conversations with tour guides, I noticed that they are predominantly retired people, accompanied by their partners.

In our first conversation, Bautista and Paula explained that the only travel agencies that organise visits to the museum take Italians (B. Bianco, personal communication, February 1, 2023). I had the opportunity to have several conversations with the agencies' guides at the museum, and interview some of them. I also interviewed an Italian tourism consultant that works for an Italian agency, that defines itself as a responsible tourism agency (S. Bini, personal communication, March 22, 2023). I also interviewed the coordinator of an Argentinian receptive agency, that works with tourists from Latin America, Spain, Italy and Portugal, but only includes the visit to the museum for Italians, as it is more appealing to them (S. Kumar, April 12, 2023). For both agencies, the inclusion of the museum in their itineraries, which only takes place during the summer season, responds to an interest in showing Italian



tourists Argentinian history and to provide a meaningful experience that connects them to their country and family past.<sup>19</sup>

### **3.1.2.1 Connecting to the past through the museum's exhibitions**

For those who do not walk up the well-preserved tiled stairs, a crystal-clear elevator, offering unique views of the river and the city, takes visitors to the third floor, where the permanent exhibition is located. It is called *Para todos los hombres del Mundo* [For all the men of the world], and consists of three axes, which also organise the guided tours: the journey, the arrival at the Immigrants Hotel, and the insertion and legacy in society (MUNTREF, 2023b). The first element visitors encounter when entering the exhibition is a huge timeline of the most remarkable milestones in Argentine migratory history. In front of it there is a fragment of the preamble to the National Constitution (1853), which says: “[...] promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves, to our posterity, and to all men of the world who wish to dwell on Argentine soil”. The text is surrounded by the names of many nationalities. Emily, one of the museums’ official guides, begins the tour by explaining the proactive role of the national state in “populating” the lands and providing a labour force. Then, she highlights the promises and benefits for immigrants arriving in the country, as outlined in the Immigration and Colonization Act (1876). The journey is described as an arduous long voyage in an overcrowded ship, with poor hygiene conditions and short of supplies.

The exhibition displays antique suitcases, advertisements of the ships that offered passage to Argentina, records of arrivals, postcards, letters, certificates of good health and criminal records (Appendix B). These objects, detached from the place they were meant to be, are exhibited according to relationships that make sense in the museum's narrative, with texts that help the visitors understand the immigrant experience, constituting an *in-context exhibition* (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). The *museum effect*, a musealised way of seeing, makes objects acquire a new nature, that transforms them into something worth observing (Alpers, 1991). In my observations, I could notice how the exhibition quickly triggered emotional responses of cultural enrichment, identification and nostalgia. For some tourists, without a family history of migration, the museum was only a form of cultural enrichment, to learn about Argentine history (Mateo, personal communication, February 7, 2023).

Notions of familiarity and identification emerged, as some tourists commented on relatives who had migrated to Argentina, such as one that mentioned that her uncle migrated to work in Patagonia. Similarly, in an interview, a tour guide mentioned that:

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<sup>19</sup> As one guide explained: “Uno les cuenta de la inmigración y ven el lugar donde llegaban sus antepasados, muchos de los que nos visitan tienen o tuvieron parientes que llegaron acá. Les gusta mucho la idea de buscar el barco” [One tells them about immigration and they see the place where their ancestors arrived, many of those who visit us have or had relatives who came here. They like a lot the idea of looking for the boat] (S. Kumar, personal communication, April 12, 2023).

Cuando vemos las salas ven las publicidades de los barcos, los vapores, empiezan a contar que en sus casas también había estas publicidades. Ellos tenían sus tíos o abuelos que han venido. Te cuentan que un tío ha venido en el *Mafalda*, y empiezan entre ellos a conectar y por ahí se sienten familiares [When we see the rooms, they see the advertisements of the ships, the steamers, they start to say that in their homes there were also these advertisements. They had their uncles or grandfathers who had come. They tell you that an uncle came on the Mafalda, and they begin to connect with each other, and maybe they feel familiar] (G. Baldo, personal conversation, March 28, 2023)

These are some examples of how the visit to the museum resonates in the memories of Italians, thanks to the intersection of their family and national history, with Argentine identity. In that regard, certain sections of the exhibition elicit intense emotional responses. Beyond cultural enrichment and identification, the visit also brought feelings of nostalgia and solidarity, as this tourist explained to me:

Le foto, i documenti con l'età, il luogo di nascita, queste persone non conoscevano il posto [...]. Il viaggio è stato una cosa molto dura e lunga, in condizioni non facili. Se ci pensi, piangi perché vedi che le persone erano disperate, hanno lasciato la loro vita per trovare la speranza [The photographs, the documents with the age, the place of birth, these people didn't know the place (...). The journey was very hard and long, in not easy conditions. If you think about it, you cry because you see that people were desperate, they left their lives to find hope] (M. Pederzoli, personal communication, March 26, 2023)

The area that recreates the hotel's original rooms, immediately attracts the tourists' attention and prompts feelings of nostalgia. The bunk beds at the centre of the exhibition are exactly as the rooms used to be, while the guide emphasises the realness of the display (Figure 3.2).

**Figure 3.2.**

*Recreation of the original rooms at the National Immigration Museum*



*Note.* Tour guide explaining the routine at the Immigrants hotel. Image taken by the author.

This constitutes an *in-situ exhibition*, recreating a natural environment that produces mimetic evocations of the past (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). As one of the tourists commented to me in an interview, visiting this section was a very evocative experience:

I saw all the different displays and artefacts there. I looked around, walked around, and you know, I was very impressed. They showed the actual beds that the immigrants stayed in and some of the equipment

from the 1920s and I saw, you know, old beds and I said “I wonder if my grandfather slept in a similar bed”, he might have stayed in this, he might have used it. (E. Schubert, February 9, 2023)

This experience suggests engagement as embodiment (Smith, 2020), in which the fact of “being there” is a crucial part of the tourist experience. In this case, it was a nostalgic experience in a *transferral space*, which allows prosthetic memories to emerge, referring to events that are remembered or imagined even though people have not experienced them directly (Landsberg, 2004).

The next section of the exhibition explains the arrival of the immigrants in the hotel. Here, the guide describes the structure of the building, which contrasts with the precarious conditions on the ships. The construction followed a hygienist design, with tiled walls, large windows for ventilation, wide corridors and easy to clean stairs (MUNTREF, 2023a). The guide then proceeded to describe the daily routine at the museum, mentioning the abundance of meals and the classes on the use of agricultural machinery and domestic work, as well as lectures on Argentine history, geography and legislation (MUNTREF, 2023b). The photos show the daily life at the hotel, the huge kitchen and the clean rooms, the job offices, and the workshops offered to the newcomers. The guide also points out the presence of national symbols in the images, as an example of the constant effort to educate about local culture and language, in line with the Law of Common Education (Law n° 1420, 1884), which aimed to propagate an Argentinian national identity through standardised and public education.

Overall, this section serves as political propaganda<sup>20</sup> as it recalls the generosity of the migration policy (Lopes, 2012; Magnani, 2007), which produces grateful reactions from visitors. For example, one tourist mentioned that this section made her reflect on the “humanity” and good-treatment immigrants received, contrasting the situation with the arrival at Ellis Island, which she had previously visited (A. Fiorenza, personal communication, February 15, 2023). The idea of gratitude was present in many interviews. For instance, a tourist mentioned that: “Noi siamo bene perche tanti sono emigrati e hanno lasciato la torta un po’ piu grande, prima la torta era piu piccola. Allora *non possiamo dimenticarli*” [We are fine because so many have emigrated and left the cake a little larger; before, the cake was smaller. So, we cannot forget them] (R. Milani, personal communication, March 26, 2023).<sup>21</sup> Emigrants with their remittances boosted local economies in two ways: via remittances and through a vigorous demographic decompression that allowed a better redistribution of food (Sommaro, 2022a).

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<sup>20</sup> Remembering the era of prosperity associated with economic growth during the mass migration period, projects a promise of wellbeing as an achievable goal, in contrast with current precarious economic development.

<sup>21</sup> Similarly, another tourist commented that Italians should be thankful and remember that: “Nuestro país tiene que agradecer a Argentina, porque muchos fueron para tener una vida mejor, por eso no hay que olvidarnos de eso. He conocido mucha gente que tienen muchas raíces acá y quieren venir. Nosotros tenemos natalidad cero, hay que aceptar que necesitamos que necesitamos que los argentinos vengán a Italia” [Our country has to thank Argentina, because many went to have a better life, this is why we should not forget that. I have met many people who have many roots here and want to come. We have zero birth rate, we have to accept that we need Argentinians to come to Italy] (M. Barella, personal communication, February 17, 2023).

Finally, the tour moves on to the last part of the exhibition, which focuses on the integration of immigrants and their legacy in society. This section features video interviews with foreigners that live in Argentina, to help visitors engage with the material. By displaying archival material related to the settlement process, such as books, musical instruments, and associated publications; the exhibition shows the reorganisation and adaptation in the new country, while preserving their traditions. Emily describes these objects and emphasises the important role of immigrants in shaping society, as she mentions that a significant part of Argentine national culture derives from the legacy of these emigrants. Then, she gives examples of the Italian legacy on language, gastronomy, music, and gestures. The guide mentions the role of immigrants' associations in connecting with and helping the newcomers and preserving their traditions. The tour ends with reflections on the current migration waves in Argentina and invites visitors to consult the records of arrivals at the main desk.

Outside the permanent exhibition, another display that resonated among Italian tourists, awakening emotional responses of nostalgia and identification, is *Huellas Migrantes* [Migrant Footprints]. This temporary exhibition, displayed from December 7, 2022 to February 26, 2023, aimed at engaging visitors with overseas immigration between 1880 and 1950. It invited visitors to reflect on the sounds of the period, through the voices of immigrants, ships, and coastal birds (Borrillo et al., 2022),<sup>22</sup> helping to imagine the atmosphere of a period. Not only are sounds embodied in the memories of immigrants, but they are socialised, mobilising visitors that relive prosthetic memories. In this regard, one of the tourists I interviewed mentioned that “It's quite emotional hearing that and thinking maybe my grandfather, you know, was part of that, you know, it feels some sort of connection to it. It has that emotional effect on you” (E. Schubert, personal communication, February 9, 2023).

Through its exhibitions and guided tours, the museum represents a crucial period of Argentine history, selecting and articulating memories that resonate with Italian tourists. The process of remembering and forgetting is essential to the constitution of an imagined community (Anderson, 1993). As Nash (2002) and Maddern (2004) argue, certain migrant groups, such as early settlers and founding families are more successfully integrated into national narratives than others. As I have argued, the museum recreates the idea of a transnational imagined community that sustains the emerging nation-state and whose legacy in society is being traced in our time. Italianity is emphasised in the insertion and legacy section of the exhibition, reinforcing the idea of a shared transnational community between Italians and Argentinians. Besides, the narratives embedded in the exhibitions and tours create an identification among Italians and the site, especially in the cases where migration is an element of the personal, familiar, ancestral or ethnic background.

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<sup>22</sup> The multiplicity of sounds, becomes an expression of different contexts and constitutes the *sonority of culture* (Domínguez, 2007) or the *soundscape* of an era and a place (Schafer, 1969), implying that sounds function as a frame of reference through which the world is signified.

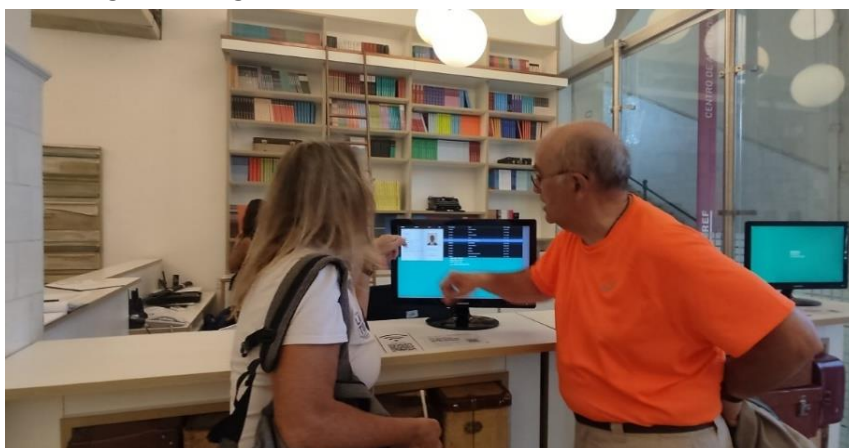
The tour experience facilitates the connection between the visitor and Argentine national history mediated through its narrative of migration and the Italian legacy in the country. When tourists recall family or national histories, this is an emotional experience that implies imagining themselves as part of Argentine history, in line with Morton’s argument that emotions involve imagination (2013). In some cases, the experience resonates in the form of nostalgia, reviving memories of the visitors’ ancestors. For other tourists, with a more general curiosity, the visit to the museum resembles a cultural enrichment. For others, it has led to various forms of identification with the site. The objects on display are like fossils that contain the life of the emigrants (Teti, 2022), and together with the sounds, and the photographs in exhibition, articulate the personal memories with the national ones, making them part of the national history. The construction of the building by Italian architects, the significant presence of Italian objects on display, the Italian heritage highlighted during the guided tours, have a particular resonance with tourists of this nationality.

### **3.1.2.2 Into the migration digital archives**

After describing the emotional responses of Italian tourists at the National Immigration Museum, I will analyse how genealogical research is a crucial aspect of their visit, which enables them to connect with their family or ethnic background. Like roots tourists, not all reverse roots tourists engage in genealogical research. However, it is common for them to research the traces of their ancestors, usually consulting archival records. On one of the Italian tours, a tourist asked the guide (and then asked me) the possibility of doing genealogical research, “like in Ellis Island” he said (Figure 3.3).

**Figure 3.3.**

*Searching in the migration records at the main desk in the National Immigration*



*Note.* An Italian tourist and a tour guide researching on the museum’s records. Image taken by the author.

I accompanied him to the main desk and observed his enquiries. He and others were queuing to ask for information about their ancestors. While talking, a lady interrupted us and asked if we knew that

one of her friends had found her father's records, pointing energetically at her (M. Pederzolli, March 21, 2023). As they obtained the printed certificates, they showed them to each other. Both tour operators previously identified explained to me that their interest in the museum developed more when the digital archive was available (S. Bini, personal communication, March 22, 2023). In fact, they started taking tourists eight years ago, driven by the possibility of undertaking genealogical research.<sup>23</sup>

Although not all tourists who visit the museum pursue genealogical inquiries it holds substantial significance for some of them. It is beyond the scope of this research to elaborate a typology of visitors. However, to better understand reverse roots tourism, based on my observations and my interview with Bautista, I have identified different levels of purpose and knowledge prior to genealogical research. Some visitors only ask for the records out of a general curiosity to find out if other people with the same surname have arrived in the country. I also observed how, during the tours, when they saw others searching, they were encouraged to do it as well, engaging in it as a way of “discovering”. For instance, I observed a lady that was delighted to find four individuals with her surname in records, despite being unaware of ancestral emigration to Argentina, something that usually occurs, as Bautista commented me in our interview.

On the other hand, other tourists are better informed about their ancestors, usually with papers and notes with names and dates of arrival. About this, Bautista commented to me that Italian tourists are usually “well prepared” and “get very emotional”. For instance, he mentions that they cry or emphasise the “hereness” of being in the same place as their ancestor:

Si están más preparados la emoción es el doble o triple porque se dan cuenta de que están en el lugar donde pasaron sus antepasados, además de museo mantenemos la sede donde sus antepasados desembarcaban. El turista al venir y encontrar esta conexión con el antepasado lejano los emociona bastante. Se dan cuenta en qué barco y en qué fecha, se dan cuenta que están en el *mismo lugar* que pasaron sus antepasados [If they are more prepared there the emotion is double or triple because they realise that they are in the place where their ancestors passed, besides the museum we keep the place where their ancestors disembarked. When the tourists come, they find this connection with a distant ancestor and it is very exciting for them. They discover on which ship and on which date, and they realise that they are in the same place where their ancestors spent their time] (B. Bianco, personal communication, March 27, 2023)

However, not all purposeful tourists get the results they want, since genealogical research presents many difficulties. Sometimes records are not properly registered, and have variations in names. Sometimes, when ships were overcrowded, not all people were registered. In the cases where their information is inaccurate, I have observed how tourists may feel demotivated and clueless. However, they keep trying, slightly changing letters of the name or arrival dates. For example, a tourist found 83 results of people with his same surname. He could not identify his uncle, who migrated to

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<sup>23</sup> That is an example of how digital archives create new opportunities for museums and archives, allowing people worldwide to easily delve into search on massive databases and engage with primary material in different and innovative ways (Burgess et al., 2010; Hoskins, 2009).



Argentina to escape fascism. They asked for information to do research online later and took a picture of the screen. They told me they would try to do the research after asking a cousin who has more details, meaning that the museum was a *way of entering* the world of genealogy.

Then, Bautista explained that personal relatedness with migration, influences visitors' emotional responses during the genealogical enquiry. In that vein, he states that emotions are more intense when the personal relationship with the migrant is closer, as he explained to me: "Muchos jóvenes que vienen y les sorprende bastante, pero es mucho más emocionante para sus padres o abuelos" [Many young people come and they are pretty surprised, but it is much more exciting for their parents or grandparents] (B. Bianco, personal communication, March 27, 2023).

However, more research should be done in this direction to evaluate the existence of a relationship between personal relatedness and emotional responses. During my fieldwork and interviews, I observed how the emotional responses express nostalgia especially when personal stories of migration (especially to Argentina, but not limited to it) are present in the personal or familial background of the visitors. In this regard, a tour guide described a situation she had experienced during one of her visits, about an Italian tourist: "Él cuando encontró tenía los ojos llenos de lágrimas y decía 'que lástima que mi papá ya no está, para mostrárselo'" [When he found it, his eyes were full of tears and he said 'what a pity that my dad is no longer here, so I could show him'] (M. Ruffa, personal communication, March 31, 2023). For another tourist, whose grandfather had emigrated to Argentina, it was a very meaningful and moving part of his journey, as he explained to me in an interview:

My grandfather was Italian, my mother grew up in north Italy. But when my mother was about 3 years old, my grandfather sort of left his wife and my mother and went to Argentina to start a new life [...]. I have a document, *the only document* I have about him, is about immigration, when he arrived in Argentina. I got it at the Immigration Museum. They were very helpful. (E. Schubert, February 9, 2023)

For this tourist, this search represents a turning point in his genealogical endeavours, as he revealed that he had done much research before travelling to Argentina, without any success.

The experience was also very emotional for some Italians without a family history of migration, as was the case with Anna, who witnessed the moment when another visitor found a relative in the museum records. She described it as "commovente, molto emozionante, *anche per noi* [...]. L'altra signora ha trovato dei parenti. Le hanno detto quando sono arrivati, e le hanno dato il *certificato proprio, guarda*" [Moving, very emotional, *even for us* (...). The other lady found some relatives. They told them when they arrived and they gave her own certificate, look] (A. Fiorenza, February 15, 2023). The certificate was also essential for another tourist who told me that, after some difficulties in his genealogical research, he finally "got that piece of paper with my grandfather's name on it from the museum. So that is an official document that *actually states* the day he arrived and full name" (E. Schubert, personal communication, February 9, 2023). The certificate in these two cases is a form of

verified truth and materiality sought by genealogical tourists (Basu, 2004; Santos & Yan, 2010). In this sense, genealogical enquiry rescues individuals from anonymity (Fox, 1967). Similarly, the sharing of stories of migrant ancestors helps to keep their memory alive. For example, one of the tourists told me that he used to show the photo of his grandfather on the street:

Trying to find some information, you talk to people they might come up with some idea, you know where to go, and sometimes they share their own story as well, too. I believe in sharing your stories. That's what we do as human beings. (E. Schubert, personal communication, February 9, 2023)

This resembles a form of individual heritage performance that takes place in micro-encounters and commemorates a personal and family past (Smith, 2020). Another example of this rescue from anonymity is the case of an Italian tourist who wrote the history of his home town, for which mass migration was an important chapter that "must" be remembered (R. Milani, Personal communication, March 26, 2023). Travellers' connections with the museum resemble a form of sacralisation in which visitors can be part of history (Magnani, 2007), as their own family or nation stories are strongly intertwined with the narratives displayed in the museum and the research in migration records.

## **3.2 Reverse roots tourism beyond the museum**

### **3.2.1 Many practices within genealogical research**

To better understand the phenomenon of reverse root tourism, I asked Italian tourists about their motivations for visiting Argentina. Genealogical research emerged as an essential part, especially for those with a family or village migration background. Recovering family past is a strong motivation for some tourists with a history of emigration in the country, and for them, genealogical research is a central aspect of their visit:

Certain friends were going to Argentina, and I said, 'I come too' [...]. But this was one reason, the other reason was that there were cheap airfares by Air New Zealand [...] and direct flights as well. And I wanted to know because bit more about my grandfather. So, this combination of factors [...]. I had a purpose of, you know, finding out about my family background as much possible. (E. Schubert, personal communication, February 9, 2023)

Not only this tourist described his experience as very emotional, but also as a form of connection with Argentina, with long-lasting effects that could be considered an aspect of place attachment, as memories of his grandfather came to his mind:

I felt some kind of connection with Argentina in some ways, you know, because he [his grandfather] was there and I wonder if his sons had grandchildren, you know? [...] It can be quite emotional. Maybe talking about it... People there they could be my cousins because my grandfather was there. You feel some sort of connection. My relatives are there [...]. Now I want to know about what's going on there, the news, I check the weather, it stays with me forever. (E. Schubert, personal communication, February 9, 2023)

Another tourist mentioned genealogy as one of the two reasons for visiting Argentina, along with meeting his wife's relatives. He was in Argentina three times, undertaking genealogical research the first two times, but was only successful on the second trip:



Motivo doppio: vedere la famiglia di mia moglie (che già conoscevo), e poi la storia di mio nonno, perché mio nonno è partito dall'Italia per l'Argentina con suo fratello. No era serio, ha abbandonato la famiglia in Italia. E ha avuto sei figli a Buenos Aires. [Double reason: to meet my wife's family (which I already knew), and then my grandfather's story, because my grandfather left Italy and went to Argentina with his brother. No era serio, he left his family in Italy. And he had six children in Buenos Aires] (H. Tadiotto, personal communication, February, 24, 2023)

For this tourist, the reaction was very emotional too, as he cried when he found his family in Argentina: “Abbiamo pianto perché era una cosa che dicevano essere impossibile. Avevo la lettera del Comune e le foto, quindi si sono fidati di me” [We cried because it was something they said was impossible. I had the letter from the municipality and the photos, so they trusted me] (Personal communication, February, 24, 2023). For this tourist, genealogical efforts were of great significance, since he intended to reconstruct his family history, marked by ruptures in the middle of the Second World War. This is an example of what Landsberg (2004) refers to when she explains how migration produces ruptures and geographical discontinuities that underpin the need for genealogy (p. 70).

My observations in the museum suggest that not all research is about family or ancestors, as some tourists look for information about their *paesani* [fellow villagers]. One of the tourists, regretted not knowing before about the possibility of undergoing genealogical research at the museum. “Che peccato” [what a pity] he said. In my interview, he explained he is from a town where many emigrated to Argentina, but he didn't have any known migrant in his family. As I have pointed out, many Italian regions were fractured during the period of mass migration with social consequences that continue to the present. Referring to migration, he explained that

Per noi l'emigrazione è un *capitolo importante* [...]. Ho visto che diverse persone sono venute in Argentina, e sono curioso di la storia, di vedere dove sono arrivati, di vedere le condizioni che hanno trovato [...]. Sono curioso dell'Argentina non perché sono venuti i miei parenti, ma persone del mio paese e questo ti rende curioso [For us, emigration is an important chapter [...]. I have seen that many people have come to Argentina, and I am curious about the history, to see where they have arrived, to see the conditions they found [...]. I am curious about Argentina not because relatives have come but people from my homeland, and that makes you curious] (R. Milani, personal communication, March 26, 2023)

For this tourist, his experience in Argentina evoked emotional responses of cultural enrichment, but also of identification. The interest in migration to Argentina is linked to the knowledge of the city's history, since migration is recognised as a central element in the history of the cities from which the tourists come. For this tourist, genealogy is a passion, a curiosity to know more and a desire to keep alive the memory of his town, so they should “remember” immigrants. As he explained, migration “aumenta l'amicizia tra i popoli ma anche l'aspetto economico, per voi vedere da dove vengono gli immigrati, per noi dove sono emigrati” [increases the friendship between peoples but also the economic aspect, for you to see where the immigrants are from, for us where they emigrated to] (R. Milani, personal communication, March 26, 2023). A couple of weeks after this interview, I received a phone message from this tourists' friend, who was also tracing the footsteps of his fellow villagers.

Following notions of extended genealogy (Nash, 2017; Strathern & Franklin 1993), this phenomenon can be conceptualised as an example of genealogy of kinship, where individuals seek to understand and establish connections with their fellow villagers or those who share a similar cultural heritage. As I have explained, this concept widens the scope of traditional genealogical research beyond immediate family to include broader social and communal networks, including others with whom they share a sense of kinship and community ties.

Similarly, during my fieldwork, I met an Italian-American tourist who explained to me that he was in Argentina for a second time and had done genealogical research on her aunt's footsteps. His family separated when they left Italy, his mother emigrated to the United States and his aunt to Argentina (M. Rowley, personal communication, March 21, 2023), being a case of lateral diasporic tourism.

These two cases resemble the notion of genealogy as a broad, multidirectional relationship, in the form of Deleuze's and Guattari's idea of rizhome (2004). As these authors posit, genealogy is not simply a linear tracing of ancestry, but a dynamic process that involves exploring the interconnectedness of different historical and personal elements. The two cases described exemplify how genealogy can imply multidirectional and fluid connections and relationships across time and space. Overall, they illustrate how the tourists' engagement with genealogical research aligns with the rhizome's characteristics of non-linearity, and the interconnectedness of multiple points. The pursuit of connections with fellow villagers and the exploration of lateral diasporic ties, reflect the rhizomatic nature of social relations, while emphasising the importance of extended networks and multiplicity in the context of tourism and genealogy. In that vein, these cases are examples of the broader genealogical geographies proposed by Nash (2017) and how genealogical practices involve a complex network of connections and relationships that constitute a subject's identity and sense of belonging.

### **3.2.2 Ethnic tourism**

In addition to genealogical research, I have identified other reasons for travelling to Argentina within Italian tourists. In fact, genealogical research is rarely the only reason for visiting the country and is not the most frequent. Passion for Argentine culture (usually driven by a passion for tango), meeting friends and relatives and getting to know Argentine natural landscapes were also motivations identified among Italian tourists.

Besides, I have found some cases of Italian tourists practicing a form of ethnic tourism in Argentina, based on my interviews with museum experts, representatives of Italian associations and tour guides, and fieldwork in the museum. I have delved into the experiences of these tourists to explore how this is a form of reverse roots tourism. Ethnic tourism takes place to encounter Italianity overseas. The idea of Italianity functions as a powerful social imaginary present in some motivations

for travelling to Argentina or/and while travelling through the country. These are all non-Visiting Friends and Relative forms of tourism in which the presence of the Italian community abroad exerts an influence on outbound tourism. Sometimes the motivation to visit the country is not to engage in genealogical research, but is partly motivated by a desire to get to know a distant country that they have heard about and which evokes notions of familiarity, as this tourist described in an interview:

Non ho parenti in Argentina, ma ho amici e parenti che hanno parenti in Argentina. La mia compagna di classe al liceo è nata a Buenos Aires [...]. I suoi genitori erano calabresi e sono venuti a lavorare in Argentina e poi sono tornati in Calabria. Questa mia cara amica mi ha sempre raccontato della sua infanzia in Argentina, che l'Argentina era piena di italiani, quindi quando tutti noi parliamo dell'Argentina, è come se parlassimo di un posto che si conosce [I have no relatives in Argentina, but I have friends and relatives who have relatives in Argentina. My high school classmate was born in Buenos Aires (...). Her parents were from Calabria and they came to work in Argentina and then returned to Calabria. This dear friend of mine has always told me about her childhood in Argentina, that Argentina was full of Italians, so when we all talk about Argentina, it is as if we are talking about a place that you know] (A. Fiorenza, personal communication, February 15, 2023)

Besides, I have identified ethnic tourists who are motivated to encounter these similarities. Sometimes perceptions about *Italianity* in Argentina are transmitted through the media:

“Quería venir a argentina porque cuando era pequeña escuché siempre que hay muchos italianos, inmigrantes, que es una inmigración muy antigua [...]. Quería viajar a un país que es muy diferente pero no me siento tan extranjera, por el idioma, la historia, los *legami* [...]. [I wanted to come to Argentina because when I was little, I always heard that there are many Italians, immigrants, that it is a very old immigration (...). I wanted to travel to a country that is very different but I don't feel so foreign, because of the language, the history, the bonds] (A. Vella, personal communication, February 7, 2023)

In the case mentioned above, the tourist referred to a television cartoon called *Marco: Dagli Appenini alle Ande* [from the Apennines to the Andes] (Takahata, 1976), which she watched as a child, which recounts the story of an Italian boy whose mother emigrated to Argentina. Similarly, online platforms serve to reproduce social imaginaries of Italianity. For a tourist I had the opportunity to interview, the work of an Italian association in Argentina, that he had met online, was a motivation to book his flight:

Cuando estaba en internet he visto la “Familia véneta de Rosario”, vi qué hacen y me ha impresionado mucho cómo organizan en el Facebook [...]. Entonces les escribí porque me parecía extraño que organizaran eso [...] y he dicho “*ma come? Questa è una meraviglia, gli immigrati come mia madre, 30, 40, 50 años fuera de Italia y mantienen las raíces importantes*”, es importante cómo me hablaban a mí de sus recuerdos de la inmigración, y dije “debo conocer estas personas, entender por qué” [When I was on the internet I saw the Venetian Family of Rosario, I saw what they do and I was very impressed by how they organise on Facebook (...). Then I wrote to them because it seemed strange to me that they organised that (...) and I said “this is a wonderful, immigrants like my mother, 30, 40, 50 years out of Italy and they keep the important roots”, it's important how they talked to me about their memories of immigration, and I said “I must meet these people, understand why”] (V. Caoduro, personal communication, April 13, 2023)

For those with these preconceptions, travelling to the country somehow confirms or assures them. According to Smith (2020), the person's entry narrative to heritage sites is often authenticated and reinforced during the visit. Some tourists told me they knew about Italian influences in Argentina and

that their trip confirmed their idea. In that sense, a tourist commented that “questo non mi ha colppito, è abbastanza logico” [It has not surprised me, it’s quite logic] (M. Pederzolli, personal communication, March 26, 2023).

### 3.2.2.1 *The role of Italianity in the reverse roots tourism experience*

I sought to identify the elements that make up Italianity from the perspective of Italian tourists. The answers vary for many aspects of the culture, such as food, sharing meals with family and friends, attitudes, religion, architecture, names of people, names of streets:

Però quando vieni in argentina riconosci l'architettura, è la tua, riconosci i nomi delle strade, sono i tuoi, le facce delle persone sono le tue. Guardi le vie, riconosci i tuoi posti. Non c'è questa sensazione di diverso [...]. Il cibo, le tradizioni culturali della carne, la griglia [...] anche la pasta [But when you come to Argentina you recognise the architecture, it's your own, you recognise the street names, they're your own, people's faces are your own. You look at the avenue and recognise own places. There's not this feeling of difference (...). The food, the cultural traditions of meat, the grill (...), also the pasta" (A. Fiorenza, personal communication, February 15, 2023)

Some tourists commented on speaking Italian with Argentinian-Italians, in ice-cream shops, with taxi drivers, in public spaces such as Plaza de Mayo. One of them mentioned that:

I went to a gelato shop in Buenos Aires, the same way they make the gelato in Italy. They had Italian names as well, and I said “it's very Italian too”, and the Italian words. The Italian name, the man who run the shop. I spoke a little bit Italian with him. (E. Schubert, personal communication, February 9, 2023)

However, a tourist referred to feel disappointed with the Italian legacy he found in gastronomy (C. Vernarelli, personal communication, February 23, 2023).

