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Heritage and new communication technologies: development perspectives on the basis of the Via Francigena experience

Enrica Lemmi

Fondazione CampusLucca University of Pisa

enrica.lemmi@unipi.it

Abstract

Tourism market trends are changing in relation to the new communication technology dynamics, thus, web tourism 4.0 is providing new tools and new marketing approaches for Destination Management and Destination Marketing. In this scenario, slow tourism, with its multiple tourist offers, is oriented to a pro-summer approach, based on strategic communication marketing. This paper wants to propose some marketing perspectives for walking itineraries, such as the Via Francigena, on the basis of video marketing tools and, in particular, by taking advantage of the positive effects of cinetourism on the local tourism systems. The descriptive methodology of research analyses, firstly, the potential of new technologies for slow tourism; then, the Via Francigena, as a world-famous slow travel product, in terms of both real and virtual experience. A recent pilgrimage experience on the Via Francigena is also described by emphasizing its video marketing elements. Finally, some reflections on the role of communication strategies for tourism opens new hypothetical perspectives for cinetourism as a relevant Destination Management vision towards some slow tourism products.

Keywords: slow tourism, new technologies, communication, Via Francigena, cinetourism, Destination Marketing, Destination Management.

1 Introduction and research methodology

In the last decades, the changing scenario of the tourism market has given relevance to the socio-cultural phenomenon of slow tourism, which steadily represents a valuable economic driver for a variety of tourism-driven territories.

In light of the principles of slow tourism, among which: sustainability, socio-cultural exchange, authenticity and quality growth (Lemmi, 2015), this field of tourism contemplates different market segments, such as religious tourism, which includes a world-known specific tourist product: the Via Francigena, an increasingly well-known tourist

attraction, popular in Italy as a route of pilgrimage, it has recently affirmed as a kind of alternative tourism, away from traditional mass tourism destinations. The existing studies of the Via Francigena route mostly refer to its geographical, historical and religious elements, with particular attention to the origin of tourist sights, also through the history of place names as significant tools to discover the cultural identity of places (Lemmi, Tangheroni, 2015).

Moreover, the Via Francigena has also been examined using an experiential tourism approach, indeed, it has been defined as a product whose studies have registered the environmental impacts of tourism in terms of local development, gained by the enhancement of tourist flows along the paths crossing through the Via Francigena, on the North, Centre and South Italy (Trono, Ruppi, Mirotti, Cortese, 2017).

This paper has the purpose to analyse how the concurrent growth of slow tourism and Digital Tourism has influenced the market development of the renowned Via Francigena route. The study research invite to reflects about the unceasing rise of new technologies and web communication tools, in line with the success of destination management strategies, thanks to the digital marketing processes oriented to the Via Francigena. The study shows how the pilgrimage experiences along this historical route can be promoted in new original ways, thanks to the strategic role of multimedia tools, new technological platforms and audio-visual supports, by enhancing the destination brand image and local tourism systems.

According to those assumptions, the final purpose of the paper is analysing cinetourism phenomenon referring to its implications on slow tourism framework, focusing on promotional potentialities of new communication strategies related to film productions, well defined as best practices in term of set location visibility, they could represent empirical models to apply at pilgrimage routes. Definitely, the paper shows some theoretical tools for Via Francigena route marketing perspective, based on the previous Way of Saint James route, in terms of visibility, marketing promotion and Film Commission influences/impacts on the territories concerned.

Regarding the research methodology, the theoretical framework has been realized on the recent slow tourism related literature, focusing on the fields of tourism sciences, destination management and destination marketing, likewise the latest digital and communication research studies

on tourism. A case studies' research is also high representative of the empirical matters related to audio-visual production, tourism development and slow tourism.

At the end, a critical section inspired to professional interviews to specialized companies operating in cinema and slow tourism sectors, with the purpose to draw future favourable scenarios in sustainable tourism.

2 The value of new technologies for Slow Tourism marketing

Nowadays, the power of the tourism industry reflects on both the civil society system as well as on tourist behaviour, by contributing to the building of the destinations' virtual image. New technologies and, particularly, social platforms, represent the pillar of the digital era of communication, that lead collective interests towards the co-creation of travel experience contents based on a narrative approach. The contemporary figure of 'prosumer tourist' (defined as the co-producer of tourist destinations together with local stakeholders) is now evolving into the figure of digital tourist, thus, tourist market research perspectives are shifting from emotional marketing to predictive marketing, with particular attention to both cognitive processes of the various tourist segments, both the virtual dimension oriented to the potential traveller (Lemmi, 2019).

