

“Puglia Autentica” from World Wide Web:
Postcards and stories for travelling
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This contribution focuses its attention on processes and methods through which some local non-institutional players read and understand the set of cultural assets (tangible and intangible), in order to build relationships (horizontal and vertical) and launch initiatives capable of enhancing the value of heritage assets, strengthening the territorial identities and competitive capacities of the local context.

In particular, it focuses on the work of the Association of tourist and cultural promotion “Puglia Autentica”. It was founded within a region, Apulia, whose heritage, until the end of the twentieth century, was endowed with low figurability, with an almost total exclusion of the inner areas.

Since the nineties of the twentieth century, a crucial role in the processes of recognizing and enhancing heritage has been played by the Region, that was able to activate broad participatory processes aimed at discovering and capitalizing the unimaginable jewels of territorial identity. Within these processes, actors such as the “Puglia Autentica” Association, find more and more space in the definition of forms of active territoriality that pass through the creation of images and narratives that enhance, especially through cyberspace, the attractiveness of places.

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The “Puglia Autentica” Association and its interpretation and representanzion of heritage - Born “from the desire to explain the artistic and cultural contaminations that have characterized and still characterize Puglia”, the Association has focused on the promotion and support of initiatives and events that at local level “aim to increase the feeling of belonging and identity with places”.

Worldwide, they aim to communicate elements of the “lesser-known regional anthropological heritage to make them an opportunity for cultural and social growth” and to enhance the tourist-cultural attractiveness of Puglia (www.pugliaautentica.it). The Association, which has among its partners the 6 Apulian provinces, 43 municipalities, the Region, 8 companies and 11 other public and private entities, has worked on the construction of itineraries in what it defines as “Apulia that you have ever seen”. These unfold mainly within the food and wine, folkloristic and cultural traditions.

Among the tools and languages favored by the Association to represent and explain the parts of the heritage that correspond to its vision of authentic Puglia, there are a number of websites (5). Built with the aim of increasing the attractiveness of the places, especially in terms of tourism, and of allowing the potential visitors to make their own journey using their contents, web sites also present themselves as an important “support to the communities in order to define their identities” (Raffestin, 2003, p. 10). The reading of these sites, based on an inductive method (Gattullo, 2008; 2019) that follows a quantitative path (aimed at identifying, summarizing and classifying the type of content that the association has chosen to share) and a qualitative one (focused on the images and content published by the authors - symbolic reproductions - with particular attention to narratives, reports and descriptions) proves to be important because it highlights their role as

mediators within the territorialization process. The images and texts proposed by the web sites “are intentional, selective” and prove useful both “in the processes of self-recognition and care of the territory by the inhabitants” and “to encourage the processes of re-identification with the places” (Magnaghi, 2003, p. 13).

References

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