

TOURISM DISCOURSE MEETS MIGRATION DISCOURSE: GODFATHER PROMOTIONAL WEBSITES TO SICILY¹

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In recent years, film-induced tourism has promoted tours to film locations through various travel websites, focusing on the symbolic and cultural value that some tourists associate with their favourite film scenes. Among the film locations that have long fascinated tourists in Sicily, the *Godfather Tour* or *Mafia Tour* seems to have a particular cultural value for a specific target group of tourists: Italian-Americans. It is well known that the Godfather saga reflects the stereotypical image that Americans have of Sicilian-American immigrants, but also evokes traditional Sicilian culture and the feelings of Sicilian immigrants who, in reaction to isolation and in defence of their identity, have tried to achieve the American dream. Based on these assumptions, this paper deals with the contemporary cultural tourism referring to *The Godfather* film and the Mafia phenomenon in Sicily. It will be shown how the tourism discourse found in a selected corpus of American tour operators, promotes the film locations and recalls some scenes as something fascinating, evoking the identity of Italian-Americans through specific linguistic persuasive strategies.

*The Godfather, tourism discourse, migration discourse, Sicilian-American identity,
Tour itinerary*

1. Introduction

In recent years, film-induced tourism has been increasingly promoting tours of film locations around the world through several websites providing the essential tips on hotels, restaurants, attractions and whatever tourists can expect to see and visit regarding their favourite film. The pull factors for

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visiting these locations often depend on a wide range of tourists' motivation drivers such as the special qualities of a landscape, self-identification with film characters, emphatic involvement, the symbolic and specific cultural value that some tourists attribute to their favourite film scenes (Riley and van Doren 1992; Kim and Richardson 2003; Connell 2012).

Among the film locations that have long fascinated tourists in Sicily, *The Godfather* or "mafia-tour" seems to be one of the most popular. Research has shown that Francis Ford Coppola's masterpiece represents the supreme expression of a specific typology of film industry that has contributed to stereotyping Sicilians at a global level, by associating them with organized crime and by fostering the Mafia phenomenon as a legend. This "interlinking" has proved to be a commercially successful formula, particularly in the sixties and seventies, when Sicily was linked to repetitive cycles of crime films that, especially in the American context, highlighted and confirmed specific features of Sicilian immigrants in different ways (Sindoni 2016). In the history of immigration to the USA, Sicilians have been stereotyped as people tending to be "clannish", characterized by a strong loyalty to their regional roots, their family cohesion and attachment to the religious celebrations of their native places, their respect for hand-made cooking traditions, their lack of modernity, their physical features and jargon, the specific and recurring roles of women and mothers within their communities. Moreover, among these cultural aspects, the initial tendency of Sicilian immigrants to be clannish and their resistance to becoming an integrated part of American life have made native Americans and other immigrants believe that Sicilian migrants were destined to remain in ignorance, poverty and isolation. These beliefs limited the work and educational opportunities of most Sicilians who, labelled as dirty, diseased, political rebels, were also accused of introducing the Mafia into the United States.

The paper focuses on the current cultural tourism associated with *The Godfather* film and the Mafia phenomenon in Sicily. It aims at showing how the tourism discourse of *The Godfather* or "mafia-tour" of our selected corpus promotes the film locations and recalls some scenes as something fascinating by evoking, in our opinion, the identity of a specific target of tourists: the Italian-Americans. It is not by chance that most of the travel agencies that include *The Godfather* tour in their trips to Sicily have their headquarters in the USA, and in particular in those regions – such as New York, New Jersey, California, Massachusetts – listed among the first ten states for the greatest number of Italian-American inhabitants or Americans with Italian heritage, representing a significant percentage of their whole population.

On the basis of these assumptions, it is worth bearing in mind that the Mafia phenomenon has always attracted tourists visiting Sicily out of curiosity or perhaps fear, inducing them to ask questions on what Mafia is

really like, how it operates, what damage it has caused and to what extent it is dangerous to walk along Sicilian roads as opposed to along the roads in the rest of the world. Nevertheless, recent efforts of tourist operators or local anti-mafia organizations, like *Addio Pizzo*, deserve to be mentioned because they are promoting a different image of Sicily and Sicilians by highlighting the natural and breath-taking landscapes and the historical and cultural resources that Sicily offers. Tourist operators and travel agencies more and more frequently list Mafia-free hotels, restaurants and other tourism facilities the owners of which are members associated to the above-mentioned *Addio Pizzo*. So, websites, such as ADDIO PIZZO TRAVEL, are official pioneers of an “ethical tourism for those who say No to the Mafia” by organizing trips which invite visitors to discover what Sicily really is from a naturalistic and cultural standpoint.