In light of this, tour operators are currently aware of the complex segmentation of tourism demand and they are now studying various formulas representing the tourist destination brand image. New communication formulas for tourism are the expression of new travel semantics, laying out the potential of digital tools. The growing phenomenon of storytelling and collective narration of places has recently enabled the coming of tourist segments with a strategic role in terms of destination appeal: the so-called 'digital nomads', those who live the journey in connection with web tools, by becoming local ambassadors and cultural attractors of the places visited (Olietti, 2018).

In the varied tourist market, the segment of slow tourism, with its multiple formulas, has gained wide success thanks to the concepts of wilderness, authenticity, place identity, intercultural exchange and sustainability. It is a field of tourism often seen only as green or rural tourism, away from web technologies; while, the rapid development of digital systems and communication models related to tourism, has

involved slow tourism, by giving it a renovated marketing approach. New technologies and social network platforms have changed not only the way to practice tourism, but also the way to learn about and discover new territorial elements.

In line with digital marketing perspectives, slow tourism has been reorganized by evocative communication video marketing tools, and also thanks to the digitalization of excursion itineraries by mapping, virtual landscaping and geo-location activities. From cartography, up to landscape virtual reconstruction and geographical digital systems (GIS) on Google Earth, the famous pilgrimage route, the Via Francigena, beginning in Rome and ending in Canterbury, one of the main Italian slow tourism routes, rich in cultural values, is a widely promoted itinerary that is now evolving into a heterogeneous touristic product oriented towards different types of customs (Cecchi, Landi, Mambrini, 2014). The cultural tourist, as well as the religious tourist, today, is open to the use of new technologies on the trip, such as App, virtual tours and the info point 4.0; thus, a great part of contemporary customers are well aware of the potential of digital systems, although they are looking to experience the real identity of places, by avoiding a comfortable, hedonistic holiday approach.

The most recent marketing innovation on the Via Francigena includes storytelling strategies and video making promotion, based on authentic live experiences of trekkers. The current tourism dynamics reflects the new technological paradigm that has influenced a great part of tourism companies, both in the mass tourism market and in the niche tourism.

The emblematic concept of 'slowness' has acquired different meanings and different experiential dimensions, where the tourist figure can reflect his/her hedonist need.

Contemporary tourists' need to overcome the traditional motivation of tourism (such as, the discovery of new places, entertainment, family harmony), but they represent the search for emotion, social branding, and also feeling engaged with people and territories. The combination of the search for slowness and the flexibility of ICT has a strategic role in emphasizing the virtual sensoriality that mobile and web communication systems contribute to enhancement, by enriching the multiple experiential dimensions of travellers (Albanese, 2013).

The new trends of tourism, from emotional marketing, to viral and predictive marketing, have constantly affirmed the growth of social platforms and web facilities in all tourism sectors, especially in cultural and slow tourism (Croci 2017).

The emotional dimension of slow tourism is amplified by evoking approaches identified in Storytelling narration, virtual reality journeys and community systems that empower people's relationships and travel communication (Gallucci, Poponessi, 2010).

The geography of territories is often the geography of emotions (Fiorucci, 2008); in this panorama, new technologies support the slow tourism trip organisation as well as the post trip communication; besides, the journey customizing role of technologies has facilitated the urban slow tourism development and the related cultural heritage fruition.

According to this point of view, the slow tourist has changed his/her way of practicing tourism, starting from ICT tourism 2.0 until ICT tourism 4.0, thanks to the usage of new technologies in all trip phases:

- Pre-trip:

The phase concerning the research of information and suggestions for planning the journey. Beyond metasearch platforms and online travel agencies, today, many web users and potential tourists, want to organise their journey independently and find a lot of information from Social Networks, specialized blogs and communities and also from sharing economy platforms, both for information and for booking purposes. Crowdfunding platforms have recently affirmed the promotion of tourist destinations, although indirectly, thanks to project financing campaigns. The way to find and analyse information pre-trip has widely changed due to the tourists need of relationship and opinion exchange focused on post- trip experience and local tips.

- On-trip:

The phase of local experience is supported by all new mobile technology systems, such as Apps, virtual info points, totems, chatbots and virtual local guides. Social networks are always relevant to share the own trip experience and find the journey instantly, also to localise the place for promotional purposes.

Sharing economy platforms and tourist websites are also useful tools to book services in real time.

- Post-trip:

The phase that follows the journey is more important than the previous phases in terms of experience sharing, destination visibility and brand promotion. The post-trip tourist behavior is similar to during the trip regarding the usage of emotional communication and storytelling activities supported by video and photo reporting that become real viral marketing activities on the Internet. Reviews, social posts, personal blogs and travel diaries, are still growing as online promotional tools used by all types of tourists becoming true “influencers”.