Gestures, how people greet each other, and “ways of speaking” are mentioned as examples of Italianity in Argentina (A. Vella, February 7, 2023). Similarly, another tourist commented that:

Me di cuenta de unas palabras que son más italianas que españolas. Entonces puedes tocar con la mano esta italianizad y la españolidad. También el modo de vivir de la gente, de pensar, se parece mucho a Italia, sobre todo la Italia del sur. *Lamentablemente*. [I noticed some words that are more Italian than Spanish. So, you can touch with your hand this *Italianness* and *Spanishness*. Also, the way of living of the people, of thinking, is very similar to Italy, especially the southern Italy. Unfortunately] (O. Pellizzari, personal communication, February 13, 2023)

This distinction between northern and southern Italy is a recurring theme in many interviews with tourists and Italian associations. In this respect, there are more similarities between southern Italians and Argentines regarding behavior and closeness to the family. The tradition of eating lunch (usually pasta) with the family on Sundays was identified as an important element of Argentine culture with Italian influences, as one tourist mentioned: “La cultura del ritrovarsi la domenica tutti insieme con la famiglia insieme, per trovare questo è molto italiano, soprattutto nel sud” [The culture of Sunday gatherings with the family is very Italian, especially from the South] (M. Pederzolli, March 26, 2023).

One of the travel agency representatives explained to me her perception of the cultural affinity between Argentina and Italy. This cultural affinity is one of the manifestations of migration-led tourism, as a form of non-VFR migration-led tourism:

Desde los 24 años viví en distintos países del mundo y Argentina es donde me he quedado más y podría vivir, justamente por esta cercanía cultural que hay con Italia. No hay duda de eso, es el lugar donde uno se siente más en casa, si tiene que estar fuera de su país [Since I was 24 years old I have lived in different countries around the world and Argentina is where I have stayed more and could live, precisely because of this cultural closeness with Italy. There is no doubt about it, it is the place where you feel more at home, if you have to be out of your country] (S. Bini, March 22, 2023)

Cultural affinity can encompass different aspects of culture, such as football. In this regard, one tourist mentioned that, having roots in Naples, she found the people very friendly, sharing her passion for Maradona, she “felt in love with Argentina” (M. Barella, Personal communication, February 17, 2023).

Moreover, in many interviews with Italian tourists, the idea of familiarity with Argentina emerged beyond the idea of cultural affinity and Italianity. One of the tourists commented that “sappiamo che gli italiani che vengono qui trovano un paese fratello” [we know that Italians who come here find a brother country] (A. Fiorenza, February 15, 2023). Another tourist described it as a *fratellanza* [brotherhood] or a *legame* [bond] (A. Vella, personal communication, February 7, 2023). In an interview, she reflected on this closeness, which made her feel good: “Es esta cosa de que soy extranjera pero no me siento tan. Nosotros vivimos muy lejos pero no lo siento así, lo siento cerca. Me gusta mucho, estoy muy bien” [It's this thing that I'm a foreigner but I don't feel so. We live far away but I don't feel that way, I feel close. I like it very much, I am very well] (February 7, 2023). In other words, one tourist mentioned that “Non mi sentivo strano [...] perché siamo parenti” [I didn't feel strange (...) because we are relatives] (R. Milani, personal communication, March 26, 2023).

Notions of familiarity are reinforced in the conversations tourists have with locals, usually accompanied by positive feelings “Me decían *sono italiano anch'io*, el 90% me decían ah o soy italiano, tengo parientes italianos, *sembra che sano tutti italiani*, me hablaban de tener la ciudadanía italiana. Todo esto de familiaridad era constante” [They told me *sono italiano anch'io*, 90% of them told me ‘I am Italian’, I have Italian relatives, *sembra che sano tutti italiani*, they talked to me about having Italian citizenship. All this familiarity was constant] (M. Barella, Personal communication, February 17, 2023).

Emotional responses of identification also take the form of a rediscovery of the personal identity, as a tourist I interviewed mentioned. Although she grew up in Trento, in the north of Italy, her parents are from the South, and she was raised in that culture. She mentioned that Argentinian culture resembles the southern Italian part of her identity and that she feels like an Argentinian Trentini. Besides, this traveller feels she was not a tourist during her visit, as she explained to me in an interview (M. Barella, Personal communication, February 17, 2023).

In light of the above, it can be assumed that the experiences of Italian tourists in Argentina, beyond the National Immigration Museum, provoke emotional responses such as identification and nostalgia. In that vein, not only do objects produce identification and connect people to places, linking personal, familiar and national stories to Argentine history, but also intangible aspects of culture, such as ways of speaking, eating rituals, behaviors, and music, produce identification with the Argentine cultural landscape and prompt emotional responses of identification and nostalgia.

### 3.2.2.2 *Ethnic tourism at Italian associations*

During my interviews with representatives of Italian associations, I learnt how some Italian tourists engage with Italian heritage through these organisations, which preserve strong cultural traditions. Italian associations as place of memory play a crucial cultural function (Russo, 2008). In that sense, they usually provide Italian lessons, have dance groups, workshops, organise festivals, degustation of Italian products, cultural exchanges, and conferences (M. di Salvo, February 13, 2023), constituting a *civil society of immigration* (Leal, 2005), that produces and reproduces a talian-Argentinian identity.

Beyond the National Immigration Museum, Italianity can be traced in the culture reproduced at Italian Associations, through the recreation of traditional dances and typical food. A tourist I interviewed, said that he did not visit the National Museum of Immigration but visited many Italian associations because he wanted to know more about “the real community”, and “not at a museum” (C. Vernarelli, personal communication, February 23, 2023). Many representatives of Italian associations have commented that their activities generate curiosity, interest and strong emotions among Italians. For example, María Celeste Carlín, secretary of the Directive commission at the *Association Familia Calabresa* in Rosario, declared in an interview that their activities catch the attention of Italians abroad, even journalists that write about them for Italian newspapers and blogs (personal communication, February 3, 2023).

Following Leal (2005), the rituals of these associations are oriented both to the homeland and the land of settlement. These reactions of surprise are also mentioned by a tour guide who sometimes takes Italian groups to the associations: “Ellos estaban conmovidos en cómo está gente mantiene tanto las tradiciones, bailes, las comidas del norte de Italia. Les llama la atención al que viene de afuera” [They were impressed by how these people maintain the traditions, the dances, the food of northern Italy. It attracts the attention of those from outside] (M. Ruffa, personal communication, March 21, 2023). Italian travellers who visit Italian associations and local events have described how they rediscovered old traditions, music, and typical foods they had never tried before. Sergio Escalante, president of the *Círculo Trentino de Resistencia*, recounted an anecdote that illustrates this:

Vino un concertista muy famoso del norte, preparamos un espectáculo, mi hija y otro se vistieron con trajes típicos [...]. Los ve vestidos de trentinos, y dice “tengo que venir a Argentina para ver cómo eran

los trajes típicos trentinos, porque allá no lo veo esto, lo veo en museos". Él estaba asombrado como se vive la italianidad y la trentinidad [...]. Y algunos dicen "hace un montón que no como tal cosa, porque allá ya no hay quién lo prepare" [A very famous concert performer from the north came, we prepared a show, my daughter and another one dressed in typical costumes (...). He saw them dressed as Trentino, and he said 'I have to come to Argentina to see how the typical Trentino costumes were, because I don't see this there, I see it in museums". He was amazed at how Italian and Trentino life is lived (...). And some people say "I haven't eaten such a thing for a long time, because there is no one there to prepare it anymore"] (Personal communication, February 20, 2023)

For a tourist who travelled to Argentina to visit friends and Italian associations, the experience was sometimes like "being in Italy", as he explained me in an interview: "I had a very positive experience. People used to tell me 'I'm Italian, I'm Italian like you, they mentioned they had an Italian grandfather, and many of them spoke Italian. You felt like if you were in Italy" (C. Vernarelli, February, 23, 2023).

This is reminiscent of Vito Teti's concept of *paesi doppi* (1989), in which the "duplicated" country reproduces traditions initially carried by the emigrants and then continued by them and their descendants. Similarly, a tourist whose trip to Argentina consisted of visiting Italian associations, reflected on the authenticity of this Italianity:

Yo pienso por lo que he visto, encontrado yo, especialmente en Rosario y Mar del Plata, son *italiani piu autentici che noi* [...]. Y no solo la saben porque la estudiaron en escuela, la practican también, que es lo más importante. Es lo que más me ha *colpito* de Argentina. Son argentinos nacidos allá, pero son más italianos que los de acá, tienen Italia en el corazón una Italia que ahora ya no existe piu', *che en un senso* es perdida [I think from what I have seen, I found that, especially in Rosario and Mar del Plata, they are Italians more authentic than we are (...). And they not only know it because they studied it in school, they also practice it, which is the most important thing. That's what I liked the most about Argentina. They are Argentines born there, but they are more Italian than those of here, they have Italy in their heart, an Italy that no longer exists, which in a sense is lost] (V. Caoduro, April 13, 2023)

These appreciations resemble what Savoldi described as an Italianity that cannot be traced in Italy (1998). For this tourist, it was a quite emotional experience:

Fue una emoción grande, porque entrar en la sede de la familia véneta y ver una pared un muro grande enorme, alto, con el puente de Rialto, no entendía si la Argentina estaba en Venecia o Venecia estaba en Argentina. Entendí que Italia está en el corazón de los argentinos [It was a great emotion, because entering the building of the Venetian family association and seeing a wall, a huge, high wall, with the Rialto Bridge, I did not understand if Argentina was in Venice or Venice was in Argentina. I understood that Italy is in the heart of the Argentines] (V. Caoduro, personal communication, April 13, 2023)

These are cases of emotional responses of identification with the destination and its people. This motivated his visit in 2023, during which he deliberately travelled to meet Italian associations. This tourist felt identified with the Italian community in Argentina because it reminded him of his parents and grandparents, who were Italian intra-European migrants after the Second World War (V. Caoduro, April 13, 2023). The memories of parents or themselves migrating also produce some identification with Argentina. Ideas of identification with Argentines and nostalgia arise because tourists see the history of their parents and grandparents as migrants, as V. Caoduro, who mentioned that "cuando

encuentro un inmigrante, me recuerda a mi familia, un poco de tristeza” [When I meet an immigrant, it reminds me of my family, a little sorrow] (V. Caoduro, April 13, 2023).

Ethnic tourists also experience strong emotional responses, even if they don't have ancestors who emigrated to Argentina, as I noticed in my interviews. In that regard, a tourist commented that he perceives a bond with Argentinians:

Tenemos que recordar que los italianos somos inmigrantes, hemos sido inmigrantes o somos hijos de inmigrantes, y nuestros abuelos, mamá, papá, han trabajado mucho para tener un futuro mejor. Y me siento *più legato ai brasiliani e agli argentini*, [...] que con tantos italianos, porque capaz veo en ellos lo que han hecho mis padres, la historia que sus padres o abuelos han seguramente hecho, el camino común, de sufrimiento, dolor y sacrificio [We have to remember that we Italians are immigrants, we have been immigrants or we are children of immigrants, and our grandparents, mom, dad, have worked hard to have a better future. And I feel more attached to Brazilians and Argentinians (...) than with many Italians, as I can see in them what my parents have done, the story that their parents or grandparents have certainly made, the common path of suffering, pain and sacrifice] (V. Caoduro, personal communication, April 13, 2023)

Another form of ethnic tourism I have identified through online research and fieldwork occurs in the tourism between *gemmellaggi* or “twin cities”.<sup>24</sup> Some municipalities in Italy, as well as tour agencies, promote the *gemmellaggi* tours to meet Italian communities (Municipality of Bricherasio, 2016; Comune di Caramagna Piemonte, 2011). A tour guide explained to me that occasionally they organise visits to Italian associations in Buenos Aires and part of the itinerary of the *gemmellaggi* tours. On these tours, they visit Italian associations, share a meal, and learn about the associations’ activities. Another example, was the *Gemmellaggi* tours in Cordoba, where they spend a week and celebrate the brotherhood with Piemonte (G. Baldo, personal communication, March 28, 2023).

Italian associations’ cultural role in Argentina helps maintain and spread the idea of an imagined community through the reproduction of Italianity in Argentina. Moreover, they sometimes reproduce an Italianity that is difficult to find in Italy. As I have explained in this section, their sense of identity, the traditions they preserve, can evoke strong emotional responses such as nostalgia and identification. For some tourists, visiting the Italian associations was a way of rediscovering a distant Italy and reconnecting with their family and national heritage.

### **3.3 Potentialities on reverse roots tourism development**

#### **3.3.1 The stakeholders’ perspective**

In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of reverse roots tourism, I explored the current involvement and prospects for further development from the supply side, which has been overlooked in tourism studies (Alexander et al., 2016; McCain & Ray, 2003; Timothy, 2011). In that vein, I interviewed Italian cultural associations in Argentina and travel agencies.

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<sup>24</sup> *Gemmellaggi* are an official union between two municipalities or regions, intending to stimulate economic, political, cultural cooperation between them (Sassu, 2010).



During my interviews with representatives of Italian associations, I found out that some of them already provide tourism experiences with Italian tourists, in a small-scale and personalised way. Most involve people who know each other through friends or relatives living in Argentina, and rarely undertake genealogical research (M. di Salvo, February 13, 2023). Last year, Michele Bina, an Italian living in Belgium, contacted the Italian Circle in Rosario through Facebook. His grandparents emigrated to Argentina at the beginning of the 20th century, then returned to Italy with their son. He felt an immense sense of happiness when people from the Italian Circle in Rosario helped him to finally find their house in Rosario: “Una fortuna molto grande, una cosa bellissima [...]. Ieri pomeriggio con mio zio, lui ha pianto, era la casa dei suoi genitori. Tutti noi siamo felicissimi, è un'emozione unica” [A very great fortune, a beautiful thing (...). Yesterday afternoon with my uncle, he cried, it was his parents' house. All of us are overjoyed, it is a unique emotion] (M. Bina, personal communication, February 15, 2023). He explained me that he would love to travel to visit the house and in a later communication he told me that he had sent a gift to the people that helped him to find the house.

More common is the involvement of associations in cultural activities in which sometimes tourists participate. Several associations commented to me that they have organised activities for Italian tourists, usually in an informal and spontaneous way: “vino Mavi y la hicimos conocer un montón de cosas, con mi familia, con mi movilidad propia, llevarla a los museos, a los centros culturales, compartir espacios de música y de teatro [...]” [Mavi came and we introduced her to a lot of things, with my family, with my own car, taking her to museums, to cultural centres, sharing music and theatre spaces (...)] (S. Escalante, personal communication, February 20, 2023). Similarly, Carlin commented to me that they received a Calabrese music producer; he participated in a show and their saint's festivity, and then they showed him around the city of Rosario (personal communication, February 3, 2023).

Italian associations also engage in tourism with Italians through educational exchanges. For example, the association *Trentini Nel Mondo*, offers scholarships to university students for volunteer programmes and has welcomed many students to work with the association and the local community (S. Escalante, personal communication, February 20, 2023). Besides, the Trento provincial government has developed a youth exchange programme called *Interscambi Giovanili*, through which students with Trentini roots can be hosted for 20 days in a Trentini family in another country (Trentini nel Mondo, 2023). Similarly, the Centro Friulano di Avellaneda, within the Friuli nel Mondo scholarship and project *Lazos*, develops student exchanges between Friulians in Italy and Friulans' descendants abroad. They teach Spanish and show the territory and “Friulanity in Argentina”, as Luisana Lorenzini, an association member, explained to me. Participants stay at the homes of locals, and those from Argentina go to stay at their homes in Italy. The association prepares them typical food and dances, organises a lunch or a snack, or hosts them at family houses (L. Lorenzini, personal communication, February 3, 2023). In the same vein, María Marinelli, secretary of the Association *Familia Molisana de Rosario*, told me

that there have been trips from Molise on two occasions, with around 40 people each time. The association recreates *Cammina Molise*, an annual event originated in Italy (Cammina Molise, 2023), in which sometimes Italian tourists participate. In 2018, the event was held in Buenos Aires, and the route finished at the National Immigration Museum (personal communication, February 10, 2023).

When asked about the potential of reverse roots tourism and their interest in participating as stakeholders, the responses from Italian associations were very positive and enthusiastic. Some associations mentioned efforts to become more involved in tourism activities. For example, Maria Dalleves, regional representative of *Italiani nel Mondo*, commented that she is currently promoting the development of bilateral educational exchanges between Italy and her city (personal communication, February 3, 2023). Also, Joaquín Asuaje, member of the *Centro Friulano de La Plata*, mentioned that they would build a loft to host people from other associations around the world (personal communication, February 14, 2023). Similarly, Marcos di Salvo, member of the directive commission of the Italian Circle in Rosario and representative of the *Círculo Friulano de Rosario*, commented to me that they presented a funding project for a programme to promote their Frulianity and Italianity (personal communication, February 13, 2023).

Only one of the association representatives interviewed believes that Italians' interest in travelling to Argentina for genealogical purposes or visiting Italian associations is minimal (M. Dalleves, February 3, 2023). However, most of the association representatives perceive great curiosity. For instance, Marcos di Salvo commented that there is a huge interest in travelling to Argentina and he mentioned that many Italians engage in their activities through their Facebook account, through which they have generated empathy and brotherhood (personal communication, February 13, 2023). Similarly, Carlin explained to me that Italians are involved through their Facebook group and seem very curious about their activities, especially their dance group (personal communication, February 3, 2023). When asked about their potential interest in offering tourism experiences, some representatives responded that it would be a great opportunity to keep a connection with their ancestors and make visible the activities they do, as Carlin commented that

Siempre está bueno el contacto con la gente de allá, más allá de que uno lo disfruta, uno lo hace para contactar con esta parte ancestral [...]. Y también es bueno que ellos vean la riqueza de lo nuestro. Siempre me gusta y nos gusta mucho recibir gente, los llevamos de un lado a otro [It is always good to have contact with the people there, beyond the fact that you enjoy it, you do it to get in touch with this ancestral part (...). And it is good that they see the richness of what is ours. I always like and we like to receive people, we take them from one place to another] (Personal communication, February 3, 2023)

Similarly, Marinelli commented to me that they would be interested in participating in tourism as it would be a way to make visible what they do (personal communication, February 10, 2023). In the same line, Escalante mentioned that they are “obviously” interested but should hire a specialist (personal communication, February 20, 2023). Carlin observed that the contact with Italian tourists “revitalises” the association. She described a process of general uninterest and less participation in the

association, especially among young people (personal communication, February 3, 2023). Similarly, Escalante reflected on the Italianity they depict and suggested ways of engaging with youth:

Nos quedamos con la Italia de cantar canciones viejas, del romance italiano [...], con la Italia que trajeron nuestros nonos, porque es lo que aprendimos [...]. Pero por ejemplo a mi mamá o a los viejos del grupo, sacarles las canciones de hace 50 años no las podés sacar, pero cuando vienen jóvenes, dejamos otra música también [...] esa música imposible hacerle escuchar a los viejos de la comisión, es una lucha, con diplomacia hay que trabajarlo, entre generaciones [We keep the Italy of singing old songs, of Italian romance (...), with the Italy that our grandparents brought with them, because that is what we learned (...). But for example, you can't take songs from 50 years ago away from my mother or the old members of the group, but when other kids come, we leave other music too (...), that music is impossible to make the old members of the committee listen to, it is a struggle, we have to work on it diplomatically, between generations] (Personal communication, February 20, 2023)

The activities of Italian associations connect them to their Italian roots, and sharing them with Italians recreates the idea of being closer to their homeland, strengthening ethnic and family ties. As Sommaro describes (2022a), music, dances, and food play a crucial role for migrants as a way of returning to the country they left behind, and sharing with Italians brings the *paesi doppi* closer together. Whether or not tourism is an opportunity for Italian associations in Argentina to revitalise themselves, exceeds the objectives of this research. However, my interviews demonstrate the existence of current involvement in tourism development and an interest in expanding it. Also, the type of activities described and how they are provided, indicate the potential of these associations to develop as local actors offering personalised and meaningful experiences, something increasingly sought after by tourists, especially amongst roots tourists (Alexander et al., 2016; Park, 2010; Poria, et al., 2004).

When asked about the potential of reverse roots tourism, one of the tour operators replied that she considers that genealogical services can complement the experience of Italian tourists in Argentina, but she doesn't consider it a central motivation, at least for the tourists she takes. Additionally, she believes Italians with genealogical interest would first contact an Italian association to help them, instead of a travel agency (S. Bini, personal communication, March 22, 2023). On the other hand, the other agency representative thinks it would be interesting to offer some services in genealogical endeavours (S. Kumar, personal communication, April 12, 2023).

### **3.3.2 Other potentialities**

To complement the analysis, I explored other elements to identify the interest of Italians in tracing their ancestors in Argentina. In that regard, through online research, I have noticed a great interest in their ancestors among Italians who emigrated to other countries. I have identified specialised forums (TuttoGenealogia; ItalianGenealogy) in which people ask for information and help others with their genealogical search. Similarly, at the museum, Bautista told me that in addition to personal consultations, they receive online requests from Italians abroad looking for information to which they

do not have access, such as where their ancestors went after they arrived, where they lived, if they had family, or where they died (B. Bianco, personal communication, March 27, 2023).

The Italian organisations I contacted highlighted the significant attention Italians show towards exploring their family history and tracing their ancestors who migrated to Argentina.<sup>25</sup> In that regard, the Italian Emigration Museum replied that they “frequently” receive requests for information about ancestors or relatives who migrated to the country (MuseoMei, personal communication, March 7, 2023). Similar responses were received from the Recanati Emigration Museum and the Emigration Centre Altretaliae.<sup>26</sup> In my interviews, representatives of Italian associations and Italian tourists, referred to genealogy search as something with many obstacles. One of the tourists I interviewed mentioned that he was able to start reconstructing his family tree in Argentina, “by chance”, when he met a distant relative in Italy, who helped him make contacts in Argentina to get information. He had previously reconstructed the family history in Italy, and in attempts to do so in Argentina he had immediately encountered many difficulties (O. Pellizzari, personal communication, February 13, 2023). Another tourist tried to find his family in Argentina twice, only succeeding the second time, when he received information from an Italian return migrant in his town (H. Tadiotto, personal communication, February 24, 2023). The appearance of relatives “by chance” is also something I was told about in an association (S. Escalante, personal communication, February 20, 2023). A tourist commented that he had paid someone to help him with his research, without success (E. Schubert, personal communication, February 9, 2023). One of the Italian associations commented to me on the potential of technology to help Italians in their research, which contrasts with the lack of resources that existed decades ago (M. di Salvo, personal communication, February 13, 2023). These difficulties should not be seen as determinant limitations, but rather as obstacles that can be overcome, given the interest of Italians in learning more about their family, ancestors and relatives abroad, and the interest of the supply side in undertaking genealogical and ethnic experiences. These considerations open up new opportunities for developing reverse roots tourism in Argentina, a country whose history is largely made up of immigrants of different nationalities who continue to shape Argentinian culture to these days.

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<sup>25</sup> Namely the *Museo della Emigrazione a Recanati*, *Museo della Emigrazione*, and *Centro Altretaliae sulle Migrazioni Italiane*.

<sup>26</sup> The Centro Altretaliae sulle Migrazioni Italiane, replied that “Riceviamo spesso richieste via mail [...] di italiani che stanno ricostruendo la loro storia familiare e vorrebbero entrare in contatto con i loro parenti che sono emigrati in Argentina” [We often receive requests via email (...) from Italians who are reconstructing their family history and would like to get in touch with their relatives who emigrated to Argentina] (Personal communication, February 6, 2023).

## 4 Conclusions

This dissertation has contributed to filling the gap in migration-led tourism studies by exploring the intersections of personal heritage, migration flows, and travel, beyond VFR-tourism. I have identified the motivations and experiences of tourists from Italy, a country with a significant emigration history, to Argentina, a historically receptive country. By examining the genealogical endeavours of these tourists, and the role of Italianity in their tourism experience, the research provides valuable insights into reverse roots tourism and delves into the potential for further development of this niche.

In this research, I have defined reverse roots tourism as a form of personal heritage tourism that involves traveling to a place that is significant to one's familial, ancestral, or ethnic background. As a form of roots tourism that operates in a reverse way, it refers to those who travel to the land of settlement to encounter either their genealogical roots or cultural affinities. By identifying the experiences of Italian tourists, both at the National Immigration Museum in Buenos Aires and Italian associations in the country, I have explored a wide variety of practices that constitute reverse roots tourism as well as how these experiences generate emotional responses of cultural enrichment, identification and nostalgia.

### 4.1 Summary of findings

My fieldwork at the National Immigration Museum revealed how tourists who visit the museum connect with their family, ancestral or ethnic past through the exhibitions and genealogical research. Tour guides agreed that visiting the museum is an opportunity for Italian tourists to encounter part of their identity. For one of the agencies, it is also a way of responsible tourism, which educates tourists in the context of escalating racist discourses in Italy. In that regard, some Italian visitors expressed gratitude towards Argentina, perceiving its hospitality as something worth commemorating. Others shared empathetic remarks on current migration in Italy, reviving narratives of their parents and or grandparents as immigrants and the challenges they faced.

Furthermore, I have provided a description of how the visit to the museum evoked various emotional responses. Visitors without a family history of migration tended to find the museum a place of cultural enrichment while learning about Argentine history. Conversely, those with family ties to immigration, regardless of whether Argentina was the destination of migration, experienced a sense of familiarity and identification, connecting with the experiences of their relatives. Nostalgic sentiments were evoked during genealogical research and through the museum's in-situ recreations, such as the faithfully reconstructed bedrooms. A similar effect was observed in the case of the temporary exhibit *Huellas Migrantes*, where the sounds of migration were replicated, resulting in the emergence of prosthetic memories. I have examined the dynamics of genealogical research, where I identified tourists that are moved by curiosity, especially in the case of those travelling with a travel

agency, who imitate other tourists in their groups, engaging in uninformed genealogical inquiries. By contrast, there are other purposeful tourists that engage in the research moved by a profound desire to recover their family or fellow villagers' footsteps.

During my observations and interviews with Italian tourists, tour guides, and museum personnel at the main desk, it became evident that seeking information in the migration records evokes strong emotions. The process of uncovering family information and reconnecting with their heritage elicits a sense of attachment to Argentina. In one case, a tourist expressed the possibility of finding long-lost cousins in the country, further deepening his sense of connection. In that sense, I have indicated how important the migration certificate is for those tourists who engage in genealogical research. The process of piecing together fragmented narratives was of great importance, especially to tourists mentioning family disruptions in the context of the Second World War. One of them tried to trace his ancestors and family in Argentina, only succeeding during his second trip. Another tourist mentioned he even paid (with no success) someone to find some genealogical records of his grandfather.

Additionally, I identified an Italian-American who traced the footsteps of his distant relatives who had emigrated to Argentina, being an example of lateral diasporic tourism as described by Santana Pinho (2018). Furthermore, my fieldwork revealed that genealogical research was not solely limited to family connections. This showcases the multidirectional nature of genealogy, where individuals explore connections and relationships across time and space, encompassing multiple branches of their family trees. Moreover, I have identified some Italian tourists that are motivated to visit the country where their villagers or compatriots settled. Based on the interviews I conducted, I illustrated how genealogy extends beyond the tracing of immediate ancestry to encompass wider communal networks, as critical genealogy studies argue.

The findings highlight the central role of genealogical research in shaping the motivations and experiences of Italian tourists who engage in reverse roots tourism in Argentina. The desire to uncover their family history, forge connections with ancestral roots, and explore broader social and community networks were key drivers behind their visits. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexity and multidimensionality of genealogical practices and their significance in shaping tourists' identities and sense of belonging.

In my research, I have shown how genealogical research has a very emotional component for Italian tourists visiting Argentina. However, it is not the only or the most prevalent reason for their visits to the country. Passion for Argentine culture, particularly tango, the opportunity to reunite with friends and relatives, and exploring the natural landscapes were identified as strong motivations. Additionally, I have identified other tourists who engage in ethnic tourism when they encounter Italianity abroad. This can be considered as a form of reverse roots tourism that is based on the traveller's ethnic background in line with King's (1994) conceptualization of ethnic tourism.

Italians' reverse roots tourism in Argentina can be based on either personal, family or national heritage, which is replicated in a country which has developed a local culture highly influenced by immigrants. This culture in the duplicated country, following Teti's concept (1989), is the basis for the construction of Italianity as a social imaginary, that is present in Italian outbound tourism to Argentina.

Recovering Salazar's definition of social imaginaries, I have demonstrated how Italianity functions as a social imaginary in two directions, firstly, as a motivation to visit the country, and secondly, as a key element that produces identification between the tourist and the destination, constituting a central element of ethnic tourism in Argentina. Italianity serves as a powerful social imaginary that influences the motivations for traveling and plays a significant role in the Italians' experiences in Argentina, serving to shape their perception of belonging and kinship. Indeed, this research has shown that some Italian tourists visiting Argentina were sometimes motivated by a sense of belonging to a transnational imagined community and a desire to connect with their Italian heritage. During the visit, the cultural symbols, narratives, and practices associated with Italian heritage created a sense of shared history and reinforced the connection between Italian reverse roots tourists, both at the National Immigration Museum and beyond.

Retrieving Anderson's work (1993), I have described how reverse roots tourism contributes to reproduce the idea of the existence of a transnational imagined community, that recalls shared memories among Italians and Argentinians, connecting their past with the present. In this respect, Italian tourists find elements of Italianity and familiarity in various aspects of Argentine culture. They recognise similarities in architecture, street names, people's faces, gestures, greetings, and ways of speaking. These elements constitute the Italianity of a cultural landscape in which Italian tourists feel identification and connection with. There is also a distinction made between northern and southern Italy, with many tourists identifying closer similarities between Argentina and southern Italy. For example, the tradition of Sunday family gatherings and shared meals, especially pasta, is seen as an important element of Argentine culture with Italian influences. Moreover, tourists often describe a sense of fraternity or bond with Argentina, feeling close and at home despite being foreigners. Notions of familiarity are reinforced by conversations with locals, even in Italian, who identify themselves as Italian or have Italian ancestry. These emotional responses also contribute to a rediscovery of personal identity, as in the case of a tourist that felt an Argentinian Trentini.

For some Italian tourists, the perception of Italian influences in Argentina is conveyed through personal experiences, such as conversations with friends, and through various channels such as the media, including television shows like *Marco*, which tells the story of an Italian boy whose mother emigrated to Argentina. Online platforms also play a role in reproducing social imaginaries of Italianity. A tourist I interviewed explained to me that he was motivated to buy his flight ticket to Argentina after discovering Italian associations in the country through Facebook. These associations, which I have

explored in my research, serve as important cultural hubs. They offer Italian language classes, and host dance groups, workshops, festivals, and cultural exchanges, all of which contribute to the preservation and reproduction of Italian-Argentine identity. In a sense, Italian associations function as "places of memory" and constitute a civil society of immigration that actively reproduces Italian-Argentinian identity. Notably, Italian tourists have expressed positive sentiments toward these efforts, perceiving them as avenues that evoke feelings of familiarity akin to being in Italy itself.

