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In the family home: roots tourism among Greek second generation in Italy

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This paper attempts to make a contribution to the niche area of roots tourism and the broader nexus of tourism and migration, in particular to the literature on roots tourism among second generation, which has only recently attracted scholarly attention. Despite a gradual increase in scientific contributions on roots tourism, most of the literature has focused on the experiences of the first, second and later generations as a single phenomenon. The principal originality of this work lies in the analysis on roots tourism in an under-explored geographical/ethnic context, that is Greek second generation in Italy. The purpose of this study, which is based on an analysis method that combines structured questionnaire data with life stories collected through in-depth interviews, is to analyse the relationship between second-generation Greek migrants' attachment to the birth-country of their parents and their homeland travel. Specifically, frequency and reasons for their travelling, self-perception during their stay in Greece and their definition of 'home' are investigated. The results of the study show that frequent journeys to Greece are crammed with a much deeper meaning as they are transnational practices aimed at visiting relatives and friends, the desire to find cultural roots and relocating cultural identity.

Keywords: roots tourism; second generation; Greece; cultural self-perception; transnationalism; home

Introduction: notes on roots tourism

From an academic point of view, it is only with the transition to the twenty-first century that scholars have attempted to explore the relationship between the field of tourism and the issue of mobility in other scientific disciplines such as anthropology, sociology and geography. One of the most interesting results of this effort has been the emphasis on the combination of tourism, migration and diaspora. At the macro level, migration and tourism are similar as both involve movement of people among geographical areas, although with different duration (Williams & Hall, 2002). At the same time, the notion of diaspora has to do necessarily with flows of movement and forms of tourism related to the countries of origin and cultural roots, as well as concepts such as global communities (Appadurai, 1991), identity and ethnic diasporas (Basch, Glick Schiller, & Szanton Blanc, 1994; Shukla, 2001), and deterritorialized and nomadic mobility (Urry, 2000).

The literature on roots tourism is relatively recent. Early studies referred to statistical analysis of tourist flows at the macro level, in order to identify the economic importance

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of the country as a travel destination (Asiedu, 2005; King & Gamage, 1994; Thanopoulos & Walle, 1988) and with reference to specific groups of migrants (Hall & Duval, 2004; Ostrowski, 1991).

In recent years, we are witnessing a gradual growth in the number of scientific contributions, and roots tourism has become increasingly popular, particularly amongst people of Irish, Scottish, Jewish and African-American descent living in North America and Australia. Amongst the contributions specifically related to the roots tourism, those made by scholars such as Timothy (1997), McCain and Ray (2003), Basu (2001, 2005, 2007), Coles and Timothy (2004) and Iorio and Corsale (2013) should be mentioned. According to Basu, roots tourism is a type of tourism motivated by the search of roots and the desire to return home, which results in travelling to the ancestral homeland considered as pilgrimages and experienced as 'a journey of discovery' and 'life-changing experience' (2004, p. 151). Similarly, McCain and Ray (2003, p. 713) call 'roots tourists' people travelling in search of genealogical information or just to feel connected to their ancestors and to their ancestral roots. Other definitions include travels to the countries of origin for purposes such as leisure, visiting family and friends, discovering the ancestral culture and society, without the intention of a permanent settlement (Maruyama, Weber, & Stronza, 2010, p. 1). In the literature there are other terms that are very similar to roots tourism such as 'diaspora tourism' (Coles & Timothy, 2004; Sim & Leith, 2013), 'ancestral tourism' (Fowler, 2003), 'genealogy tourism' (Birtwistle, 2005; Higginbotham, 2012), 'legacy tourism' (McCain & Ray, 2003), 'heritage tourism' (Garrod & Fyall, 2000) and 'ethnic reunion' (Stephenson, 2002). Although it may cause confusion, all these terms have several aspects in common: a sense of nostalgia for the motherland, the desire to return 'home' and the need to maintain ties with family history (Sim & Leith, 2013, p. 269).

Despite a gradual increase in scientific contributions, most of literature has focused on the experiences of the first, second and later generations as a single phenomenon (Duval, 2004; Lew & Wong, 2004; Stephenson, 2002). Studies of roots tourism specifically regarding the second and later generations are not very extensive yet. However, there are some important exceptions related to African-Americans (Austin, 2000; Bruner, 1996; Holsey, 2004), Jewish diaspora (Cole & Timothy, 2004; Ioannides & Ioannides, 2004), Asian Americans (Huang, Norman, Ramshaw, & Haller, 2015; Kibria, 2002; Louie, 2004; Maruyama et al., 2010) and British Pakistanis (Bolognani, 2014). Finally, in reference to the Greek second generation, the only relevant contributions are those of King and Christou (e.g. Christou & King, 2010; King & Christou, 2010). While focusing on second-generation return of Greek Americans and Greek Germans to Greece, the two authors analyse many of the core aspects that are constitutive of counter-diasporic migration such as, although only partly, homeland and holiday visits.