ICT innovation has overwhelmed the whole tourism field and all tourism practices, also the Slow tourist has recently embraced the hi-tech vision to support his/her walking, cycling or sporting adventure. Contemporary pilgrims can turn out to be Slow-Tech tourists, but it is incorrect to define him as a unique target of Slow-Tech tourist, since they are many different kinds (Savelli, 2012).

The ‘level’ of Slow-Tech tourist changes according to two main variables: the tourist attitude towards technology and the usage of technology.

Regarding the high, medium or low combination of attitude and usage of technologies, the Slow-tech tourist can identify with a free climber loving the wilderness and refusing totally technology, or oppositely, with an urban walker or an extremely adventurous slow tourist. Other middle segments include, eco-tourists, birdwatching or kayaking lovers and also culture seekers and slow foodies.

All these varieties of tourist profiles use new technologies sometimes to independently book their trip and to solve trip difficulties, and often also to tell and promote the real slow travel experience.

3 The Via Francigena between real and virtual tourism experience

The tourism literature doesn’t provide a scientific definition of slow tourism or slow travel, although it is described as a response to mass tourism, which represents the globalized world giving the whole of society the opportunity to travel for leisure and it has made tourism a real consumer industry. In response to this relentless phenomenon, slow tourism has affirmed all over Europe in different ways, but with a

common objective: to value an authentic place identity in a sustainable perspective preserving the local environment and the local community.

In the last decades, according to this vision, various kinds of niche tourism have sprung up spontaneously or thanks to the creativity of tour operators. In Italy, rural and green tourism have been promoted since the 80s, especially in North and Central Italy. Later, other slow tourism products have been integrated with the food & wine sector, sport and adventure tourism, heritage and eco-tourism. Therefore, slow tourism, even if it is characterized by a small-medium number of sustainability-oriented tourists, looking for rest, quiet and slowness, it is a hybrid tourist product, often promoted by small specialized tour operators or local associations, with particular attention to assuring positive socio-economic local returns (Lemmi, 2015).

In 2019 the Italian year of slow tourism was celebrated by The Heritage and Culture Italian Ministry (MIBACT); this celebration reflects the government activities done in cooperation with private stakeholders to encourage sustainable hospitality and marketing strategy approach to the slow travel sector. This is the following step to the realization of the slow tourism website dedicated to all walking itineraries of Italy: www.camminiditalia.it. This is the first official portal to promote maps of walking slow tourism itineraries, as a tool to promote foot, cycle and horseriding itineraries. Among them, the Via Francigena has a strategic role to revitalize all the places that cross, in Italy as well as in the other three bordering countries. The Via Francigena, recognized as the Cultural Itinerary of the European Council 1987, is a 1800 km long path, counting 79 stops passing through 4 countries: England, France, Switzerland and Italy.

The European Council grant wanted to give value to the cultural and environmental heritage of the route landscapes from a tourism perspective, by representing the heart of the cultural heritage of the European continent, as a real symbol of intercultural values showing the roots of the population that have crossed the route. From Rome to Canterbury, thousands of pilgrims, Crusaders and merchants have walked on the Via Francigena, influencing each other's' customs. Beyond the social cohesion approach and resource identity preservation purposes, the route of Via Francigena, today attracts millions of 'renewed pilgrims' that have recently become 'tourists' (Berti, 2013).

The Via Francigena, with its wide historical and religious connotation, is currently known and promoted as a whole tourist product.

The Region of Tuscany has invested in numerous destination marketing projects referred to the Via Francigena since 2004, when the Region expressed its interest in promoting the path passing through Tuscany. In 2006, this path was the subject of an International Project involving six Italian Regions in order to realise a real tourist product and to draw up the financial and promotional MasterPlan that have gained investments of about 3.3 million Euros. In 2010 the Tuscan project named 'La Via Francigena' began, but the actual operation plan started in 2012, thanks to 16 million Euros, and was oriented to all touristic usage activities along the route and also to create an interesting tourist product. In 2014, The Via Francigena was definitely operative and was entitled "Great Cultural Itinerary" in the European network of Vie Francigene.

The project's purpose was to redefine the brand image of the route and to reposition its tourist reputation awareness. The first step of the project was oriented to securing the route to create the tourist product, thanks to the support of the Tuscany Promotion Agency, Toscana Promozione Turistica. The Tuscan product 'Via Francigena' is now world popular, in fact, most recently the Region of Tuscany has renewed according to the foreign segment requests.

The foreign countries' campaigns of the route have shown how an historical path can become a slow and niche tourism product, suitable to satisfy heterogeneous clients searching for peace and quiet and contact with nature and people, and not less important, a high cultural tourism product.