My research has delved into how Italian associations currently carry out both spontaneous encounters with tourists and also organise bidirectional tourism activities, ranging from educational and institutional exchanges, to *gemmellagi* tours. I have also underlined their interest in developing more tourist experiences, as they believe that this would help them to make their activities more visible and to preserve their traditions. Most of the associations highlighted that Italians are interested in and surprised at the way they preserve their traditions, such as the case of traditional dances and cuisine they cannot find in Italy anymore.

As for the tourism agencies that take Italian tourists to the National Immigration Museum, they both included the museum in their tours after it made the migration records available to the public. Both agencies believe that this is an important segment, and would be interested in providing genealogical services, although it should be complemented by other tourist experiences.

The connection of Italian tourists with their family and national past takes place beyond the National Museum of Immigration. The presence of Italian culture shapes their experiences, evokes emotional responses of identification and nostalgia, and reinforces a sense of familiarity and connection with Argentina, which is particularly intensified when Italian tourists visit and share activities with Italian cultural associations. The research highlighted the potential for further development of reverse roots tourism in Argentina. The country's rich migratory history and the presence of cultural artefacts, institutions, and Italian-themed establishments create a fertile ground for this niche tourism segment. The findings suggest that policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders can capitalise on cultural heritage and social imaginaries built upon immigration to enhance the tourism experience, with alleged "authentic" experiences in collaboration with local stakeholders such as Italian associations.

## **4.2 Further research directions**

Despite the valuable findings of this research, there are some limitations that need to be acknowledged, as they point out important lines for future investigation. First, further research on the potential of reverse roots tourism should include the interaction of Italians with organisations based in Italy, as well as the dynamics taking place in social media and online forums.



Secondly, it would be worthwhile to carry out extensive research on the profiles of Italian reverse roots tourists, establishing relationships between personal relatedness and emotional responses. An analysis considering generational differences as an independent variable, could identify patterns in the variations of emotional responses produced. Besides, an in-depth analysis of the socio-economic background of these tourists would help contextualize their expectations and motivations, providing useful information for targeting these segments.

Thirdly, this research has provided insights into the educational significance of reverse roots tourism, particularly in a society in which migration holds great relevance. The visit to the museum prompts a connection with the contemporary migrant situation in Italy, as observed through my fieldwork and interviews with tourists and guides. Expanding on this line of inquiry, further research endeavours could explore the degree to which these experiences resonate with travellers and potentially influence their perspectives on migration-related issues.

Finally, the research is focused specifically on Italian reverse roots tourism in Argentina, given its prominence as the largest group of immigrants in the country and the powerful construction of Italianity in Argentina. It is important to note that this focus does not disregard the significant influence of other nationalities in the formation of the nation-state, nor does it overlook the relevance of current migration trends. Further research on non-VFR migrant-led tourism in Argentina should encompass a broader range of nationalities. Conducting comparative studies would facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of reverse roots tourism, capturing the variations and similarities across different cultural contexts.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A– Interview flexible guides

#### A.1. For Italian associations

- Do you do cultural/tourist exchanges with associations in Italy? How often? How are these exchanges? What do they consist of?
- Do you receive inquiries from Italians doing genealogy research in Argentina?
- Or another type of enquiry? From any Italian region in particular?
- If so, through which channels do you receive enquiries?
- Have you received messages from Italians interested in travelling to Argentina?
- What are your experiences with Italian tourists?
- What facilities/support do you provide to tourists during their visit?
- If you are not currently participating in tourism activities, do you think that the institution would be interested in that? Why?

#### A.2. For experts at the National Immigration Museum

- Does the museum receive visits from international tourists?
- Which are the most predominant nationalities, in order?
- Do the international tourists come independently? Or by agencies?
- And Italians?
- Are there specific months which they come more?
- About those that visit the museum and ask for information, they mostly search with specific or general knowledge?
- What are people's reactions when they find relatives or ancestors? Or they emotions? How do they look?
- What are their main enquiries?
- What do you do when you receive the questions?
- What facilities/support do you provide to ancestral tourists during their visit?
- Do you have any anecdote that you would like to mention?
- Do you receive online inquiries from Italians doing genealogy research in Argentina? Or other type of enquiry from Italy? From any Italian region in particular? How often? What are they requesting? How precise are they?
- Is there anything else that you would like to highlight?

### **A.3. For tour operators:**

- How long have you been organising visits to the National Immigration Museum with Italian tourists?
- Why do you think it is a good place to visit for them?
- How is the experience for these tourists at the museum? How are they reactions?
- Do they engage in genealogical research?
- Do you work with Italian agencies only?
- Do you know the regions of origin and age of your clients? Which are they profiles? Do they travel alone or with company?
- Do you offer genealogical services to the tourists?
- If no, would you be interest in providing them?
- Would you be interested in collaborating with Italian associations in reverse roots tourism development?
- Which are your perspectives on the potentialities of reverse roots tourism?

### **A.4. For Italian tourists (with family background of migration to Argentina)**

- Can you tell us about your (ancestor) and his journey as an Italian emigrant to Argentina?
- How did you learn this story?
- What motivated your visit to Argentina?
- Which ideas did you have of Argentina before travelling?
- Do you know other people pursuing similar genealogical endeavors? Did they influence you?
- What motivated you to undertake a genealogical travel to follow your (ancestor's) footsteps?
- How long have you had the idea of visiting the country? What stopped you from doing it before?
- Have you done any genealogy research before coming to Argentina? Can you please describe it?  
what kind of genealogy research have you done before coming to Argentina?
- Have you contacted any Italian-association, private tour operator, emigration museum or archive before coming? Who did you contact? What type of enquiries did you have?
- Has anyone recommended to come to Argentina? What did they recommend you? Where they involved in any genealogy or family research?
- What kind of places did you visit in this trip? Can you please list them?
- Have you visited any place significant to your family, ancestral, or ethnic group background?
- How did it feel to visit those places? What kind of emotions did it make you feel? Was any place more significant than other one?

- Have you visited the National Immigration Museum? How did it make you feel?
- Can you explain me what this trip means to you?
- Do you have family and friends living in Argentina? Have you met them before? Have you met them on this trip?
- What are your impressions about Argentina? Do you find it similar to Italy? In which aspects? Can you please expand on this?
- Is there anything that you would like to highlight?
- How would you describe Argentinians and their culture?

#### **A.5. For Italian tourists (without family background of migration to Argentina)**

- What motivated your visit to Argentina?
- Which ideas did you have of Argentina before travelling?
- How long have you had the idea of visiting the country? What stopped you from doing it before?
- Have you contacted any Italian association, private tour operator, emigration museum or archive before coming? Whom did you contact? What type of enquiries did you have?
- What kind of places did you visit on this trip? Can you please list them?
- Have you visited any place significant to your family, ancestral, or ethnic group background?
- How did it feel to visit those places? What kind of emotions did it make you feel? Was any place more significant than the other one?
- Have you visited the National Immigration Museum? How did it make you feel?
- Can you explain to me what this trip means to you?
- Do you have family and friends living in Argentina? Have you met them before? Have you met them on this trip?
- What are your impressions of Argentina? Do you find it similar to Italy? In which aspects? Can you please expand on this?
- How would you describe Argentinians and their culture?
- Is there anything else that you would like to highlight?

**Appendix B – Photographies**

**Figure B.1.**

*Ship advertisement at the main exhibition at the National Immigration Museum*



Note. Image taken by the author.

**Figure B.2**

*Personal postcards at the main exhibition at the National Immigration Museum*



Note. Image taken by the author.

**Figure B. 3**

*Old suitcases at the main exhibition at the National Immigration Museum*



*Note. Image taken by the author.*

## Appendix C – Interview transcripts

**Interviewee:** A. Vella (labelled as AV) **Interviewer:** Rocío Cali (labelled as RC)  
**Date of Interview:** February 7, 2023 **Interview setting:** In-person, National Immigration Museum.

**RC: Como te decía, empiezo a grabar la entrevista, te solicito que me digas si estás de acuerdo.**

AV: Sí, claro.

**RC: Contame un poco por qué viniste al museo de la inmigración.**

AV: Soy italiana y vivo en Alemania y la inmigración es un tema muy presente para mí, porque mis padres son italianos y trabajaron mucho tiempo en Alemania y yo nací ahí. Es muy presente porque yo lo viví.

**RC: ¿Y por qué querías venir a Argentina?**

AV: Quería venir en Argentina porque cuando era pequeña escuché siempre que hay muchos italianos, inmigrantes, que es una inmigración muy antigua, no como la inmigración que tenemos reciente en Europa. Tengo año sabático y quería viajar a un país que es muy diferente pero no me siento tan extranjero, por el idioma, la historia, los *legames*.

**RC: Sí, claro, sí.**

-Para mí es muy interesante. Yo no sé si tengo antecedentes en mi familia de inmigrantes en Argentina, pero tenía un deseo de conocer esta realidad que para mí hay mucho de italiano en Buenos Aires, de la cultura, en el idioma, es increíble, hay palabras que... Hay momentos que creo que están hablando italiano, pero es porteño. Pero es siempre muy *simile*.

**RC: ¿Eso ya lo sabías antes de venir?**

AV: Lo... Mmm lo sabía, pero ahora tengo la *segurità*. Que es confirmado.

**RC: ¿Qué viste similar en Bs As? ¿Cuánto tiempo llevás acá?**

AV: Estoy desde agosto hasta junio.

**RC: ¿Qué has encontrado que te parece similar?**

AV: El idioma, hay muchas palabras que son... italianas. Y qué no hay en castellano. Esta cosa me gusta mucho es muy hermoso. También la comida, aunque hay *riferimento*, no es la misma cosa, la pizza es diferente pero hay siempre una suerte de legume. Y también una cosa que encontré la gente siempre muy feliz cuando digo que soy italiana, siempre muy "aaa italiana!!!" Y dicen "mi abuelo fue italiano", mi hija está buscando la ciudadanía italiana", "yo quiero ir a Italia", esto es una cosa que siempre siempre.... Cuando digo que soy italiana, siempre muy personas mayores me cuentan también que los italianos eran muy trabajadores, que son parte de la ciudad, que construyeron calles, ferrocarriles, son parte de esta nación, el conductor de colectivo hablo mucho conmigo y me contó mucho de esto.

**RC: ¿Cómo te hace sentir eso?**



AV: Me gusta mucho me hace sentir muy bien. Es esta cosa de que soy extranjera pero no me siento tan. Puedo comprender muy bien cómo piensan acá, también como la cultura, no es tan... Nosotros vivimos muy lejos pero no lo siento así, lo siento cerca. Me gusta mucho estoy muy bien.

**RC: Lo mismo que cuentas, yo tuve experiencia similar en Italia, en vacaciones de verano fui a Italia, fue al pueblo donde era mi abuelo, y en el sur tuve mucha suerte la gente me decía todos en argentina tengo mis parientes, lo mismo que vos me comentas...**

AV: Sí, hay una suerte de *fratellanza*, como una sintonía. Creo que porque tiene mucha cultura italiana y fue una inmigración positiva, seguro fue difícil en el momento, pero creo que parte integrante del país de la nación y por eso no hay sentimientos o no sé, puede ser que haya pero en general son sentimientos positivos.

**RC: ¿Eso te paso en otro lado te sentiste así?**

AV: Diferente, muy diferente. Viajé mucho en Europa, y estuve en lejos solamente en Indonesia y es diferente porque el idioma no conoces, entonces no hay esa posibilidad de comprender si la gente tiene sentimientos positivos o no. Acá es diferente porque puedo comprender, aunque mi español no es tan bueno pero comprendo mucho, puedo ver si una persona me dice cosas. Pero si el idioma no es tan lejos, en Indonesia es completamente diferente, soy una turista y nada más. Y otra experiencia fue en República Dominicana, en Centroamérica, muy diferente porque el idioma es el mismo pero la cultura es muy diferente, no hay nada... me sentí diferente. Acá es diferente.

**RC: ¿Estuviste en otros lados además de Buenos Aires?**

AV: Sí, por ejemplo, en el norte, las cataratas, lugares de turistas, muy hermoso. Y la Patagonia. Y Mar del Plata.

**RC: Muchos italianos fueron a Mar del Plata**

AV: No encontré muchos, estuve pocos días. Había mucho turismo, pero local. Patagonia si muchos extranjeros.

**RC: ¿Y ahí sentías eso del legame?**

AV: Donde hay muchos turistas no hay esa posibilidad, acá en Buenos Aires porque encontré personas que tengo una suerte de vida cotidiana, es diferente

**RC: Como lo de tomar el colectivo...**

AV: Sí, ver un concierto don gente que vive acá, no hay muchos turistas en los centros culturales, o ir a una clase de tango. Es un poco diferente, Patagonia hay muchos, todas las actividades que hice eran actividades de turistas, por eso es un poco diferente.

**RC: Y perdón, antes de venir acá ¿Cómo fue que elegiste argentina?**

AV: Para mí es una cosa muy vieja de la infancia, tenía un *cartoon animazione* Dolce ... El hijo de inmigrantes italianos y cuenta un poco está experiencia de vivir como es difícil ser aceptado.

**RC: ¿Pero era argentino?**

AV: Sí, sí. Me gustó mucho. *Dolce remi*. Para mí era una cosa que tenía de chica, un poco la historia de la emigración me encantaba esa historia, ir a un país tan distante y está migración que fue buena integrada, en Europa tenemos dificultades con la inmigración. Y esa inmigración seguramente tenía

dificultades, pero con el tiempo se integró mucho muy bien, está cosa me gustó mucho la idea de conocer este lugar. No quería ir a un país donde el idioma es una dificultad, y la cultura

**RC: ¿Y lo de la cultura que me mencionabas?**

AV: Sí, este legame, unión, ¿cómo se dice?

**RC: Ligazón, algo que une una cosa con otra.**

AV: Sí, eso, una cosa muy interesante.

**RC: ¿Qué otra cosa me decías?**

AV: Argentina también tiene una historia muy interesante, es muy distinto el norte del sur.

(Suena teléfono y comienza a hablar con su familia)

**RC: ¿Tu familia está en Italia?**

AV: Sí toda mi familia está en Italia. Tengo dos hermanos. Pero estoy en pareja con un alemán que está en Berlín donde yo normalmente vivo en Berlín, y tengo dos hijos que están en Berlín. Pero mi familia está en Italia.

**RC: ¿Pero vos naciste en Alemania, toda tu vida viviste ahí?**

AV: No, mis padres volvieron en Italia con mis dos hermanas, yo tenía 16.

**RC: ¿Y vos fuiste?**

AV: Sí, con ellos, estuve todo el periodo de la escuela y de la universidad en Italia, en Napoli, cerca de Napoli, en Caserta. Fui en Alemania por razón de estudios pero en este año conocí mi marido.

**RC: Tenés mucho pasado migratorio...**

AV: Sí, sí, doble migración. Volver en Italia fue... Yo soy italiana pero no vivía en Italia. El idioma, por ejemplo, era muy difícil para mí porque mis padres no estaban en atención con el idioma, para mí el italiano era solamente el dialecto, hablado no escrito. Entonces yo era extranjera en Italia. Siempre extranjera. En mi país, porque mis padres son italianos, yo no soy una alemana (señala su pelo negro y rizado) pero en Italia tenía el nombre *la tedesca*, la alemana.

**RC: ¿Y en Alemania como te sentías?**

AV: Era muy difícil porque era una inmigración tolerada pero no tan aceptada, porque en este año en los 60 necesitaban trabajadores y la idea era pero vienen y se vuelven a su casa, vienen trabajan y cuando no necesitan más tienen que volver a su casa. Por eso era muy difícil la integración.

**RC: Bueno y cambiando de tema, ¿cómo se te ocurrió venir al museo?**

AV: Porque para mí es un tema muy presente, mis padres tuvieron la dificultad de migrar, no tenían mucho nivel educativo, fue una migración difícil, trabajaban en ámbitos no tan... Fue difícil con la idea de volver en su país. Una inmigración particular, no querían estar ahí, querían hacer dinero y volver a

su país de origen. Es un tema muy presente, con muchas dificultades, pero para mí hoy también mucha... riqueza. Conocer muy muy bueno la cultura alemana, el idioma, yo soy bilingüe...

**RC: Bueno, trilingüe porque tu español es muy bueno también.**

AV: [Risas] No, no es tan bueno, pienso que son palabras en español, pero no son, son palabras en italiano. Para mí es una riqueza porque me siento por ejemplo en Europa una ciudadana europea. Estoy segura en dos culturas.

Y mis hijos que no vivían esta problemática, o este tema de la inmigración, para mí es muy rico. Se sienten alemanes, pero también italianos. Y siempre lo más rico. Por ejemplo, si se habla de comida se sienten más italianos, claro, pero si por ejemplo el sistema educativo se sienten, defienden el alemán. Es una riqueza. Sin estas connotaciones negativas, para mí es muy rico.

**RC: ¿Y tú experiencia en el museo cómo fue?**

AV: No, no fue porque estuve telefoneando, tengo que ir.

[Invita a pasar a visitarlo y luego continuar entrevista]

**RC: ¿Y cómo te fue?**

AV: Me gustó mucho, muy interesante la línea del tiempo, pero me gustaría más saber historias, cómo fue.

**RC: Sí, hay una parte donde se muestra pero hay que tener tu propio cable...**

AV: Sí, y no hay información de la inmigración alemana... Para mí es muy problemática acá, por los nazis. Creo que está mal representada, por ejemplo, fui en Bariloche tenían mucho tiempo alemanes que vivían prosiguiendo la ideología nazi y fue aceptada se puede decir, esa es una cosa muy...

**RC: Sí, creo que no se menciona...**

AV: No, acá no menciona. Hay un cerro que se llama... como un señor de ideología nazista. Y uno vivía 30 años en Bariloche que era criminal del nazismo. Y muchos alemanes venían acá porque emigraron por eso vivían escondidos. Pero me gustaron las fotos. Se pueden ver las caras y que es una experiencia difícil de sufrimiento, sufrir.

**RC: Me olvidé de preguntarte, ¿allá en Alemania o Italia conociste gente que viajó a Argentina?**

AV: Tengo una amiga que es argentina y vive en Alemania, es de Formosa. Y tengo personas que estaban acá alemanas porque por ejemplo una amiga porque él baila el tango, por dos o tres meses. Y la hija de un amigo estuvo acá por 6 meses porque era intercambio de escuela. Y sí. Pero no personas que tienen familia o abuelos o historia.

**RC: ¿Y tu amiga argentina te motivó a venir?**

AV: La única cosa cuando... Era muy simpática y tenía una sintonía y me dice "claro somos parecidas!" me confirmó que la gente no es tan difícil venir acá. Pero me dijo que no es buen período, difícil por la economía, y un poco peligroso, no era... Ella era un poco triste. Pero yo no soy preocupada.

**RC: Ah y una pregunta, ahora que conoces más a los argentinos, ¿en qué se parece y no se parecen Argentina e Italia? ¿Es como vos pensabas?**

AV: Sí, se parece tanto como pensaba. Creo que es una cultura muy europea, estoy segura. Es muy europea. Al menos Buenos Aires, puedo imaginar que pueblos es muy diferente. Pero acá es muy europeo por eso nos gustan las mismas cosas, se puede hablar NO ES tan extranjero, se puede hablar de escritores, de música, es muy similar, se puede hablar sin problemas, y la gente acá sabe muchas noticias de Europa. Mucha gente te cuenta. Es muy similar la apertura, como se saludan las personas, el uso de la mímica, y también los elementos en el idioma, por ejemplo, acá se dice también "valija" en castellano se usa otra palabra.

**RC: Claro en España dicen "Maleta"**

AV: Hay muchas palabras que son palabras italianas, que son diferentes. Los nombres apellidos italianos. También el sentir creo. Tengo la creencia de que se sienten... europeos, no sé, que hay una cosa, muchos elementos de Europa.

**RC: Claro y como vos decís al principio fue una inmigración muy antigua...**

AV: Fue muy buena la Argentina porque el extranjero que viene acá puede *diventare*, cómo se dice..? Convertido. Que está en la constitución, ¿no? "Quien está en este lugar"... Esta cosa por ejemplo en Europa es muy difícil.

RC: Te agradezco mucho, ya terminamos la entrevista.

**Interviewee:** E. Schubert (labelled as ES) **Interviewer:** Rocío Cali (labelled as RC)

**Date of Interview:** February 8, 2023 **Interview setting:** Online

**RC: So, as I was explaining to you, I'll record the interview starting now, please tell me if you agree with this.**

ES: Yes, go ahead.

**RC: Can you tell me about your grandfather and his journey as an Italian emigrant to Argentina?**

ES: Okay. Yeah. My grandfather was Italian of course, my mother grew up in north Italy. But when my mother was about 3 years old my grandmother sort of left her wife and my mother and when to Argentina to start a new life. He was a mechanic working on trucks. I have a document, the only document I have about him, is about immigration, when he arrived in Argentina.

**RC: You have been in the immigration museum?**

Yes, exactly, there I got the certificate. They were very helpful.

**RC: Which information you had?**

ES: I told them the name, I didn't know the ship or dates. Would you like to see the document? I can send you. So, he started a new life in Argentina but he didn't, you know, say that he was previously married or anything else. So, he had a couple of sons. My mother told me he had sons. And when he did stand up his business, that's all I know somewhere in Argentina.

**RC: Your mother stayed in Italy. And then...**

ES: She, my mother eventually came to Australia in 1951. She married someone over in Italy, came to Australia. She was a nurse who studied at Padova University as a nurse, and she came here then she worked as a nurse in Melbourne, Australia. Okay, so she my mother, she moved with her first husband. After she had a divorce for various reasons. She married again and that's my father. My father came from Poland after the war. He was a displaced person in 1948. He came to Australia. He had an opportunity to go to America about he came to Australia because his other Polish friends were going to Australia and he started a new life. He met my mother at the Melbourne General Hospital. He was working there and others a nurse, and this happened in 1950s. Back to Argentina my mother was so upset about my father, please, her father goin to Argentina, leaving her alone. And there was some correspondence early on, and that's where I found out he had a couple of sons, and after she cut off to correspondence, she didn't want to tell me anymore. She was, you know, aggrieved as she left alone, you know, she didn't grow up with a father. So, she grew up with a grandfather in Italy. And her mother was quite strict to the mother wanted to be a schoolteacher, and my mother wanted to be a nurse. So that's one other reasons why she left Italy. As well as married and came to Australia as well. So that's a bit of a family dynamics.

**RC: Correspondence was between your mother and your grandfather?**

ES: That's right. Exactly. So they got on somehow. I kept when after she cut it off. She said I'm too upset. And so, I don't found out you know, any more details, but one thing I didn't mention is I paid someone when I came back to Australia. Sometimes you see on internet the search family history, I paid this guy \$100 might have been \$100 for us to do some searching. See if you can be you know, he said he got access to records used in Buenos Aires. We went to electoral rolls, and we didn't find anything. We went to other data sources, and he said he couldn't find anything. So maybe my grandfather changed his name. He didn't want to be found out. You know, maybe he wanted to change

his identity. He sort of disappeared. Registers are not centralized, I was told. Is that correct?

**RC: Yes. Maybe they are only in certain provinces. Also, sometimes they put like I was trying to get also the papers of the older certificates of my grandparents. And sometimes they write the names differently in the death certificates like my grandfather was not my grand grandfather, who had like five names and then some certificates in Argentina, they only put one name, or they put the Spanish translation. So, you really need to look for all the possibilities when you look for the certificate.**

ES: I didn't know if this guy was you know, just take my money and made-up stories. That's when I contacted your professor. He recommended to go back to Italy, but I haven't had much luck. I think it Italy before, you know a few times, but I didn't have much luck finding out. I have to go maybe one day again, to I've got my mother's a marriage certificate. And I've got my grandmother's devastated as well, but I couldn't find anything about my grandfather. Not that I've searched much. But there must be some records in maybe the parish or the church records for my grandfather in Italy somewhere.

**RC: Yeah, like for example, the birth certificate of your grandfather.**

ES: Yeah, that's what I like to follow that up a one day I might try that.

**RC: Yes... You were more interested in trying to find some traces in Argentina.**

ES: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's right. But maybe on a birth certificate and might give another name or you know, some other clue. I'm thinking, yeah, it could be also his marriage certificate as well. You know what? He was married in Italy?

**RC: Yes, yes. So, did you contact Marcelo at the conference, or where do you meet him?**

ES: I think he gave a speech we have in Melbourne in this cultural institution of Italian, he was a guest speaker. I listen to him. I was very impressed with what he had to say spoke very articulately, very clearly. And he did it via zoom from Argentina as well. So then I contacted him and we had some correspondence.

**RC: The conference was in an Italian Association?**

ES: Yes, yes, that's right.

**RC: So, do you frequently visit these associations or what's your connection to them?**

ES: Yes, I do. Because of my Italian heritage, you know, I go there occasionally, and find out a bit more about Italian culture and also the influence it had on Australia. I don't know if you know, it had a huge influence on Australian culture. Post migration to Australia was huge by Italians and Greeks, and other nationalities. They tried to build... It is similar to Argentina. How they invited you know, people from other nationalities especially the Italians to go there and do the work, especially early part of the 20th century. That's why my grandfather went there in 1923.

**RC: I see... When did you become interest in this search?**

ES: Probably after my parents died. I didn't take much interest a little bit. But But after they died, died, I wanted to know a bit more about the family and see my father was in a the war two, he didn't want to talk much but I went with my father to Poland and met some of his brothers and sisters. And I went with my mother, before she died, to Italy, and she showed me where she grew up. The baptisms played

in the church and I've been to Italy three times. So to see more iterations, but I still keep in contact with them, you know, and hope to go another day and one my son's the youngest son. He wants me to take him Italy to see where his grandmother grew up as well. Maybe next year.

**RC: So you've been going to these places you're really interested in like your roots.**

ES: Yes, and I find that my children go older. I have two boys in their twenties, and as they get older, they ask more questions about my grandparents and about their family history. I've started writing something down about their birth.

**RC: What do you write?**

ES: All right about my mother came here. My father came here they met here, their background where they grew up in Italy, or in Poland, this sort of thing. What the major dents affected him in the Second World War, that sort of thing. And also, my mother, she had you know, growing up in 1920s, as time you know, in Italy was a fascist time. So, I talk about that as well.

**RC: And about your idea to come to Argentina, how, how did it come to your mind?**

ES: When certain friends were going over to Argentina, and I said, I come too and I went over there with him, but I also went independently. I stayed with a family in Buenos Aires and also, I went to Posadas and stayed with another family as well. And my friends, they stayed in hotel so I spent a bit of time with them. But it was the reason the other reason was there was cheap airfares by Air New Zealand at the time to return from Melbourne to Argentina direct flights as well. And I wanted to know because bit more about my grandfather. So, this combination of factors. Yeah, I've made to do go over there to Buenos Aires and look around. See to country.

**RC: So, your friends told you if you wanted to go and...**

ES: Yeah, I had a purpose of, you know, finding out about my family background as much possible. So I went to a few places in helpful, and I couldn't really find much as well. I don't know how hard they were looking.

**RC: Which places you visit?**

ES: One of them was a dead place in where they record... In Buenos Aires. Sort of Archives records. Deaths and funerals is right in the heart of Buenos Aires. And some people they took me around.

**RC: So, did you visit those archives and the Museum of the immigration any other place?**

ES: That's right I visited Museum of Immigration and outside the museum or immigration, there was a long queue of people and asked one of the people working there. What are these people doing here? I said, "Oh, looking for visa to come to stay in Argentina" as well. Do you know that building? Not far for the immigration museum.

**RC: Because it's in the yeah, there is a museum and then the immigration offices.**

ES: That's right. That's where I went. Yeah.

**RC: Any other place? Like relevant you visited any Italian association here or anything?**

ES: Um, I went to the embassy, this Australian Embassy was so busy, but I didn't visit much. I should have gone to some Italian Embassy but I was not aware of it. If I went back again, that's what I'll do. All sorts of a you know, just hopeful and I was just finding my way. Maybe I should have done more research. If I contacted Marcelo, he would have been a big help but it found about him later. Yeah, or someone like you you would know which which is the best place to visit... is there a Italian Association in Buenos Aires?

**RC: Well, there are many of them, but I contact them and they don't usually receive sometimes they receive requests from people asking for information. Like Italians asking for information. I also saw a lot of forums and some people post questions there. But the other thing is, it is still very, very difficult. Also, because they changed the names when people came here. So maybe you need to try with different names and barriers, variations of the names and something like that. Yeah. Yeah, that's something I'm thinking. And you might you mentioned you visit family here. In Posadas. I'm born on site. Yes.**

ES: Yeah. Well, when I saw your family, you know, we used to be a sort of like styles.com You know, heard of that stays, you know, where they put an ad or they saw like, a website, where people from Argentina they advertise, you could come stay with us in a family.

**RC: Okay, can you write in the chat? Or then you can send an email as you prefer, but I'm curious about it.**

ES: Yeah, yeah. I'll send that to later on. And that's why there's a lot of them. And some of them are very accommodating, very friendly, as well. And the first person I stayed with; she was right in the middle of Buenos Aires. She didn't speak much English, but I speak a little bit of Italian so I was replying to her in Italian, as well, but she had a son who spoke a bit of English and she kept students. She had a three story building right in the middle of Argentina. And she had two cleaners and one day, I wanted to help, you know, collect the rubbish and she said, 'no, no, no. No, that's for the cleaners to do their job'. So she was good say snobbish. You could say you know, didn't want to you know, someone else to do their job. And but the other people I stayed were more down to earth people, and now of friendly they treated me like family. I sat at the kitchen table with them and I shared a meal. And I took me around to all these different places like they took me to the Che Guevara Museum. Oh, that's what and they took me everywhere. Very grateful to them. Very nice.

**RC: Oh, how long did you stay with them?**

ES: Probably three or four days probably not very long. Either one, or came back to the other one in Buenos Aires and travel by bus but also with a friend. We went up to Posadas. Stayed up there with a friend and we just did some touristy things and we find we found one of the taxi drivers wanted to take us to the old missionaries.

**RC: Okay, okay. One question. Do you these people were like, if you really like her, what's your experience with these people? You feel them like family.**

ES: The one in Cordoba that family are very like family to me, but the other one was a bit more... Different but I was still helpful. Yes. Well, the sounds were good too. And I met other students who are living there. And one was studying cinema typography. She wanted to be a filmmaker and she spoke English so I had good conversations with her too at the breakfast table.



**RC: Yeah. Yeah, that's nice. Well, maybe you know, I don't know this app. And this this family, do you know if they have some Italian ancestry or not?**

ES: No, ah. She had something in the distant past. I think. I can't remember what was the relation but she didn't really speak much Italian as well. Yeah, it came from big family. The sisters were always there as well. Sisters lived around the corner.

**RC: Ah ok, in which year did you travel to Argentina?**

ES: I was 201, 17 Okay, yeah.

**RC: And before coming here, you you had that in your mind about doing some genealogical research?**

ES: Yes, yes.

**RC: But it was the you mentioned there were many reasons that was not the only one.**

ES: Oh, not only one but I mean, I when you say opportunities like that. You take it up, like I said before, was a cheap airfare plus, the friends were going over as well. Yeah, my friend Catherine. She said it's cheap airfare. And Christine stayed with Christine in a hotel, and I stayed with a family because I wanted to experience in real life in Argentina and I know best way to do this mix with the local people. Instead of a stay in hotel or motel or Airbnb. Your stay in a bubble, you know?