Considering the relative paucity of literature related to roots tourism and Greek diaspora, this paper attempts to fill this significant scientific gap through a field research on this topic. The general organization of the paper is as follows. Firstly, research aims and methodology will be described, including the reference target, the specific issues that have been identified, and the methodological approach. Secondly, research findings and a large number of themes emerged from this study will be presented. Since much of current literature often lumps first and later generation travellers together, this paper focuses only on second-generation members, in order to understand the dynamics of Greek Italians' touristic experience, the intensity of ties with their homeland, and the meaning ascribed to their travelling to Greece. In the discussion section, some considerations allowing for comparisons with existing literature and previous studies will be made. Finally, in the conclusions I will stress the importance of this work which makes a

contribution to the literature on diaspora tourism among an under-explored geographical/ethnic context, in the hope that future studies will expand our knowledge of the association between Greek diasporic tourism and migration.

The research design: aim and methodology

This paper is the result of a larger research project that deals with the phenomenon of contemporary Greek diaspora in Italy and that has not been covered by the historical and social disciplines yet. In light of the lacking and fragmented literature on this topic, I attempt to make an essential contribution to the studies on the Greek diaspora in the world, also by trying to increase qualitatively different perspectives and viewpoints in the study of human migration.

In particular, this study has taken the Greek second generation as the reference target, that is persons currently living in Italy with at least one parent of Greek nationality. In addition to individuals born in Italy, I included individuals who moved to Italy at the age of no more than six years old (preschool age), by virtue of the fact that, despite the statistics on population census register them as foreign-born, sociologically they are virtually indistinguishable from the narrow definition of second generation (Andall, 2002).

The research project has investigated many topics such as the family history, the process of identity construction, the sense of Greekness, the degree of involvement in the Hellenic institutions and 'sites of belonging', roots tourism, transnational practices and the phenomenon of counter-diaspora.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the relationship between second-generation Greek migrants' attachment to the birth-country of their parents and their homeland travel. Specifically, frequency and reasons for their travelling, transnational practices included in their touristic experience, self-perception during their stay in Greece and their definition of 'home' are investigated.

The research was carried out via structured questionnaires and life stories collected through in-depth interviews. A statistically representative sample was not built and the research results cannot be generalized to the entire universe of the Greek second generation in Italy. I followed an approach based on a flexible methodology that allowed to describe the complexity and the dynamics of the object of study, thus avoiding to create all-encompassing generalizations. Moreover, such an approach aims to build a set of valuable experience and considerations in the scientific reconstruction and human understanding. In fact, social reality cannot easily be reduced into narrow areas of relationships and quantitative measurements but requires an operation of discovery and understanding.

Contacts with the main Greek institutions in Italy that allowed for the first access was the starting point of the execution phase of research: the Greek Embassy, some Greeks Consulates (first of all the Greek Consulate in Rome), the Federation of Greek Communities and Brotherhoods of Italy as well as all Greek Communities in the Italian territory, by their presidents. In addition, the representatives of some Italian-Greek associations/foundations that revolve around the Web have also been involved as informants. Among these, the information portals on Greece were extremely useful and, especially, the social networks that the Greek community attends. People belonging to the target have been contacted considering such strategic points for sampling, around which persons of Greek nationality gravitate more or less constantly.

The snowball sampling method has been very useful. This method has allowed for a better identification of respondents and, at the same time, for a conscious selection of individuals from which to obtain useful data and insights. Thus, by adopting the saturation

criterion, a ‘progressive construction of the sample’ has been reached (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) by creating many chains between the persons interviewed and obtaining a diversification of the sampling units. Moreover, the identification of various informants has helped to reduce the time of the execution phase and has allowed for the removal of many obstacles in creating a climate of confidence, socialization and mutual understanding.

I interviewed 256 individuals by questionnaire. The use of the questionnaire was almost always face to face with only a small minority being sent via the Web. The interviews were conducted from May 2014 to February 2015. The questionnaire included a large set of questions concerning all the aforementioned research topics. One section concerned tourism and travelling to Greece. All participants have been interviewed for the purpose of this paper. They were asked: if they have ever been in Greece in their lifetime, when they went for the first time, how many times they went in the last five years, what are the reasons for their travelling and what is their type of accommodation in Greece. In addition to the questionnaire, among all participants, 70 life stories were collected through in-depth interviews. The purpose of in-depth interviews was a deeper penetration into the issues investigated by the questionnaire, by analysing the relationship between Greek Italians’ attachment to the birth-country of their parents and their homeland travel. The questions raised during the fieldwork were as follows: what specific reasons drive them to travel to Greece? How do they experience their journey to the homeland? Do they perceive themselves as visitors or local residents? How do they feel during their stay in Greece? Does travelling back to the parental homeland have an impact on the definition of the concept of ‘home’?