In the last years, the touristic development course of the Tuscan area of the Via Francigena has promoted the realisation of some equipped pilgrimage itineraries as well as cyclo-tourist paths, that can be explored thanks to georeferenced maps. The first "homogeneous tourist product" of 2018 touristic regulation of Tuscany is the Via Francigena, with its 39 districts of Centre, North and South Tuscany, that have submitted partnerships aimed at a common planning strategy including accommodation, information, maintenance and communication activities. The added value of a specialised and all-round tourism product is the Destination Management strategy that is well integrated with the Destination Marketing Plan. In light of this, the Tourist Product Observatory analyse touristic data, socio-economic information and

benchmarking statistics, and evaluate sustainability and competitiveness of the route.

In addition, The Tuscan Via Francigena is connected with other historical and religious routes of the European Council, such as the Via Romea Strata, the Via Romea Germanica and the Via del Volto Santo. This combination of cultural identities assures the strategic role of the Via Francigena in the contemporary tourism market perspectives, geared to the concepts of sustainability, accessibility and authenticity. Today the Tuscan Via Francigena is divided into 15 stops passing through 39 districts of the Region of Tuscany and counting 5,8 tourist numbers. [2] Some small districts have gained in terms of socio-economic growth and tourist flows, with an increase of +29% of tourist arrival and 47, 5% of tourist numbers, from 2010 to 2016. The Tuscan route has about 1000 accommodation facilities offering specialised services for multiple targets such as: pilgrims, cyclo-tourists and trekkers.

The variety of Tuscan micro-regions characterized by different landscapes, historical attractions and cultural backgrounds expresses the high tourist value of the Via Francigena, especially in inland areas where tourism is a real economic engine of growth. The main places of tourist polarisation such as the cities of art of Pisa, Lucca, Siena and Florence, with its large number of visitors, are attractive tourist hubs from which tourist flow spreads to minor urban or rural centers with small pre-existing tourist activities. (Lemmi, Tangheroni, 2011). According to this assumption, slow tourism trails, such as the Via Francigena have a strategic role in redistributing tourist flows and in reducing tourism seasonability of mass tourism, by promoting a quality tourism with a restrained environment carrying capacity.

The contemporary Slow tourist has developed a real aptitude for new technologies during the three most relevant phases on the trip: the pre-experience, the live experience and the post-experience. One of the latest digital actions on the Via Francigena include the digital official guide of the path, from the Gran San Bernardo to Rome, 1000 kilometers crossing through geo-referenced stops along the path, linked to hostels with direct booking systems. From this perspective, tour operators have changed their tourist offer, by highlighting the identity elements of tourist products in a new digital way. The tourist chain is also influenced by the behavior of the above mentioned Slow-Tech tourist. Regarding the Via Francigena, the level of technology development is constantly

enhancing, even though it still requires much more improvement. Today, the Via Francigena walking and cycle trails are well mapped by GIS technologies that offer georeferenced routes in the official App of the Via Francigena with GPS localization and also on Google Maps and on Google Street View. The pilgrim can create his/her journey according to his/her personal needs.

4 The Italian project “Le Energie Invisibili”: a video narrative strategy approach for destination marketing

A significant Italian case study shows how slow tourism has been affected by the new communication and technology revolution. An empirical case called “Le Energie Invisibili - Da Milano a Roma in Cammino” (Invisible Energies - From Milan to Rome on foot) has been promoted by an Italian trekking and communication expert, Luca Contieri, that has produced an extremely attractive documentary, 58 minutes long, focused on his 750 km pilgrimage journey, along the Via Francigena, that started on August 2016 and lasted 26 days. The experience designer and also video producer, Luca Contieri, works for film companies and communication agencies as a film maker and producer. The film “Le Energie Invisibili - Da Milano a Roma in cammino” shows the walking itinerary from Milan to Rome and it was his first film documentary. It can be defined as a real opportunity to begin to explore the wide field of spirituality through films, thus, a way to appreciate slow tourism's distinguishing elements. Specifically, the film maker's purpose was to highlight the ‘true identity’ of the places by the key of simplicity. The film is a first-person account of a walking journey starting from Milan Cathedral to arrive to San Pietro Cathedral in Rome, by walking along the pilgrimage route of the Via Francigena. The two characters and promoters (Luca Contieri and the photographer Mimmo Lanzafame) of the film explore the world of pilgrimage and become pilgrims themselves. On their way, they find several other people who tell them why they are going on such an adventure. Every new meeting is not scheduled and everything that happens is by chance. A mosaic of motivations and emotions come out to satisfy the final aim which is to escape from daily routine, and, moreover, to experience a slower pace of life. The film illustrates the experience of the symbolic journey from the point of view of the pilgrims. The objective is to take back one's time in a world that requires us to go faster and faster.