**RC: Yes, absolutely. How long did you stay in Argentina?**

ES: Probably it was about three weeks. I think. I caught the bus from Posadas back to bonus areas and I was sick on a bus as well. That's the first I gave a lot of good food chicken and the you know, slide and then I got sick. And it happens when you travel. Yeah.

**RC: I see... Then when you came here, you didn't try to contact any association for helping you in the research?**

ES: The Australian Embassy. And I didn't think about like the Italian one, I didn't know where to start. Didn't have knowledge didn't and the local people they didn't suggest that I said I was searching my Italian you know, roots, you know, ancestry. Maybe they could have told me something because I kept on going on internet and looking for me.

**RC: I guess the best place is the like you mentioned the immigration museum... Who suggested you to go there?**

ES: No one, I thought to go there initially, but I didn't know how successful... But it was good. I got that piece of paper with my grandfather's name on it from the museum. So that is an official document that actually states the day he arrived and full name, yeah...

**RC: Yeah, yeah, I guess that's you knew that they do that before going? Or?**

ES: No, I was just pleasantly surprised. I had no idea. You know, you go to different countries you don't know what to expect as well. You can't compare to your country. You know, you know what Italy is like as well. For instance, you go somewhere can be hit and miss depends who you go to and where you go. Yeah,

**RC: Yeah. Oh, can you tell me about your experience at the museum, which emotions you had or**

**how was your experience?**

ES: Oh, that's a good question that because I saw all the different displays and artifacts there. I went looking, walking around and you know, I was very impressed. They showed the actual beds where the immigrants were staying, and some of the equipment from 1920s and I saw, you know, old bed and I said, 'I wonder if my grandfather slept in a similar bed' time bid might have stayed in this, you know, he might have used... and they had lots of old black and white photos. As you know, you've been there many times, I'm sure.

**RC: Yes, yes...**

ES: And yeah, I mean, they're very well and I was I was impressed with the old photos. You know, people coming from different parts of the world, mainly Italy and showed the big groups and how they were working or you know, socializing together as well. And I want to take a photo and one of the guards said "no photos".

**RC: I go send you some photos. I took some photos of the photos. So now the yellow taking pictures you need to come again.**

ES: Yeah, that's right. That's very impressive. What they have been done, do they change exhibitions quite often?

**RC: I don't know how it was when you came. So I don't know but I can ask that. Yeah, because they have some I think the main maybe they mean room is the same, I'm not sure. But there is also small one with new things like sounds of migrations very emotional. They have like the sounds of the sea. I don't know if that one was before.**

ES: That's right. I heard that too. That's right. Now that you're mentioned, it is very good. So like I said, they did a good job. You know, it gets quite emotional hearing that and he's thinking maybe my father or sorry, my grandfather, you know, was part of that, you know, it feels some sort of connection to it. It has that emotional effect on you. Yeah, right.

**RC: Yeah, yeah. You said that this was like you felt the connection. Any specific thing you can add on that like what type of connection you went there?**

ES: Yes, I went alone, took the underground called Metro walked up and found eventually I asked her, you know, one of the security guards she spoke English to and I showed it showed a picture of my grandfather (laughs) as well. We had a bit of a conversation. So that was quite interesting because I took the photo of my grandfather, I only got one photo. And so showed it to people and they say 'oh, yeah, very nice'. I can send you the photo, right?

**RC: Yeah. And you were showing and telling your story or what did you want?**

ES: Trying to find some information, you talk to people they might come up with some idea, you know where to go or I feel like that, and sometimes they share their own story as well, too. I think I believe in sharing your stories. That's what we do as human beings.

**RC: Yeah, that's nice. How do you how do you feel when you tell this story or when you when you were telling this story to the people you met on the streets?**

ES: I felt quite proud that my grandfather came to Argentina I felt some kind of connection with Argentina in some ways, you know, because he was there and I wonder if his sons had grandchildren,

you know? Because his sons were born probably... After the war he was a bit older. So, there may be some relatives that are I would like to hook up with one day but ... I can't find anything about my grandfather or sons. I know he had two sons and I know he had a workshop, a garage where he repaired trucks. motor mechanic, that's all I know. So, it's lost. Lost some terrain.

**RC: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. See? You mentioned that you felt like a connection with Argentina.**

ES: Yeah. Yeah. My grandfather went there. He had a family there as well. So, you know, he's, I feel like my dad was there. He had two sons, and maybe he got cousins as well. So that's sort of connection that it is missing. You know, you always try to find family especially as you get older, as well. I find your connection... you're very young. Do you have connected still some sort of connection to your ancestors as well?

**RC: Yeah, because when I did this experience in Italy and Spain, I feel like it's like yeah, like rewriting some story that comes before you something like that, right?**

ES: Yeah, yeah, exactly. Exactly. That's right. I feel quite proud of that. As well. Yeah. Yeah. can be quite emotional. Yeah. Maybe talking about it...People there they could be my cousins because my grandfather was there. You feel some sort of connection. My relatives are here. Connection with Italy was closer, I knew my relations there, I knew who is who. In Argentina I didn't know. In Italy I had a closer affinity. And I talked about my mother, I had a closer connection. If I had a family in Argentina, it would have been different. The family connection is missing there.

**RC: So, it was also your uncle that came here with your father?**

ES: No, it was only my when, when I say uncle, I mean my grandfather's sons. Yeah.

**RC: And also taking into account what you mentioned about Australia is highly influenced by Italians. Did you feel something like that in Buenos Aires? What's different? What's similar?**

ES: It's slightly different in some ways, but because I was born in Australia, and since my mother had a lot of Italian friends as well, family friends, on both sides. So, I grew up with a lot of Italians who came to Australia after the war. A lot of them are passed away now as well. And so would have been something similar, I imagine in Argentina, as well... say if my parents say my mother went over to Argentina and married someone local there. I could have been an Argentinian person with Italian background, as well. So you think about all these permutations, you know, that could have happened as well. The same with my father. He nearly went to America. I could have been born in America the same time. So you think about that. Do you know much about Italian migration to Australia?

**RC: No, not much. I know it was huge also.**

ES: Yeah, it was built up. A lot of them worked in the industries like they brought out the first coffee machine to Melbourne to make a coffee. They made lots of concrete, opened delicatessens where they sell all Italian food. And so those places are still going. There's a place in Melbourne called Lygon Street, where it's full of Italians and now have Italian students come to work at these restaurants. I was there yesterday. And because they speak English with an Italian accent as well, so the connection still continues. Yeah.

**RC: And do you feel like that in Argentina?**

ES: Here I do. I went to a gelato shop in Buenos Aires. And they had all Italians, you know, the same way they make the gelato in Italy. And I had Italian names as well and I said 'it's very Italian too', and

the Italian words. The Italian name, the man who run the shop. I spoke a little bit Italian with him too. I don't speak very good Italian just a little bit. Yeah, so when I went to Italy, my relatives said after three weeks 'your Italian is improving'. But I don't speak the grammar. Well, even though I will learn some Italian that here a Dante Alighieri society they teach Italian here when I was younger, too. But now not much practice. Even though I've got Italian friends yesterday, I met up with a friend who's going to live in Italy for eight months. His parents met my parents after you know 1950s, 1960s And he's still got the Italian connection. He goes to live there for six to eight months.

**RC: Can you explain me what the trip to Argentina means to you?**

ES: I haven't thought about that much...I was impressed with argentina and its history, I'm very happy I went there even if I didn't succeed with my grandfather. But witness famous side, the square of Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, Casa Rosada, the whole outlook is very european to me, the buildings. It doesn't like feel like a southamerican country, the buildins, landscape, the people, the history, looks very European, Spanish, Italian. I didn't know that before going. I learnt about peron and what it meant, the fanacity for football and Maradona, the place where he played. The famous cementery. Now I want to know about what's going on there, the news, I check the weather, stays with me forever.

**RC: Thank you very much.**

**Interviewee:** O. Pellizzari (labelled as OP) **Interviewer:** Rocío Cali (labelled as RC)

**Date of Interview:** February 13, 2023 **Interview setting:** Online

**RC: Como te explicaba antes, empiezo a grabar la entrevista, por favor decime si estás de acuerdo.**

OP: Sí, claro.

**RC: ¿Me podés contar de tu viaje a la Argentina?**

OP: Viajé a argentina en 2008 pero en esa época no sabía de tener tantos parientes en Buenos Aires, en Bragado y Trenque Lauquen. Ya había hecho un árbol genealógico a fines de los '90 y sabía que padre y madre de mi bisabuela habían emigrado a Argentina, pero no sabía ni dónde ni qué habían hecho. En 1978 vino una pareja, ella era una pariente mía, pero yo era pequeño y en esa época no me interesaba de la genealogía, los parientes y todo eso.

**RC: ¿Cómo conociste a tus parientes de Argentina?**

OP: Todo pasó cuando un chico, bueno, tenía... (piensa) en el 2008, o 2009, un día pasó en el pueblo donde vivían mis padres, un hombre con su padre, él venía de París porque había emigrado de buenos aires. Y su papá vivía en Buenos Aires. Y decidieron venir aquí para ver el pueblo de dónde eran.

**RC: ¿Cuál es el nombre del pueblo?**

OP: Condino, en la provincia de Trento, al norte de Italia. Limita con Austria.

**RC: ¿Y vos vivís ahí?**

OP: Normalmente estoy en Trento, porque vivo ahí y tengo casa ahí, pero ahora estoy en Condino, en casa de mi mamá.

**RC: Ah, bueno, bueno. Sí, seguime contando.**

OP: El padre hablaba un poco de italiano, ellos se llamaban Galante de apellido. Mi papá los encontró por la calle y hablando con él, se vieron en un restaurante aquí y el dueño le dijo "ah, sabés, estos dos hombres llegan de Argentina y son de origen de Condino". Y mi papá se puso a hablar con ellos y el padre dijo "soy Galante" y mi abuela era Zulberti y mi papá le dijo "también mi abuela era Zulberti" y... (risas) Y le dijo "¿cómo se llamaba?" y dijo "Magdalena" y la abuela de mi papá se llamaba Clementina. y le dijo "espera un momento, voy a llamar a mi hijo (que soy yo) porque él hizo un árbol genealógico y seguro sabe más de la familia". y ahí me llamó, hablamos en español, yo tenía el árbol genealógico en el despacho de la oficina y encontré que esta madalena era una hermana de mi bisabuela. Entonces empezamos a hablar y me puse de acuerdo con Gabriel, que dentro de, que nos mandaríamos informaciones que teníamos. En un mes después volvió y empezamos a buscar con más información, me dio información de su padre, su madre, abuelo y bisabuelo, y empezamos a conectar (gestos) las informaciones, con esta rama de argentina que yo no conocía o conocía muy poco. Después llamamos a una tía de su padre, de Gabriel, que tenía noventa y pico de años, con el ordenador, y empecé a preguntarle, para entender la relación entre mi familia y su familia. Ah y un año o dos años antes, vino aquí, me llamó un amigo mío que vive en un pueblo cerca, y me dijo "van a llegar una pareja de parientes de Argentina que son Zuberti", y mi amigo mío se llama Zuberti, pero somos parientes lejanos y ahí descubrí otra parte de la familia. Y ahí empezó esta búsqueda de informaciones y descubrí que en argentina tengo más de 100 parientes, algo así, sobre todo en Buenos Aires, en Merlo cerca de Buenos Aires. Y en Bragado, mi bisabuelo, el papá de mi bisabuela, construyó una casa y abrió donde se estudia música, un conservatorio Schopen, ahora está cerrado. Él tocaba música también aquí. Y además otra cosa muy curiosa, me han dicho que aquí en una de las iglesias del pueblo cambiaron el órgano, y el antiguo tenían que echarlo y él se lo llevó, lo hizo llevar hacia Argentina y todavía está en Bragado. Salió del Puerto de Génova, cruzó el charco hacia buenos aires.

**RC: ¿Y esta parte de la historia como la conoce?**

OP: Esto a través de los parientes, que después conocí ahí, cosas que me mandaron ellos. Vi una foto de mi bisabuela porque me la enviaron de Bragado, no, de Buenos Aires, y también mi padre nunca la conoció, y las conocimos por foto que nos mandaron de Buenos Aires.

**RC: A ver, vos viajaste en el 2008 pero...**

OP: Me confundí antes, ellos vinieron en el 2012 o 2013.

**RC: Ahh, entonces primero viniste a Argentina**

OP: Sí, no sabía nada y no busqué nada porque no sabía de estos parientes. así que tendría que volver.

**RC: Y en esa visita a Argentina, ¿qué lugares visitaste? ¿El Museo de los inmigrantes?**

OP: No. Gabriel vino dos veces en 2011 y una vez en 2012. Cuando fui a Argentina llegamos a Buenos Aires, después en avión a Ushuaia, Calafate, Estrecho de Magallanes (piensa)... Península Valdés, Buenos Aires. 23 días.

**RC: ¿Y en Buenos Aires, a qué lugares fuiste?**

OP: Puerto, caminito, no pudimos ir a ver el tango porque fuimos a Colonia, Uruguay, una amiga que viajó tenía a los padres que viven allí cerca. Yo y un amigo mío, yo empecé a estudiar español en 2005, y fuimos a Argentina. En realidad, no vimos muchas cosas en Buenos Aires porque nos quedamos ahí prácticamente dos días llegando y dos días volviendo a Italia. Lo que es increíble es que en 2010 empecé a bailar tango argentino, hasta 2018. Y nada es un poco... cuando pienso esta cosa... Fui a Argentina y no conocía los parientes que tengo ahí y tampoco sabía bailar tango y luego descubrí un nuevo mundo de los parientes que tengo ahí y empecé a bailar tango. Y fue toda culpa de Argentina.

**RC: ¿Cómo surgió la pasión por el tango?**

OP: Por casualidad, una amiga mía me preguntó que quería bailar tango, y yo le dije que no sabía bailar, y tampoco tango, y le dije no, por primera vez, cuando volví de Argentina. Pero en año siguiente fui a México y ella me insistía. y yo 'Cristina, digo no' y me dice "podemos ir a ver, y si te gusta bien. Y empecé" y ... y... ya está.

**RC: Ah, cómo dijiste 'fue todo culpa de Argentina' pensé que ahí había pasado algo.**

OP: No, no por eso, me parece algo... no quiero decir, raro, en el sentido de que cuando fui en Argentina en 2008 no sabía ni de tango ni de parientes, y después aprendí del tango y conocí unos parientes y además... Susana por ejemplo estuvo aquí en... tengo todas las fotos en el ordenador... 2017. Y despacito, despacito voy a conocer a unos parientes más. Y por suerte en Facebook tengo una relación con Gabriel, su padre, un ... su abuelo, y después los primos... "En Facebook ahora tengo más amigos argentinos que italianos. No, estoy bromeando, pero de vez en cuando me piden amistad y digo "¿quién es?" porque normalmente si no conozco no acepto amistad en Facebook.

**RC: Y después intentás hablar con ellos, ¿les preguntás quiénes son?**

OP: Sí, hace dos semanas empecé a escribirme con una Zurberti... no me acuerdo ahora cómo se llama. que me escribió, me pidió amistad en... María Isabel Zurberti y otra que es Virginia Zurberti... y Clemente Galante... como vez, de vez en cuando. es el abuelo de Gabriel.

**RC: ¿Y esa gente cómo se presente?**

Y Virginia me preguntó si somos parientes, y con el árbol genealógico delante en el ordenador, ella me explicó quién era su padre, su abuelo y yo conseguí que... encontrar la relación entre mi rama, mi familia y su familia. Con la otra no encontré, probablemente es una pariente más lejana y entonces no la veo con el árbol.

**RC: ¿Y entonces, qué motivó tu visita a Argentina?**

OP: Ah, una visita para aprender español. Con unos amigos fuimos para aprender español en Granada. Y después viajábamos a España dos o tres veces cada año para practicar español. Y él dijo “España es demasiado pequeña, tendríamos que ir a otro lugar”. podríamos ir a México o Argentina, y dijimos “vamos a Argentina”. Para un viaje turístico naturalístico, para ver los glaciares, los parques, Tierra del Fuego y Calafate...

**RC: Y en ese momento, ¿no había nada de la cultura local que te interesara particularmente de Argentina?**

OP: Claro, para hacer un país hispanohablante para practicar español. Porque en esa época no sabía nada ni de los parientes ni del tango. Todas cosas que aprendí después. Ahora tendría que volver para conocer unos parientes. Por ejemplo, Clemente debe tener 80 años, sería mejor volver pronto. Me gustaría conocerlo. Porque es el pariente creo, más viejo, el que seguro conoce de la historia de la familia. Se fue a Argentina en 1901.

**RC: ¿Qué parentesco tiene Clemente?**

OP: Es un primo segundo de mi papá.

**RC: ¿Entonces estás pensando viajar a Argentina?**

OP: Me gustaría pero tengo compromisos, vino la pandemia, se sigue desplazando el viaje. Pero me gustaría volver, con Gabriel, este primo lejano que vive en París, si volviera a Argentina, este es uno de los programas. Porque él conoce toda la familia y podríamos ver los parientes de Buenos Aires y Bragado por lo menos

**RC: Y ahora otra pregunta, capaz esta es una parte más personal, ¿por qué te gustaría encontrarte con Clemente?**

OP: Para conocer mejor la historia de la familia. Esta parte de la historia de mi familia es algo muy reciente, que he conocido hace unos diez años y que antes no conocía y como me gusta la historia, cuando iba a la escuela no me gustaba, pero un poco es la edad, las historias que me contaba mi abuela, empecé a interesarme y buscar informaciones, sobre todo la familia y el pueblo donde vivían mis padres. Y también los parientes de Argentina, o una buena parte. Y empecé a buscar informaciones, y conocí los parientes argentinos... Una pariente que vivía en Bragado, de noventa y pico de años, me dio una libreta con la historia de la familia, escrita a mano con bolígrafo. Me ayudó a conocer un poco más.

**RC: ¿Lo mandó por correo?**

OP: Sí. Y tengo los archivos que me mandó por correo electrónico. Y gracias a ella conozco más de la historia de la familia.

**RC: ¿Y por qué querés conocer más de la historia de la familia? ¿Qué te genera?**

OP: La culpa es toda de mi abuela, cuando era pequeño me contaba la historia de la familia (pero la familia de mi mamá). Yo los parientes que tengo en Argentina, la mayoría, no todos, son de parte de mi papá. Ella me contaba historias de cuando era pequeña ella, y de la historia de la familia y del pueblo. Empecé a buscar fotos de la familia, fotos del pueblo, informaciones del pueblo, para ver cómo era. Y llegué a escribir dos libros, sobre la primera guerra mundial en el pueblo y en el valle. Probablemente ahora escribiré otras cosas, aquí sobre la historia de la zona.

**RC: ¿Tu profesión es sobre la historia?**

OP: No. Trabajo en un banco. nada que ver con la historia. Y empecé todo por casualidad, como fue una casualidad conocer los parientes de Argentina.

**RC: Vos decías que habías hecho tu árbol genealógico, pero siempre con los parientes de Italia, era menos difícil?**

OP: Era menos difícil, o más fácil. Sabía sobre los parientes de Argentina pero no sabía nada de ellos. Solo cuando conocí a Carlos... Duberti... pude engrandecer el árbol.

**RC: Me pregunto qué es lo que sentís, ¿qué te lleva a armar con este nivel de precisión un árbol? Porque mucha gente no avanza, dice ya está, en tu caso se ve un profesionalismo, qué te lleva a eso?**

OP: Para mí es curiosidad, conocer algo sobre la familia, sobre la historia, nosotros somos los que eran que vivían antes de nosotros (gestos de señalar hace atrás). Somos hijos de la historia, somos hijos de la familia. Y la sensibilidad sobre este tema me llega de mi abuela porque me contaba las cosas cuando era pequeño., y yo decía "otra vez esta historia...". Pero después creciendo comprendí la importancia de esas historias que a veces son increíbles, hoy en día creo que si un niño le cuentas las historias de un abuelo o bisabuelo les parece algo aún más raro, porque es otra época. Es una curiosidad mía, si le preguntas a mi hermana como se llamaba su bisabuela seguro no te contesta, o de las cosas del pueblo, no sabe absolutamente nada.

**RC: Qué interesante... Me pregunto, cuándo empezaste las búsquedas, me dijiste que era difícil, ¿cómo era el proceso? ¿Qué recursos usabas?**

OP: Empecé de mí... y subiendo a mis padres, abuelos, bisabuelos, y también la descendencia. La búsqueda es algo que dices es algo que te (gestos de movimiento), la busca te lleva a buscar aún más, porque encuentras algo y dices "bueno y esto quién es" y sigues buscando (gestos en espiral con las manos hasta algo grande), es algo que crece en el tiempo, crecen las ganas de buscar y encontrar otras cosas y más atrás vas y más difícil es encontrar noticias o encontrar informaciones. Los archivos de la Iglesia por ejemplo son que hay que tener un permiso para ir a ver. Y todo está escrito con mano, difícil de entender.

**RC: ¿Actas de nacimiento?**

OP: Sí. A veces encuentras cosas más interesantes, si te ponen los nombres, Ovidio, padre ... madre... y luego los abuelos y a veces te ponen los bisabuelos. En un acta de nacimiento. A veces ponen cosas que no se ponían y te ayuda muchísimo. A veces te ponen nombre de los padres y poco más... A veces el sobrenombre de la familia, un nombre que distingue a la familia. Cuando hay varios apellidos parecidos, Galante por ejemplo, aquí en el pueblo hay un montón, puedes encontrar un Galante de los padres, no de los madres, pero no es una regla general. Si la mujer llegaba de una mujer importante a veces los descendientes dejaban el sobrenombre de la madre. Y si ponen sobrenombre es una ayuda también esa porque tienes una información que te ayuda a decir "bueno sí, es esa la familia". Es un mundo para descubrir.

**RC: ¿Y para vos, esto es un hobby, una pasión, qué sentimientos tenés vos con estas búsquedas?**

OP: Una pasión más que un hobby. Lo increíble es esta búsqueda que sigue creciendo en el tiempo. Y después lo dejé ahí, tengo todo en el ordenador. Sobre todo porque las descendientes tenés que seguir poniendo porque sigue naciendo nueva gente. Los que están atrás no se mueven. Pero los que están delante por suerte, siguen naciendo niños y casamientos... Pero ahora está ahí, tendría que ir adelante con trabajo. Dentro de mí... tenía este deseo de conocer más, y cuando empecé a armar el árbol genealógico bueno, no fue fácil pero después despacito encontraba un pariente... "¿Pero es él o no es él..?"

**RC: Es de detective, ¿verdad?**

OP: Sí, porque hay nombres repetidos.



**RC: Y visitaste archivos de iglesias, y ¿qué otras fuentes visitaste? ¿O documentos, qué recursos usabas?**

OP: Hasta 1923 todos los nacimientos, muerte y boda estaban en las iglesias. Unos parientes que emigraron en estados unidos, fui a buscar en estados unidos en el sitio de Ellis Island, donde puedes encontrar informaciones sobre un pariente que se fue a Nueva York, puedes encontrar el lugar donde tenía que ir el pariente, por ejemplo, que iba a ir a ver a su primo (con el nombre) que vivía en no sé Siracuse. Una hermana de mi bisabuela se casó y se fue para allá y ellos estuvieron aquí unas veces y en 2018 estuvo una nieta de los dos que se fueron a EEUU y estamos en contacto en Pascua.

**RC: Y del lado de parientes de Argentina, ¿consultaste alguna página web?**

OP: Busqué páginas blancas de Bragado. Se encuentra un montón de gente, muchos italianos. Pero no llamé a nadie. Conocí a Gabriel y todo salió más fácil así que no busqué nada más.

**RC: ¿A Gabriel lo conociste después de hacer la búsqueda de páginas blancas?**

OP: Después, poco después. Probablemente tengo unas copias con los resultados de páginas blancas de Bragado. Pero no llamé a nadie, hablé con otros parientes verdaderos y tengo unas direcciones electrónicas y de vez en cuando nos escribíamos, ahora llevo mucho tiempo sin contactos.

**RC: Y esos correos te ayudó Gabriel a obtenerlos?**

OP: Sí, claro.

**RC: Me mencionaste la página de Ellis Island, hiciste búsqueda en otros sitios?**

OP: No me acuerdo, pero sí usé. En Estados Unidos hay más páginas, se encuentran un montón de informaciones, más que en Argentina, ancestros o algo así. Hay que pagar, poner tus datos, puede ser útil, te ayudan a hacer un árbol genealógico. Busqué información de una iglesia del pueblo, la reformaron en 2019, encontraron unas firmas de soldados que estuvieron aquí durante la primera guerra mundial, y yo estoy haciendo una búsqueda de estos soldados, y encontré una página de Estados Unidos de uno de estos soldados que se fue para allá con la familia y allí tuvo hijos. Y esto lo encontré en una página de Estados Unidos, no de Italia. Llamé al ayuntamiento en Italia y ellos me dijeron que él sí había emigrado. Es una de las tantas búsquedas históricas que hice y estoy haciendo, de otro tipo, no tiene nada que ver con la familia.

**RC: ¿Y respecto a los que fueron a Syracuse, en Estados Unidos, has viajado o pensado viajar?**

OP: Sería una hermana de mi bisabuela que se casó y fue para allá y tuvo dos hijos, y ellos estuvieron aquí algunas veces. Y antes de la pandemia 2018 o 2019 estuvo aquí la nieta de los dos que se fueron a Estados Unidos y nos estamos en contacto en Pascua y Navidad todos los años, sabes.

**RC: ¿Y cómo se inició el contacto con ellos?**

OP: Yo cuando era pequeño el contacto seguía, ellos emigraron en 1914 y después de la primera guerra mundial volvieron a Italia, pero como no había trabajo y era una situación bastante difícil volvieron a Estados Unidos y se quedaron ahí, con los dos hijos.

**RC: Estaba pensando, si me decís que le pregunte a tu hermana o tus primos, ¿ellos no se acuerdan?**

OP: Ellos no se interesan, es algo que no les pertenece, no les interesa, es un mundo que no... Todo mío prácticamente en la familia. Ah, mi mamá y mi abuela... Mi abuela ha muerto con 98 años, y tuvo tiempo de contarme muchas cosas.

**RC: ¿Y conoces otras personas con intereses similares?**

OP: De la historia sí, genealógico no... Tenemos un grupo de whatsapp sobre la historia de las guerras mundiales, o de los primeros años del siglo pasado... Ah de familia sí, hay un chico de Condino que me

dijo hace veinte días “estoy buscando informaciones sobre la familia”, y él está haciendo investigaciones más completo que el mío, porque con internet consigue buscar más informaciones. Yo cuando empecé a usar el árbol había internet, pero no se usaba mucho. Hoy es más sencillo que estamos más acostumbrados. Me pidió unos archivos que tengo en el ordenador con muchas informaciones, que él no tiene. Me lo dio uno del pueblo que lleva un montón de años haciendo búsqueda histórica desde el año 1000 hasta hoy, puso en un archivo de Word todos los datos de la iglesia.

**RC: ¿Y esta persona lo hace con qué datos? ¿De qué región?**

OP: Lo hace con datos del pueblo, no sé si hizo también sobre otros pueblos, él es de Condino e hizo investigaciones sobre Condino. Pero hizo investigaciones muy antiguas sobre otros pueblos de aquí del valle. Y cuando terminan las informaciones sobre el pueblo, hay que buscar otras informaciones sobre otros pueblos.

**RC: Y ahora tengo algunas preguntas sobre tu experiencia en Argentina, quería saber tus impresiones de tu viaje en Argentina.**

OP: Conocí a muchas personas que decían ‘ay mi abuelo mi bisabuelo era italiano’. Fuimos a las abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, ahí una señora que hablaba bien italiano nos explicó de dónde venía, pero que los abuelos.... Ella tenía un apellido italiano, como muchos argentinos. Pera mis los argentinos un 40% tiene por lo menos un pariente italiano, y un 40% español y lo que queda del resto del mundo” (risas) En Ushuaia conocimos una señora que su abuelo... Ah era de Austria, mi pueblo hasta 1918 era Austria, ahora es Italia. Y también ella su abuelo o abuela llegaban de Austria y Hungría. Y yo le dije ‘bueno yo también era de Austria una vez’, mi abuela por lo menos nació sobre el imperio austro húngaro. Entonces argentina es un mundo *variegato*, un montón de nacionalidades, te das cuenta cuando viajas a Argentina.

**RC: Han transcurrido tantos años que en un principio la gran mayoría era italianos...**

OP: Para mí la mayoría tienen al menos un pariente italiano o español, pero serán una gran parte de los argentinos.

**RC: Y más allá de los apellidos, ¿ves otras cosas en que se refleja eso? Qué elementos de la cultura?**

OP: Bueno, el idioma hablando español... pero además hay palabras que son españolas pero *italiano*, como el *lavoro*, en lugar de trabajo; o el aeropuerto en lugar de ‘llegadas’ dice ‘arribos’, vi o me di cuenta de unas palabras que son más italianas que españolas. Entonces puedes tocar con la mano esta italianidad y la españolidad. También el modo de vivir de la gente, de pensar, se parece mucho a Italia, sobre todo la Italia del sur. Lamentablemente... Si vas a Bariloche seguro se la cultura no es ni italiana ni española, porque Bariloche son más suizos o un lugar un poco particular. Por ejemplo, los italianos que les decían tanos, las amigas que conocí me llamaban tanito, tanto llega del “napoletano”. Lamentablemente los únicos argentinos que conocí dos chicos que eran de la agencia de viaje que nos organizaba los viajes, a Perito Moreno, al Chaltén, estamos todavía en contacto. Ideal sería poder entrar a una familia, estar con ellos unos días y así te das cuenta cómo vive la gente y cómo piensa. La mayoría de la gente viaja para turismo y sí claro puedes ver El Calafate, El Chaltén, el Perito Moreno, pero para conocer mejor un lugar hay que conocer a la gente, no? Quedarte unos días con una familia, entender mejor la vida de la gente y cómo vive la gente, que es una parte importante para entender un pueblo, una raíz. A mí me gusta muchísimo cuando viajo me gusta conocer a la gente, hablar con la gente, e ir a comer a donde va la gente de ese lugar, y no ir donde van los turistas, que ahí no puedes ver cómo vive la gente. En México he comido los *chapulines*, sabes qué son? Es un insecto.

**RC: Claro, entiendo... Y si hicieras un nuevo viaje a Argentina, te gustaría conocer formas de la cultura local que quizás no pudiste conocer... ¿Te interesaría conocer asociaciones de italianos en Argentina?**

OP: En Buenos Aires hay "Trentini nel mondo", una asociación de Trento, seguro en Buenos Aires hay una sede. Si volviera a Argentina me gustaría quedar con los parientes para conocerlos y viajar a algunos lugares sobre todo la naturaleza me ha gustado más. Hay muchas cosas que me gustaría ver, del norte, de Salta, bajar a Mendoza, Córdoba, Bariloche. Y volver al Sur, como turista para ver Argentina la naturaleza sobre todo que es lo que me ha gustado más de Argentina. Si no tuviera parientes allá seguros las asociaciones de italianos sería un ... pero no solo de italianos, sería una parte nada más de Argentina, en Argentina hay un poco de todo. Claro, los italianos son muchos, los españoles también, pero hay otras culturas. Quedar en contacto con la gente es lo mejor que puede pasarte para quedar en contacto con el pueblo, conocer las costumbres, lo que la gente hace, cómo vive.

**RC: Sí, yo comparto esa idea... Muchas gracias.**

**Interviewee:** M. Barella (labelled as M. Barella) **Interviewer:** Rocío Cali (labelled as RC)  
**Date of Interview:** February 17, 2023 **Interview setting:** Online

**RC: Como te mencionaba antes, tengo que grabar la entrevista, voy a empezar a hacerlo ahora, por favor decime si estás de acuerdo.**

MV: Sí, sí.