In addition, many itineraries of the island include special briefings in which experts explain how Sicilians and in particular people from Corleone (the birthplace of the most recent Mafia bosses) are reacting against organized crime. Travel agencies, for example, promote one day trips to the CIDMA, the Mafia and Anti-Mafia Centre, created in 2000 in Corleone, where local guides invite tourists to “truly understand what the Mafia is and has been, by taking a journey throughout history from its beginning to the current day” (CIDMA). Not by chance, a post of the CIDMA homepage underlines the “authenticity” (Dann 1996) of the centre’s work, stating that “guides are all local, which makes what we share with you not just a story we tell but something we have experienced” (CIDMA).

Although recent tour operators and local Sicilian organizations have focused their attention on rebuilding the image of a Sicily fighting against the Mafia, *The Godfather* film has undoubtedly contributed to giving a distinctive mark to an entire generation of Sicilian-Americans who have been stereotyped: at times they have been associated to crime and at other times to family traditions.

2. Bigotries, organized crime and the American Dream

Unlike what many people take for granted about Mario Puzo’s best-selling novel (2010 [1969]) and its 1972 American crime film, directed by Francis Ford Coppola, several scholars (Camon 2000; Hart 2007) have recently observed that *The Godfather* saga (henceforth the GF) encapsulated the ambivalent stereotyped image that Americans have of Italian-American immigrants, always swaying between violence and sentimentality. The film has amplified the mafia boss conditioned by the status of a migrant – Don Vito Corleone – who, reacting against isolation and defending his identity, pursues the

American dream (Messanger 2002; Warner and Riggio 2012). Coppola's successful formula, according to the literature, was to represent the ethnic prejudice against Italians as the main cause of the Mafia phenomenon, in a way that no other film on the Mafia had ever done (Warner and Riggio 2012: 224). Also, reviewers have underlined that Francis Ford Coppola succeeded in humanizing the Corleone family by mixing their illegal activities with some specific aspects of Italian-American culture that successfully induced the audience's sympathy: "the festive, colourful wedding scenes; the respect for traditional rituals; the warmth imparted by familial closeness; the sense of ethnic identity provided by Italian food, language, and music". Therefore, if "[t]here is no easy way to set the Mafia apart from the general culture it operates in [...] at the same time, the general culture is not identical with Mafia culture" (Camon 2000: 58). The figure of Don Vito Corleone, for instance, shows a mixture of qualities that makes him a human being: "he shows dignity, intelligence, and capacity for love equal to his capacity for cruelty", and "a set of values, beliefs, attitudes, prohibitions and 'ethical' behaviours" that combine his violence and illegal affairs with sentimentality (Warner and Riggio 2012: 220).

Another aspect that is worthy of note in both Puzo's novel and Coppola's film is the frequent occurrence of the word *business*. Whereas in Southern Italy the rise of Mafia has been historically linked to a virtual absence of the central state, in the GF both Don Vito and later Michael justify their illegal affairs as a mere question of business. Some examples are Don Vito and Michael's famous expressions "make him an offer he can't refuse", "it's not personal [...] it's strictly business" (see also Warner and Riggio 2012: 221). Hearing Don Vito's reasoning and considerations, we can foresee that in general the USA Mafia is a question of business, and it is well-known how business has always made the American dream possible. In Don Vito's actions we can see a Machiavellian conception of his being a Sicilian coping with American culture: business is the end that justifies the means, the excuse for everything (viz. the illegal affairs).

Italian-Americans have played important leading roles in business, politics, labour, art, music and entertainment. However, the GF concentrates on the negative side of Italian-American leadership, that is, its emergence at the head of *Cosa Nostra* and its criminal activities. According to Warner and Riggio (2012: 8), "the lack of Italian national identity for many southern Italians and Sicilians was replicated to some extent in the culture of the Italian-American immigrant communities." In particular, Sicilians frequented migrants from the same geographical area, showing little interest in interacting with other Italians, who wanted to integrate themselves in the American melting pot.

After their arrival in the USA, Sicilians usually contacted and followed leader figures known as *padrones* or *pappas*, who “seemed” to do their “utmost” to facilitate the migrants’ arrival to the new American environment. Actually, the *pappas* represented a significant barrier to the Sicilian assimilation into the American society. Taking advantage of the newcomers’ unfamiliarity with the language and the laws, these figures contributed to creating a dual identity among Italians, which was to become discrimination on the part of earlier immigrant groups such as German or North Europeans (Italians and Sicilians, in particular, were offered lower-paying jobs and were housed in squalid and overcrowded urban areas).