If from Milan to Rome by train today only takes three hours, why instead do the opposite, that is take as much time as possible? The two protagonists collaborated, with Luca Contieri, behind the video camera and Mimmo Lanzafame in front of the video camera. Their first adventure was in Naviglio Pavese and once they arrived in Pavia, they continued to Rome along the Via Francigena, the ancient pilgrimage route that was firstly explored by Bishop Sigerico, who left Canterbury to go to Rome a thousand years ago. In the footsteps of Sigerico and of the millions of other pilgrims who followed him over the centuries, Luca and Mimmo began the journey without any companions but they soon met other pilgrims along the way.

Some of them appeared and then disappeared, others met each other a lot of times and others joined them for several days. Each pilgrim was asked to talk about the motivation and emotions they experienced on the long journey.

Some did it for a religious reason, others for adventure or simple curiosity, but everyone, despite being different from each other, wanted to share the same feelings of getting to know themselves and having an authentic experience. The result was the awareness that every pilgrim is in search of something that surely exists, but cannot be seen: they are “invisible energies”. This is why Luca and Mimmo tried to understand what they are and to discover that in reality that they are clearly visible when you explore the world in a slow way.

During the pilgrimage, nothing was planned, everything happened by chance and all communication material was produced spontaneously. At the end of the 26-day itinerary, a film trailer was produced by the film producer Luca Contieri and was distributed by Mescalito Film, an Italian independent film production and supplying company. The video and cinema marketing of the documentary was projected starting from a first research for partnerships in the slow tourism sector, such as specialized associations (Amici di Santiago, Associazione Europea Vie Francigene, etc.) that were invited to the first showing of the film. Some presentation events were organized for an audience of pilgrims, potential pilgrims, walkers and general visitors, with the special participation of some pilgrims with the role of ‘testimonial’ of their real walking experience.

The trailer, transformed into a film, has been shown in more than 30 cinemas all over Italy, throughout 2017 and 2018, for a total number of around 1.624 spectators and a gross income of 8.919,50 euros. The

marketing results of this cinetourism experience was not completely influenced by a projected video marketing strategy, since, the trailer, and then the film, were promoted by cinema showings, social network web communication on the slow tourism blog and by TV programme interviews. The aim of the pilgrimage video making wasn't actually to do a video marketing campaign, but, in fact, it occurred. The press review of the film includes:

- an interview on the Italian TV programme "Il Mondo Insieme" on tourism matters by Licia Colo'
- an article in the "Touring Club" magazine
- a review on MyMovies website
- an article on FilmTv website
- a review on Film website
- an article in the daily web newspaper "La Repubblica"
- a speech in the entertainment TV Programme "Siamo Noi"
- some Articles on the Francigena News websites
- an interview on the slow tourism blog "Filosofia in cammino"
- film Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/leenergieinvisibili/>
- web film version to watch on Streaming web Tv and the project website: www.leenergieinvisibili.it

This video marketing empirical case applied to a renowned slow tourism experience, such as the Via Francigena, is an example of the powerful role of communication technologies as a new methodology of Tourism narrative promotion. Promotion depends mainly on a local branding system that highlights the most relevant features of a tourist product. Territorial marketing tools are vital for the improvement and promotion of a site determining the change from a unknown tourist destination to a popular tourist destination (Lemmi, 2009).

Among the original new ways of tourism communication and marketing strategy, Cinetourism is relevant for all potential tourist destinations that have been visited starting from a cinema-oriented tourist flow; it is an innovative procedure of spontaneous diversification that begins from customers and contributes to the deseasonalisation of tourism (Filippi, 2012). Cinematographic creative industries influence the tourism industry and operate at multiple stakeholder level, by activating public-private partnerships in the territory and also with foreign countries. Cinetourism is an extremely attractive territorial marketing strategy, that can represent the developing step of video marketing narrative campaigns.

In particular, the case history of the film-documentary “Le Energie Invisibili” has been a non-projected territorial marketing tool that has gained a large media coverage with potential slow tourism flows. When a film-documentary becomes a marketing tool, it can activate a successful destination marketing strategy, in particular to show all the attractive features of slow tourism that are created on territorial peculiarity. According to this potential, the European Association of Vie Francigene operates to promote the route in Italy and abroad and it is investing in a communication marketing strategy

5 How cinetourism becomes a slow destination marketing tool: case studies

The first narrative and experiential expression of Slow Tourism, especially for walking routes, such as the Via Francigena and the Way of Saint James, has been on the Social Networks, in particular, on Facebook and Instagram, defined as ‘the Via Francigena stage’ [6] Nowadays, the high engagement potential of social media storytelling has emphasized by the emotional dimension of social platforms, generating a personal sense of immersion in the natural environment and in the place culture. The strong communication impact of images broadcasted on social platforms highlights the spiritual value of walking routes, recognized by pilgrim communities and also by web surfers, which may become potential walking tourists or simply Slow tourists.

