Chapter 3

The Cultural Relationship Management: Case Study “Sassi of Matera”

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ABSTRACT

This chapter uses a case study to analyse the ways a cultural product, if managed efficiently and effectively, can activate processes of economic growth and stimulate the start-up of new businesses. The work is divided into two parts: the first presents the mapping of cultural enterprises in the province of Matera, and the second presents a quantitative analysis on the main economic enterprise activity in the area under investigation. The aim of this research is to demonstrate the main area of evolution in business development in Matera and its province since UNESCO declared the “Sassi of Matera” to be a World Heritage Site. In particular, the analysis of cultural activities and those of tourism and eating out allows readers to see that the economy of Matera, despite being an inland community, is linked to tourist accommodation and development thanks to the “Sassi of Matera.”

INTRODUCTION

With this research we wish to demonstrate the ability of a cultural product to attract capital flow and individuals to the area in which it is present, and how management based on business requirements could bring an increase to both cultural activities and to those activities connected with them such as, but not limited to, accommodation and eating out.

The current crisis that has imposed biggest constraints on public spending as well as the general state of neglect which characterizes the sector has led to a greater openness to private capital. To that effect, it becomes particularly interesting to note the cultural organizations rather than the cultural products in order to understand the terms to legitimize the private action in a context typically ruled by public. The subsequent analysis will investigate the reasons that can push private parties to invest in cultural organizations.

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To prove our thesis we have chosen to present an analysis of quantitative statistical data and qualitative information, based on an analysis of the cultural scene in Italy, a country with one of the highest concentrations of cultural products. In order to make the results of our analysis more evident, we have identified a region with an economic and sociological history characterized in the past by limited economic development: the town of Matera, which features “The Sassi of Matera” cultural product. Starting with analysis of the presence of cultural activities in Italy, this research has focused firstly on the province and then on the town of Matera (Tentori, 1956). Confirmation has been sought, in particular, to highlight development and the ability to attract businesses thanks to the restoration and enhancement of the cultural product.

At this point, it is necessary to note that not all cultural products lend themselves to attracting flows of capital related to the development of the area and it will still be necessary to analyze the specifics in a local context to that effect, in any case it is the network that is configured around the cultural resource which determines strategic managerial developments (Fernández-Pérez, Verdú-Jóver, & Benitez-Amado, 2013).

BACKGROUND

There are several different opinions in the literature about the cultural and economic links of the area, and on how organizing these links should be orientated; as noted in a previous chapter, some authors take the perspective of conservation into greater consideration (Redner, 2004); while others give greater consideration to value (Klamer, 2011).

Authors such as Tamma (2010) have shown that there are close reciprocal links between culture and territory, in fact there are cultural activities that disseminate and take the area out into the world, as in the case of the performing arts such as plays and concerts, and there are other products that bring the world to the area, such as cultural heritage. Cinti (2007) also demonstrated the importance of the relational dynamics between the city of Florence and its museums. J.D. Snowball (2008) also noted how the value of culture can be measured, the author considers that, in practice, the economic impact can be used as a method of evaluation.

In the light of leading international literature on the role of culture in the economy, and considering that each area has had, over time, a varied cycle of repopulation and depopulation, the aspect that emerges from this research is the interest that companies may have in investing in culture. The data were taken from major sources of Italian reports and statistical information, such as Unioncamere (registroimprese.it), Tagliacarne and Istat.

The information was taken on one hand from observation in the field and, on the other, from available web sites and portals on the Sassi of Matera.

1. ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE PROVINCE OF MATERA

Attention to cultural products is confirmed by the latest report on culture (Snowball J. D., 2008), from which it emerges that despite the global crisis, export of cultural products is stable or increasing for many Italian regions. Basilicata is one region that has reported an increase in incidence in the export of cultural products, out of the total for products/services. In 2012, these exports in this region increased by 0.4 points compared to 2009. The province of Matera, in addition, is fifteenth in the list of Italian provinces for specialization in the cultural content of exports, an increase of 20.0%.

There are 201 companies spread throughout 19 municipalities in Matera in the main areas