Regarding the GF, the book and the film are characterized by a complex moral dimension because they entail both an outside and inside view of the Corleone family of criminals involved in the Mafia business (Warner and Riggio 2012: 217). The protagonist, Don Vito Corleone, represents a figure of immense power, able to give the “redress” that American society itself could not, or would not, give to Sicilians against the injustice and prejudices they suffered in the new land. Don Vito’s network of relations is based on personal reciprocity: an agreement between him and his followers that allowed his clan to operate with a freedom denied by the regulation-dominated structure of the American society and the ethnic prejudice against Italians in the USA.

Don Corleone considered “keeping one’s word a sacred obligation”. When countrymen came to visit him, he established with them a condition of indebtedness, reserving to call upon them to perform specific tasks, if necessary. These tasks might be in the future or might in fact remain potential (e.g. the expression “that day may never come”). Several parts of the film show how Don Vito and the Sicilians are capable of serious discussions during their business meetings (e.g. between Don Corleone and his highly educated adopted son and lawyer, Tom Hagen). Furthermore, the film reveals strong family values and cohesion when, for example, Don Vito blames his adulterous elder son Santino affirming that “a man who does not spend time with his family is not a real man.” Although in any crime organization wealth and power come at an ethical cost, Don Corleone seems to follow an ethical code when, for example, after Bonasera’s request, the boss affirms “give this (affair) to Clemenza. I want reliable people, people that aren’t going to get carried away. I mean, *we’re not murders*, in spite of what this undertaker (Bonasera) thinks.” Moreover, when Bonasera enters the room, Don Corleone offers him a drink, and, on this occasion, the film scene suggests empathy, courtesy, and personal warmth (Warner and Riggio 2012: 217). Finally, the Don showed “a vague moral principle” (Clarens 1980: 287), “a strong moral stand against narcotics” when he stresses that the narcotics business is something dangerous that could destroy his family in the future and “once he agrees to the drug trade, it

is only because he gets the other Dons to control the business, keeping it away from children” (Warner and Riggio 2012: 220; Lewis 2010: 67).

In conclusion, this section, dealing with the main factors that characterized the Sicilian migration in the USA and the following success of Francis Ford Coppola’s film, provides the necessary background to understand how the tourism discourse of the GF or mafia-tours in Sicily evokes the identity of Americans with a Sicilian heritage in search of their origins.

3. Corpus and Methodology

Preliminary online research was carried out to identify the travel agencies that promote tourism destinations referring directly or indirectly to the scenes of the GF film. This first step revealed that most agencies and tour operators throughout the world, which offer trips to Sicily with a specific reference to cultural and thematic aspects of Francis Ford Coppola’s masterpiece, have their headquarters in the USA. Although this aspect could be taken for granted, considering the success of the American film and the recent increase of the film-induced tourism, an initial reading of some trip proposals revealed that tourism promotional discourse was not only strictly linked to the film scenes, but used to mix other aspects and persuasive strategies recalling some stereotypes frequently associated with Sicilian immigrants in the USA.

The American travel agencies and tour operators offering package tours in Italy were retrieved from the following websites: USTOA and TRAVEL STRIDE. These websites are pillars for those who are interested in travelling all over the world. In particular, USTOA is a non-profit professional association operating in the USA, made up of companies that provide worldwide service, while TRAVEL STRIDE, based in San Francisco, is the first USA site for package tours.

Texts were manually selected to meet the criteria established by Bowker and Pearson (2002). Accordingly, the texts were as recent as possible (last accessed October 2020); the tours considered were promoted by agencies having their headquarters in the USA; also, the texts pertained to a specialised communicative setting (viz. tourism promotion) and were in full electronic format; and all texts were documents drafted by private travel companies. Finally, a further criterion for selection was added by the authors, namely the thematic one: package tours or private daily excursions included a visit to the GF film locations or referred to some themes of the GF in their itineraries.

From a total number of 400 travel agencies and tour operators offering tours in Italy, 41 tours refer to the GF locations explicitly and there are 16 regular tours (included in priced and package tours), 18 optional tours and 7 excursion proposals; 12 regular tours offer a day trip to Corleone and its

CIDMA museum (see Table 1) and often refer to the Corleones or better Godfather family. Finally, although this study does not focus on actual Mafia tours, it is worthy of note that the same agencies offer seven package tours, which include lectures on Mafia and in two cases the visit to Capaci (where the judge Falcone and his wife were killed by the Mafia).