The virtual slow tourist experience often begins on social platforms with the purpose of sharing live or past experiences and giving suggestions and travel inspiration to web audience. Whether the ‘non-virtual’ tourist has a central mantle in suggesting local destinations on offline channels, the 4.0 tourist, more or less digital-oriented, can be an influencer figure, that is equally important for the tourist decision making process since he can be specialised in tourism-related topics of which he talks about by generating interests, reliability and social participation due the influencer authority level. This contemporary way to transform social network users into social network followers is a win-win method used by destination managers with the goal to dissipate tourist products’ information and boosting destination interaction, as well as brand engagement (Ejarque, 2015).

The huge extent of social media influence through photos and video narrations has gained a powerful impact on destination branding and

place visibility; similarly, it has represented the stage where the most of viral buzz on the Via Francigena has expanded as a real socio-cultural phenomenon, like has been experienced by the television presenter and reporter Marco Maccarini. His walking experience along the Via Francigena started in summer 2017 and lasted 20 days through 400 km-walk from Pontremoli to Radiconfani, across the historical pilgrimage stops on the Via Francigena Tuscan stretch. It has been a true social media experiment, supported by real-time video clips and photos with pilgrims and policy makers (such as the mayor of Siena) posted on Facebook and on Instagram. After this social storytelling, Marco Maccarini has been declared a 'Via Francigena ambassador' by the Tuscan Association of Vie Francigene. He is actually an 'ambassador' of Tuscan cultural heritage, since he wanted to share his walking trip with local communities and he was interested in knowing and communicating the rebirth places of the Via Francigena, thus on 22th July 2017, he also celebrated his birthday in Gambassi Terme (Florence) with walking group. This experience has gained millions of social followers and great media coverage.

Furthermore, social networks aren't admittedly the unique broadcast means where walking routes can be promoted, both in 'natural' and in strategic ways, but other audiovisual products have also a great marketing effects for local destinations and also for all those niche tourism products crossing unknown hamlets, such as various medieval villages set on the Via Francigena route. In this context, Via Fracigena has been the main subject of some Italian tv programmes (Geo&Geo, Alle falde del Kilimangiaro, Beetz), together with columns, tv documentaries and newscasts.

A foreign experience is also represented by a BBC film, broadcasted from 5th to 12th April 2019, for three episodes, after the previous BBC film production concerning the renowned Way of Saint James. By direct interview to AEVF, it has been observed a substantial increase of social network interaction after the BBC film broadcasting. Social Networks represent web communities for people engagement, experience sharing and worth of mouth, altought video makings dealing with TV and cinema represent also some realistic promoting tools. The pilgrimage narration in the footsteps of Saint James began in 1987 with the world bestseller by Paolo Cohelo, called 'Il Cammino di Santiago', a novel based on the

walking experience made by the author along the pilgrimage route having been a successful storytelling for route popularity.

The first film set on the Via Francigena was called 'I volti della Via Francigena' [8], it was a traditional film- documentary directed by Fabio Dipinto in 2016 and focused on walker and local communities' interviews, while, the mentioned film-documentary approach of Luca Contieri tells his first-person experience, despite of that, the aims of the two producers were the same. TV and cinema productions are able to recreate walking emotions, immersive and spiritual dimensions, and also feed- backs post-trip reminding to the memories of the trip. The sensitisation of spectators and of local communities, even that the spectacular showing of the route heritage and authentic meeting with the residents and pilgrimage communities, are further aspects giving value to audiovisual makings (Aevf, 2019).

One of the most renowned Italian cinetourism best practices for local development and reputation impacts regards Sassi the Matera UNESCO site that has been set of cinematographic productions (The Passion, The Omen, The Nativity Story, Ben-Hur, Veloce come il Vento, Wonder Woman, etc..) gives evidence of spill-over effects on local economy, social awareness towards creative industries, employment, merchandising, export economy and heritage preservation and promotion fostered by a strong coordination between local government policies and the private stakeholders involved on the territory.