**RC: ¿Me podés contar qué te motivó a venir a Argentina?**

MV: Participé en proyecto de la Provincia de Trento *Interscambi giovanili*, donde tengo que hospedar en mi casa 20 días un chico o chica de raíces trentinas [inaudible]. Muchos chicos de distintas partes del mundo llegan en el mismo período. Luego estos chicos pueden volver a ese país a volver a encontrar el chico que hospedaron. La provincia organiza eventos diferentes cuando llegan los chicos que tienen raíces. Por 3 años no se hizo, por el COVID. Mi *ospite* era de San Paccio, un pueblo en la provincia de Córdoba. Tengo una nueva adicción (ríe y mientras se prepara un mate).

**RC: Te pegaron el vicio c ¿Quién lo organza?**

MV: La Provincia Autónoma de Trento. Ellos cubren pasaje y la estadía en una casa de familia. Yo agregué otra cosa al proyecto, porque no me gusta estar un mes viajando con dinero público. y contacté al Círculo Trentino en Argentina, y me interesaba entrevistar a todos para armar un espectáculo. Yo digo que nuestro país tiene que agradecer a Argentina, porque muchos fueron para tener una vida mejor. Y no solo eso, los que se quedaron en Trento eran los más ricos, entonces ayudó a Italia.

**RC: ¿En qué sentido decís que ayudó?**

-Entonces ayudó dos veces. por eso no hay que olvidarnos de eso... Puede hacer bien a Argentina e Italia. He conocido mucha gente que tienen muchas raíces acá y quieren venir... Y nosotros tenemos natalidad cero. Y aceptar que necesitamos que... Necesitamos que los argentinos vengan a Italia. Entonces hice todos los contactos del círculo culturale de Trentini nel Mondo. y les dije que estaba yendo por el intercambio estudiantil y les propuse si querían compartir un poco de tiempo. me hospedaron y me dijeron "llegá, llegá", con asado, fiestas, regalos, me *portaron* me buscaron *en giro*... En Buenos Aires, Córdoba, San Paccio, Fiesta de Jesús María, sierra, Mendoza, La Pampa toda provincia, Bahía Blanca, Mar del Plata, Corrientes, Resistencia, Saenz Peña, Iguazú. Puede conocer el cacique, la fiesta del pueblo, participar en intercambios de idiomas, conocí actores de teatro, fui a la radio, al telegiornale, todo eso a la voluntad de la gente de Argentina que ama nuestro país. Porque son hijos de inmigrantes, el 40% de la población eran italianos. Entonces no puedo decirte si lo puedo llamar turismo eso, porque eso.

**RC: ¿Por qué no lo llamarías turismo? ¿En qué se diferencia?**

MV: Porque la intención del turismo, es llegar, aprovechar de un lugar, es ser tratado como turista, tú no eres un viajador, un amigo, yo percibí en Mendoza capital sí fui turista. En todos los lugares no. Ahí no fue compartir la cultura, fue vender el vino y no me gusta esa manera, no me gusta ser tratada como persona que viene en vacaciones, hice todo para no estar como persona que va en vacaciones. Tengo contacto con universidad de Saenz Peña con la de Trento. Y ya comprendo mucho de la política, entender el peronismo 40 días (decían lo aman, lo odian), creo que entendí la cuestión sin *sembrar* arrogante.

**RC: Hay gente que estudia toda la vida y no logra entender el peronismo [risas]. Contame, vos recibiste una chica de Córdoba en tu casa, por el intercambio. ¿Cómo fue esa experiencia?**

MV: Maravillosa, maravillosa [she smiles as she makes energetic movements with her arms].

**RC: ¿Cómo fue cuando recibiste a esa chica?**

MV: Yo tengo sensación de desarraigo, mis raíces son del sur, no de Trento, hablo mucho, acá son más cerrados. Así fue como encontrar una prima, como la primera vez que la miré que bajar del colectivo fue un abrazo. El novio donde vivía estaba aburrido porque era trentino. A veces algunos que se hospedaban en otro pueblo de la zona venían a mi casa y se quedaban ahí. Los trentinos el proyecto hacían salida al museo, y tu ibas con ellos, era muy estructurado, fue una conexión que cuando nos encontramos de nuevo, después de tres años de COVID, lloramos, yo con la familia de ella, fue una fiesta, una experiencia bellísima, ella es una hermana Argentina. Tú tienes una parte de tu familia, porque es una conexión muy fuerte con ella.

**RC: Antes de esta experiencia, ¿qué sabías de Argentina?**

MV: Un poco de La internacional, una economía un poco, leía un poco de Borges, el realismo mágico, la parte cultural, una cultura un poco inaccesible como un muro, porque me parece imposible que de un continente de Sudamérica un país grande no sabía mucho de la cultura, de la pintura, no era accesible para mí. Cuando fui a hablar de las personas allá, era cerrado, la cultura de los *indiani originari* me era desconocida, pero yo sabía que estaban. Yo sabía que fueron algunos nazis, pero de la guerra... de los desaparecidos, de la cultura yo tenía un espectáculo con el profesor de tango, pero no sabía del folclore. Fui a Jesús y a la Fiesta de la Reina del Trigo (risas).

**RC: Claro, en Buenos Aires no se escucha tanto folclore, pero a mí me encanta...**

MV: Buenos Aires es completamente diferente de la cultura argentina, porque es la capital, como... muy internacional.

**RC: ¿Qué viste que te llamo la atención?**

MV: Es muy intercultural, se viaja más rápido, no se conoce la cultura originaria... La primera ciudad que visité fue Buenos Aires, entonces aprendí después la diferenciación. Y yo decía "son todos muy abiertos muy simpáticos", de compartir, maravilla, y después ir al pueblo más desconocido y ahí vi lo que es realmente compartir. Por ejemplo, el mate, el mate se toma menos, en Buenos Aires lo vi menos, estuve 7 u 8 días. Me encantó si vivo en Argentina viviría en Buenos Aires o Córdoba. Para mí es un tiempo de aprovechar del tiempo, como en una gran capital.

**RC: ¿Y en qué se diferencia de otras ciudades?**

MV: Todo puedes probar pero hay todo pero todo es muy hay un pedazo que *sembra* para el teatro, un espacio antiguo... Cada barrio es diferenciado. No es que encontrás de todo un poco en cada lado. Vas a caminito, vas a River, la arquitectura es diversa. La sensación es que otras ciudades son más uniformes, yo soy enamorada del arte y contradicción, muy fascinante todo el tiempo, Buenos Aires es la más grande contradicción del mundo, eso me encantó.

**RC: Sí, entiendo lo que decís... ¿Y cómo percibís, qué observaste de las influencias de la cultura italiana?**

MV: Te digo... Cuando estaba en Argentina me siento más una trentina argentina, que una trentina trentina.

**RC: ¿Por qué? ¿Cómo sería eso?**

MV: Porque la Argentina es más parecida a la parte de mí del sur de Italia, pero cuando hablaba con trentinos trentinos, tenían el problema que yo percibía del trentino. Por ejemplo, de familia, su abuelo era trentino, y no abrazaba a los hijos, porque no es cultural, es cultural así, para mí es un problema así, porque nosotros no nos abrazamos. Esa cultura del compartir de Argentina, me parece más compartir al sur de Italia, los nombres, a ver, yo estaba en *Palermo*. Los nombres de las calles, los apellidos, un montón de apellidos italianos, la cultura en el teatro Colón, lloré en el Colón... Pero lloré

muchas veces en Argentina por la belleza, por cómo me recibió la gente, la cultura del mate me encanta. Para nosotros es una locura que el profesor comparta un mate en clase... Aprenden folclore en la escuela, bailan muy bien. Una de las chicas de Buenos Aires que me hospedó era milonguera, fuimos a una milonga normal, típica (gestos con la mano en el corazón), tenía piel de gallina maravillosa [she points out her arms]. Cuando hablé con el cacique también, de ir a Córdoba muy rápido todo fui al cacique en Chaco, muy serios, Avellaneda no. Allá muy alegres y simpáticos, y había mucha *povertá*, y una energía muy pesante, sentía que era *un'altra Argentina*. El cacique hablaba despacio y pesante, yo tenía que hacer esfuerzo. Fui con Rafaele Agnelli, representante político de Sáenz Peña. Y también fuimos a la universidad, en la universidad eran peronistas.

**RC: ¿Qué viste en Buenos Aires?**

MV: Milonga, Teatro Colón, Av. Corrientes, Teatro San Martín, Centro Cultural Konex, Recoleta, Puerto Madero, el Jardín Japonés, La Bombonera, Plaza de Mayo el Jardín de Rosas, el museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Palermo... Avenida Libertador, San Telmo, la Catedral... Cementerio de Recoleta, el otro, confitería ideal, Barrio judío, casa de Gardel, fui al museo de los inmigrantes pero estaba cerrado, por una semana. Yo llegué el 5 de enero.

**RC: ¿Cómo se te ocurrió ir al museo?**

MV: Me lo aconsejaron de Trento, la organizadora del intercambio.

**RC: ¿Fuiste a visitar alguna asociación trentina?**

MV: Hablé con Mariano Rocca, María Ángeles Prego, y fui al Círculo Cultural Trentino, hablamos de la historia, de cultura de inmigrantes allá, de cómo se fundó, de cuándo, fue muy interesante (puedo darte contactos). Buenos Aires me organizó todo de manera muy turística. Teníamos una media de 30.000 pasos al giorno. No he visto propio la cotidianidad de Buenos Aires porque es de una gran ciudad. Me fue a buscar al aeropuerto un señor que escribió un libro y está en la radio, Guillermo Fontes.

**RC: ¿Qué pensas de las influencias italianas en Argentina?**

MV: Como te decía, creo que es una gran influencia, la *persipisco*, algunas veces me parece, en Caminito me siento... Como muy turista, Buenos Aires para mí es una ciudad con una cultura de la gente, no encuentro quello que imagino un europeo de Sudamérica, la gente, la gente es muy abierta, esa es la parte que me sembra más original, la cultura de la guante, del compartir, es común a toda la Argentina. sé que llegar a una capital con la buena onda de la vencida del mundial es otra cosa. Con Maradona, yo tengo raíces de Napoli, la gente es siempre abierta, yo llegué y me enamoré de este país y sabes cuando te enamoras por primera vez todo te parece más grande, más bello. Después de un año no sé, llegué con un enamoramiento general.

**RC: ¿Y cómo eran las reacciones de la gente cuando decías que sos italiana?**

MV: Lo mismo, en el sentido de que siempre "*italiana!, sono italiano anch'io*", el 90% me decían "ah o soy italiano", "tengo pariente italianos", *sembra chi tutti sono italiani*, me hablaban de tener la ciudadanía italiana... Todo esto de familiaridad era constante. Esto he descubierto de otros países. Como una predisposición a comprender mi especial idioma de italianolo. Todo era muy rápido muy bien, la gente tenía una actitud, una predisposición mejor a entender mi idioma un poco mejor que en otro lugar del mundo. Es una tierra acostumbrada a recibir inmigrantes.

**RC: ¿Cómo te hacía sentir cuando la gente reaccionaba así?**

Era interesante, me parecía extraño, y yo decía "¿italiano de dónde?" y no sabían, y nos reíamos. Yo estaba en una tierra extranjera y te digan que reconocen *qualcosa di te* en la tua familia, en la *sua storia*... maravillosa [she smiles]. Me hace feliz, obvio que sentía una conexión.

**RC: ¿Se da más en el interior? ¿O dónde más?**

MV: Me llamaban “la tana”, es diferente del gringo... Y que reconozcan que también tienen raíces italianas, me daba cuenta que es *sensu positivo de accoglienza*. no de etiquetamiento. En Buenos Aires era más normal el recibimiento de alguno. en el interior hacían una fiesta, un asado, la mega cena y mega *pranzo* porque “llega la trentina”, me trataban como una reina, me hicieron muchos regalos. Si pudiese vivir en Argentina me encantaría. Nosotros queremos hacer conocer los parientes italianos lejanos que quedan en Italia. Yo creo que, según mi percepción general, el italiano se olvida de que han sido inmigrantes, hay una percepción general de que se inmigrantes, la mayoría piensa que fue a América del Norte y han creado la mafia. No saben que han emigrado a Argentina.

**RC: Muchas gracias por compartir tu experiencia, gracias por tu tiempo.**

**Interviewee:** C. Vernarelli (labelled as CV) **Interviewer:** Rocío Cali (labelled as RC)

**Date of Interview:** February 23, 2023 **Interview setting:** Online

**RC: Como te explicaba antes, empiezo a grabar la entrevista, por favor decime si estás de acuerdo.**

CV: Sí.

**RC: ¿Me podés contar cuántas veces viniste a Argentina?**

CV: Fui una vez, el año pasado, para Navidad. Conozco muchos amigos de Rosario sobre todo, buenos aires y mar del plata, Maxi Manzo, que está trabajando en el proyecto del Turismo de las Raíces, Petro Vechi, del COMITES, de la región Emilia Romagna. Tenemos una asociación de Abruzzesi nel Mondo, y en Argentina está la Federación Abruzzesi en Argentina, hay en Mar del Plata, Buenos Aires varias, Bahía Blanca, Tandil creo y algunas más. Tengo esta pasión empezó por el fútbol, yo nací y crecí en Italia, y en Bruselas tenía dos amigos argentinos muy cerca, uno fue a Londres, Pipo, un cocinero, y otro volvió a Mendoza, hablando con ellos y escuchando música empezó esta pasión. Hay un montón de españoles en Bruselas, pero me gusta más la cultura argentina. España está muy cerca, pero me gusta más la cultura argentina, la música, el fútbol, me gusta el mate [he sips mate]. Y bueno, “ya está” [he laughs].

**RC: ¿Y qué te motivó a viajar a Argentina por primera vez?**

CV: Viajar en agosto es perder el verano, compré el billete el día de mi cumpleaños, con escala en Madrid, para ir en verano en Argentina. Y me salió bastante barato, como 700 o 800 euros porque lo saqué con anticipación. 20 o 21 de diciembre hasta 5 o 6 de enero. Tenía la idea de encontrar todas las comunidades italianas en Buenos Aires, Rosario, Mar del Plata, pero ahí no es fácil tomar aviones, el bondi, como se dice allá, sale bastante caro y son muchas horas. Fui con mi amigo Eduardo que también le gusta el fútbol y todo eso. Estuvimos en Buenos Aires, Rosario, luego Mar del Plata, Buenos Aires, después casa. Fue un gran viaje, tenía ganas también de visitar Uruguay, pero había COVID y tenía que mostrar un papel para entrar.

**RC: ¿Entonces qué motivó tu viaje, querías ver las asociaciones?**

CV: Tenía ganas de viajar, visitar las asociaciones y tener verano, pasar Navidad en verano, nos juntamos el 24 por la noche, y el 25 a comer. Acá estamos acostumbrados a una Navidad distinta, allá era verano.

**RC: Sí, hace mucho calor en Navidad...**

CV: La gente se reía porque llegué todo blanco...

**RC: ¿Qué amigos ibas a encontrar en Argentina?**

CV: Nosotros tenemos cada año una cita global con Abruzzesi nel Mondo, es un año en Italia y al otro año en otro año, también muchos proyectos que discutimos por zoom, en Argentina se hacen muchos proyectos sobre Abruzzo, pero son cosas diferentes porque, la inmigración en Argentina es muy vieja, del siglo pasado, la inmigración en Europa es más recientes. Algunos me decían en Argentina que son italianos porque mi bisabuelo nació en un pueblo en Italia.

**RC: ¿O sea acá la gente te decía que ellos eran italianos?**

CV: Sí, bueno en Rosario todavía hay una inmigración reciente después del segundo conflicto mundial. Mucha gente hablaba italiano, me sorprendió, no todo el mundo, pero hablaban bastante bien italiano. Estaban los cursos de la Dante, del Consulado italiano, la gente decía soy italiano, me decían yo soy como vos. Ah, allá también lo conocí a Marcos. Pasaron ya dos años... (se lamenta). La gente me decía cada vez que puedo voy a Italia, ir a Italia significa viajar ir a Firenze, Roma, no van tanto a Abruzzo. Pero el gobierno ahora empezó esta política del turismo de las raíces, conocer de dónde venía tu



abuela, tu abuelo, tu mamá. Te cuento que me pasó, no sé si conocés a los COMITES. Fui elegido representante del COMITES de Bruselas, y esta semana me fui con un amigo ítalo-uruguayo a la Embajada, bueno, italiano pero pero él no habla nada del idioma, ni sabe dónde queda Italia. Y él quería un certificado de matrimonio. Y yo fui con la mujer y la esposa y le dije “tenés que hablar un poco de italiano”, y son cosas que no me gustan, creo que por lo menos, tener una ciudadanía es hablar un idioma, es italiano, no es ruso. Y él no lo sabía leer. Pero me parece bastante raro que hay una ley que no tome un examen, si querés tener la ciudadanía, tenés que tener el italiano, por lo menos un B1.

**RC: Cuando hay matrimonio con un italiano, ahí se rinde examen de idioma. Si no, rige el derecho de sangre y se hereda la ciudadanía.**

CV: Para mí el Estado debería hacer esto, no me parece bien tener un pasaporte sin conocer el idioma, tener el pasaporte es conocer la ley, hoy voy a jugar al fútbol con un amigo italiano uruguayo que tampoco habla nada de italiano, no me parece normal, y le dije hay que aprender y me dice que no puede. Creo que habría que tomar un examen de idioma y cultura italiana, con todos, conocer la ley

**RC: ¿Y en Argentina cómo te sentías como la gente te decía que eran italianos?**

CV: Tuve sensaciones positivas, era una comunidad abruzzesa grande en Rosario y Mar del Plata, en bs as solamente conocí algunos representantes nada más, obviamente porque la ciudad es muy grande. En Rosario fui a la familia abruzzesa de rosario y al Círculo Italiano, y uno se sentía italiano, por lo que hacen y lo que hablan. si uno comparte una identidad y una cultura, y hace como si fuese Italia, esto me gusta. Me decían, “sabemos que esto no es Italia pero me gustaría que esto se haga y sea como Italia”. Se puede compartir una identidad sin tener el pasaporte. La cosa importante que te decía del idioma, se puede hablar un poquito, el resto no me importa, se puede compartir una identidad sin tener el pasaporte. Algunos todavía me hablaban el dialecto abruzzese, como el abuelo de Maxi Manzo, había profesores de italiano, y había gente con pasión por Italia que decía soy ítalo-argentino. Claro que no me molestaba, decía qué suerte que tienen un buen presidente. Hace el proyecto del museo de cultura abruzzesa. Organizaron una fiesta teatral en Rosario, una historia de inmigrantes, me gustaba esa cultura de nací y me crié en Argentina pero mi cabeza y mi corazón están en Italia.

**RC: Vos ya viajaste a otras asociaciones abruzzesa en el mundo, ¿esto pasa en todas las asociaciones abruzzesas?**

CV: Fui a NorteAmérica, allá en Argentina me decían “se dice Norteamérica”, para nosotros América significa norteamérica. Es distinto porque en Argentina el italiano es una cultura local, en Europa estamos con la misma moneda, muy cerca de cada ciudad, en Argentina, a la gente le daba *joia* de compartir esta como explicarte esta cultura este sentimiento de ser algo más que argentino.

**RC: Entonces, me interesa, si vos comparás tu visitas a otras asociaciones abruzzesas, ¿cómo fue diferente respecto a tus visitas a otras asociaciones en todo el mundo?**

CV: En Bruselas tenemos una asociación, yo soy el presidente, en Europa es una inmigración más nueva, del '50 o '60, tenemos contacto directo con Italia, en Argentina había gente que le gustaba quedarse con una cultura más además de la argentina, pero nunca tuvieron oportunidad de viajar. Decían no puedo viajar porque tengo una familia, tengo dos hijos, pero les gustaba compartir conmigo... La navidad del 2021 la pasé en Rosario con una familia abruzzesa y calabresa. Había fotos de Argentina e Italia y hablaban un poco italiano, estaba la RAI 1. A la señora le gustaba mirar la RAI 1, es un canal bastante viejo, le gustaba mostrar su pertenencia a Italia, y eso me gustó. Y la sede de la asociación en Rosario es enorme, un restaurante gigante, un hotel, lugares para conferencias y una escuela de italiano. Es un laburo más que una pasión. Y también estaba el coro folclorístico abruzzese. Pasamos la noche de 22, 23 de diciembre, cantaban en italiano, estaba un poco no sorprendido, había muchas ganas de ser italiano, con gente que no puede viajar más, y me decían sabías que en Abruzzo.

O decían voy el año que viene a Italia y decían que querían volver, tengo una casa e Abruzzo, y para mí era muy importante, nosotros siempre somos italianos fuera de Italia, como culturalmente no soy belga pero respeto la cultura belga. No sé si puedo ser belga, son cosas culturales, no puedo ser español por más que me guste mucha España.

**RC: ¿Y de Argentina?**

CV: Podría viajar en Argentina todos los años, pero vivir 1 día. estamos acostumbrados a un nivel de vida muy europeo. Llegué a Argentina y el peso estaba \$223. A los quince días estaba \$280. En Argentina negocian el salario todos los años por la inflación. Me gusta la cultura, decir la cultura del Río de la Plata, Argentina y Uruguay es la misma cultura, me gusta escuchar la música argentina, tomar un fernet cola, asado con mis amigos, me siento parte de una cultura, lo comparto, pero no me siento argentino, me gusta el fútbol, vi todos los partidos de Argentina y se armó alto quilombo [he sings songs of Argentinian football team]. Cuando estuve en Rosario, me decían este lugar no vayas, este lugar no, esto es una villa. Acá en Europa hay diferencia, pero no tanto. Los amigos “chetos” de Argentina no se mezclan con los de los barrios pobres. Los amigos que tengo de Uruguay que son bastante chetos no se mezclan con los otros. Esto también lo vi en Rosario. Son cosas que no puedo entender, porque en Europa alguien te dice trabajo en la Comisión Europea y a nadie le importa si tenés un iphone o no, si tenés un coche o no, en Argentina alguien que le va bien, se queda más o menos con gente de su círculo social.

**RC: Sí, entiendo...**

CV: Me gustaba el concepto de barrio, amar azul, me gusta la cumbia y Los Palmeras, Damas Gratis y la gente me decía “Por qué escuchás eso?” Mis amigos me decían que soy turro y les canto [he sings a *Cumbia* song].

**RC: ¿Cuánto estuviste en Argentina? Me sorprende cuánto que conocés de la cultura acá...**

CV: Estuve 15 días, pero mucho conocí por internet, y con mis amigos. Soy hinchita de River Plate. Estoy abriendo un poco de mi cabeza. Lo primero que hice fue ir al estadio de River [he shares a personal anecdote of a taxi trip].

**RC: ¿Qué visitaste en Buenos Aires?**

CV: Visité el estadio de River, casi toda la ciudad... En el sur, cerca de Quilmes, un lugar... Berazategui

**RC: ¿Qué hay ahí?**

CV: Una comunidad de italianos. y Lomas de Zamora. También Palermo, Belgrano, cementerio de Recoleta, Puerto madero, Vicente López hablé con el presidente. También la comunidad piemontesa Florencia, conozco a la presidenta, era una de las primeras asociaciones de Piamonteses, que se mudaron a la Argentina en la prehistoria. Hay gente que habla todavía italiano, les gusta hacer muchos proyectos. Mi amigo Maxi en Mar del Plata, hablan italiano, hacen cosas por los italianos, tengo otro amigo, Marcelo Carrara, de Mar del Plata, que habla muy bien italiano. Él me explicaba que ayudan a sacar pasaporte, hacen cosas conmemorativas, y esta cosa me... Jugué al fútbol con gente de Mar del Plata y para mí era importante, la emigración en Mar del Plata, allá eran más campesinos los que emigraron, en Rosario eran más de trabajar en la fábrica.

**RC: ¿Pero viniste por trabajo a visitar las asociaciones?**

CV: Visité por pasión porque tengo ganas de viajar, tengo ganas de viajar a Argentina, vamos a descubrir Argentina, y porque con los amigos. Si no conocía esta gente el viaje hubiera sido diferente, ir a Buenos Aires, Bariloche y la Patagonia. Pero como los conocía, elegí Rosario y Mar del Plata. No fui por el mar, fui por los amigos, con Pietro Vecchi, Maxi Manzo hablo casi todos los días, Maxi se mudó a Italia. “Y decía quiero conocer cómo viven los italianos afuera”. En Bélgica vi la asociación, en

Luxemburgo, en Estados Unidos también, luego vamos a Sudáfrica. Me gustaría conocer los italianos en Canadá. Argentina y Canadá no son muy nacionalistas. Los italianos en Estados Unidos son gringos y nacionalistas. En Canadá la gente es indiana y francesa, italiana y canadiense, es distinto. Por ejemplo... Mis amigos o son peronistas u odian al peronismo. Y para nosotros Perón es un dictador. Mi amigo Pietro es de izquierda y le gusta Perón y él le explica que Perón no es dictador. Creo que no podría nunca ser argentino porque hay cosas que no entiendo, cosas que no viví. Vi la película 1985 y me gustó, ahí se entiende que es una dictadura, acá no sabemos qué es, para nosotros Putin es un dictador. Mis amigos decían que, en Argentina, te paraba la dictadura y te llevaban, te mataban. Yo no podría votar en Argentina, tengo una mentalidad europea, diferente [...].

**RC: ¿Fuiste al Museo de la Inmigración en Buenos Aires?**

CV: No, porque hablo con los inmigrantes todos los días, ya conozco la inmigración en Argentina, quería conocer más la comunidad real, no un museo. En Nueva York sí lo visité. Ya hago de eso en mi trabajo.

**RC: Y disculpame, ¿vos tenés familiares que hayan emigrado?**

CV: Sí, en Suiza. Los voy a ver a fines de abril, para un Bautismo. Se mudó mi tío a Suiza después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, Suiza era 'neutral' y hacía el sastre. Y se casó con mi tía calabresa.

**RC: ¿Tenés ancestros que emigraron a Argentina?**

CV: No, pero en mi pueblo la emigración fue a Estados Unidos, cerca de Detroit, Francia a París o Lyon, un poco Bélgica y Suiza. Los abruzzeses a Argentina fueron de la parte de la costa, pero no tengo a nadie emigrado. Tengo mis amigos y mi familia de Rosario y de Mar del Plata.

**RC: ¿Con ellos pasaste Navidad en Rosario?**

CV: Una profesora de italiano, en la escuela Dante Alighieri de Rosario, que es abruzzesa y véneta y el marido es abruzzese y calabrese. Y estaba la abuela, que todavía hablaba calabrés.

**RC: ¿Y con ellos se conocieron antes de viajar?**

CV: No, el señor me decía van a hacer una fiesta, y no se puede hacer, van a cortar la calle y tengo miedo y yo que estoy hace 50 años no ... los fuegos artificiales están prohibidos y los usan igual [he tells a story of a party on the streets]. Marisa me dijo "Claudio te llevo a casa", y el marido la acompañó, porque era peligroso volver sola. Y es una cosa que no estoy acostumbrado.

**RC: ¿Cómo definirías tu relación con la Argentina?**

CV: Apasionado, hablo demasiado porque argentina es algo cultural que me gusta compartir, no como Portugal o Alemania.

**RC: ¿Y qué cuestiones identificás de influencias italianas en Argentina?**

CV: Vi una cultura italiana, que se desarrolló en Argentina. Cosas de la comida, la muzzarella es cortada, no redonda; el aceite de oliva; luego una cultura que dice 'nosotros vivimos un lugar real y un hipotético, un lugar real, que en Argentina puede ser España o Italia, y un lugar real que es Argentina'. No es un problema compartir una identidad, y eso me gustó mucho. Significa también, mis abuelos se mudaron hace doscientos años y yo todavía sigo siendo italiano. Y te digo yo soy un poco atípico porque llevo muchos años viviendo fuera en Bélgica. Me dijeron ir a Guerrin que es la mejor pizza de Buenos Aires, pero... voy, veo la pizza, y le digo a mi amigo, "Qué es esto, Pizza Hut?".

**RC: Sí, sí, me pasó eso, tiene mucha fama pero...**

CV: Sí, tiene mucha mozzarella, mucho aceite... Es muy diferente, ¿viste? Estoy acostumbrado... Cuando fui a Estados Unidos y vi el spaghetti con *meatballs*. No existe en Italia eso, pero ser italiano

no es... Hay italianos de Italia, y de Sudamérica, hay de todo. Cortar la mozzarella así me parecía bastante raro.

**RC: ¿Viste algunas similitudes culturales?**

CV: Ayudarse, una cultura de grupo, estamos juntos y nos ayudamos. Como italianos nos ayudamos, estamos juntos, somos un equipo. Esto me gustó un montón. Cuando hay muchas personas compartiendo una identidad en la zona no se va a perder. En Brasil bueno, hablo con mis amigos, es un continente... Los europeos en Brasil están en Santa Catarina. Pero en... Cuando hay muchas personas, compartiendo una identidad, no se va a perder... La mayoría de los italianos que conocí o están muy bien, o bien, no andan mal. Me interesa conocer la vida de la gente en lugares más difíciles, como una villa. Vi una pobreza que me acordaba de Italia como hace 30 años en mi pueblo pequeño. Una pobreza de ropa, de zapatos, de vida, que no existe más en Europa. Pero mi amigo Claudio, el papá de Maxi, me decía "esta es una villa"... Podría viajar a Argentina un millón de veces, pero vivir un día. Me gustó que la gente lucha por lo que quiere. Y todos juegan al fútbol, la pasión de la hinchada. Es como una familia, esta pasión por el fútbol. El sentimiento de compartir, la gente te da mucha bola. Y de las chicas me gustó que son bastante atrevidas, con mucha libertad. Me gustó la cultura liberal, emprender proyectos, moverse.

**RC: ¿Cómo describirías a los argentinos y la cultura argentina?**

CV: Son muy orgullosos, atrevidos, [he says a typical Argentinian phrase], y algo para mí algo muy importante las mujeres son bastante libres, directora de empresa, estudiar, vivir su vida, cada una su vida y que no me rompan los huevos. Y la cultura italiana es diferente. Orgullosos porque explican que Argentina no es del tercer mundo. Y para mí no hay una cultura nacional muy fuerte excepto futbol, mate y asado, y la guerra de las Malvinas, mucha cultura es muy... Una cultura muy adaptativa, a la inflación, ser fuertes. Es una cultura de un país nuevo, Argentina vio muchas cosas, se fue el presidente en helicóptero. La gente está acostumbrada a todo. La gente no planifica los gastos y ahorros del año. Algo que no me gustó es que la gente es muy impuntual, te hacen llegar temprano pero no están.

**RC: En la asociación, ¿recibiste alguna consulta sobre emigración?**

CV: No, porque en Bruselas es muy reciente, de los años 2000. Y con estudios universitarios. E Italia está muy cerca. Estamos haciendo conexión de cultural la cultura abruzzesa en Bélgica y financiar proyectos acá. Pero somos italianos que nos mudamos hace poco. En Bélgica hay muchos argentinos y hacemos un asado todos los viernes.

**RC: ¿Y qué dificultades encontraste para viajar a Argentina?**

CV: Es un vuelo muy largo, sino me gustaría ir más seguido. Acá estamos acostumbrados a un nivel de vida bastante alto, yo no entendía por qué pelear tanto por un pasaporte, ellos explican que la ciudadanía es importante para hacer cosas, para viajar a Europa. Una fuerza de luchar... Acá estamos acostumbrados a que por lo menos te va bien.