<i>Tours</i>	<i>Destination</i>	<i>Typology of tours</i>
41	Godfather locations	Regular 16 Optional 18 Excursion proposals 7
12	Corleone	Regular

TABLE 1. Corpus results

Except for the excursion proposals, all the tours are included in package tours lasting several days. The package tour represents one of the largest segments of the worldwide travel industry, since it makes tourism consumption accessible to a huge number of mass tourists (Chen et al. 2016). Indeed, they are pre-arranged guided tours organised by tour operators which have fixed departure dates and daily excursions or a set of attractions (Maci 2013).

Excursion proposals are also package tours and special-interest one-day tours offered by travel agencies to visitors who decide to visit a specific destination autonomously. Regular, optional and excursion proposals all belong to the itinerary genre, but have different promotional/persuasive purposes. Optional tours and excursion proposals are, indeed, more promotional, since their aim is to convince tourists to buy that specific daily tour.

Tour operator and travel agency web portals offer e-brochures or online versions of package tour itineraries, and in this way tourists, interested in a holiday destination, can access to online information readily available on travel websites, becoming web “tourist users” who choose what to read and not necessarily in the form of a printed text. Web portal texts are very similar to travel brochures, which are regarded as the tourist advertising text *par excellence* (Calvi 2009), since they describe a destination and tour packages with the intention of promotion. Hence, travel brochures – as well as package tour itineraries and daily trips – are promotional documents provided by travel and tourism-related services to seasonal travellers with the intention of promoting a specific destination (Weightman 1987). Finally, the communicative purpose of tourism brochures overlaps with that of package tours or excursion proposals, but there are slight differences: travel brochures

often start with a few accounts on the tour operator and the service provided, while package tours or excursion proposals describe the itinerary in detail (Jalilifar and Moradi 2019).

In order to analyse more specifically the tourism discourse employed by tour operators, we identified the textual structure (moves) of package tour itineraries. To the best of our knowledge, no study on itinerary move structure has been undertaken, although several have analysed moves and the structure of hotel homepages (Yaemwannang and Pramoolsook 2018), brief tourist information texts (Huang 2015), and travel brochures (Mason 2004; Ling Ip 2008; Luo and Huang 2015). Thus, given the communicative similarities between itineraries and travel brochures, the move analysis of tours has been based on Lou and Huang's move-structural model of a travel brochure (2015). Some moves in Lou and Huang's model (see Table 2) were adjusted to form a generic structure of package tour itineraries and adapted to the different tour types (regular/optional tours or excursion proposals), since our study mainly focuses on a specific destination: the GF tour.

<i>Moves</i>	<i>Generic structure of Tourism brochure</i>
1	Attracting tourists' attention
2	Targeting the market
3	Establishing credentials
4	Highlighting specialties
5	Detailing the tourist destination
6	Offering incentives
7	Providing service information
8	Soliciting responses

TABLE 2. Travel brochure move structure (Lou and Huang 2015)

According to our corpus data, none of the 53 daily itineraries consists of 8 moves altogether. From our findings, the generic structure of itineraries usually consists of the 5 following moves (see Table 3).

<i>Moves</i>	<i>Generic structure of daily tour itinerary</i>
1	Attracting tourists' attention
2	Targeting the market
3	Highlighting specialties

4	Detailing the tourist destination
5	Providing service information

TABLE 3. Generic structure of daily tour itinerary

As can be seen from Table 3, Move 1 has the communicative purpose of attracting the visitor's attention. This move includes the headline, subheading and an initial brief description or better definition of the destination. Move 2 targets the special groups interested in a specific excursion (i.e. film lovers). Moves 3 and 4 describe the destination in detail, by using a narrative and persuasive description of the main highlights and the historical and naturalistic values of these locations. Finally, Move 5 details the service (i.e. number-based information such as price, duration, pick-up and drop-off). The regular daily itinerary move-structure does not include Move 5 because this move provides service information such as prices and times.