Matera has become a tourist destination thanks to the big cinematographic production that has been a promotional tool, by transforming local economy assets and by increasing also destination appeal and tourist flows and by redefining tourism accessibility (such as: transport services, safety system and tourist accommodation) having been the preconditions to be acknowledge European Capital of Culture in 2019. (Capriotti et al., 2016). Consequently, a great film production attracting substantial funds and professional teams enables local community to rediscover his identity and to increase the destination brand image. At Italian regional and national level, Film Commissions play the fundamental role of being the cabin truck of local and foreign stakeholders willing to invest in local film productions.

According to cinetourism study framework, Italian Film Commissions is worth mentioning since it joins all Italian Regional Film Commissions and provides services, visibility, information and assistance at national

and international level to cultural industry operators, as well as it provides local stakeholder intermediation by promoting access to audiovisual public and private funds. Film commissions, operating as territorial animators by dealing with film production service companies and all other economic operators, are strategic entities able to attract private and public investments and to win thematic calls.

A video production, such as a videoclip, a short-film, a documentary or a movie, without a Film Commission and a sufficient promotion campaign budget has limited opportunity to provide socio-economic benefits on the territory. At this light, numerous empirical studies have become best practices thanks to the strong ‘hype’ power of a well-organized structures operating on and for territories.

The proactive role of Film Commissions is pouring on tourist activities and destination marketing promotion. At national public level, Italian Government, with the recent acceptance of Tourism as a subject belonging to the Minister of Cultural Heritage, cinematographic industries alike cultural industries are becoming powerful drivers for cinetourism. From this perspective, the national website Italy for Movies [9], provides suggestions to video makers and also invites people to discover tourist destinations through cinema and audiovisual productions shot all around Italy.

Italy has been a prominent stage for movies and tv series settled in the most fascinating Italian cities of art, among which, Florence [10], Venice [11], Rome, Siena, Matera [12]; although, those locations take advantages of its celebrity and its numerous tourist flows, cinematographic productions contribute to bring occupancy and socio-economic incomes on the territory. It has been possible thanks to a correlation of push factors: the film director popularity, the amount of investments availability and the actors’ fame and talent.

Some recent best practices both for production popularity and for destination image and impacts are:

- o Six Underground, a Netflix series newly shot in one of the most recent tv series production boasting a high impact on the destination in terms of budget and employment and general local economy incomes (estimated around about 500.000 euros compared to a budget around 1.500.000 euros for 1 week of film production corresponding to 17 minutes of shooting).

- o Assassin's Creed Pilgrimage, a successful videogame production settled around the medieval towns of Monteriggioni and Siena in Tuscany, over that in Florence, telling about fight histories of the past.
- o Showreel, a trailer of Indian cinematographic productions set on Italian locations, realized by Odu Movies [13] (Italian film and video corporate production company), for Indian film producers using to realized short musical trailers with Indian characters playing in Italian locations, especially in famous cities of arts boasting the typical Italian artistic skyline.

Focusing on the cinematographic relevance for Slow tourism, and particularly for pilgrimage routes, the most significant case study concerns the Way of Saint James (by the film *The Way*¹⁴) that has seen research approaches focused on the relationship between cinema and the pilgrimage routes in reproducing local identities. Some identifying aspects of pilgrimages' thematic audiovisual products are the 'sense of sustainability' emerging from sociability, slow mobility images, pilgrimage accommodation, architectural sights, culinary heritage and natural environment. Cinema tourism can be considered an efficient tool for urban regeneration and economic revitalization with significant socio-economic direct and indirect impacts (L. Lopez, E. Nicosia, Lois Gonzalez R.M., 2018).

6 Conclusion and theoretical implications

'Slowness' as a cultural model conveys the spiritual and experiential dimension of slow travel philosophy, that has affirmed under a dynamic and technology-related tourism perspectives (Calzati, 2012). The gradual communication and technology changing process leads tourism marketing systems, in which, the concepts of smart village and smart cities have been affirmed by residents' positive attitude towards innovation technology, for developing a tourist sustainable-oriented destination models (Lemmi, 2015). The paper wants to show how communication marketing could change the future perspective of the slow tourism sector, focusing on walking itineraries; in fact, the natural and fast development from video marketing to cinetourism approach for destination marketing opens new relevant opportunities for both policy makers and private tour operators. Destination management and destination marketing strategies follow technological and market trends; in slow tourism, and, in particular, as regards walking and pilgrimage

itineraries, such as The Via Francigena, storytelling and video marketing represent the natural tourism practice of ‘going slowly and experiencing deeply’. Animate documentaries, sometimes transformed into cinematographic films, create a virtual reality pilgrimage immersion for the potential tourist experience.

It has affirmed that Cinetourism gives territories multiple chances to revitalise their touristic appeal, by involving partnership synergies, where Film Commissions, entity regulated by country legislation, assure a strategic role in generating socio-economic benefits for territories.

