



2018

IL CAPITALE CULTURALE

Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage

JOURNAL OF THE SECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

Department of Education, Cultural Heritage and Tourism
University of Macerata

eum



Il Capitale culturale

Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage
n. 17, 2018

ISSN 2039-2362 (online)

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The participatory process of a community involved in its biggest event: the case study “Matera European Capital of Culture 2019”

Angela Pepe*

Abstract

The study highlights from the point of view of territorial marketing that great events are one of the tools used by a territory to improve or reposition its image, attract tourist flows, value its resources, and activate development processes. They are elements of tourist attraction and entertainment that also have an important social impact on the host community as they contribute to the formation of a strong sense of belonging and a sense of the place. In detail, this study is a work in progress on the empirical case of the mega event “Matera European Capital of Culture 2019”. It focuses on the local people involvement, the value created by the big event on the city perception and the culture of welcome. Participation proves to be a tool used by local communities for creating a sustainable tourism development, that is based on local people’s needs with benefits on the territory itself. In this case, thanks to its election as “European Capital of Culture 2019”, Matera enhances its cultural value and moreover achieves a new model of territorial development.

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Questo studio evidenzia come nel marketing territoriale i grandi eventi rappresentino degli strumenti per migliorare e riposizionare l'immagine di un territorio, attrarre flussi turistici, valorizzare le risorse e attivare processi di sviluppo. Essi sono elementi di attrazione turistica e intrattenimento che hanno anche un impatto sociale importante sulla comunità ospitante in quanto contribuiscono alla formazione di un forte senso di appartenenza e del luogo. In particolare, la ricerca rappresenta un *work in progress* verso lo studio del caso empirico di “Matera Capitale Europea della Cultura 2019”, sviluppando il focus sul coinvolgimento della popolazione locale e il valore che crea il grande evento sulla percezione e sulla cultura dell'accoglienza. La partecipazione rappresenta uno strumento ad uso delle comunità locali per dare vita ad una forma di sviluppo turistico sostenibile, basata sulle esigenze locali e volta a creare dei benefici in loco. In questo caso, con la designazione a Capitale Europea della Cultura 2019, Matera potenzia il suo valore culturale e soprattutto realizza un nuovo modello di sviluppo territoriale.

1. *Introduction*

The growth of events' importance has become clearer for some time now, both at national and international level. Thus, there are several interpretations of events: from marketing tools for promoting other products or services, nowadays they are increasingly being recognised explicitly as real businesses with their own independence and professionalism¹. They are elements of tourist attractiveness and entertainment that also determine an important social impact on the hosting community because they contribute to the formation of a strong sense of belonging and a sense of place². As Resciniti and Fortuna³ noted, the basic principle is that value creation through events is strictly linked to the ability to involve people on the cognitive, emotional, sensorial level, giving them the possibility to live experiences based on their needs and wishes, coherently to their expectations. Starting from these considerations, this study focuses on aspects of evaluation determined by the events on a territory and its hosting community. In detail, the focus is on events as unique opportunities to seize with positive effects on the concerned territory. In this case, a strategic role in the planning process and in the city image relaunch is covered by what also literature calls “mega events”, as catalysts of territorial transformations, since they contribute to the positioning and branding of the city image itself. In fact, in the competition among geographical areas, mega events appear as an instrument apt both to create value in the context and to promote the territory image in the perception of external people. In particular, this research is a work

¹ Cherubini, Iasevoli 2005.

² Rizzello 2013.

³ Resciniti, Fortuna 2007.

in progress on the empirical case “Matera European Capital of Culture 2019”: it focuses on the local people involvement and the value created by the big event on the perception and the culture of welcome, and it outlines the specifics concerning chances for development, opportunities to seize, territorial impacts, goals and organisational setup for their management.