3.1 Regular daily tours: Savoca, Forza d'Agrò and Fiumefreddo

The GF locations promoted by USA travel agencies and tour operators often include three main destinations: Savoca, Forza d'Agrò and Fiumefreddo. Savoca is the village where the meeting and engagement between Michael and his first wife Apollonia was filmed at *Bar Vitelli*, while Forza d'Agrò is the village where tourists can easily recognize the church where the couple got married. Fiumefreddo is the village known for its *Castello degli Schiavi*, the house where Don Vito Corleone was born and where his son Michael Corleone died. All the 16 regular tour itineraries which are part of our corpus include these three locations in their daily itinerary. Only one case involves a visit to the Teatro Massimo in Palermo and it is described as one of the largest opera houses in Italy and the setting where the final scene of the GF III was filmed (the murder of Michael's daughter).

As far as the textual structures of these moves are concerned, the headlines (move 1) of regular tours usually associate the visit to the GF locations – Savoca, Forza d'Agrò and Fiumefreddo – with the area of Taormina as immediately highlighted by most of their day tour headlines (i.e. *Taormina – The Godfather tour – Home hosted lunch, Taormina and the Godfather connection; Taormina-Savoca d'Agrò Valley*).

In Move 1, Dann's concepts of authenticity and strangerhood (1996) appear as the first driving motivations to enjoy the daily excursion when giving a brief description of the tour. The visit is, indeed, linguistically promoted as: "enjoy a once in a lifetime experience", "a truly and unique experience, a

wonderful day of discovery”, during which the visitors will be able to touch with their hands “the daily real life of Sicilians”, “the traditions of the Sicilian inland” and “the heart of Sicilians”. In one case, the headline directly recalls to the GF inviting tourists to accept “an offer they can’t refuse”, quoting Don Vito Corleone’s famous statement.

The audience is rarely targeted (Move 2) except for two agencies, which promote this tour as a visit for “both movie fans and those who are not lovers” of this movie, underlining the historic value of these villages. The narrative description of the highlights (Move 3) focuses on the most romantic and unforgettable scenes of the GF, such as the engagement between Michael and Apollonia at *Bar Vitelli* in Savoca, the festive, colourful scenes of their wedding in the Church of San Nicolò and the murder of Apollonia by a car bomb (*Castello degli Schiavi*, otherwise known as Corleone house). All these scenes, according to the literature, have successfully induced sympathy in most of the GF’s audience (see Section 2). These villages are described as unchanged over the years where “everything is just like in the movie” and where, although years have passed, family traditions remain so strong that *Bar Vitelli* is still “run by the family who owned it at the time of the movie”.

When describing the historical and naturalistic value of these locations (Move 3), Savoca and Forza d’Agrò are alternatively portrayed as out of ordinary and qualified as “rustic”, “unspoiled”, “old”, “ancient”, “picturesque and charming”, but also stereotyped as “sleepy” where “life goes slowly”, recalling the stereotyped reflection on Sicilians as people taking life easy. Local inhabitants are portrayed as people who “adhere to age-old traditions”, “give warm welcome” and “welcome you to share their tables for a traditional meal and conversation”. These portraits, in our opinion, go beyond the film scenes and recall the Italian-American identity by reinforcing the idea of Italian-American families who do not forget their roots (i.e. old-traditions), sharing meals in a cohesive way as a manifestation of taking care of their families and keeping them united.

3.2 Regular tours: Corleone “we’re not kidding! ... it’s a real place”

Among the regular excursions, Corleone is one of the scheduled activities of the tour packages. This daily tour is associated with the visit to the Anti-Mafia Museum as clearly underlined, for example, by the headlines (Move 1): *The Sicilian Mafia* or *The Dark History of Cosa Nostra*. If the tour to Corleone is generally featured as an anti-mafia tour, it is worth stressing that one of the headlines clearly recalls Francis Ford Coppola’s film: *Corleone (we’re not kidding! ... It’s a real place)*, stimulating the curiosity of visitors and referring to the Corleone Family. Also, this daily tour always includes a lecture on the Mafia phenomenon followed by a cooking lesson.

The highlights (Move 3) concentrate on Mafia, always defined as “the most famous social phenomenon in Sicily”. The town is never described from a naturalistic standpoint, but from a conceptual one. Corleone and Mafia are two sides of the same coin, and the town is described through dichotomies (i.e. past and present; life and death; good and evil), such as: “Corleone past and present or Corleone the birthplace of Mafia [...] nowadays well known for the fight against organized crime”. Moreover, dichotomies are governed by the use of war metaphors to explain the Sicilian effort “to eradicate” this social phenomenon (e.g. Corleone’s *fight against* the Mafia). To give another example, from EZ ITALY Corleone is the place where the Mafia is firmly “fought”; the tour clarifies “the way how Corleone inhabitants have taken to eliminate organized crime; how the people of Corleone are fighting back.”