Tourist destinations gain benefits from international projects realised with the contribution of national or foreign investments, especially from cinematographic creative industries. The Film Commission is defined as “organisation with the function of supporting artistic, technical and organizational education towards local operator’s resident on the territory and with the function of promoting direct activities to reinforce the territory appeal” (Ruggeri, Bassani, 2018).

Such organisations manage European funds to invest in attractive territories for cinematographic purposes; but often cinetourism is a direct consequence acting on the set location and on the local touristic system and on the whole economic system (Presenza, 2007). Film commissions operate to promote the territories on a national and international scale with private and public stakeholders; in light of this, cinetourism, with its wide range of action, boosts new integrated systems of tourist offers with a whole strategic approach, attracting new tourist flows. Moreover, the real cooperation of Film Commissions with the local systems convey a realistic message of the destination in which they act.

According to those assumptions, in relation to the theoretical framework and in light of the mentioned case studies and best practices, this study research wants to propose how slow tourism destination marketing could be renewed by taking advantage of 4.0 ITCs, social network narrative and audiovisual value. In this field, cinematographic productions represent a promotional tool seen as a great mass-media and, moreover, as a policy support for touristic territorial strategy. This network approach has to be endorsed by local organization such as DMO that are able to create synergies with Film Commission at multiple levels (local, regional, national and international) with those purposes:

- Activating virtuous processes affecting tourism behavior towards destination and residents' involvement in tourism activities.
- Enhancing the brand image awareness from locals and tourists by rediscovering the local heritage promoted by audiovisual productions.
- Activating post-production film set appealing cinetourists, visitors keen on film production locations or tourists interested in exploring new places known by tv or film showings. Cinetourism is a 'long term' tourism strategy able to realise local tourist districts.
- Valorising slow touristic product in the same way, or better than other tourist destinations, by emphasising a heritage product with high territorial connotation.
- Fostering sustainable development thanks to incoming slow tourist flows interested in discovering the tourist destination along the pilgrimage route and promoting: slow mobility, slow accommodation, sustainable policies (similarly to the Way of Saint James' experience).
- Promoting positive socio-economic impacts: regeneration of urban destination in sustainable tourist destinations. Regarding tourism sectors, it is expected an increase of tourism flows, tourist incomes, and average stay time and spending. Concerning social aspects, slow tourism can encourage intercultural exchanges and also a growth of the quality of life; besides, slow tourists can become proactive stakeholders involved in pilgrimage accommodation management systems (many pilgrims have become voluntaries in hostels set along the Via Francigena).
- Finally, residents' awareness towards the destination brand image and local community positive attitude towards slow tourists are relevant aspects referring to audiovisual potential for slow tourist destinations.

On the basis of the mentioned case studies and the tourism and cinema-related companies' interviews, it can be asserted that Via Francigena pilgrimage route could be promoted in a stronger way taking advantage of the high value of audiovisual productions, based on Saint James Way's experience. In contrast to The Way of Saint James, crossing France and Spain for 800 kms, the Via Francigena route crosses four countries (Italy, England, France and Switzerland) for 1.600 kms. The challenging to create a homogenous marketing promotion on the Via

Francigena itinerary is evident, especially because of its length and its development fragmentation. On the other hand, the two routes boast a strong cultural and human dimension, so they're recognized Council of European Cultural routes, including some UNESCO sites, such as the French and Spanish routes of the Way of Saint James.

If the Via Francigena will be acknowledged as UNESCO site, it will benefit from a better destination marketing and destination management strategy [16]. It could have profitable effects on the Via Francigena promotion and cooperation with national and regional DMOs and Film Commissions. As observed from the case studies, some video or promotional projects present a lot of weaknesses due to the lack of territory organization with film commissions and other stakeholders. Consequently, the combination between DMOs and Film commissions, as two powerful local stakeholders, can be reflected on slow tourism marketing management on the basis of successful models such as, the Way of Saint James, and differently, the touristic restyling the town of Matera. In conclusion, cinetourism isn't only a technological support for video marketing, but it has become a local valorization. Information by personal AEVF interviews phenomenon, as a real powerful tool for restyling tourist destinations, especially for unknown places that can become popular and well-presented for their identity peculiarity related to appealing cinematographic stories (Filippi, 2012). Slow tourism destinations and the pilgrimage routes would take advantage of could this tourism marketing perspective, since cinetourism strategies, if well integrated with the local system, could assure real socio-economic territorial effects, by creating some new network tourism products or by transforming the existing touristic systems.

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CH-6900 Lugano (Switzerland)