In the following paragraphs I will explore these topics through an analysis method that combines questionnaire data with the narratives by second-generation members. Using a mixed methods analysis provided pragmatic advantages for understanding research issues. In fact, while on the one hand the questionnaire provided quantitative data, on the other hand the life stories allowed for a deeper penetration into the issues, for a direct access into the world of the interviewees and also to achieve a vision from within as a meaningful form of social knowledge. Combining quantitative and qualitative data offered some insights into the meaning of particular fixed responses. The core activity in narrative analysis allowed us to obtain information on variables not obtained by the questionnaire, to increase the validity of the findings from quantitative data and to identify similarities and differences among the interviewees.

Findings of research

Frequency and reasons for travelling to Greece

Social multi-local connections provided by technological advances and by the efficient means of transport lead to the consideration of the transnational dimension of the diasporic populations. Transnationalism allows for a placement of multiple relationships and facilitates the compression of the social bonds between two locations.

Greek second-generation members who took part in the research develop many forms of human mobility in terms of bidirectional flows and socially stratified processes that connect Italy and Greece. This materializes in transnational activities, including practices that entail the physical crossing of geographical borders, such as frequent travelling to Greece.

All participants in the present study have been to Greece at least once in their lifetime. Excluding those born in Greece, a striking figure is that 7 out of 10 people have travelled for the first time to Greece within the first two years of life. In the last five years, the frequency

of their journeys to Greece is very high: 63.4% say that they have been there more than three times, compared with 3.5% who have never travelled to Greece during the concerned period.

Unlike the past, second-generation Greek migrants today can easily maintain their social ties to their parents' country of origin due to technological developments and advances. New technologies in the transport sector promote international mobility and allow for frequent and bidirectional human flows. Undoubtedly, the massive presence of low-cost flights entails a greater intensity, distance and speed of travels between the two shores of the Mediterranean, facilitating the modes and level of communication. In fact, many of the respondents say that they go to Greece very easily and several times a year, not only during the summer. This allows them to be co-present, to visit their ancestral lands and their relatives, thereby compensating for the physical distance.

To be more specific, among those who go to Greece very often (more than three times in the last five years), the age of the respondents and the place of origin of their parents weigh considerably. In fact, among the youngest (10–34 years), the incidence is even equal to 82.3%, while there is a greater frequency among people whose parents came from mainland Greece (73.8%) than those with origin from the Greek islands (44.8%). In addition, individuals with Greek nationality move to their ancestral land more often than people who are only Italian citizens, with a gap of over 18 percentage points. Finally, higher values are recorded among the second-generation residents in Northern Italy with a percentage corresponding to 74.3%.

Reasons for travelling to Greece are many and overlapping. From the total number of responses, the first two motivations are related to relatives/family (43.4%) and tourism (41.8%). Reasons referring to study (4.6%), work (4.4%) and partner (1.8%) follow at a great distance.

Forms and types of journeys involving the Greek second generation in Italy are not defined properly as classic mass tourism, that is the set of practices and activities that take place outside a familiar environment, aimed exclusively at achieving the leisure, relaxation and fun. As we will see, in the course of in-depth interviews, people have argued, in a very comprehensive manner, the meaning attributed to the notion of tourism. In fact, in this conceptual dimension there are simultaneously multiple aspects and components and it could be reductive and simplistic to speak of ordinary tourism. Therefore, in our case, it is certainly more correct to refer to what in literature is called roots tourism, namely that tourism linked to cultural roots and to ancestral land.

Roots tourism and transnational practices

We cannot take it for granted that people living the diaspora maintain cultural and psychological attachment to the country of origin. Travelling to Greece represent one of the most effective ways to maintain ties with the homeland in order to preserve or enhance personal and emotional connections and to rediscover the places of origin. In fact, connections with the homeland are the major reasons of tourist flows for both the first and the second generation. The factors pushing my research participants to travel to Greece with such frequency are numerous and varied. Besides looking for relaxation in the summer season and holiday, travels are aimed at visiting relatives and friends, the desire to find the cultural roots, the knowledge of the family history, re-experiencing the land of origin and relocating identity.

Usually when I go to Greece I try to awaken memories, to see and understand all that can better explain the history of my family. I took last trip to Corfu with my uncle who is definitely not the

right person to travel with. He can be difficult sometimes. Probably it was due to the desire to come back with a member of my family. I went to see the house where my parents lived and I remembered the old stories told by my mother. For example, about the carnival. So I tried to imagine my mother in these streets during these feast days. It was like to re-connect with my family. I went to find emotions and many little things that awakened my memories but it's hard to explain in words. The last time I went to Corfu I researched the songs that my grandfather sang with the guitar for me. I can say that going to Greece is like an ancestral return and makes me child again. (Linda, female, 64 years, origin of the mother: Corfu)