From the above-mentioned examples, it seems that only Corleone (and not the whole of Sicily) is fighting against Mafia, probably because tour operators want to promote the value of Corleone as a daily trip. Last but not least, in a tour package, Corleone is defined as “the namesake of the family from the movie.” Also one tour operator mentions the village as the birthplace of “Tommy Gagliano, belonging to the Lucchese crime family who was one of the five (families) of New York.” Thus, suppose that, although Corleone was undoubtedly the place of birth or origin of several cruel Sicilian and American Mafiosi (i.e. Riina and Provenzano), the promotional tour discourse is by and large associated to the GF and the human aspects of the Corleone Family which, in our opinion, represent one of the motivating drivers to sponsor this tour.

Moreover, a large number of daily trips to Corleone – as above mentioned – include a cooking lesson at the end of the Mafia lecture, creating the association between Corleone, Mafia and Cooking. The cooking lesson is introduced as “interesting and accurate”, and it involves tourists (with their own hands) in the preparation of “genuine and traditional Sicilian dishes”, supporting the authenticity of the cooking lesson. Homemade food reminds one of the Italian-American migrants’ traditions and their food cult as a way of bonding the family. This love for cooking is, also, a key concept in the GF, since it reinforces the idea of gang as family, such as when Clemenza (Don Corleone’s right-hand man) teaches Michael how to cook the traditional ‘red sauce’, he underlines that one day Michael will lead the Corleone family, and traditionally the head of a Family is in charge of feeding and supporting his family guys (*i picciotti*). Thus, the association of Corleone with a cooking lesson reinforces the idea of the negative and positive aspects of Mafia as represented in the GF: Mafia is crime, but Mafia is also family links and traditional cooking.

3.3 Optional tours: “An offer you can’t refuse”

With regard to the optional tours, our data show that 18 daily excursions

are usually included in 7–8-day itineraries. These tours leave the choice to the consumer to join or not a one-day trip to the areas where the GF was filmed in Sicily: Savoca, Forza d’Agrò and Fiumefreddo. There is no optional tour offered for Corleone. Therefore, the optional tours are usually associated with the area surrounding Taormina, metaphorically considered “the jewel of Sicily”.

On one hand, most of the headlines (Move 1) directly refer to the GF, on the other, they refer to the association of the film with Mafia and cooking: *Mt Etna, Savoca and the Godfather*; *The Godfather Trilogy Locations Tour: An Offer You Can’t Refuse!*; *Godfather vs Mafia tour and Sicilian Lunch* or *The Godfather Saga Tour*. Once again, tour operators quote one of the most famous sentences of Don Vito Corleone: “an offer you can’t refuse”, as they want to evoke the film scene, but also underline that it was not just a tourism offer, but something similar to a transaction offering tourists something so attractive that they are almost compelled to accept, because “It’s not just tourism...it’s strictly business!”.

Finally, one headline, *A walk in Old World Sicily* (COLLETTE), highlights the Sicilian world and its traditions, clearly recalling the Italian-Americans’ desire to know the real places from which their ancestors emigrated. This assumption is reinforced at the end of the advertisement itself, stating “this journey through the ‘past’ is sure to give you ‘the feeling of being in old-world Sicily’ and should not be missed.” (COLLETTE)

The audience is never targeted (Move 2) except for one case in which this tour is introduced as “of a particular interest to Godfather aficionados” (CONTEXT TRAVEL), probably because this function is fulfilled by the attractive headlines that often include a direct reference to the GF.

When tour operators describe the highlights (Move 3), authenticity and strangerhood (Dann 1996) represent the main pull factors promoting the GF daily trips. In general, Savoca, Forza d’Agrò, and only once Fiumefreddo, are sponsored as “the real and authentic locations of the Godfather sets.” As a matter of fact, the main focus is on the “charming Savoca” represented as so “authentic that the movies come to life before your eyes, delving tourists into the traditional villages that served as sets for the Godfather” and letting them “explore” “the real untouched Sicily and countryside, local life and culture”. Thus, on this occasion, the tourism discourse does not emphasise the romantic scenes evoked by the engagement between Michael and Apollonia or the colourful scene of their wedding as happens in regular tours, rather it focuses on the “unforgettable” experience to touch with their own hands the life of a “real Sicilian”, exploring “the rustic village life”, “the real untouched Sicily and countryside, local life and culture”.