A participative process can result more efficient and sustainable in the long term than a top down management. Participation proves to be a tool used by local community for creating a sustainable tourism development, that is based on local people’s needs and it has benefits on their territory itself. In this case, thanks to its election as “European Capital of Culture 2019”, Matera enhances its cultural value and moreover achieves a new model of territorial development. Passing its geographical borders, the city transforms its creativity into a laboratory and its culture into a driving force and an encouragement for the creation of new wealth, involving its territory in a social and economic challenge. In this study, a particular attention is given to the benchmarking analysis of other past successful European Capitals of Culture, to examine success factors and problems. The literature concerning this topic is wide, but a variety of documents of pre-selection, selection and European Commission evaluation have been examined focusing on cultural agenda, main topics, goals, cultural infrastructures and expenditure. The case studies of Santiago de Compostela 2000 (Spain), Avignon 2000 (France), Kosice 2013 (Slovakia), Pecs 2010 (Hungary) e Guimarães 2012 (Portugal) have been studied in detail. For a social and tourism evaluation of the mega event impact and perception, a field survey was conducted through the use of 300 questionnaires to both residents and managers of hotels or other forms of accommodation (144/200) in Matera and 5 towns of Matera hill territory (Gal Bradanica), including Pisticci and Bernalda (two towns near Matera). The residents were asked about their perception of Matera 2019 election and the consequent changes.

2. From cultural event to mega event: a brief overview of the literature

The word “event” derives from Latin *evenire*, meaning “to come out, happen”. The etymology of the term already gives the idea of becoming and the phenomenon dynamism⁴. In fact, one of the main problems linked to the concept of event is to delimit the survey field and the in-depth analysis, because the difficulties come from the same nature of an event as a multi varied phenomenon, and then it is dangerous circumscribing it in few categories or examples. As regards this topic, doctrine provided several definitions of the events phenomenon, each time outlining some specifics. In effect, literature

⁴ Bracalante, Ferrucci 2009, p. 52.

found an agreement on three specifics: events celebrate, communicate and put into relation things and people⁵. In particular, Getz, one of the researchers who studied more in detail this topic, for example, defined an event as «themed, public celebration»⁶, while Cherubini and Iasevoli outlined that «more significant concerning the events is however the presence of natural persons who join together for a specific purpose»⁷.

The literature, above all English, but recently also the Italian one, has focused on some type of events, first of all big events, even though it has never found a shared, univocal and coherent classification. Getz⁸, in some cases, defined them “real tourist attractions”, as such they constitute one of the more dynamic product of tourism and leisure industry, whose appeal comes from the temporariness and uniqueness of each event that with the festival and celebrative atmosphere make them very different from other attractions. Re-elaborating a taxonomy used by Hall⁹, resumed also by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Roche¹⁰ elaborated a classification of events in four types: Mega Events, Special Events, Hallmark Events and Community Events, adding, among the criteria to evaluate, two important elements like the type of audience (the target) and the attention of medias (it is fundamental since the event should attract people, often from all the world). Mega Events (a concept introduced by Ritchie in 1984) refer to happenings with a global involvement both in terms of target/market and television coverage; Olympic Games, International Expositions and European Capitals of Culture fit in this category.

To Special Events type correspond global or national target and the national or international televisions interest. Hallmark Events include for example sport competitions and happenings addressed to a national target, whereas Community Events have a limited target and they attract local medias (television and press) attention¹¹. Roche's taxonomy definitely prefers some events and has many shortcomings since several events have no adequate place in his model. On the contrary, Chito Guala¹² elaborated a more detailed classification and events are evaluated in terms of their goals and type. In this sense, Guala aimed to further widen the range of big events including a specific category for major works and dividing Roche's special events and hallmark events sections in five different typologies. According to these typologies big events are: fairs, religious, sport and cultural events, but these are just some types of events and the category can further vary in time and include new

⁵ Simeon, Di Trapani 2011, pp. 179-202.

⁶ Getz 1993.

⁷ Cherubini, Iasevoli 2005, p. 5.

⁸ Getz 1997, p. 8.

⁹ Hall 1989.

¹⁰ Roche 2000.

¹¹ Attademo 2011.

¹² Guala 2002.

events that, for their dimension and value, become part of it. It is interesting to note that Ritchie and Yangzhou¹³ distinguished events for their quality and their possibility to be directly associated to a specific territory. His definition states «one-time or recurring events of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance the awareness, appeal and profitability of a tourist destination in the short and/or long term»¹⁴. They are those events that, according to Hall, can «have big dimensions or concern local and little community events like festivals and carnivals»¹⁵. So, Hall agreed with Ritchie's definition, but he outlined that hallmark events are not to be exclusively considered large-scale events.