Unlike an ordinary tourist, in Greece the second-generation members have clearly defined socio-cultural basis and extended family ties which are functional to renew, reaffirm and consolidate their social networks. While spending temporary periods in their parents' cities or villages, the second-generation members use a historicized ancestral space where they confirm the sense of belonging. Roots tourism means living the experience of an emotional landscape both symbolic and material. Visiting a significant relative, attending a local *panighiri* (traditional local festival), browsing through an old family album, swimming in the waters of the Aegean Sea, eating a *souvlàki* (meat skewer) in the main square of the village represent performative acts of return to roots and of re-connection with the motherland. Other activities such as staying in the home of their parents or grandparents, gathering information on Greek family, returning to the childhood summer places have a strong symbolic value. As a result, these activities are an important component for the re-affirmation of their identity and allow to live the past constantly, through the materiality of being in places, not only of their ancestors, but also in places that marked their childhood and initiation of Greekness. The renewed presence at the place of origin gives vent to their emotions, intertwining with spatial memory, where the 'sites of memory' (Nora, 1989) are functional to the confirmation and strengthening of cultural roots.

As mentioned previously, the vast majority of people interviewed move between Italy and Greece very frequently and regularly. However, there are rare cases where journeys occur sporadically, often due to particular circumstances happened in the course of life, such as a family conflict or the loss of a loved person on the Greek family side. The following words describe effectively a big journey of two brothers after a long absence from Greece. It is a case of roots tourism where they re-discovered their origins and family history.

Several years ago I went to Greece with my older brother. After visiting many places, we went to Tsakoni, that is our father's village, just to go see it. Walking around the village, we ended up in the only open bar and we took something to drink. Having seen us young foreigners, they asked us what we were doing there and who we were. Through the few Greek words we knew, we told who we were and that our father was from there. One of these people was my grandmother's brother! They showed us a photo album and we were inside, with our parents. This photo album has given me a witness and awareness of a sense of belonging that I hadn't before. Previously, I thought that Greece and Greekness didn't belong to me, also because of bad relations with my father. The travel with my brother became a travel of origins. Obviously, if you want to make a travel you have to make a rational decision; but in that case it was not so much linked to rationality because we were motivated by emotional reasons and we retraced our historical and family steps. We set out with the intention of not going to find our relatives but I don't think we were there by chance! (Dimitri, male, 42 years, origin of the father: Tsakoni)

The new technology and media can be helpful in the search for roots but cannot take the place of travelling to Greece in a physical sense. No matter how advanced the technology

is, it will never replace face-to-face contact. The physical meeting with their relatives and friends or participating in important live events promote what Urry calls ‘meetingness’ (2003), that is the personal contact which is necessary to develop mutual exchanges and a sense of belonging.

As described above, visiting relatives is the main motivation of travelling to Greece. The members of the second generation, due to anticipatory socialization played by their parents, continue to maintain close and significant bonds with their extended family, regardless of the degree of kinship: grandparents, uncles, nephews, first, second and third cousins. Once again, we are in presence of a kind of hybrid tourism that is not limited to leisure purposes but which has a much more profound meaning that often extends beyond the ordinary travel. It would seem to be a transnational practice that goes beyond the concept of conventional mass tourism and which can be considered as a personal transition oriented to weave important relationships. As is clear from some life stories of my interviewees, visiting relatives may be associated with both a sense of pleasure or obligation, and as such it is juxtaposed to the idea of sacredness and ritual. As for the visits by Greek relatives in Italy, even in this case, sharing of important events such as Easter or Christmas, attending weddings, baptisms, funerals, being present in times of economic crisis and so on reaffirm close relationship between the physical and the emotional dimension, by providing a feeling of mutual closeness and involving a number of continuous pleasure and duties.

In recent years, when I go to Greece, I feel the need and the duty to visit my relatives because of the crisis. I want to know how they are, how they live this tragic situation and if they need something. Every time we go there, my father leaves a bit of money for one of his aunts who has economic problems. This means being part of an extended family! (Andrea, male, 38 years, origin of the father: Lindos)

Albeit to a lesser extent, further reasons leading the second-generation members to travel to Greece are related to work and study. Several research participants perform professional activities not only revolving around Greek matter in Italy, but also entailing continuous and constant travels between the two countries. Among respondents there are import-export entrepreneurs between Italy and Greece, Greek restaurant owners whose travels are designed to buy local products, business people in a family-owned hotel, journalists and foreign correspondents for Greek broadcasters, tour guides, translators, interpreters and scientific researchers who deal with issues related to the contemporary situation of Greece. Others, as traditional Greek dancing teachers, travel to Greece to improve their skills in dance; there are those who, in the role of Parliament member or president of a Greek community in Italy, move frequently to Greece in order to maintain and increase significant political and institutional relations, especially in reference to the recent historical and political circumstances related to the Greek debt crisis. Similarly, other respondents have lived in Greece or travel between the two sides for the university programme ‘Erasmus’, for a degree thesis or a doctoral scholarship. There are also cases in which starting of a professional activity or choosing a subject of university study closely related to Greece are the product of the discovery of their Greekness at a particular time in their lives, then becoming an important element of confirmation for their ethnicity.