The qualifiers describing these villages and their life as “untouched”, “hidden”, “rustic”, “traditional” call to mind the lack of modernity and the “agricultural lifestyle” that not only have encouraged sympathy in the GF’s fans

by stereotyping Sicilian immigrants and their way of leading life, but also recall the identity of the Sicilian-Americans in search of their roots and interested in discovering “the agricultural and authentic lifestyle”, voiced by their ancestors who continued to identify themselves with Sicily without forgetting their origins and delaying their total adaptation to the industrial New World. Only one optional tour leads the readers’ attention towards the Mafia phenomenon, as the following example shows: “Compare the unforgettable storyline of the GF saga with real-life Mafia History [...] You will also hear true stories from Sicilian Mafia clans and learn about their grip on southern Italy [...] a tasty pasta buffet at a typical *trattoria*” (ITALY STORY).

In this optional tour, tourists are given the opportunity to meditate on the difference between fiction (GF) and reality (Sicilian Mafia), but the reference to “Sicilian Mafia clans” and the association with a “*pasta* buffet” (already mentioned in the above headline) recalls some stereotypes referred to Sicilians in the USA: their tending to be clannish, their common association with organized crime, their ritual of gathering to enjoy cooking traditions.

Finally, when describing the historical and naturalistic value of these locations (Move 4), Savoca is the village mainly referred to, presumably because Savoca is “the home” of *Bar Vitelli* and the Church of St. Lucia where Michael and Apollonia got engaged and married. Even on this occasion, the discourse does not focus on the scenes filmed, but on the historical value of these places. Actually, Savoca and sometimes Forza d’Agrò are described as “remarkable”, “medieval”, “historical hilltop” villages with a “stunning view” and marvellous 15th-century buildings and listed among “the most beautiful borgos” in Sicily.

4. Excursion proposals: “a film bluff’s delight”

As stated above, in addition to the regular and optional tours referring directly or indirectly to the GF, the data contain seven excursion proposals that tourists can book independently. In general, on this occasion, the promotional discourse is clearly directed to those tourists who strongly desire to know the Sicilian locations of the GF film. For this reason, the promotional language details some of the film scenes, quoting marginally the surroundings of villages and their historical aspects.

With reference to the move analysis, the excursion proposal structure presents all the moves in order to attract tourists’ attention (Move 1), to target the potential tourist, such as film lovers through expressions such as “A film buff’s delight!” (Move 2), to promote attractions (Move 3), to describe tour itineraries and locations (Move 4) and to inform on the services provided (Move 5).

In some cases, the promotional discourse goes beyond the film scenes, referring to some stereotypes of Sicilians and Sicily portrayed by the film or passed on by the life and memories of southern migrants in the USA. It mainly happens when the focus is on the three towns chosen by the film maker to replace “the too commercially developed Corleone”: Savoca, Forza d’Agrò and Fiumefreddo.

Savoca is described as a “pristine”, “silent” and “undisturbed mountaintop town”, “perched on a precarious cliff”, which lets the tourist “ascend into the sky”, enjoying “stunning” and “dazzling” views, fabulous streets and the combination of tradition, culture and history. At the same time, Forza d’Agrò is presented as a “stunning hilltop” and “attractive medieval hamlet” modernized in recent years, but preserving the ancient town with “narrow streets and tiny houses”. Only one excursion proposal (EUROPEAN CONNECTION) includes a visit to Fiumefreddo, promoting the village as “the icing on the cake” of this interesting daily trip, during which tourists may even meet the owner of *Castello degli Schiavi*, “a member of the Sicilian aristocracy”, ready to entertain his guests with anecdotes on the filming and the cast.

Among the seven excursion proposals here analysed, those that arouse interest for this study are offered by the travel agency Marriott Bonvoy and by GAELA. The former underlines that Savoca and Forza d’Agrò are “must-see Sicilian hill towns well-known thanks to F.F. Coppola”, in which excursionists may have the opportunity to learn the real story, structure and development of Sicilian Mafia as well as the current anti-Mafia fight. Doing that, bizarrely enough, they can take pictures with an authentic Sicilian shotgun *Lupara* and they may even purchase Godfather souvenirs. Significant lines of Coppola’s film are also interspersed in the whole text to make promotional discourse more attractive. For example, readers are invited “to leave the gun, take the cannoli” at *Bar Vitelli* in Savoca. Also, when walking along the abandoned streets of Forza d’Agrò, if visitors ask where all the people are, well “they’re dead from vendettas!”. Once again, as happens for optional tours, in MARRIOTT BONVOY’s excursion proposal, the brief references to landscape and places describe towns as “stunning”, “unspoilt”, “unchanged”, characterized by “delightful” and “breath-taking” views, but also eliciting “the romantically rustic atmosphere and pastoral life” of old Sicily. Thus, more than in other promotions, it seems that the above-mentioned daily trip targets an audience who is undoubtedly fascinated by the GF saga with its contents, but also an audience that self-identifies with the film characters and local places, experiencing the life of a real Sicilian. These, in our opinion, may be only Americans with a Sicilian heritage, whose ancestors probably experienced the social “redemption” of Sicilian immigrants in the USA, successfully reproduced by Coppola’s masterpiece.