**RC: ¿Qué ideas tenías de Argentina, antes de viajar? ¿Cambió luego de que te fuiste?**

CV: Quedó igual, no cambió. Es muy positiva. Podría viajar a Argentina un montón de veces, pero vivir, un día.

**RC: ¿Y para redondear, podés contarme qué emociones sentiste en tu viaje?**

CV: Para mí es una pasión, como dice la canción "es un sentimiento no puedo parar" [he says it singing], y quiero volver, no sé cuándo. Pero hay cosas que no puedo entender, porque no estoy acostumbrado. Como que no cambio el Euro en Europa, por el tipo de cambio, según el tipo de cambio oficial...

**RC: Muchísimas gracias por tu tiempo, ya damos por terminada la entrevista.**

**Interviewee:** S. Bini (labelled as SB) **Interviewer:** Rocío Cali (labelled as RC)

**Date of Interview:** March 22, 2023 **Interview setting:** Online

**RC: Como te decía, voy a empezar a grabar la entrevista, por favor decime si estás de acuerdo.**

SB: Sí.

**RC: ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva organizando viajes con turistas italianos? (Con este operador turístico o con otros)**

SB: Hace prácticamente 20 años, 2003.

**RC: ¿Y al museo de la Inmigración en Buenos Aires?**

SB: Un poco más tarde. En aquel entonces no había registro digitalizado de todos los nombres de los inmigrantes que llegaron a Argentina, eso fue unos años después. Yo pienso que el interés por el museo se desarrolló más cuando ya estaba el archivo digital, porque la gente puede buscar apellido, nombre, nombre del barco de los distintos parientes.

**RC: ¿Cuánto tiempo?**

SB: Poco más de diez años.

**RC: ¿Cómo decidieron incluir el museo en la visita? ¿Fue tu idea?**

SB: Fue idea mía, la primera vez fui personalmente, personalmente no tengo historia de inmigración con mis antepasados, pero mi impacto fue muy fuerte en EEUU cuando visité Ellis Island, viví unos años en Estados Unidos, y cuando fui a visitar eso, se abrió un mundo y nunca en mi familia había tenido historias de ese tipo, no había necesidad ni historias, me impactó muy profundamente. Luego estuve viendo unas películas sobre la inmigración, películas viejas, del período del realismo italiano, muy fuertes sobre la inmigración, entonces fue bastante natural una vez que viví en Buenos Aires, de interesarme de eso y el museo fue una de las cosas... Y había muchas cosas de la comida, yo soy de la Toscana, de Florencia, no conozco otros dialectos, pero me di cuenta de que muchos nombres de comida en Argentina eran de dialectos italianos, como la fugazza, el fainá, el tucco, en mi región estas cosas se llaman así, no sabía que venían de dialectos italianos, con el tiempo viviendo ahí me di cuenta.

**RC: ¿Y qué otros elementos te llamaron la atención?**

SB: Antes de viajar a Argentina, tuve un amigo argentino en EEUU que hizo una milanesa napolitana, que estas dos palabras no tienen nada que ver, juntar algo de Milán y de Napoli. Luego me di cuenta que era un plato muy conocido y standard de Argentina. Y el hecho de llamar con palabras italianas comidas que solamente de lejos se parecen, por ejemplo, la lasagna, me encanta, pero por qué no la llaman con otro nombre, porque como son en italiana no tienen nada. También la pizza, difícil de entender. Desde los 24 años viví en distintos países del mundo y Argentina es donde me he quedado más y podría vivir, justamente por esta *cercanía cultural* que hay con Italia. No hay duda de eso, es el lugar donde uno se siente más en casa, si tiene que estar fuera de su país.

**RC: ¿Luego propusiste visitar el museo?**

SB: Los viajes tienen que ver con visitar lo más posible y lo más real del lugar que se visita. Y pienso que el museo es como las bases de la política argentina, por la política de inmigración que hicieron, es la que dio origen a la población argentina, entonces yo pienso que es una etapa fundamental para entender ese país, y de cómo eso fue organizado de manera gubernamental. Entonces para conocer el país y nuestros viajes pretenden que la gente salga de Argentina con ideas más definidas de donde viaja, el museo de los inmigrantes es muy importante. Y además con toda la cuestión que hay en Europa ahora con inmigrantes de África u otros lugares que llegan desde otro lugar, de una forma

totalmente distinta a cómo fue organizado en Argentina, pero con una base dramática, pero con necesidades similares a las que llegaban los italianos a Argentina, totalmente distinto a lo que está pasando en esta parte del mundo. Yo quiero recordar a los italianos que hubo un momento que las cosas estaban distintas. Ya pasó suficiente tiempo para que la gente se olvide de esa parte de la historia. Ya mi generación ya no sabe mucho de la emigración.

**RC: ¿Cuántos años tenés?**

SB: 57

**RC: ¿Cómo es el itinerario y qué ven?**

SB: La mayoría está interesada en Patagonia, nos quedamos entre 4 y 6 noches en Buenos Aires, usualmente se hospedan en microcentro. Yo hago mucho hincapié en la formación histórica de Buenos Aires, y visitamos lugares de primera y segunda fundación de Buenos Aires, San Telmo, Parque Lezama, después hacen un recorrido en La Boca, habitualmente hacen museo de Quinquela Martín. Y también visitan un museo personal de una artista que se llama Celia que pinta de una manera naif, la historia de Buenos Aires. La idea es que la gente entienda lo que fue Buenos Aires, como fue planificada la ciudad, porque eso es algo muy distinto a como fue en Italia, no hubo planificación de ciudades porque tienen una historia mucho más antigua y fueron creciendo sobre un núcleo de una forma muy pragmática pero no organizada, como sí fueron las grandes avenidas de Buenos Aires. Me interesa que la gente entienda la construcción de la ciudad. Otra parte muy importante es la historia de los derechos humanos y la dictadura, eso siempre fue parte del programa, antes que el Museo de los Inmigrantes. En estos años hubo grandes cambios, agregaron el Museo de la Esma que no existía antes, otros lugares estaban escondidos, hubo todo un movimiento de *arqueología urbana* en Buenos Aires para encontrar y mostrar estos lugares. Los lugares siguieron paso a paso lo que estaba pasando en la revisión de los derechos humanos en Argentina. También siempre se buscaba de estar los jueves en la Plaza de Mayo y visitar la Universidad de las Madres. Un tiempo visitamos una escuela en la municipalidad de Morón que tenía una historia específica sobre Derechos Humanos en distintos países. Estos viajes tienen una pequeña donación a un proyecto habitualmente social en la Argentina.

**RC: ¿Una parte de lo que ellos pagan al tour?**

SB: Sí, ellos saben que hay una parte que es una donación, se les dice que una parte va para un proyecto. Por muchos años el proyecto era una panadería que estaba relacionada con la escuela de Morón (era mucha pobreza en ese momento). Luego empezamos a visitar una escuela en Tigre y luego una cooperativa de trabajo y turismo local en Pipinas, y la donación va a las cooperativas. También una parte de los programas en aquel entonces era visita a las empresas recuperadas, por varios años los turistas se hospedaban en el Bauen, hasta que el Bauen lo hicieron cerrar y cerró. Visitamos una cooperativa de grisines también, italiana, que sigue trabajando. Tiene como figura la mole di Torino. Los guías de Buenos Aires (yo no soy guía) siempre guiando en italiano, siempre fueron personas con ascendencia italiana o conexiones con Italia. Entonces cuando llevamos a conocer la fábrica de grisines, de origen italiano, con guía de origen italiano, siempre se crea algo bastante especial, no pienso que pase con cualquier grupo, con cualquier grupo de turistas europeos.

**RC: ¿Cómo los hace sentir?**

SB: No sabría porque la visita la hacen otras personas, una es de La Calabria y otra Piamontés. Yo no sé qué pasa en la cabeza de los italianos que visitan, seguro como en todos lados, hay gente que queda más impresionada, más pegada, y otros que toman distancia. Pero personalmente me emocionó mucho y pienso que es mucho lo que pretende de un turista que por primera vez pisa Argentina, se queda 15 días viajando de un lugar a otro tomando tres aviones, digamos... soy muy exigente con mis turistas, quiero que entiendan... pero me pregunto, yo he vivido acá casi 20 años... eso yo no pienso que en 15 días puedan entender todo lo que entiendo ahora. Cuando les cuento las cosas, en

Patagonia, etc, hay muchos niveles de información. Y las cosas son muy complejas. Me interesa que entiendan, pero no sé cuánto entienden.

**RC: ¿Ofrecen servicios de búsqueda genealógica a los turistas?**

SB: No. Por lo que yo sé, hay personas que... Hay grupos organizados y tours individuales que piden a la agencia que organicen un tour a la argentina. También con ellos siempre incluimos el museo y a veces en estos casos, a veces, en un 30% es gente que tiene parientes en Argentina, y quieren que les organicemos el viaje excepto en Buenos Aires (depende del nivel de relación que tienen con estos parientes). Puede ser que me piden que organice todo el viaje excepto dos días libres que ellos quieren salir con parientes que tienen en Argentina. Una cosa que me pasa ahora y me llama mucho la atención, una señora viaja a visitar unos parientes muy cercanos e igualmente me está pidiendo que le organice para ella y los parientes el viaje a Calafate.

**RC: Se no, sareste interessati a fornirli?**

SB: Yo pienso que seguramente hay gente que puede estar interesada, pero no sé si como idea, si yo estuviese en su lugar, si pensaría que una agencia de viajes pueda hacer eso, buscaría asociaciones relacionadas con, por ejemplo, si soy siciliano, asociaciones sicilianas en Argentina, no pensaría en agencias de viaje para una búsqueda genealógica. Yo he visitado el museo de emigración en Lucca, esa podría ser una idea, si yo fuese de Lucca y buscara un pariente iría ahí, antes de ir a una agencia de viaje. La otra cosa es que viajar a Argentina es muy importante por el tiempo y la plata que lleva que hay que considerar, entonces si uno tiene un interés específico en buscar los parientes, tiene una motivación distinta. La mayoría de los que viajan con mis viajes es para visitar Argentina, el hecho de que tengan un pariente es secundario, y quizás al llegar a Argentina piensan en el pasado de inmigración del país. Al llegar alguien les dice que hay un pariente, no dejan esa oportunidad, empiezan a interesarse y buscar un contacto. Pero la motivación del viaje no salió de esa búsqueda o de ese reencuentro, por conocer Patagonia o buenos aires, pero si tienen algún contacto seguramente lo irán a buscar.

**RC: ¿Qué opinas del potencial del turismo de raíces inversas?**

SB: Para mí es algo complementario, que complementa el viaje. Pero como motivación principal del viaje, no sabría dónde buscar los clientes para ese tipo de interés. Se puede poner como un servicio más que da la agencia. No sé.

**RC: ¿Qué relación creeS que tiene con el turismo responsable?**

SB: Para mí hay una relación importante, pero a nivel general, lo que estamos hablando con vos ahora es una parte más personal. A nivel de turismo responsable, es un conocimiento sobre una parte de la historia de argentina y también como para entender y hacer más tolerantes con lo que está pasando en Italia... tolerantes no es una palabra que me gusta. También a ser más humanos con lo que está pasando en el Mediterráneo. Ahora parece que es una cosa nueva que la gente emigra y te invaden el país, es una cosa histórica... Entonces encaja en el turismo responsable, conocer mejor la historia en argentina y volver con mas conocimiento de la emigración de los pueblos. Si además hay alguien que hay alguien que tiene un pariente, lo entenderá mejor porque tiene un enlace personal.

**RC: Muchas gracias por tu tiempo, damos por terminada la entrevista.**

**Interviewee:** R. Milani (labelled as RM) **Interviewer:** Rocío Cali (labelled as RC)  
**Date of Interview:** March 26, 2023 **Interview setting:** Online

**RC: Come dicevo, inizio a registrare l'intervista, fatemi sapere se sei d'accordo.**

RM: Sí.

**RC: Che idea aveva dell'Argentina prima del viaggio?**

RM: Ero curioso di vedere l'Argentina da lungo tempo perché a Buenos Aires ho incontrato il mio amico...era un giocatore di rugby, allenatore e poi lui è tornato in Argentina. Suo figlio è laureato in geologia come me, io ho trasmesso la mia passione come geologo. Abbiamo iniziato un'amicizia, ci frequentavamo in famiglia. Quindi oltre al piacere di conoscere l'Argentina c'erano anche motivi affettivi. Siamo andati a pranzo insieme, ma lui ha un altro figlio che è rimasto in Italia con la madre. È laureato in fisica, quindi una famiglia che è stata separata da situazioni diverse. La madre è un'insegnante e quest'anno andrà in pensione. aspero sarà più libero.

C'è un altro motivo affettivo, anche che è bello, per l'interesse ambientale, ci sono motivi affettivi. Quando sono arrivato a Buenos Aires ho conosciuto un'altra persona importante. una ragazza paraguaiana di nome natalia è venuta a casa mia, è rimasta per un anno, ora vive in Brasile con la sua famiglia a salto del guardia. suo marito è un traumatologo, lei è una dentista, una famiglia molto benestante, sono venuti a Iguazú, così siamo rimasti insieme. Sono due aspetti affettivamente importanti dell'amicizia. Sono stato in Paraguay tre volte, quindi c'è una certa familiarità con il Paraguay.

**RC: Quali sono le vostre impressioni sull'Argentina? La trova simile all'Italia? In quali aspetti? Puoi approfondire questo aspetto?**

RM: Non sono stato sorpreso dall'Argentina perché sono parenti, siamo... lo stesso modo di pensare, non sono stato sorpreso dall'Argentina. Mi sono trovato bene subito, mi sono trovato bene... Sì come molto, simile all'Italia, il modo di vivere non è diverso dal nostro, anche il modo di incontrarsi, di visitare, il modo di vivere, è abbastanza simile, vorrei dire da questo punto di vista che siamo abbastanza simili, anche nel modo di vestire, di vedere, di allegria, non l'ho trovato così diverso dallo spetativo.

Ho conosciuto anche altri argentini che sono venuti in Italia, quindi voglio dire che sono un po' preparato. L'economia mi sorprende un po', (la moneta), mi preoccupa un po', l'Argentina è ricca di energia, di paesaggi naturalistici, ha molte risorse agricole, anche se ora c'è una carenza d'acqua, ha tutti gli ingredienti per essere una grande nazione. questo mi lascia un po' sorpreso. il due default si vedono.

**RC: Come descriverebbe gli argentini e la cultura argentina?**

RM: Il livello culturale è difficile da dire perché non ho parlato con la gente, perché noi turisti siamo un po' isolati, se ho parlato con i miei amici, che già conoscevo, mi hanno parlato delle loro preoccupazioni, mi sembra un Paese che ha un buon livello di vita... Ho trovato diverse proposte culturali, libri, teatro, persone culturalmente, ora non ne sono sicuro, ma mi sembra un buon livello di civiltà. A Buenos Aires ci sono persone che hanno molto bisogno, immagino siano immigrati, qui stiamo anche meglio, ma ci sono anche immigrati che abbassano il loro livello culturale perché hanno bisogno di altro, perché devono prima mangiare e trovare lavoro. Secondo me, ci sono tutte le opportunità per crescere, ho visto giovani che si ritrovano davanti alla libreria, al teatro. qui il benessere è quasi peggiore. La cultura è un fatto profondo, un modo di pensare, ho conosciuto persone che stanno bene ma sono molto ignoranti.



Sono molto curioso, tanto è vero che siamo venuti al museo dell'emigrazione perché la nostra parte cessa di voler sapere un po' di più sulla situazione dei nostri parenti o predecessori che sono venuti in Argentina. Il mio perché ho studiato il fenomeno e ora sono molto curioso. Per quanto riguarda l'italianità, vedo che siamo parenti perché la nostra cultura è simile alla vostra. Se visitate Milano o Buenos Aires non ci sono tante differenze. Io mi sono sentito abbastanza a mio agio. Non mi sono sentito strano. Dopo avrei dovuto fermarmi più a lungo per fare delle riflessioni più profonde. Riusciamo a capirci abbastanza bene. Se parli velocemente è difficile, ma parlando lentamente capiamo l'essenziale. Qui andiamo in Germania o Inghilterra è difficile capirsi.

Da un punto di vista culturale, con una seconda lingua si è più preparati a parlare inglese. In questo siamo più ignoranti. Il prezzo di 10.500 eur 15 giorni per 2 persone... Per noi è un turismo costoso. È una vacanza perfetta ma costosa, abbiamo ottimi servizi, quindi tutto è organizzato, si è isolati e si perde l'opportunità di stare in mezzo alla gente. Per noi, il nostro tour era soprattutto un turismo ambientale, la cultura dell'ambiente ma non la cultura sociale.

**RC: Conosci qualcuno che è emigrato in Argentina? È stato un motivo per visitarla?**

RM: So che tanti italiani sono venuti in Argentina, immigrati. Dalla fine del 1884 e così ho fatto delle ricerche per scrivere la storia del mio paese e anche di alcuni paesi vicini. E così quando uno fa le ricerche, trova tante informazioni che riguardano anche l'immigrazione e questo mi ha incuriosito perché ho visto che diverse persone sono venute all'Argentina, e sono curioso di conoscere la storia, di vedere dove sono arrivati, di vedere le condizioni che hanno trovato. Nel museo dicevano di aver colonizzato, di aver contribuito a popolare l'Argentina, ammiro il grande sforzo che queste persone hanno fatto per farlo, ma sono curioso dell'Argentina perché non sono venuti qui i miei parenti, ma persone del mio paese, e questo ti rende curioso. È bello questo trovare le loro radici.

**RC: Come hai iniziato?**

RM: Per noi l'emigrazione è un capitolo importante. Siamo andati negli Stati Uniti, in Brasile e in Argentina. Il paese ne ha avuto un massimo di 2.000 abitanti, che ha avuto una forte emigrazione, circa 350. Se si chiama San Bellino, ma anche altri paesi vicini è più o meno lo stesso.

**RC: Come è nata questa curiosità?**

RM: Per me è più bello studiare l'evoluzione dell'ambiente. Ma l'ambiente che cambia è in accordo con l'umanità, abbastanza in accordo con la storia, anche se poi c'è una contaminazione di questo punto di vista. Poi ho fatto l'insegnante e bisogna essere preparati a molte domande. Nel mio paese nessuno aveva scritto la storia del paese, così ho iniziato a scrivere 30, 40 anni fa, mi è piaciuto e mi appassiona. Anche di natura, ho scritto cinque piccoli volumi sul mio paese e paesi vicini. Ripercorrendo gli archivi storici del Comune, abbiamo avuto una grande emigrazione alla fine del XIX secolo con un grande impoverimento del territorio, e la gente aveva fame, e cercava fortuna dove pensava di trovarla. Per noi era il Sud America. Ce lo dice la storia, ce lo dicono i documenti. Ora c'è interesse a conoscere le radici del proprio popolo, nascono passioni, si coltivano e si cercano risposte.

**RC: Come si fa a cercare queste radici?**

RM: Aumenta l'amicizia tra i popoli ma anche l'aspetto economico, per voi vedere da dove vengono gli immigrati, per noi dove sono emigrati. Ho fatto la ricerca in chiesa, supra de Brasil fanno la cittadinanza italiana per avere privilegi di altri che non hanno. Quelli che ho trovato sono venuti a Buenos Aires, dalla parte più privilegiata del paese, dove la terra è più fertile, ma quelli che sono emigrati al sud, sai quanto lavoro hanno dovuto fare per colonizzare...

Per esempio, in Brasile ho chiesto alla mia amica Natalia, vorrei visitare una comunità italiana, ma il Brasile è grande, forse tu sai dove visitare una comunità italiana. Siamo andati a cena fuori, i siciliani

sono diversi da noi del nord, hanno problemi diversi, hanno avuto sistemi mafiosi, insomma... d'altra parte noi siamo venuti dal Veneto per lavorare, quelli del nord erano contadini.

Io per esempio in Brasile ho chiesto a la mia ragazza amica natalia, mi piacerebbe visitare una comunità italiana però è grande il Brasile, forse tu sai dove visitare una comunità italiana. Una cena siamo andati fuori i siciliani sono diversi da noi dal nord, hanno problemi diversi, hanno avuto sistemi mafiosi, insomma... invece noi i veneti siamo venuti solo per lavorare, quelli del nord erano contadini i siciliani non erano grandi lavoratori della terra, stavano con le pecore. Gli italiani del nord facevano il vino, il malbec in Argentina, gli argentini non li conoscevano, credo che gli italiani abbiano portato il vino lì, quindi parte della loro economia ha radici italiane.

Per me non è una questione di radici perché non provengo da una famiglia emigrata negli Stati Uniti, quindi per me la motivazione è l'aspetto turistico, ma conoscere l'aspetto italiano è un'altra motivazione, non essenziale, io e mia moglie abbiamo viaggiato in tutta Europa, Africa, Cina, nostra figlia vive negli Stati Uniti e lavora alla NASA. Ci piace viaggiare per conoscere il mondo, ma è chiaro che viaggiare in Argentina o in Brasile, dove sono emigrati i nostri antenati e parenti lontani, è un'altra motivazione, non posso dire di aver viaggiato con la motivazione di conoscerlo, ma sono curioso. E mi piace ancora di più, e se c'è un museo o una comunità italiana, mi piacerebbe conoscerli, per una ragione storica. Ho scritto cinque libri, e c'è un capitolo sull'emigrazione. La documentazione non è facile da trovare, quindi l'ho messa insieme, ma ci sono molti libri sull'emigrazione.

#### **RC: Perché l'hai fatto?**

RM: Quando si fa la storia di un paese, arrivano le persone dell'emigrazione, e poi si mette... quando si fa una ricerca su qualcuno di importante per scrivere un libro, e bisogna leggerne tanti altri. Da una cosa nasce un'altra, quando si cominciano a vedere i documenti degli elenchi delle persone che sono emigrate, cosa si fa, dove sono andati, perché, con cosa, la situazione di vita qui, le situazioni in cui erano e poi nasce una storia, con diversi capitoli, l'educazione, la guerra, l'emigrazione. Perché voglio essere un uomo di cultura, perché voglio conoscere le mie radici, e voglio dare il mio contributo, l'insegnante deve studiare o diventa ignorante, io voglio essere un po' meno ignorante, non si finisce mai di studiare. Qui la storia è molto lunga..., una delle ultime è quella degli immigrati. Noi siamo bene perché molti sono emigrati e hanno lasciato la torta un po' più grande, prima la torta era più piccola. Quindi non possiamo dimenticarli.

#### **RC: Pensa che il libro sia un contributo per non dimenticarlo?**

RM: Sì, infatti se ne sono andati, lasciando più spazio, quindi dobbiamo ricordarli, e poi ci sono anche le rimesse dei migranti, l'economia, alcune lettere che ho letto, questi migranti hanno lasciato il papà e poi hanno mandato i soldi per mantenere i bambini qui. Persone che hanno lasciato le loro famiglie per andare in una terra che non conoscevano, non erano consapevoli del lavoro che li aspettava. Una volta terminata la ricerca, è una questione di DNA se si vuole... di etnie culturali, per me è solo curiosità solo informazione, invece ci sono studiosi che guardano a cose specifiche. La statistica è diversa... Per esempio, ci sono persone che hanno fatto ricerche sui veneziani in Sud America. Io leggo di emigrazione per parlare in miei libri. La razza se e mista, contaminata, se e conformata... Ho visto in Paraguay indigenas con spagnoli, gli italiani non sono andati.

#### **RC: Conoscete altre persone che hanno intrapreso un viaggio genealogico simile?**

RM: Sì, studi di gruppi che se ne sono andati...

#### **RC: Avete visitato il Museo Nazionale degli Immigrati? Come si è sentito?**

RM: Il tempo era poco, la barriera linguistica, che quando si visita un museo bisogna leggere, e io non avevo il tempo quindi la mia visita è stata formale, quello che ha colpito la possibilità di conoscere le

radici, che hanno registri che danno informazioni importanti. Un museo è sempre bello, ma c'è una visita turistica con informazioni superficiali, per uno studioso è diverso, dovrei fermarmi più giorni, ma la cosa importante è il museo, in una sede importante, dove naturalmente sono stati ospitati gli propri immigrati, e quindi vedere che erano in condizioni di ospitalità, che l'ambiente era sano, accogliente, è bello vederlo. Ce n'erano alcuni del mio villaggio. È vero che sono pochi, ma io non avevo il nome, avevo il desiderio di trovarli... il mio amico aveva il cognome... Zarontonello... Ma c'erano molti risultati.

**RC: Ricordo che hai detto che ti sarebbe piaciuto sapere che avevi l'opportunità di esplorare i documenti degli immigrati al museo. Perché?**

RM: Ci sono due persone che immagino siano emigrate in Argentina, ma non lo so, se siano venute per lavorare. Quindi se conosco persone con questo cognome, posso dirvi che ho trovato un po' di storia di tuo nonno. Dal villaggio, cinque sono venuti in Argentina, due di loro due volte e un altro, era una persona che conoscevo molto bene... Dopo la guerra ha lavorato come muratore, un artista molto bravo, vicino di casa alla Casa Rosada, e poi è tornato in Italia.

**RC: Ti ringrazio molto, l'intervista é finita.**

**Interviewee:** M. Pederzoli (labelled as MP) **Interviewer:** Rocío Cali (labelled as RC)

**Date of Interview:** March 27, 2023 **Interview setting:** Online

**RC: Come dicevo, inizio a registrare l'intervista, fatemi sapere se sei d'accordo.**

MP: Sí.

**RC: Grazie. Allora dimi, che idea aveva dell'Argentina prima del viaggio?**

MP: La cosa argentina che mi affascinava di più prima del viaggio era la pampa argentina, che non ho visto in questo viaggio, la vita dei gauchos, che penso sia un po' come il West americano, le mandrie, i pastori a cavallo. E la Patagonia, le montagne, i pinguini, la balena, questa era l'idea. Penso che la popolazione sia molto latina, quello che ho trovato è quello che mi aspettavo, molta simpatia, gente aperta, disposta a parlare, "sai mio nonno, mia zia sono italiani", abbiamo parlato con tante persone, cosa che qui non si usa più, tra noi, purtroppo, la gente è molto diffidente, se qualcuno ti parla, la prima cosa che pensi è 'cosa vuole da me', pensiero difensivo....

**RC: Da quale regione d'Italia proviene?**

MP: Io sono dal centro, la mia famiglia è dal nord, mia sorella è chiusa, anche per il nord Italia era molto isolata, non lo è più, le comunità erano molto chiuse, perché non era un modo... I paesi erano distanti, chiuse in valle, in montagna, e normale che il carattere fosse chiuso, io sono un po' diversa, sono più socievole come mia mamma, sono andata a 20 anni al centro in Emilia Romagna, Una regione molto sociale se posso dire, dove c'è tanta vita, tanto lavoro e tanto divertimento, le due cose, il nord che lavora tanto e il sud che vive la vita del giorno.

**RC: Quali sono le vostre impressioni sull'Argentina?**

MP: Non sono partito con un'idea precisa, ero affascinato dalla pampa, dalla patagonia, e sono andata. Non volevo avere pregiudizi. Ma poi ho capito che in realtà c'è molta vita sociale, molta cultura, non lo sapevo. A buenos aires ho visto molta cultura, biblioteche, teatro, come luogo di incontro.

**RC: La trova simile all'Italia? In quali aspetti? Puoi approfondire?**

MP: Una cosa che mi è stata detta quando eravamo a Iguazu, la cultura di stare insieme la domenica con la famiglia, di riunirsi, è molto italiana, soprattutto al sud, perché al nord è cambiata un po' a causa del lavoro, ma è ancora comunque un pasto alla settimana. Nel Nord Europa, gli Stati Uniti, ad esempio, non è così. È molto importante mantenere il legame con la famiglia, se si mangia da soli non si fa una chiacchierata, se si perde il legame, secondo me è bene incontrarsi insieme una volta alla settimana. Una cosa che mi è piaciuta molto a Calafate e a Ushuaia, questa cultura degli animali, che vengono nutriti, che entrano nei negozi, mi piacciono molto gli animali. La pulizia è molto importante, i bagni, tutto è molto pulito.

Un'altra cosa che somiglia l'Italia non ricordo... Ci sei genovese lui forse ha riconosciuto a La boca. ma posso dire io vengono di trentino alto adige, ci sono molti immigrante in Argentina. I nomi delle strade sono italiani ma non mi hanno spupitto, e abbastanza logico, il nome della città Palermo, fondata per la fabbrica di un siciliano che chiamava la fattoria Palermo. Se dici che abbiamo fondato una città, mi piace questa cosa. Ah ecco, una cosa molto italiana dell'Argentina è quel po' di furbizia che di solito hanno gli italiani, noi siamo un po', in generale, al nord un po' meno, che si adatta molto bene, abbiamo una capacità di adattarci alle situazioni molto velocemente, ho notato che questo in parte c'è, mi sembra di vedere, le regole ci sono, ma non sono fisse, non poter partire ogni tanto, per esempio, se hai il semaforo rosso, ok, non passa nessuno, l'attraverso.

**RC: Cosa ha motivato la tua visita in Argentina?**

MP: Abbiamo in mente l'idea di fare alcuni viaggi, e soprattutto viaggi naturalistici, quindi era una delle nostre mete, siamo stati in Birmania, in Egitto, in Messico, alle balene in Baja California. Anche perché quello che vediamo adesso non so se lo rivedremo tra 20 anni, anche una volta perché un gruppo di amici.

**RC: Quanti di voi eravate?**

MP: Dei nostri amici eravamo 13.

**RC: Da quanto tempo aveva l'idea di visitare il Paese? Cosa le ha impedito di farlo prima?**

MP: Abbiamo questa idea di paese di vedere, anche vogliamo vedere i gorila in Congo. Ma aspettiamo il momento giusto, anche economicamente. E' troppo caro, come l'Australia ma mi ha deluso, c'è alcuni punto interessanti ma con tantissimi strada e vuoli.

**RC: Siete migranti o i vostri genitori sono emigrati?**

MP: I miei genitori sono italiani, quindi io e mia sorella siamo nati in Germania. Il Trentino era molto povero negli anni '60, non c'erano risorzi, non si poteva coltivare, quindi la gente se ne andava, in Argentina, Brasile, Germania, America.

**RC: Come lo avete vissuto?**

MP: Ero piccola, tornavano in Italia alle 4 del mattino, ma i miei genitori mi dicevano che vivevano con tanti turchi, in camera, con il loro stipendio riuscivano a pagare la camera, mi preparavano un pasto al giorno e compravano le sigarette. Lavoravano a turni, quando ero piccola mia madre mi metteva a letto prima del lavoro e poi mi lasciava nelle mani delle donne turche che si occupavano di me, e poi mio padre andava a lavorare. non c'erano alternative. era dura per tutti. a volte penso a come si sentiva mia madre quando mi lasciava sola per qualche mese e doveva tornare al lavoro. era così. siamo cresciuti allo stesso modo. forse meglio di qualsiasi altra cosa. Perché il sacrificio si impara anche di questa cosa, di come i tuoi genitori ti insegnano, con fatti, facendo le cose. cui da noi hanno grossa difficoltà di capire cose un sacrificio. adesso i parenti controllano troppo, ti danno tutto, e esagerato, anche quando puoi, sempre le cose hanno un valore, tu devi capire il valore delle cose. se dai tutto, il valore non è nessuno. Perché il sacrificio si impara anche da questo, dal modo in cui i tuoi genitori ti insegnano, con le azioni, facendo le cose. nel nostro Paese abbiamo una grande difficoltà a capire il sacrificio. oggi i parenti controllano troppo, ti danno tutto, è troppo, anche quando puoi, le cose hanno sempre un valore, devi capire il valore delle cose. Se ti danno tutto, il valore non è nessuno.