It is relevant to note that we are in presence of not only material geography movements related to work or business, but also symbolic geography through which to give meaning to an increasingly transnational society. Cases in point are those of two second-generation members: one is an import business entrepreneur and the other is an owner of a Greek restaurant. Their repeated travels to Greece are aimed at the purchase of local food products

(wine, oil, honey, olives, liqueurs, vegetables, etc.), which are the result of careful selection of small and medium suppliers with whom they create business relationships. In Italy their transnational activity results in the creation of an ‘enlarged ethnic business’ (Ambrosini, 2005, p. 127), whose product offer meets the Greek cultural peculiarities, addressing a mixed clientele that includes Italian and Greek people. In addition, in the case of specific products not available in the Italian market, these activities become an effective instrument of knowledge not only of food but of all aspects of Greek culture, providing to Italian customers a stepping stone towards Greece and a quality cultural tourism.

I have a company that deals with the importation of Greek quality food in Italy: wine, olive oil, honey, olives, liqueurs, vegetables ... This idea was born out of my passion towards Greece. The working method is to go on site and to personally meet small and medium producers, and also to see how they work. I address both end users on-line and wholesalers through restaurants and shops especially in Rome. I have also some Greek institutional customers: in May I organised an initiative with the Greek Community and in June with the Greek Embassy. After tasting my wines, many people decided to go to Greece. Also after listening to the history of the product they get the desire to go there, even for those who have already been there and want to come back. The nice thing about my job is that I travel to Greece very often. In this period I go to Greece three-four times a year. In the future I would like to arrange trips and bring my customers to know directly the producers and the history of the products. (Costas, male, 55 years, origin of the father: Chalikida)

Between tourist and local: travelling as rite of passage

Since the very definition of travel and tourism shows the peculiarity of being outside and away from home, it is important to distinguish outside visitors from local residents, as well as domestic from international tourists.

During the field research, I asked members of the second generation how they perceive themselves when they are in Greece. Their answers revealed a network of multiple positions, in continuous transformation with respect to the space-time dimension. Most of interviewees claim to be placed in a condition more properly hybrid, between the tourist and the local resident. In this regard, it would seem extremely useful to adopt the concept of ‘rite of passage’, introduced by Van Gennep (1909) and later adopted by Turner (1969, 1982), to explain the experience of the journey to Greece and the resulting self-perception processes.

The ritual of the journey, characterized by continuous repetition in a defined time cycle, has three phases: pre-liminal phase, which is the separation from the usual context (Italy); liminal phase, consisting of transition and symbolic passage (stay in Greece) and the post-liminal phase, which involves the reintegration in the place of departure (Italy) with a new social status. In our case, the liminal is the phase that mostly calls our attention in order to interpret the dynamics of perception of second-generation members. While travelling to their ancestral homeland, they cross a symbolic threshold and enter a social and cultural limbo. In fact, they occupy a middle zone, a condition of ‘in-between’ (Bhabha, 1994; Fanon, 1967; Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1999), between outsider and local resident, between a tourist and a local. This interstice is determined, from time to time, by particular social interactions, categorizations and relationships with others, such as relatives and friends. Unlike ordinary tourists who do not have an intimate connection with the place and are not always able to appreciate the density of the space that they visit, the second-generation members, even in the presence of a temporary stay, have developed a radical sense of cultural awareness.

When I am in Greece I perceive myself as a hybrid form, neither as local nor as a tourist. There is a love that goes beyond mere tourism. (Nina, female, 28 years, origin of the mother: Neo Iraklio)

Although they are ‘foreigners’ in their country of origin, the interviewees share the same cultural background of parents and behave, or they try to behave, as locals or at least as domestic tourists. Their deep bond is due to their definition of ‘home’, learned within the diasporic habitat and understood both as a family bonding experience and a tourist consumption of the homeland. The ‘in-between’ position can also be interpreted by following the situational approach, in the sense that the oscillation between tourist and local varies according to different situations and contexts. The identity boundaries are not always the same: they may feel local in the specific place of origin of their parents but not in the entire Greek territory. Similarly, the boundaries expand or shrink in relation to the human context in which they are immersed, by virtue of the fact that this context can be constituted by familiar (relatives or friends) or unknown people, or when they have new life experiences or create meaningful relationships.