With regard to the latter, GAELA, which is an agency organizing weddings and events worldwide, the authors decided to list it among the excursion proposals because it is representative of a special typology of tourism, namely the *experiential travel*. The latter is a kind of tourism through which travellers want to deeply connect with the travel destination culture, people and history rather than just acquiring the knowledge of places. An example of experiential travel is given by the cooking lessons proposed in some of the above-analysed tours.

In detail, *Gaela, Weddings and Events Worldwide* – which realizes stylish weddings and honeymoons in Europe, North America, Australia and South Africa, whose headquarters are in Virginia (USA) – offers *The Godfather wedding. The Sicilian - An Italian wedding* ‘you can’t refuse (Move 1).

The special wedding is foreseen in the town of Savoca, which together with Forza d’Agrò, “retain(s) the spirit of old Sicily”. A traditional Sicilian *carrettu* will carry the bride to the tiny wedding Church of Savoca and to *Bar Vitelli*. Each place is described as original and authentic, but also ready to offer modern comforts and a beautiful panorama as well as a familiar atmosphere and traditional food. Promotional discourse lets the reader identify the Sicily of GF and the Sicily of present times, in which the old traditions represented by the movie are still maintained and respected. Indeed, the conclusive message “Now put yourselves in the picture and you have the perfect Sicilian wedding!” lets the reader intertwine the typical Sicilian wedding with the GF scenes and proves the writer’s intention to target an audience who wants to live a unique experience connected with the destination’s culture and history (experiential travel).

Conclusion

The tourism discourse promoting Savoca and Forza d’Agrò, or Corleone itself with its CIDMA, presents these places as linked to the most famous scenes where the GF was filmed in Sicily. Also, it regards Corleone as the place from which the GF family was known, where the Mafia phenomenon had its origin, really existed and is currently fought. In particular, the tourism discourse examined mainly refers to the past life and customs of these places, to family traditions, passion for home-made food and attractive places that mirror the “rustic” and “sleepy” life of Sicily in an authentic way. These are aspects that sometimes result in an explicit promise to experience the life of a real Sicilian.

In detail, in all the three types of tours we have identified (regular, optional and excursion proposals), the link to real or fictional organized crime usually goes beyond the film scenes and is often followed by a description of places.

There are no relevant differences in the communicative purposes of the move structure except for the headlines. Indeed, optional and excursion proposal headlines mainly focus on a direct reference to the GF themes, since their aim is to convince tourists to buy the additional tour. In all cases, Savoca, Forza d'Agrò and Fiumefreddo are promoted as “small unspoiled villages” where visitors can “discover the slow life and the traditions of the Sicilian Island”. Most of the daily trips are also presented as a good chance “to explore the ‘authentic’ real untouched Sicilian countryside, local lifestyle and culture; the town [Forza d'Agrò] consists of traditional buildings and stone paved lanes that are impassable by car”. In addition, potential visitors often have the possibility to enjoy cooking lessons or taste locally produced products such as *cannoli*, a *granita di limone* at *Bar Vitelli* or a buffet of different dishes, which on some occasions they learn to cook.

Thus, this research suggests that tourism discourse represents the cultural identity of Sicilian-Americans in search of their origin or looking for evidence of their ancestors' memories. The evocation of Sicilian identity abroad appears clearer in comparison with the general web tourism promoting Sicily, in which aspects such as the real old Sicilian world and life, pastoral life, rustic atmosphere of the above-mentioned villages, and finally the possibility to experience the life of a real Sicilian occupy a very marginal role, or they are even absent. Indeed, also in our corpus when the area surrounding Taormina – the Jewel of Sicily – is described, tourism discourse focuses on the archaeological, artistic and architectural heritage as well as the natural and breath-taking landscapes that Taormina and Sicily, in general, offer their visitors.

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