Quello che non mi piace è che queste persone arrivano e sono bandite, non hanno dignità, il primo giorno gli danno da mangiare e poi molti scappano, non è questo il modo di emigrare, in America era molto duro, arrivavi e ti controllavano e poi trovavi un lavoro, altrimenti finivi per strada. Non ho paura dell'emigrazione, quindi, l'emigrazione esiste e non si può fermare, molti lavori sono fatti da immigrati, ma deve essere una regola, sai... Le persone, e non si possono lasciare per strada, ... Ho visto a Buenos Aires una famiglia che viveva per strada, non ne abbiamo viste molte. Perché non danno un pezzo di terra a queste persone che almeno coltivano qualcosa da mangiare? In città se non hai un lavoro non puoi vivere, devi chiedere agli altri, in Argentina c'è spazio. Anche in Italia ci sono villaggi abbandonati, perché non dare un pezzo di terra a queste persone? Non dico per sempre, ma 50 anni, ... ti fai la tua vita, coltivi, ti fai la tua vita.

**RC: Qualcuno le ha consigliato di venire in Argentina? Cosa le hanno consigliato?**

MP: Avevamo una copia di amici perché sono andati anni fa, hanno fatto il Cile e l'Argentina, Ushuaia e Cap'dhorno.

**RC: Conosce qualcuno che è emigrato in Argentina? È stato un motivo di visita?**

MP: Io non lo conoscevo, ma il mio professore di matematica ha scritto degli emigranti in Argentina (noi siamo nell'alto udine trentino). ha pubblicato le lettere che si scrivevano, un fratello è rimasto in Italia e l'altro in Argentina. nella zona da cui proviene ci sono molti emigranti. nella mia zona non lo conosco, uno zio di mia madre, missionario laico, è andato in Brasile. il libro mi è piaciuto molto, ma mi è piaciuto perché spiega il tempo all'inizio del 1900, racconta la situazione di grande difficoltà economica, tanta povertà a causa della decisione del ragazzo di andare a cercare fortuna. e poi il fatto che questa famiglia non si vede più, perché quando si partiva si diceva addio per sempre alla propria famiglia. c'era molta forza di carattere. alcune persone non vogliono fare l'Erasmus. Mi dispiace che non abbiano la curiosità di vincere la paura.

Non ho studiato perché la scuola superiore più antica era a un'ora di macchina, ho fatto 8 anni di scuola dell'obbligo, poi puoi fare 5 anni di maturità o fare un professionale di 2 o 3 anni che ti apre il mondo del lavoro, ho fatto turismo perché era l'unica cosa che avevamo in casa. Vengo da una famiglia dove l'unico che lavorava tutto l'anno era mio padre, eravamo in 6, mia madre lavorava qualche mese all'anno. ma abbiamo sempre avuto la curiosità di andare all'estero. vengo qui da 20 anni, vengo da un posto dove non c'era la possibilità di viaggiare così tanto, quindi per me è un'avventura. A 16 anni ho lavorato a Venezia da sola come baby sitter.

Se volessi farlo, mi stupisce molto che i giovani non vogliono viaggiare e conoscere, è difficile, ma avere l'opportunità di viaggiare è la cosa giusta da fare, per conoscere un'altra tradizione, io viaggerò sempre. Viaggiare aiuta a capire che il tuo mondo non è il mondo di tutto, aiuta anche a capire che il tuo mondo è un mondo privilegiato, qui in Italia nonostante il governo, viviamo molto bene, partiamo da qui per essere felici. Ora come dire, l'America è bella, l'Argentina è bella, l'Africa mi piace ma ognuna ha delle specificità, non abbiamo tutto in un piccolo territorio, la storia, la cultura, il mare, le montagne, e dobbiamo aprirci di più e amarle di più. E questo lo impari quando vai all'estero perché vedi che ce ne sono di meno ma con meno fanno più di noi. come l'Italia ci sono pochi posti. se devo dire che l'Europa in generale sono più specifici in molte cose.

**RC: Che tipo di luoghi ha visitato in questo viaggio? Può elencarli?**

MP: Una cosa che mi ha deluso è che non abbiamo visto quasi nulla di storico a Buenos Aires, è vero che il paese è giovane, abbiamo visto la casa rosada, la chiesa cattedrale, plaza de mayo, i quartieri di la boca, ma non abbiamo visto la cattedrale e ciò che è più vecchio non ci sono molti edifici reali. Abbiamo iniziato a vedere il museo dell'emigrazione, Av. Corrientes, il quartiere francese, La Boca, il Teatro Colon, una sala di milonga era piena, uno spettacolo di tango, la galeria pacifico, abbiamo girato il mercato di San Telmo da soli, il caffè Tortoni.

**RC: Cosa ne pensate del museo dell'immigrazione?**

MP: Pensavo di vedere altri oggetti, quelli che hanno... Fotografie, documenti con appunti, luoghi di nascita, e anche fotografie, queste persone che non conoscevano il posto, dovevano capire che si fermavano in Brasile magari a molti chilometri... Persone che non si sono trovate, la traversata è stata una cosa molto lunga e dura, in condizioni certamente non facili. Se ci pensi ti viene da piangere perché guardi persone disperate che sono riuscite anche solo a vivere un'esperienza da qualche parte...

Lo fanno anche adesso per lo stesso motivo, gli immigrati turchi.... ma la gente se ne dimentica, qui si dice 'vengono a toglierci il lavoro', ma cos'è? Perché se li fai venire legalmente il problema non si pone. La maggior parte di quelli che hanno paura degli immigrati non sono i poveri, è incredibile, ma sono i più ricchi, che non devono avere paura perché non possono [inaudible].

Il problema è che c'è la mafia che aiuta, chi organizza il viaggio. in argentina o in brasilie non c'è una situazione del genere, in quel paese avevano bisogno di manodopera, e qui ora abbiamo un problema di manodopera che non è facile da risolvere, e naturalmente abbiamo bisogno di persone che facciano dei lavori specifici. Non capisco come non riusciamo a sistemare. I miei genitori non hanno avuto difficoltà come in Argentina [...], la Germania è vecchia, hanno un viaggio in treno. Mi sembra che ci sia stata molta umanità in argentina, non è stata una quarantena lunga come negli stati uniti, non mi è sembrata così dura per fortuna.

**RC: Durante la nostra conversazione nel museo, mi ha detto di aver fatto un test del DNA. Può dirmi perché l'ha fatto?**

MP: C'era un annuncio, l'ho fatto per conoscere l'etnia, e per capire la mia ascendenza, perché ero curiosa di questo, ero diversa da mia sorella e anche da mio padre. Sono molto legata all'Europa, greco-sud-italiana, ebrei della Foresta Nera, un po' di iberica e inglese, ho una bisnonna o trisnonna spagnola.

**RC: Hai fatto un'altra ricerca genealogica?**

MP: Solo per cercare corrispondenze genetiche con altre persone nella APP. ci sono più o meno forti con i parenti in europa, usa, italia, francia, germania, svezia, brasilie. Ho scoperto che il cognome di mia nonna, è trentino, ma anche spagnolo, che nessuno al mondo e quello di aridità nelle Filippine. Potrei parlarne con loro ma non l'ho ancora fatto. Insieme a questo test ho fatto il test per le malattie genetiche.

**RC: Grazie mille, l'intervista é finita.**

**Interviewee:** B. Blanco (labelled as BB) **Interviewer:** Rocío Cali (labelled as RC)

**Date of Interview:** March 27, 2023 **Interview setting:** Online

**RC: Como te decía, voy a empezar a grabar la entrevista, por favor decime si estás de acuerdo.**

BB: Sí.

**RC: ¿Recibe el museo visitas de turistas internacionales?**

BB: Sí, es bastante alto el número por suerte, a lo largo de todo el año, hay fechas que más y que menos, los italianos son la mayoría, vienen grupos bastante grandes, suelen venir más engrupo. De otros países vienen de manera particular, recibimos gente de muchos lugares, de China, de Alemania un montón, Estados Unidos un montón, España un montón peleando el lugar con Estados Unidos en el segundo lugar, e Italia está en el primer lugar.

**RC: ¿Dirías que los turistas internacionales vienen de forma independiente? ¿O por agencias?**

BB: Yo creo que los italianos viajan más por agencia que por individual, hay agencias de acá y creo que de allá también que los agrupan, y traen visitas guiadas, en la mayoría de los casos se contactan con nosotros y otras veces vienen por libre, hacen los recorridos por su cuenta.

**RC: ¿Y hacen reserva?**

BB: Nuestra dinámica es reservas para las visitas guiadas, para mantener el orden la idea es que reserven, pero son muchos los casos de agencias de turismo que vienen sin reserva. y si la sala no está ocupada está buena porque le podemos dar el espacio, pero si está ocupada los retenemos un rato y hacemos pasar primero a la base de datos para que no se junte toda la gente. Pero suele pasar, la realidad es que como te comenté es bastante común que vengan sin visita.

**RC: ¿Hay meses concretos en los que vienen más?**

BB: La temporada alta sin duda es el mes de febrero y la primera semana de marzo también entra, recibimos muchos turistas extranjeros porque debe ser que coincide con las vacaciones de ellos. si tuviera que decir una fecha puntual en que vienen los turistas sí, febrero, sin dudas.

**RC: ¿Y vacaciones de invierno?**

BB: No vienen tanto, por lo que hablé con ellos ellos buscan destinos con calor, baja bastante. Obvio que podés encontrar turistas en cualquier época del año en cualquier día. pero si tuviera que decir una época donde seguro todos los días recibimos extranjeros, en febrero.

**RC: ¿Pero no hay registros, no?**

BB: No hay por nacionalidad, agrupamos todas las visitas en general, los grupos de estudiantes también.

**RC: ¿Cuánto hace que trabajás acá?**

BB: Estoy en la recepción desde octubre de 2019. Así que estoy familiarizado para encontrar a la gente y experiencia.



**RC: ¿Y cómo trabajaban durante la pandemia?**

BB: Desde marzo 2020 cerró el museo cuando inició la pandemia en Argentina, desde marzo hasta el mes de julio si no recuerdo mal. Recibíamos consultas de la gente vía mail, pero no lo volvimos a hacer, pero nuestra base de datos mantenemos la idea de que sea presencial, pero tuvimos una excepción, recibíamos consultas por mail y tratábamos de recabar información por mail y lo imprimimos al certificado y nos ponemos en contacto para que se lo enviemos o retirarlo. pero al estar encerrados perdemos el contacto y muchas veces eso facilita la búsqueda. Y luego hicimos otro cierre. Nos dimos cuenta que hacerlo es más difícil a la distancia, se pierde el contacto con la persona, se pierde la posibilidad de buscar, cambiar letras, en la base de datos como todo registro histórico se dan errores de nombres, errores cronológicos...

**RC: ¿Y los extranjeros también consultaban?**

BB: Sí, al día de hoy recibimos también consultas de muchos extranjeros y en su gran mayoría italianos. En esa época no era tan auge como en los últimos años, diría que en el último año hemos recibido un montón de mails de muchas personas de Italia, digo un montón en base a lo que recibimos anteriormente, el número subió bastante. Gente que capaz tuvo familiares que pasaron por acá, o emigraron a argentina, quieren saber si la gente figura en la base, porque al ser el museo nacional de la inmigración es la primera vía de búsqueda para el extranjero.

A la hora de hacer la búsqueda pedimos apellido y nombre, y si necesitamos más, vamos charlando con la persona tratando de descubrir otro dato que nos sirva para filtrar. y en caso de no encontrar la persona en cuestión, que es la mayoría de los casos, hay un 50 y 50 de chances de encontrarlo, si no lo encontramos le damos opciones y tratamos de darle más información, le damos fechas, zonas, pero en los casos de no poder ofrecerle información a la persona le entregamos lo máximo que pueda servir. Pero siempre presencial, salvo la excepción que hicimos. con el caso de las personas de afuera que no tienen posibilidad de venir, que son muchas, tratamos de derivarlos a otras bases de consulta que pueden encontrar online, tanto páginas de argentina como tenemos conocimiento de páginas de Italia y tratamos de derivarlos a esos sitios. Y en el caso de que capaz algunos casos excepcionales de que la persona no encontró tratamos de coordinar y comunicarnos con esa persona para que le sirva la información que le proporcionamos nosotros. Por más de que lo tratamos de mantener siempre de manera presencial hemos hecho excepciones para ayudar a distancia.

**RC: La base online, ¿es la misma que tienen ustedes?**

BB: Nosotros trabajamos con la base que nos proporcionó el CEMLA (Centro de estudios migratorios latinoamericanos) y el CEMLA sí tiene base al público, tiene un apartado de buscador, que en ese mismo buscador esa información es la misma que tenemos nosotros.

**RC: En cuanto a los que visitan el museo y piden información, ¿buscan mayoritariamente con conocimientos específicos o generales? ¿Cuáles son sus principales consultas? ¿Cuáles son las reacciones de la gente cuando encuentran parientes o antepasados? ¿O sus emociones?**

BB: Acá vemos de todo, todo el tiempo, viene gente desde que no sabe nada, que se enteró al final del recorrido, al final del recorrido tratamos de promocionar la base y muchos se enteran así; otros se enteran en el boca a boca o en redes sociales o en la tv, porque han venido de la tele. Están los que no saben nada y vienen por curiosidad, muchas veces solo traen el apellido, están los que tienen algún dato y llaman a un familiar en el momento para recopilar datos, esas reacciones son de sorpresa, dicen “no venía a buscar esto, pero me llevé una linda información”, en esos casos el regalo por decir así es para sus generaciones anteriores. Muchos jóvenes que vienen y les sorprende bastante, pero es mucho más emocionante para sus padres o abuelos, y se escuchan los gritos de la madre o del padre en el

teléfono cuando los llaman. Y después viene mucha gente que está al tanto, porque lo promocionamos bastante, recibimos muchas consultas de gente que quiere hacer búsqueda de la ciudadanía, mucha gente que piensa que puede presentar certificados de arribo en un consulado, ya sea de Italia o España, pero el certificado de acá está legalizado, pero no puede ser apostillado porque necesita pasar por procesos previos. Pero encamina a esas personas porque te da información y ahorra pasos de la búsqueda. eso para los que vienen buscando trámites para ciudadanía, son bastantes. y después otros casos, pero que más disfrutamos, cuando hay personas que tuvieron un contacto más directo con el inmigrante, hijos o nietos directos, que tienen historias y anécdotas contadas por sus abuelos, y ni hablar cuando fue un inmigrante que llegó al puerto, y ya ahí pasa poco, pero son shocks históricos culturales muy locos muy lindos porque estás hablando con una persona que le vas a dar un certificado con su nombre que dice en que año y barco llegó. Y te comunicas con nativos italianos, españoles, croatas, rusos, de todo.

**RC: ¿Y dentro de los turistas italianos?**

BB: Los que vienen de manera individual se sorprenden porque no están al tanto de la base, tenemos mucha promoción a nivel nacional pero los del exterior no tienen idea de esta base, y muchos dicen ah yo tenía un tío o un primo que pasó por acá y está bueno porque se re sorprenden. Y nos ha pasado muchas veces que un antepasado pasó por acá y la persona se entera, al ver las fechas y los apellidos. Muchas veces la búsqueda se hace solo por apellido para ver si otras personas con el mismo apellido pasaron por acá, claro hay apellidos más comunes, si un español va a buscar con apellido González obvio va a salir, pero cuando viene una persona de Inglaterra o Alemania capaz no hay tantos. Y los que vienen en grupo de agencia turística ya saben porque las agencias se los comentan así ya saben y están más preparados y ahí la emoción es el doble o triple porque se dan cuenta de que están en el lugar donde pasaron sus antepasados, además de museo mantenemos la sede donde sus antepasados desembarcaban. Ellos no vinieron se quedaron en allá, pero el turista al venir al país y encontrar esta conexión con aquel antepasado lejano los emociona bastante. Se dan cuenta en qué barco y en qué fecha, se dan cuenta que están en el mismo lugar que pasaron sus antepasados.

**RC: ¿Y dentro de los italianos cómo tienen el nivel de curiosidad?**

BB: El turista italiano es el que está mejor preparado más de la mitad de los grupos que recibimos están preparados con nombres, apellidos, fechas. Otros no vienen con ningún dato o no se acuerdan nombre exacto. Pero la realidad es que los italianos puntualmente sí suelen venir bastante bien preparados ya con una noción.

**RC: ¿Tenés alguna anécdota que le gustaría mencionar?**

BB: Acá anécdotas tenemos muchas, nunca se acaban. Me pasó con una persona, que vino el mismo inmigrante, la persona que se subió al barco, vino, bueno, cuando le entrego el certificado, un croata, me dijo "todo muy lindo, pero acá me figura religión católica y yo no soy católico, yo soy judío". Y ese intercambio estuvo bueno porque mismo en esa época ahí ves como registraban, o tenían tendencias, o les hacían decir cierta información. Otro caso, uno de acá, vino a buscar a su bisabuela, y el certificado decía que venía con un hermano, y dijo 'qué raro, nunca me comentó nada' se suma la madre y dijo 'sí, qué raro, yo nunca tuve un tío', llama la madre y rompe en llanto y luego me cuenta que ese hermano, la madre se lo tuvo oculto a la hija y la nieta, las dos personas que vinieron, porque era una parte a la que ella le tenía mucho rechazo, lo ponía muy triste, pero mayoría de esa gente venía de un conflicto bélico para esa gente, y gracias a esa búsqueda que hicimos nosotros esa persona se dio cuenta que tenía un tío, que estuvo oculto por la madre toda la vida. y anécdotas... Recuerdo un turista italiano que vino de Italia, y yo al contarle que su antepasado vino soltero, le generó mucha sorpresa, y dijo "¿cómo puede ser, si estaba casado?" Después hay gente que no puede aguantar las lágrimas, siempre trabajamos con empatía pero y estamos acostumbrados al llanto, moviliza muchísimo, hay

personas que emociona muchísimo, al punto del llorar, hay gente que perdió esos familiares, o gente que nunca tuvo contacto...

**RC: ¿También los turistas se emocionan?**

BB: La gente de acá se emociona más porque traen el pasado de sus abuelos, los argentinos se emocionan muchísimo, pero gente de otros países se emociona un montón, nosotros somos mucho más emotivos, pero hay gente que se emociona y no lo puede creer, un italiano vino a buscar a su primo lejano y perdieron contacto o lo recuperaron después de muchos años y en esa época la comunicación no era como ahora.

**RC: ¿Reciben consultas online de italianos que realizan investigaciones genealógicas en Argentina? ¿O algún otro tipo de consulta desde Italia? ¿Con qué frecuencia? ¿Qué solicitan?**

BB: Muchos escriben para saber de qué barco y qué fecha llegaron, pero por otro lado es muy loco porque mucha gente nos escribe para buscar información a la que no tenemos acceso, como a donde se fue una vez que llegó, donde vivió, dónde tuvo familia, dónde murieron. Pero acceso a esa información no tenemos, al trabajar con la base del CEMLA solamente tenemos base del arribo en barco al país por el Puerto de Buenos Aires.

**RC: ¿Y no derivan al registro civil, u organizaciones?**

BB: Nosotros siempre tratamos de derivar a otros organismos como el RENAPER, el registro histórico del registro civil, o el archivo general de la nación; o búsquedas online, pero nosotros no damos esa información. y derivamos al consultante por mail. por ejemplo, *family search* es la que primero recomendamos porque la base es bastante completa, tiene datos completados por organizaciones privadas, archivos recuperados, y usuarios de *family search* porque la gente sube información.

**RC: ¿Y cooperaciones con organizaciones? o contacto con museo de emigración en Italia?**

BB: Con la única que tenemos contacto, informal, porque no tenemos convenio armado, debe ser por la cercanía que tenemos, el principal canal de comunicación es la dirección nacional de migraciones, nosotros le derivamos a ellos y ellos nos derivan ellos muchas veces. La Dirección Nacional de Migraciones lleva gente que consulta por este archivo histórico y los traen por acá porque hacemos la consulta más ágil y más rápida. Con museos de emigración, estaría buenísimo porque allá son muy regionales y cada región de Italia tiene como muy marcados sus valores y de dónde vinieron y todo lo que trajeron para acá. hemos tenido contacto con museo de emigración en sao paulo, para organizar trabajos en conjunto, te diría que es el que más comunicación tuvimos. También hemos tenido contacto con registros de búsqueda de Colombia, pero ahí sería hace mucho. Con el museo de Sao paulo se está pensando hacer encuentros, se verá qué tipo, un encuentro entre ambas entidades para trabajar en conjunto y compartir archivos, información que pueda servir a uno del otro. Y en un futuro estaría buenísimo hacer muestras en conjunto, compartir ideas de las bases de datos.

**RC: Muchas gracias por tu tiempo, damos por terminada la entrevista.**

**Interviewee:** G. Baldo (labelled as GB) **Interviewer:** Rocío Cali (labelled as RC)

**Date of Interview:** March 28, 2023 **Interview setting:** Online

**RC: Como te decía, voy a empezar a grabar la entrevista, por favor decime si estás de acuerdo.**

GB: Sí.

**RC: Contame de las visitas que hacen al Museo de los Inmigrantes**

GB: Llevamos a Museo de inmigrantes a los italianos. Está más enfocado a ellos, un museo de bellas artes es difícil que lo vean, pero pueden ir al museo Evita o Museo de la inmigración, pero acá quieren ver cómo fueron aceptados acá. Acá vinieron con promesas de trabajo. Rotativo Express o Master Tour, a veces llevan al programa. Lo incluyen al turista que viene con interés de vacaciones, no para eventos. Y la finalidad del viaje. El tour por ejemplo de israelíes está enfocado en ofrecer pasajes nazis en Argentina, cómo llegaron, congreso Nazi en la Luna Park, hasta ir a Bariloche, eso lo hace la agencia que les vende. Museos de arte los tienen en Europa... Este 24 de marzo muchos fueron por su cuenta a la ESMA. Mostramos lugares que tienen que ver con historia y desarrollo del país. Me tocó hace mucho una persona interesada en inmigración y fueron al Archivo general de la nación, porque el archivo estaba en La Boca, y logró rescatarlo en La Usina en La Boca.

**RC: ¿De qué nacionalidad era?**

GB: Era italiano y tenía trabajo en la universidad.

**RC: ¿No tenés el contacto con este turista, no?**

GB: No, fue hace mucho. Tuvimos que pedir permiso y entró el solo.

**RC: ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva organizando visitas al Museo Nacional de la Inmigración con turistas italianos? (Con este operador turístico u otro)**

GB: Saquemos los dos años de pandemia, hace 8 años, antes estuvo cerrado. Y antes de la pandemia, el año antes, dejamos de ir porque estaban rediseñando la sala, y todo había vuelto a la universidad porque iban a reformar salas y quedó en la nada y quedó en la pandemia.

**-¿Cómo ha decidido incorporar esta visita? ¿Desde cuándo?**

GB: Cuando estás en otro país, buscás algo de tu identidad, algo tuyo, no sé, en otro país, y eso los mueve a ellos saber que Argentina es como una segunda opción. También saben que, en cada país o ciudad, hay un museo de inmigrantes, entonces ver cómo cada uno lo plantea. Yo siento que el nuestro podría ofrecer muchísimo más, hacer más cosas, aumentar más las colectividades. Yo mismo cuando se los digo a ellos, ven una foto, pero no se descubre qué ves en la foto, por ahí son cosas obvias. Transmitir la sensación y cómo lo vivimos en Argentina, que no es la misma que cómo lo vivieron en Brasil.

**RC: ¿Cómo es la experiencia de estos turistas en el museo? ¿Cómo reaccionan?**

GB: Ya saben lo que significa para nosotros la inmigración, cuando vemos las salas ven las publicidades de los barcos, los vapores, empiezan a contar que en sus casas también había estas publicidades. Ellos tenían sus tíos o abuelos que han venido. Te cuentan que un tío ha venido en el Mafalda, y empiezan entre ellos a conectar y por ahí se sienten familiares. Y empiezan ese tipo de conversaciones.

**RC: ¿Cómo organizan la visita?**

GB: El que busca tiene un dato preciso, tiene un papelito y por lo menos la fecha en la cual salió, el nombre del barco en el que supuestamente se embarcó o un apellido. Me ha pasado que encontraron, con mucha data, se pudo ser preciso con la búsqueda, pero tiene que ver con la época que llegaron, porque la parte que estaba en La Boca se perdió mucho. Lo que también hacen los italianos más que los españoles, es quieren ir a la casa de Catalunya, o ver algún teatro típico y les mostrás la Av. De Mayo, les gusta, ven que están acá... Y con los italianos nos tocó de ir a la Sociedad de Benevolencia, la Asociación napolitana, Calabresa, etc. Me dicen este grupo te va a pedir tal cosa, y si se puede hacer se hace.

**RC: Contame un poco más**

GB: Con españoles fuimos a la Casa de Catalunya y a ver la casa de una exiliada franquista. Y Relacionan nuestra dictadura con la nuestra, la de Franco o la de Mussolini. Para los españoles Evita les mató el hambre porque mandaba comida a España. Y veían gente exiliada de España que se exilió en Argentina. Con italianos fuimos a la Asoc. Calabresa, los estaban esperando, les mostraron instalaciones, tomaron algo y compartieron un café, les contaron de las actividades, son como clubes sociales.

**RC: Claro, parte de mi investigación también es contactar las asociaciones italianas.**

GB: En la última visita hablamos de la responsabilidad del gobierno con los inmigrantes, y la verdad se portó bastante bien, si comparas con los gobiernos actuales, que ellos cumplieron y pudieron hacerse sus cosas, eso a ellos les gusta, yo les contaba que después de, lo que ven acá es el desarrollo que tuvieron, llegaron a fundarse muchos sindicatos de colectividades o sea los que llegaron empezaban a sindicalizarse y ayudar a los nuevos que llegaban y surgían las asociaciones culturales para no perder el idioma. Y muchos hablaban el dialecto. A mí me tocaba tener vecinos inmigrantes que hablaban el dialecto, el idioma era lo único que lo mantuvieron, el resto lo tuvieron que cambiar, aprender historia argentina, pero lo que perduró y que ellos lucharon por mantener fue mantener dialecto, por eso se formaron las asociaciones. Y por eso les conté que en Córdoba hacen el tour del *gemmelaggio*. Y vienen y pasan una semana y festejan por la hermandad con el Piemonte, en Córdoba, para hacer el encuentro Piemontés, con comidas típicas. Muchos inmigrantes pasaban por Buenos Aires, pero no se quedaban acá.

**RC: Viste que ellos hacen paralelismos con la inmigración en Italia...**

GB: Sí, allá llegan muchos. Ellos cuentan que se ven invadidos, lo ven por el lado económico, tienen críticas, como acá cuando te atiende un venezolano... Los españoles tienen problemas por los moros y el tema religioso. Ellos dicen "si ellos no son condicionados por la cultura, por qué nosotros tenemos que cuidarnos de no ofenderlos a ellos?". "A nosotros nos prohibieron en varias regiones hacer ventas de navidad, feliz año nuevo" porque nosotros festejamos desde el catolicismo y ellos desde el Islam, sienten que están perdiendo su cultura. Los italianos me comentan que tratan de conservar, pasan de una situación a otra, en Italia están teniendo muchos candidatos jóvenes en las elecciones, para ellos, no, están acostumbrados a gente mayor. Y dicen que los jóvenes son más permisivos, y les jode. Y más al del norte. El norte es más reacio, parece más un francés.

**RC: ¿Cómo es el perfil?**

GB: Profesionales, gente mayor, gente que viaja mucho, te preguntan y te comparan con otros lugares. Algunos tienen parientes en Argentina, otros se conocen por primera vez porque se han hablado por internet por primera vez. El argentino es el primero que inicia la búsqueda. Pero también ha pasado de alguno que ha iniciado la búsqueda, pero no estaban en Buenos Aires, habían ido a Córdoba. El que quiere y tiene certezas viene con muchos datos, y después hay otro que intenta ver, sabe que hay parientes emigrados, pero no tiene otro dato más que ese. Y otro problema que se encuentran es que

por ahí en el buscador como está anotado figura con un nombre y apellido, pero viste que los anotaban como se escuchaba.

**RC: Muchas gracias por tu tiempo, damos por terminada la entrevista.**

**Interviewee:** M. Ruffa (labelled as MR) **Interviewer:** Rocío Cali (labelled as RC)  
**Date of Interview:** March 31, 2023 **Interview setting:** Online

**RC: Como te decía, empiezo a grabar la entrevista, te solicito que me digas si estás de acuerdo.**

MR: Sí, claro.

**RC: Contame un poco de vos y tu trabajo como guía en el museo.**

MR: Hace 17 años trabajo de guía, soy docente jubilada, al terminar la carrera docente estudié turismo. Desde 2006. Empecé trabajando en una agencia mayormente españoles, después italianos, y empecé como pude con el idioma, por una cuestión familiar, soy hija de italianos, pero no aprendí la lengua de chiquita, mi mamá vino con 9 años y mi papá con 22, se conocieron y casaron acá. Mi mamá vino con su familia, pero mi papá ya iba y venía, era trabajador golondrina. Con la muerte de mi mamá empezó a revolverse todo, mientras tanto mi papá frecuentaba todos los paisanos, tenés la gente del pueblo, las fiestas patronales, que con el desarraigo se incentiva eso, todo eso lo fui mamando de chiquita. Por una cuestión de incluirse acá aprendieron el castellano. [...] mis hijos empiezan a tomar clases de italiano en la escuela pública y los padres que estuvieran interesados, me empezó a enganchar, pero yo seguí entusiasmada y pasé por varios lugares y ya estaba trabajando en agencia y la agencia me dice si vos querés, estudiá más formal, y empecé en la Dante. Me sirvió para lo profesional, me manejaba mejor con los pasajeros. Esta agencia manejaba un nivel muy alto.

**RC: ¿Y dónde los llevaban? ¿Lugares solamente turísticos?**

MR: Sí, Palermo, Recoleta, Caminito, Plaza de Mayo, San Telmo, Se hablaba de la inmigración en La Boca. A las agencias no les interesaba que se hablara del museo de los inmigrantes. Eso surge cuando yo empiezo con esta otra agencia, de Italia, que yo me contacto con esta chica que hace 10 años que está trabajando, la agencia *viaggi solidali* y *viaggi emiraggi*. *Turismo responsable 360 es la página de ella*. Es totalmente opuesto, es un turismo distinto, es un turismo responsable o turismo corporativo, es otra mentalidad. Ella en el programa sí pauta que dentro de tal día se hace La Boca y ensamblamos la temática de la inmigración, entonces hacemos un recorrido cuasi clásico de La Boca (vamos a ver una artista plástica) y después vamos al museo de la inmigración.

**RC: ¿Cuánto hace que trabajás en las visitas con italianos al museo de la emigración en Buenos Aires?**

MR: Empezamos hace unos 10 años. Con un grupo mínimo de 12 personas se ejecuta el viaje. Los últimos fueron en mediados de febrero. Y el anterior fue en noviembre. También hicimos intercambio cultural con una escuela de Olivos (chicos que venían de Italia). La agencia les organiza visitas por la ciudad, y yo hacía de guía. Puede ser por la edad que esos chicos no están motivados. Me da la impresión que moviliza más a gente más grande. Los intercambios son de una escuela secundaria media en Italia, se hospedan en casa de chicos de Olivos, donde funciona una escuela italiana. La escuela de Italia se relaciona con la escuela de Argentina. Los chicos salen con doble título. La agencia de turismo les organiza las salidas a los chicos, en la semana estudian, pero los fines de semana van al tigre, al teatro colón, a La Boca. Otro grupo vino a hacer un intercambio folclórico con descendientes del Friuli.