I am a tourist when I go to other Greek islands, I behave as a tourist. But when I go to Euboea, my father’s island, I am no longer a tourist: I don’t visit anything, I enter a world of relationships without a sense of holiday. It’s a world made of relationships that I cultivate a lot. When I go there, I’m in the midst of people. I go for this reason, to maintain these relationships. Well, of course, there is the sea and the sun, but it is not a holiday in the traditional way, where you walk around, visiting monuments and so on. It’s more than a holiday, I go and live somewhere else. Although being there I don’t work but I go to sea. In Chalkida, there is not something new to do but there is a world of relationships. (Marinella, female, 50 years, origin of the father: Chalkida)

Many people who are interviewed want to stress their role and status in Greece, by differing from the ordinary tourist and affirming their sense of identity and belonging. This is primarily due to greater access to and knowledge of the local territory that allows them to adopt behaviour patterns not in monotypic terms. This means that they do not want to be perceived ‘as a group of like-minded individuals who have common ideologies and cultures, and similar patterns of behaviour’ (Stephenson, 2002, p. 409). An example is when, rather than bringing Greek souvenirs to Italy as an ordinary tourist, they bring gifts or particular objects from Italy for their relatives.

Their return to Italy represents the post-liminal phase, namely the reintegration in the usual place from which they left. This phase is characterized by the acquisition of new socio-cultural position and status. In fact, travelling to Greece can be a rite of passage that has resulted in the change and renewal. Being imbued with a strong symbolic and cathartic value, it can lead to feeling ‘more Greek’ than before departure. That being functional to the sense of belonging and attachment to their ancestral homeland.

Every time I return from Greece I feel more Greek. It seems like a piece of a puzzle! (Maria, female, 24 years, origin of the mother: Athens)

‘When I am in Greece I feel at home, Greece is a second home’

With regard to the type of accommodation in Greece, the respondents say that they use different solutions. From the total responses in the questionnaires, at the first place there is the hospitality by relatives/family members (33.9%), followed by hotel or rented apartment (28.4%) and their own house (23.3%). Only a minority stay at the house of friends/acquaintances (9.7%) and their partner (2.1%). Often the choice of accommodation depends on the destination: when they return to the place of origin of their parents, second-generation members enjoy the house of their relatives or family; on the contrary, when they decide to travel to other parts of Greece, they opt for a hotel room or for a rented apartment.

From the total number of respondents to the questionnaires, nearly 4 out of 10 people have a house property in Greece. It is interesting to note that nationality and place of origin of their parents affect considerably the possession of a house in Greece. In fact, high incidences have been identified among the holders of Greek citizenship and those who have parents from the regions of mainland Greece. House property is definitely a comfortable and convenient solution to spend the summer holidays. However, it is not a mere physical and material location. Owning a home in the ancestral land has a unique symbolic importance as reunifies the family and represents an investment connecting future generations with the country of origin. Living in the old house of their ancestors allows the second generation to be part of the family tree, by reconnecting the threads with their family history and defining their sense of belonging.

My house was restored as soon as I got married, in 1972. It is a house that dates back to 1865 and belonged to my grandfather. Before he died, my grandfather gave the house to my mother, as dowry. Once, there was a big room with an old ladder to go up and a high bench parallel to the fireplace. In that room we ate and slept. In the room at the bottom instead we put the donkey. Later, we also put the *koklaki* [typical pavement with pebbles] in the patio and terrace.

Then, we have another house in the countryside of Pefki, where I grew up. Now it's abandoned. I'm so sorry to see it so destroyed. There, I have all the memories: I remember when my father went every evening, always dressed in white, from the mule track, because the road was not there yet. I remember that we all slept on a bench, we were also twelve people, close to one another or out on the sand. These places and these houses are very important for me and represent continuity with my family. (Nicola, male, 73 years, origin of the mother: Lindos)

A statement found very frequently from in-depth interviews was: 'When I am in Greece I feel at home, Greece is a second home'. Therefore, I decided to explore this question, by investigating the definition of the concept of 'home' and how it is associated with the specific place of origin of their parents. The responses were varied and composite. Home is as a place of ancestral return, a place of social relationships and familiar feelings, emotions, smells and tastes. In addition, it is identified as a place where to find peace, to feel comfortable or to search for 'existential authenticity' in order to affirm a sense of spatial location. What emerges is the connection of the concept of 'home' to not really material places. They are spaces that go beyond the territorial notions and which are related to the idea of moving house, built on symbolism, feelings and moods. Consequently, it is an idea that can be linked to Greece but, at the same time, home can be anywhere.

For me, Greece is a second home. Home for me is the place where I always perceive the spices and smells from the pots, since I was a child. It is the place of family members, friends, lounges that speak of the culture in which I grew up. Therefore, it is not strictly tied to a place but to the people around me. (Loukas, male, 20 years, origin of the father: Kalitheia)

When I'm there I feel at home because of smells, the light ... For me home is that place linked to emotions, people with whom I am involved. It's important how I relate myself with the place. It could be anywhere. (Nina, female, 28 years, origin of the mother: Neo Iraklio)

Other interviewees stress the existence of a double home, both in Italy and in Greece. By following a transnational approach, they claim that they feel at home in both countries. Although not being born and having not lived most of their lives in Greece, they do not associate home exclusively to the place of residence but also to the diasporic centre. Therefore, it would seem more correct to speak of 'ductile home' considered as dynamic and changing construct that is anchored both to an ancestral past and a fluid present where second-generation members can know themselves. The frequent travels to Greece

contribute to strengthen this duality and create a sense of dual identity embedded in networks of relationships connecting simultaneously two nation-states. Similarly, as shown by other researches on the second generation (Huang, Haller, & Ramshaw, 2011), the sense of a double home increases the number and frequency of transnational activities such as travels to the country of origin of their parents.