**RC: Contame un poco más**

MR: El señor que conduce la asociación friuliana en Italia está contactada con la agencia. Estuvieron en Buenos Aires, Córdoba y después 8 se quedaron y fueron a Cataratas y al Sur. En realidad, ellos venían al intercambio folclórico, actuaron acá. Acá me tocó guiarlos en capital. Este grupo me manifestó que ahora recuerdo, viste que Mariel está en una asociación calabresa, este grupo se

contacta creo con la asociación friulana del norte de Italia en Córdoba. Ellos estaban conmovidos en cómo está gente mantiene tanto las tradiciones, bailes, las comidas del norte de Italia. Les llama la atención al que viene de afuera. Por ejemplo, un caso familiar, una de las veces que fui a Italia mis primos están asombrados de que mis hijos supieran canciones que mi papá les enseñaba a mis hijos, que ellos no las cantaban más y ya no se las habían enseñado a sus hijos. Entonces ese es el desarraigo del inmigrante, mis hijos cantaban canciones que los hijos contemporáneos en Italia ya no las cantaban más y se sorprendían, es el inmigrante que vivía del recuerdo, yo no conozco y capaz mis hijos no conocen lo moderno, llama la atención. En este último viaje, te pasé el contacto de Piero, cuando voy al museo, la primera vez que lo hice, que saqué los datos en el museo de la inmigración, viste que te dan el papel, yo lloraba a moco tendido, si bien... Parece que te lo dan impreso y se te mueve el mundo. Y a partir de ahí, al llevar un grupo, yo imprimía y después los regalaba. Ellos estaban maravillados de que se hayan podido volcar a nivel tecnológico todos esos datos. Entonces, cuando este señor encontró al abuelo estaba emocionado. Pero bueno, fue fortuito, no es que el señor venía con la intención de encontrar a su abuelo. Si no íbamos al museo de los inmigrantes, eso pasaba. Fue que fuimos, se explicó, nos detuvimos. Por ahí explicaba y no me detenía en la computadora, pasaba y él no buscaba nada. Él cuando encontró tenía los ojos llenos de lágrimas y decía "que lástima que mi papa ya no está, para mostrárselo". A mí, me emocionaba, nos conmovió mucho. Después se conmovían muchos con las gigantografías, las fotografías, el interior de los barcos, y ahí yo voy mechando lo que mi papá me contaba cuando vino, con 22 años, solo. Mi papá quería incluirse, participar, en ese sentirse solo en un mundo desconocido, yo trataba de ponerme en el lugar del que viene, con esa soledad, y eso transmito también a esta gente, él quería ayudar, y se metía en la cocina y dijo que vaya y que tire el café y el tiró la cafetera al mar. Yo les voy mechando, se ríen y tenés al que nos quedamos mirando fotos, hay muchas fotos que son muy expresivas y te conmueven, y de pronto yo miro a los costados y miro que somos cuatro o cinco mirando la misma foto y expresamos qué sentimiento nos inspira esa foto, o sea que hay una movilización. Pero yo no te puedo decir que los italianos turistas vienen buscando eso, eso yo no te lo puedo asegurar. Hay infinidad de museos en Buenos Aires, yo sé que es muy visitado, también por escuelas y me parece bárbaro, me parece bárbaro, pero no te sé decir si el turista viene incentivado para ver ese museo, salvo una situación así que esté programado.

### **RC: ¿Tenés otra anécdota?**

MR: Otro muchacho trató de buscar a una tía, hermana de la mamá, que vivía en Lanús, él me escribió cuando se iba al sur, me dejó una cartulina en papel y yo fui con mi marido a buscar la dirección. Ahí hay ahí una veterinaria, tomé el número y me dijo que la familia le había alquilado la casa, y que la señora había muerto, pero tenía un contacto con el hijo, entonces le dije al muchacho italiano, y le pasé el celular. Cuando estuvimos en el museo del inmigrante, no la encontró en la lista porque había un millón de personas con ese apellido. Pero estaba contenta porque hicimos contacto por el otro lado, pero no pudo llevarse el papelito. Había una que encontró a la mamá de una amiga. Era una euforia del momento de encontrar. A una le llamó la atención un cuaderno, que tiene anotado un diccionario casero con palabras en dos o tres idiomas y después objetos. Se emocionan de las fotos que muestran desolación, las expresiones del rostro, miradas, una señora sentada sola sobre una valija, en esos salones inmensos... Y otra cosa que llamó la atención es que cuando vos entrás, hay una parte del preámbulo. Antes habíamos estado en la tumba de Alfonsín, donde está el preámbulo. Yo les hablaba que siempre sido un país cosmopolita y hemos albergado todas las nacionalidades y uno medio reticente me decía que eso se dice pero que a veces no se cumple y yo le decía que acá sí se cumple, porque acá viene todo el mundo, desde siempre. Y los estudios, los datos dan que acá ingresó mucha gente, se hicieron censos y eran más que los propios del país, y él me miraba, y me animé yo no es que tengo muchos conocimientos, me da la impresión de que a ustedes les está costando mucho del "extracomunitario", que justo del ingreso de la barca que habían muerto muchos inmigrantes, estaban muy conmovidos. Yo lo veo también con mi familia. Tenés de todo, el que está a favor de que venga, pero también el que está en contra... Nosotros estamos muy acostumbrados a que vienen de todos lados pero a mí me da la impresión que al italiano le cuesta. Cuando les hice ese comentario



bien, muy educadamente les dije que es mi impresión y me dijeron 'y sí' (moviendo la cabeza), como que les cuesta esa apertura que hay que tener, en Italia tiene un lugar estratégico para que se crucen.

**RC: ¿Incluyen otro museo en el itinerario? ¿En qué tours incorporan la visita a este museo? ¿Solo con italianos?**

MR: Como museo mirá, a veces si da el tiempo vamos al museo Malvinas cuando se hace la visita a la ESMA porque ese es un tema que interesa muchísimo y se toca tema Derechos Humanos. Si se puede se hace el museo de la memoria. Después se hace en La Boca el Quinquela Martín, si da el tiempo.

**RC: ¿Cuánto tiempo se quedan en Capital?**

MR: Depende del recorrido, tres o cuatro días máximo.

**RC: ¿Identificás una temporada alta para el turismo de italianos? ¿Cuál?**

MR: En temporada alta que arranca a partir de septiembre, octubre, noviembre, diciembre, enero, febrero, ahí hay visitas, capaz un mes hay tres, después capaz un mes no hay nada. Capaz en abril empieza temporada baja y hasta julio no hay nada.

**RC: ¿Trabajan sólo con agencias italianas? ¿Quién les envía turistas?**

MR: Sí, con las otras no mandaban al museo de los inmigrantes.

**RC: ¿Conoces las regiones de origen y la edad de sus clientes? ¿Cuáles son sus perfiles? ¿Viajan solos o acompañados?**

MR: Yo lo que noto en *viaggi solidali* es que gente que viene con más... me parece, con más 'conciencia de un turismo responsable', de un contacto con la naturaleza, un contacto con la ciudad, un contacto con, por ejemplo, desde el momento que hacemos recorridos a pie, en colectivo, en subte, se busca un contacto más persona a persona, viendo contacto persona a persona; con la agencia a mí me ponen un auto y hay cosas que si no quiero no las miro, doy vuelta la cara. Yo caminando veo cosas, las explico y las charlamos. Forma parte de mi ciudad y la realidad que estamos viviendo, y a mí me tocó como guía hacer residencias del último año con la crisis del 2000. Si vas en auto, a la velocidad que va el auto, si yo voy hablando no te da tiempo a explicar un atractivo y explicar sobre la crisis. Cuando vas caminando vas sintiendo el pulso de la ciudad de otra manera, y evidentemente cuando contratan el tour ya saben que van a ir caminando, que vamos a tomar colectivo, que van a tener que esperar, hacer la cola, bufar si veo que tarda el colectivo, estás sintiendo el pulso de una ciudad de una manera diferente al que se sube en un lugar, se baja en el otro, si querés mirás, si querés mirás el celular. Entonces, sin menospreciar el otro, este tipo de turismo me parece más real. A mí también, si voy como turista, me gusta meterme.

**RC: ¿Cuáles son sus perspectivas sobre las potencialidades del turismo de raíces inversas?**

MR: Yo en lo personal no lo noto, es gente grande, pero han tenido oportunidad y así como yo tomé aéreo cuatro veces para ir a verlos, nunca han movido un dedo para venir acá. Está bien, de acá para allá hay 11 hermanos para ver, y acá había uno solo. Yo no noté interés. Ahora uno va allá y están enloquecidos. No de mover las patitas y llegar acá. No sé con generaciones más jóvenes. Para mí sería interesante movilizar eso. Si yo me movilicé y estudié y fui a ver el lugar donde nacieron, y te hago constelaciones familiares y trato de indagar y cada vez que trato la oportunidad junto plata y trato de ir, trato de indagar el carácter del abuelo y de la abuela, en una realidad que yo no viví y que siento que la primera vez, los conocí a los 40, sentí que mi corazón se dividía, que una parte quedaba allá y otra acá. Si yo parto de eso, para mí es importante conocer. Ya partiendo de eso sería interesante

fomentarlo. Pero, así como te cuento mi experiencia, yo tengo mi hermano que no. Es algo muy personal. Que apunta a los sentimientos, que te moviliza, qué se yo, el papá y la mamá transmitieron lo mismo. Y hay que ver internamente qué. Yo me armé un árbol genealógico, yo no sé si crees en esas cosas, yo he trabajado el árbol que está en Italia, un árbol que yo no los he conocido, y sin embargo está ese interés. Y sigo con preguntas, costumbres, ver lugares, interiorizarte, yo estoy permanentemente con recetas, con imaginarme, pero es una cosa que a mí me nace interna, no sé si a todo el mundo. [...] mi papá murió siendo italiano y ahora cuando vaya llevo unas cenizas de él a su tierra. Es como cerrar un ciclo... voy a cerrar un ciclo y me quedo tranquila. Yo siento que la vida se dividió cuando conocí las raíces.

**RC: Muchas gracias por tu tiempo, ya terminamos la entrevista.**

**Interviewee:** S. Kumar (labelled as SK) **Interviewer:** Rocío Cali (labelled as RC)  
**Date of Interview:** April 12, 2023 **Interview setting:** Online

**RC: Ahora sí, empiezo a grabar la entrevista, te solicito que me digas si estás de acuerdo.**

SK: Sí, claro.

**RC: ¿Cuánto hace que organizan las visitas con italianos al museo de la inmigración en Buenos Aires?**

SK: Hace bastantes años, tres años antes de la pandemia, 7 años como mínimo hace que organizamos este tipo de visitas.

**SK: ¿Incluyen otro museo en el itinerario? ¿En qué tours incorporan la visita a este museo? ¿Solo con italianos?**

SK: Incluimos el museo en el city tour sur, tenemos también el city tour norte. Al final del city tour sur, donde contamos la historia de Buenos Aires y de la Argentina, la idea es terminar en el museo de la inmigración. De momento lo hacemos solo con italianos, se nos ocurrió por los comentarios de la gente, era muy bien recepcionado, como que la historia cierra, porque uno les cuenta de la inmigración y ven el lugar donde llegaban sus antepasados, muchos, muchos de los que nos visitan tienen o tuvieron parientes que llegaron acá. Les gusta mucho la idea de buscar el barco. La verdad que el producto es como completar la visita, en eso queda muy bien, no hay nada que objetar.

**RC: ¿Cómo se les/te ocurrió incluir la visita al museo? (por favor, explayarte) ¿Por qué crees que el museo es un buen lugar para visitar para ellos? (por favor, explayarte)**

SK: Por lo que te expliqué antes, es una coronación de la historia, sobre todo para el mercado italiano, y para ver, tomar la dimensión de donde llegaban sus familiares a la Argentina. Porque era la entrada del país, y de ahí terminar la historia de ver cómo iban para distintos lugares donde conseguían trabajo, toda la historia del museo y del lugar.

**RC: ¿Visitan/visitaron algún otro lugar relacionado con la inmigración o colectividades italianas, además del museo? ¿Cuál/es?**

SK: Sí el grupo lo pide sí, pero si no, el museo es el punto de visita para la inmigración, en los grupos regulares.

**RC: ¿Cómo es la experiencia de estos turistas en el museo? ¿Cómo reaccionan?**

SK: Excelente, excelente. Se emocionan. Ese es el término. La verdad muy bien, a pesar de que es un museo chico, la experiencia es 10 puntos.

**RC: Me podés contar de tu experiencia con ellos en el museo, qué preguntas tienen, qué les llama la atención, etc....**

SK: Les interesan muchas cosas, el trabajo, cómo conseguían trabajo, el camino que hacían. Pero te hago un comentario, para la próxima temporada no vamos a ir al museo, porque a pesar de que es una experiencia increíble, y la gente se emociona, comercialmente no, operativamente es muy

difícil trabajar, sobre todo porque depende de la universidad, nos han hecho problemas para entrar, no en este último tiempo, no sé con quién hablar, todo antes de la pandemia. Nosotros íbamos sin permisos, no nos dejaban entrar, que había que avisar, no queríamos ni guiar ni nada porque ya les guiábamos antes en el bus, que vean el tema de la llegada de barcos. Pero fue muy engorroso el tema operativo, no me aceptaban un mail, tenía que llamar por teléfono antes, me trataban como un colegio, entonces hoy el museo no está preparado para recibir agencias de turismo receptivo, no hay un departamento de turismo que no sea estudiantil. Creo que le falta eso al museo como para que pueda llegar a ser explotado de la parte turística y no solamente educativa. Es un punto bastante importante y bastante oscuro porque nunca llegué... pedí reuniones, todo antes de la pandemia, y la verdad es que estaba cerrado un día, nunca me van a avisar. El día que mandé un mail me dicen este día no se puede, este día no se puede, yo tengo los grupos que me entran una vez por semana, todas las semanas. Así que la próxima temporada lo dejamos libre... el mes de enero cerrado, que es una temporada altísima de turismo... Lo que te dije antes es calculo lo más importante. Ahora va a quedar para que vaya cada uno por su cuenta.

**RC: ¿Trabajan sólo con agencias italianas? ¿Quién les envía turistas?**

SK: No, trabajamos con portugueses, españoles, algo de Latinoamérica, pero la experiencia del museo solo con italianos, que es la parte más sentimental. Al español no le interesa tanto, el italiano se emociona con este tema.

**RC: ¿Conocés las regiones de origen y la edad de sus clientes? ¿Cuáles son sus perfiles? ¿Viajan solos o acompañados?**

SK: Mayormente del norte de Italia, del Piemonte, o genoveses. Son salidas regulares y también individuales.

**RC: ¿Ofrecen servicios genealógicos a los turistas?**

SK: No

**RC: ¿Te interesaría ofrecerlos? ¿Estaría interesada en colaborar con asociaciones italianas en el desarrollo del turismo de raíces en Argentina (ayudándolos a encontrar parientes, sus casas, registros históricos o parientes en caso de que sigan vivos)?**

SK: Sí, sería interesante ofrecer algo de eso, ayudar a encontrar parientes, podría ser algo que podríamos incorporar.

**RC: ¿Cuáles son tus perspectivas sobre las potencialidades del turismo de raíces inversas?**

SK: Hacemos grupo que se llaman *gemma*, que serían los grupos gemelos, entonces por ejemplo un pueblo del Piemonte es, por ejemplo, hermano con un grupo de Córdoba. A veces nos compran los viajes y nosotros hacemos la parte turística, después la parte que están en el pueblo se encargan ellos.

**RC: Te agradezco mucho.**

**Interviewee:** V. Caoduro (labelled as VC) **Interviewer:** Rocío Cali (labelled as RC)  
**Date of Interview:** April 13, 2023 **Interview setting:** Online

**RC: Como te mencionaba antes, ahora empiezo a grabar la entrevista, por favor decime si estás de acuerdo.**

VC: Sí.

**RC: Muchas gracias. Contame, ¿qué motivó tu visita a Argentina?**

VC: La primera vez que fui en Argentina cuatro años atrás con una amiga de Brasil, a Buenos Aires, una semana. Fue un regalo para mí, yo toco la gaita y la música que está en mi corazón es el tango, una pasión, un amor. Visitamos teatro Colón, una sala de tango, casa de Gardel, inmigrante francés, pero la cosa que me ha impresionado es que mucha gente en Argentina es de orígenes italianos, por el nombre, el del taxi me dijo que era hijo de italianos del sur, y él hablaba italiano; yo no sabía esto, yo sabía en Brasil, donde estuve 5 veces, sabía de la inmigración véneta en Brasil, de Argentina no sabía que el 80 % son de origen italiano, sabía un poco nada más. Y el taxista me ha contado de sus padres, que son inmigrados a la Argentina, toda esta historia de la inmigración me ha hecho venir en mente la emigración de mis padres, porque yo soy hijo de inmigrantes. Mi padre fue a trabajar a la mina en Bélgica, 13 años, después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, y mi madre después nació en Francia, cerca de París, de padres italianos. Y después de la guerra, volvieron a Italia y perdieron todo con la dictadura fascista. Después mi madre fue a trabajar a Suiza. Cuando yo era pequeño, desde pequeño hasta que murió, siempre contaban historias de emigración, canciones: “mérica, mérica” no sé si la conocés...

**RC: No, no la conozco**

VC: Deberías escucharla, es el himno de la emigración del mundo del italiano. En Brasil en particular, pero la he visto en Argentina, cantan ‘mérica mérica’, es una emoción fuerte porque habla de un viaje de esperanza, de 36 días de navegación a vapores de aquel viaje. Otra canción “terra straniera, quanta malinconia”. Gente que partía con una *mala, valiglia* de cartone, sin nada, sin nada para sobrevivir, porque mi papá me ha dicho que era el hambre aquí. Entonces esto es la cosa que me ha CULPITO más en el viaje en Brasil primero, y en Argentina después. Cuando fui la primera vez hacía frío, pero me gustó mucho caminito, la bombonera, Palermo, el teatro Colón, plaza primero de mayo, me gustó mucho la ciudad, pero no estaba bien porque hacía frío y tuve gripe, y estuve pocos días, todo muy rápido. Entonces dije otra vez quiero venir con calma. Pero a Buenos Aires la segunda vez estuve solo un día, con Silvia Fussaro di Padova, que vive allá desde cuando era chica. Cuando estaba en internet he visto la “Familia véneta de Rosario”, vi qué hacen y me ha impresionado mucho cómo organizan en el Facebook, como organizan la actividad de la asociación véneta de Rosario. Entonces les escribí porque me parecía extraño que organizaran eso. Conozco otras asociaciones, pero organizar como organizan ellos la música, el carnaval de Venecia, los cursos de italiano, *ho rimasto molto molto culpito*. Entonces pensé cuando pueda viajar, después de la pandemia, después de las vacunas, voy al Rosario. Y así he comenzado a hacer el viaje, lo he conocido a Mauro, hablamos muchas veces por teléfono, me dijo “tú tranquilo, vení a acá, podés estar en mi casa”. Y después decidí cuando me jubilé, decidí ir a Rosario y conocerlos. Después quería ir a conocer la asociación de italianos en Córdoba. Pero Mauro me dijo “por qué, para qué ir ahora, no hay nada en enero, están todos afuera, de vacaciones, pero Marcelo Carrara de Mar del Plata, deberías conocerlo porque es un personaje. Marcelo te espera”, me dijo Mauro. Marcelo organiza fiestas, actividades, era estación de temporada buena. Entonces fui después de Rosario, me quedé más días en Rosario y después fui a Mar del Plata. Una gran fiesta. Con todas las personas emigradas de origen italiana.

**RC: ¿Ahí eran vénéto también?**

VC: Ahí mezclado, el papá de Marcelo Carrara era de acá, la mamá es del Molise, la señora Norma tiene un hotel en centro de Mar del Plata, ella es piamontesa. Muchos calabreses con la asociación calabresa

de Mar del Plata, muchos del sur. Fui a comer helado de un calabrés de Mar del Plata, el mejor helado del mundo, tú sabes que el helado aquí es bueno, pero aquel de Paulo de Mar del Plata es fantástico, tiene un negocio solamente. Con Marcelo tenemos contacto siempre, porque Marcelo Carrara puede ser que vuelva a Italia. La segunda vuelta en Argentina fue mejor, porque la primera estaba con mi amiga brasileña de origen véneta pero no hablé con ninguno más. Pero esta vez tres meses atrás fue maravilloso porque he conocido personas maravillosas como Mauro, Sergio Zanin presidente de la asociación alpina de Rosario, nació en Bolzano. Cantamos muchas canciones populares italianas.

**RC: ¿Y tu experiencia en Brasil? ¿Visitabas las asociaciones italianas allá?**

VC: Allá las asociaciones tienen pequeñas comunidades, pero la inmigración por lo que vi la inmigración empieza antes de la Argentina. Primera vez estuve en 2006, nos invitaron a hacer un *roteiro* de 2 semanas en cada comuna con ayuntamientos, canciones de la emigración italiana, yo toco el acordeón. Allí conocí muchas personas de origen italiano, particularmente véneta, en Santa Catarina y Rio Grande do Sul. Hacen comida italiana, pero también en Argentina. La mamá de Marcelo carrara hace la comida italiana, la fiesta de Necochea cerca de Mar de la plata, fiesta de las colectividades con la colectividad italiana. Ahí estaba la familia calabresa y de Marche, hicieron dos stands con comida italiana en la fiesta de colectividades de Necochea. Ahí toqué la gaita solo. Si tú sabes cantar están orgullosos de meterte a cantar o tocar, ha sido una gran experiencia, que no pensaba, yo esperaba ser turista, pero Mauro y Marcelo buscaron una filarmónica para mí para tocar y cantar. Entonces en Brasil fui primero para el show. Después para encontrar amigos de Rio Grande do Sul. Y siempre fiestas privadas, en familia, no públicas. Las personas de etnia italiano que hablan italiano en Brasil hablan dialecto véneta, *talian*. En Rio Grande do Sul es la segunda lengua más hablada después del portugués. Después estuve en Chapecó y en Florianópolis, hice un *roteiro* con un grupo de danza y también allí conocí muchas personas maravillosas. Y esta vez dos meses atrás fue a revivir y cantar con ellos, todos ellos son de origen italiano, especialmente véneta en Brasil.

**RC: Volviendo a tu viaje a Argentina... ¿Qué ideas tenía de Argentina antes de viajar? ¿Qué sabías, qué habías escuchado?**

VC: El taxista hablaba perfecto italiano. Tenía 70 años más o menos. Sus padres eran de la emigración de la segunda. La primera vez fue en 2019. Fue un regalo de mi amiga que me llevó a visitar Buenos Aires, pero yo fui por el tango. Pero me gustó tantísimo escuchar la música del tango y ver que bailen el tango, yo no sé bailar, me gustaría bailar el tango. La emoción del tango, de la música argentina. Y dije quiero volver, conocer, entender, vivir más aquí, estuve solo 5 o 6 días. Me emocionó la historia de Carlos Gardel, su muerte en el aéreo misterioso, su infancia. Fui a su casa, una historia de música, migración y de éxito mundial. La historia de emigración de mi familia motivó mi viaje a Brasil. Y online descubrí las asociaciones y he dicho "*ma come? Questa è una meraviglia, i migranti, come mia madre, 30, 40, 50 años fuera de Italia y mantienen las raíces importantes*", es importante cómo me hablaban a mí de sus recuerdos de la inmigración, y dije "debo conocer estas personas, entender por qué". La diferencia es que mi papá y mi mamá deseaban volver a Italia, realizados, no querían vivir en la emigración, querían ganar dinero para volver aquí. Pero en Argentina y Brasil pocos han vuelto, es una historia de tristeza. Mi papá y mi mamá sufrieron mucho trabajando, pero son realizados volviendo a vivir. Mientras que en Argentina he encontrado muchas personas, claro, algunas pueden volver, tienen dinero para hacer el viaje, pero la mayoría son allá y no han podido volver más. Y después las preguntas que hacen, especialmente en Brasil en Río Grande do Sul, las preguntas de las personas que no han podido volver a Italia, y conocer sus orígenes, y te preguntan, "pero Valter, ¿existe allá Zanin, Couduro, existe Vincentín?". Preguntan si existen sus apellidos, porque es una forma de reconocer, de ser italiano, esto me ha sorprendido que quieren saber si su apellido es todavía vivo acá. Me ha sorprendido tanta gente que no pudo volver, es un poco triste, que no hayan podido volver por un motivo económico. Tú eres afortunada, pero la mayoría no pueden viajar, ni para estar 15 días. El aéreo es prohibitivo, muy caro. He estado en Australia, estuve en 1988, con el grupo folclórico, existe el véneta social club. Pero en Australia también es migración reciente. Cuando encuentro un inmigrante,

me recuerda a mi familia, un poco de tristeza, porque si el emigrante ha ganado la vida, el trabajo, la satisfacción de una vida buena y ganar dinero para feliz, soy feliz por él también, pero especialmente Argentina he visto que muchas personas viven no bien, con dificultades y yo soy feliz si digo mi papá, mi mamá, sacrificio, dolor, discriminaciones como inmigrantes, las han resuelto, han vencido, porque volvieron con el dinero y hacer una vida exitosa en un país, pero en Argentina muchos no son afortunados de volver. También mi abuelo y abuela partieron de aquí, de Treviso, 100 años atrás, a Francia, también mis abuelos, la historia del inmigrante es de melancolía, sufrimiento, trabajo y discriminación. Mi papá me ha dicho que los italianos cuando llegaron a Bélgica no le gustaban a la gente. Lo que ahora se vive para el inmigrante del África, y todos somos migrantes según yo, y todos tenemos derecho de vivir, una vida, buscar, una vida mejor. Porque si uno atraviesa el mar, el mediterráneo, a riesgo de morir, no pienso que en su país vive tan bien. Y esta es la historia de emigración que me recuerda a mi papá y mi mamá.

**RC: Me contaste algo sobre que empezaste a seguir a la asociación Familia Véneta en Facebook. ¿Los contactabas por Facebook? ¿Qué veías en las publicaciones, qué charlabas, qué te llamaba la atención?**

VC: Sigo la Familia Véneta de Rosario, creo que Facebook tiene memoria de los sitios donde estuve, y cada tanto me mete inmigrantes de otros países. Yo no sabía que estaba esta asociación. Familia véneta es una asociación que hace muchas cosas, muchos eventos, de cine, he conocido profesor Emilio Bello, experto de cine italiano en argentina, pienso que tu debes conocerlo, una persona maravillosa, disponible, de una gran humildad. Hacen muchas fiestas, bailes, y hacen tantas iniciativas, el curso de lengua italiana, el carnaval he visto espero que el año próximo cuando vuelva a argentina, pero quiero quedarme también en febrero, para carnaval en Rosario es maravilloso organizado con las máscaras de la familia véneta, como en Venecia. Es muy activa.

**RC: ¿Qué sentiste al visitar esos lugares? ¿Qué tipo de emociones te hicieron sentir?**

VC: Fue una emoción grande, porque entrar en la sede de la familia véneta y ver una pared un muro grande enorme, alto, con el puente de Rialto, he dicho pero *no ho capito* si la Argentina estaba en Venecia o Venecia estaba en Argentina. Entendí que Italia está en el corazón de los argentinos. Las máscaras, todo me sembraba de estar en san marco, aquí en Venecia. Esto me ha sorprendido mucho la primera vez. Para mí son como una familia, mauro me ha dicho de vivir con él, con sus hijos, pero todas las personas también en Mar del Plata, era como estar en familia, como conocer de siempre a estas personas, como si nos conociéramos de siempre, era el destino que yo tenía que encontrarlos. Como cuando te dije si vienes mi casa es tu casa, y lo mismo para todos los brasileños y argentinos y de origen italiano que vienen a visitar la Italia, porque yo me sentí tratado así tratado por ellos. Me quedé en un hotel porque mauro tiene dos hijos, en Mar del Plata era la estación alta, pero sé que lo que recibí al almuerzo, a la cena, era como estar en una familia, toda una familia alargada de Argentina.

**RC: ¿Has visitado el Museo Nacional del Inmigrante?**

-No, no lo conocía, estuve pocos días en Buenos Aires, pero me gustaría conocerlo.

**RC: ¿Cuáles son tus impresiones sobre Argentina? ¿La encuentras parecida a Italia? ¿En qué aspectos? ¿Puede ampliar esta información?**

VC: Hacía mucho calor, yo estaba con italianos, de fiesta, otro lugar en Santa Fe, que ahora está semi despoblado. Yo pienso por lo que he visto, encontrado yo, especialmente en Rosario y Mar del Plata, son *italiani piu autentici che noi*, los argentinos, como vos, de origen italiano, como Mauro, Marcelo, el papá de Mauro, son más italianos que muchos italianos. Tienen en el corazón valores de respeto, educación, amor de la patria, amor del arte, de la cultura, de la historia italiana, más que los que nacieron acá. Yo por ejemplo he descubierto muchas cosas con ellos. Para mí las cosas son iguales, en el sentido que no encuentro diferencias, las cosas que he visto son muy parecidas de cultura, no conozco propio la cultura argentina. Y no solo la saben porque la estudiaron en escuela, la practican

también, la practican, que es lo más importante. Es lo que más me ha *colpito de la Argentina*. Son argentinos nacidos allá, pero son más italianos que los de acá, tienen Italia en el corazón una Italia que ahora ya no existe *piu'*, che en un *senso* es perdida. Tenemos tantos defectos y problemas aquí como italianos.

**RC: ¿Hay algo más que le gustaría destacar?**

VC: Descubrí argentinos que querían hacer una fotocopia a una canción del Molise, no he encontrado argentinos que no fueran de origen italiano, sí he hecho las compras en el supermercado, pero los que no son de origen italiano, ven que vienes de Italia con gran respeto, también en Brasil, con una gran consideración, yo no sé si la merezco, como italiano, no creo merecer tanto como italiano, pero al ojo del argentino, que capaz no es de origen italiano, pero lo ven siempre como *un fratello*, como un *amico*. Yo digo todos cuando argentina jugó la final mundial, no conozco una persona italiana que ese día alentaba por Francia, todos acá era como si fuera para nosotros el nacional era la argentina. Pero siempre cuando juega argentina y no Italia, esto lo he dicho hay un legame muy importante, la verdad es así, este *legame* un poco casi invisible entre los dos países, el papa que era de origen italiano y es venido aquí, es un legame muy fuerte con Argentina, que no sabía, lo he descubierto recientemente.

**RC: ¿Puedes explicarme, en conclusión, qué significa este viaje para vos?**

VC: He descubierto que la Italia aquí es egoísta. Porque para dar hospitalidad es muy difícil a las personas que llegan, son tantos problemas. Pero he descubierto que tantos italianos, he descubierto también en Australia y EE.UU. he estado, he visto que italianos y vénetos están en todo el mundo, más en todo el mundo que dentro de Italia. Entonces tenemos que recordar que los italianos somos inmigrantes, hemos sido inmigrantes o somos hijos de inmigrantes, y nuestros abuelos mamá, papa, han trabajado mucho para tener un futuro mejor, trabajar y no sufrir hambre. Y me siento *piu legato a brasiliani e argentini*, con quien tuve contacto en los últimos años, que con tantos italianos, porque capaz veo en ellos lo que han hecho mis padres, la historia que quizás no ellos porque nacieron ahí, pero sus padres o abuelos han seguramente hecho el camino común, de sufrimiento, dolor y sacrificio para tener una vida mejor, esta es la síntesis que hago de este viaje.

**RC: ¡Muchas gracias por tu tiempo!**