For me, Athens has always been like a second home. For me, home is the place that I know well or where I have the pleasure of discovering but not from the point of view of tourism. It's the pleasure of discovering the little things that give identity to the place. And this is something that I can find in Athens. As well as in Rome. And then, home is where I have my contacts, my life, my friends, family and relatives ... Basically it is the place where I'm comfortable and I weave my social and cultural network. So it's a perception both of the physical location and of the human contacts. Both Greece and Italy have it. (Danai, female, 28 years, origin of the mother: Athens)

Some second-generation members identify home as a place offering security. Unlike the definitions given so far, for them home is not so much a construct in motion but an area linked to the idea of fixity of a past that ensures ontological security. In the presence of multicultural and cosmopolitan societies, made of continuous displacements and movements, these people feel the strong need to search for a home in order to put their roots, relocate themselves in social and cultural space, to confirm a 'genealogical rhetoric' and a territorial attachment (Basu, 2004). In fact, current forms of global mobility challenge the traditional notion of home and identity tied to well-defined territories. This can result in the fragmentation of subjectivity and identity floating in multiple, hybrids and diasporic channels. At the same time, this cultural fragmentation can be a threat to the stability of being at home and to a 'radical' and genealogically traceable past. Thus, the search for a safe place to live becomes an act of resistance and reaction to the processes of hypermobility, dislocation and deterritorialization (King, 2002; Olwig, 1997; Wessendorf, 2007). Identifying specific spatial and temporal coordinates of their home can help to dissolve cultural confusion and establish their cultural roots in the ancestral land that provides ontological security. The more these roots penetrate deeply, the more these people are able to find answers to the questions 'Who am I? Where is my house?', while removing uncertainty and existential anxiety.

For me, home is the place where I feel safe, where I can do what I want, I'm not afraid, I feel at home with strong roots. Maybe I feel at home more in Crete than in Italy. Of course, it is due to the small town and the human and social context. The more time passes, the more I realize that my roots are in Greece and Crete is a safe home (Piergiorgio, male, 44 years, origin of the father: Iraklio)

Further definitions of home are related to what Braun (1970) calls 'nostalgic syndrome': home is as a place of childhood memories that create a sense of nostalgia for an ancestral land not fully lived and kept in memory and in imagination. Within this idea of home, social and symbolic practices ranging from family ties to the consumption of cultural goods are included. The distance from the ancestral land, as well as transnational experiences designed to revive the sense of nostalgia, are crucial to the strengthening of Greek identity and the perception of home associated with Greece.

Discussion

A large number of themes and considerations emerged from this study. This allows us to make comparisons with existing literature relating to roots tourism. First of all, what is particularly useful in this paper is the specific attention to the second generation, as the current

literature often lumps first and later generation travellers together. Generally, unlike the first generation, for migrants' children and subsequent generations, the touristic experience may be rather different. They may know traditional cultural norms or family history relating to their parents' country of origin, but at the same time they may generally have weaker ties with specific local places. In other words, unlike earlier immigrants who are more involved in economic, political, social and religious life of their country of origin, the children of immigrants may not manifest an attachment with the same intensity and frequency (Foner, 2002; Luconi, 2001; Soyer, 1997). Moreover, they could give a shallow meaning to their travelling, that is strictly related to mass tourism. However, my field research findings show that their ties are anything but weak, and that travelling goes beyond the concept of conventional mass tourism limited to leisure and recreational purposes. Repeated and frequent journeys to Greece are crammed with a much deeper meaning as they are transnational practices aimed at visiting relatives and friends, the desire to find cultural roots, the knowledge of the family history, re-experiencing the land of origin and relocating cultural identity.

Another important theme raised by this research is that social multi-local connections provided by technological advances and by efficient means of transport lead to a reflection on the transnational dimension of the diasporic populations. Transnationalism allows for a placement of multiple relationships and facilitates the compression of the social bonds between two locations. Greek second-generation members develop many forms of human mobility in terms of bidirectional flows and socially stratified processes connecting Italy and Greece. This results in transnational activities, including practices entailing the physical crossing of geographical borders, such as frequent travelling to Greece. Away from a form of conventional mass tourism, members of the second generation have a clearly defined socio-cultural platform in Greece and extended family ties and relationships, that are functional to renew, reaffirm and consolidate their social networks. In addition, Greek second generation belongs to a larger social and necessarily self-attributed unit, which is associated with the diaspora and previous migratory episodes of the first generation. While going beyond national boundaries, all these people build transnational social spaces that connect Italy to Greece. By doing this, they can participate simultaneously in the life of both countries while maintaining a link between the two shores of the Mediterranean. As outlined by Ambrosini (2008, p. 48), these are bidirectional activities and practices entailing bonds of reciprocity and solidarity that make 'two Nation-states a single social space in which – together with the people – ideas, symbols and material culture circulate'. The circulation of new ideas, values and internalized norms can thus contribute to the creation of 'social remittances' that second generation spread within these transnational spaces (Levitt, 2001; Pelliccia, 2014).

From a transnational perspective, a further point relates to the self-perception of Greek Italians during their stay in Greece, and their definition of 'home'. The research findings show a network of multiple positions, in continuous transformation with respect to the space-time dimension resulting in a condition more properly hybrid, between the tourist and the local resident. By using Turner's theory, second-generation Greek migrants appear to go through a sort of rite of passage when they take their trip to Greece, undergoing a transition process. This ritual of the journey has a function in reinforcing their collective sentiment and belonging to their ancestral land. In addition, assiduous visits help maintain their visibility in order to have less chance of being seen as an 'outsider' and to be more likely to reintegrate into the homeland society. In accordance to other authors (e.g. Duval, 2003), diaspora is inserted in a context in which travelling to Greece constitute a transnational exercise that allows to foster multiple identities and meaningful interactions

across two countries. Travelling frequently to Greece helps reinforce this duality and create a sense of dual identity embedded in networks of relationships connecting simultaneously two nation-states. Similarly, as shown by other studies on the second generation (Huang et al., 2011), the sense of a double home increases the number and frequency of transnational activities such as travelling to the country of origin of their parents. With regard to Greece, the interviewees did not provide a single definition for 'home'. On the one hand, they associate home not to really material places but to a ductile location considered as an emotional and dynamic construct. On the other hand, as documented by other scholars in their works on the second generation (King, 2002; King & Christou, 2010), home is also seen as a place linked to the idea of fixity of a past that ensures ontological security, where they can put their roots, relocate themselves in socio-cultural space and confirm a genealogical rhetoric.

Travelling between Greece and Italy ensures the continuity of the diaspora itself since it renews the sense of nostalgia for their ancestral land. In this sense, as argued in other studies (Basu, 2004; King & Christou, 2010), frequent travelling and maintaining family relationships could be a transnational practice facilitating the return migration, by incorporating the myth of return in roots tourism. In fact, the strong sense of emotional attachment for the ancestral land may implement the transmission of the ideology of return, as a form of rootedness and search for their cultural identity. Therefore, the return 'home' symbolizes a project of identification and the mobility experience is a cause and effect of using the family network.

Conclusion

This paper attempts to make a contribution to the niche area of roots tourism and the broader nexus of tourism and migration, in particular to the literature on roots tourism among second generation, which has only recently attracted scholarly attention. The principal originality of this work lies in the analysis on roots tourism in an under-explored geographical/ethnic context, which deserves much further research. As a result, this paper contributes to a broader knowledge of diaspora and tourism, and Greek Italian tourists in particular. The focus centred on the phenomenon of roots tourism can be useful to combine the notion of diaspora with forms of tourism related to the country of origin and cultural roots. In this sense, roots tourism could be considered as a part of the social dialectic between Greek diaspora and 'home'.

Studying the relationship between second-generation Greek migrants' attachment to the birth-country of their parents and their homeland travel, particularly frequency and reasons for travelling, self-perception during their stay in Greece and definitions of 'home', is useful to understand the meaning ascribed to their travelling to Greece. But it could allow us to explore new issues. For example, another relevant aspect that distinguishes later generations from first generation is the risk to create a distorted and mythologized vision of Greece (*idiòtopos*) and its lifestyle. Thus, the land of origin could be seen by second-generation Greek migrants as a mythical place of desire into diasporic imagination, like a shelter in an idealized home. Their temporary holiday may be permeated with a 'traditional Greekness' made of food, sea, sun, language, singing and dancing, visits to archaeological sites, traditional festivals and so on. However, transnational practices aimed at visiting Greece frequently may develop a greater sense of realism and knowledge of contemporary Greece, by deconstructing the essentialist image anchored in a mythic iconography and by acquiring a greater awareness of national pragmatism including many practical and problematic aspects such as, for example, the present economic crisis in Greece.

In conclusion, future research is needed to extend our knowledge of homeland travel and the connection between diasporic tourism and migration, particularly regarding migrants' children and subsequent generations. Moreover, in light of the relative absence of literature on roots tourism of Greek second generation in Italy and in the world, it is hoped that researchers will enhance the understanding of this issue among this population, especially in reference to concepts such as attachment/belonging to Greece, identity, transnational practices and home. With such further studies, an interesting and comparative understanding of the meaning of roots tourism in affirming identities and socio-cultural dynamics, in both the homeland and the context of diasporic community, will be fostered and expanded in the future.

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