2.1 Mega events in territorial city marketing

“European Capitals of Culture” belong to the so-called “big events” (or “mega events”) category. In this way are defined those events that refer to intervention plans whose organisation has significant effects on territorial level. They are high profile interventions of relatively short duration, associated to important public and private investments and they expect the involvement of a considerable number of participants. While the event itself has always a limited duration, its implications can last long after the happening: what is left to the urban and territorial context after the event is concluded is called legacy. It can be symbolic values, cultural identity elements, but also infrastructures, buildings and facilities to use in the post event period. The concept of “mega events” was introduced by Ritchie towards the end of '80s, who defined them «major one-time or recurring events of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance the awareness, appeal and profitability of a tourist destination in the short and/or long term. Such events rely for their success on uniqueness, status, or timely significance to create interest and attract attention»¹⁶. Mega events arise from innovative projects able to mobilise the potential for local development, support the image reinforcement and facilitate the infrastructural development. Generally, another sign of the growing interest in mega events is linked to the development of territorial marketing and, particularly, of city marketing whose actions are related to the organisation of events both for tourists and local people. So, city marketing is defined as a set of strategies for optimising the advantages of setting in single cities specific events, considered useful for the creation of economic, cultural and development benefits. These strategies are directed to attract investments and incentivise national and international competition. City marketing relies on the place attractiveness, material and immaterial resources.

¹³ Ritchie, Yangzhou 1987, pp. 17-58.

¹⁴ Ritchie 1984, p. 2.

¹⁵ Hall 1992, p. 4.

¹⁶ Ritchie, Yangzhou 1987, pp. 2-12.

The first ones include infrastructures, transports, etc., while the second ones are traditions, human capital, liveability, services, culture, etc. In this way, each city not only tries to combine its cultural and economic offer for creating an international competitive image, but also it tries to attract new public and private investors. The object of the urban marketing actions is basically the city or one or more city areas, the citizens and potential new citizens who respectively are the primary and secondary target of city marketing actions. This type of marketing also aims to coordinate interaction between the processes of offer and fruition by potential citizens in order to increase the city perceived value, in terms of liveability too.

3. The European Capital of Culture event: identity and policy

The programme “European City of Culture” or ECOC has a complex history that shows the increasing interest of the European Union in cultural action. ECOC aims at improving the awareness and bringing closer the People of the Member States through the promotion of the richness and diversity of European cultures, by highlighting that European culture is characterised by «having both common elements and a richness born of diversity»¹⁷. The selected city, with the aim to promote cultural relations in the European Union, for a year, has to show the richness of its cultural resources, to present its cultural life on the international scene and attract tourists through an agenda of events. Launched in 1985 with Athens being the first title-holder, the programme followed a rotational model of the nominations, that is to say every member state received the title in turn. Each State selected both the city to nominate and the local authorities that would organise the event. Between 1990 and 1992 some changes occurred, a system of multiple simultaneous nominations and the extension of the programme to cities of non-EU Countries replaced the rotational model. The Council of Ministers designated the ECOC on the basis of an application report presented by national governments in the name of the applying cities. The second overhauled phase ended in 2004 and the next year a third phase began with a real change of the rules. The ECOC has stopped being an intergovernmental action, decided unanimously by Member States, and has become a community action. The rotational system among Member States has been reintroduced following the turns of Presidency, but they do not coincide. Non-EU States can participate in the programme with simultaneous nominations. The application modality and the nomination procedure, as concern the Member States, have been officialised while the application proposal procedure has remained a standard.

¹⁷ Resolution 1985.

The designation does not depend on political pacts, but on the evaluation of a panel of experts. Every year the jury of experts in cultural matter writes a report and presents it to the Commission, Parliament and Council. The Council officially designates the title city on the basis of the Parliament advice and the Commission recommendation. In the early years of the ECOC programme, the title was assigned to well-known tourist cities, big cultural centres and destinations preferred on the international market, like Athens (1985), Florence (1986), Amsterdam (1987), Berlin (1988), Paris (1989), Madrid (1992). The designation of Athens was a right considered the Greek initiative, but it was also a symbolic designation because it reactivated the narration of the European origins: if the roots of the European civilisation are to be found in Greece, the European modern world is born in Florence and confirms the symbolic meaning of the choice of these cities. Florence was the first Italian city to hold the title. The role covered by the city in the history as a cultural and tourist centre did not highlight the initiatives promoted by ECOC, but in the meantime the title fostered improvements on infrastructures and restoration of historic monuments. A change happened in the '90, when for the first time the event was held in places that most people do not associate to culture. In this way, ECOC title, from an acknowledgement of the cultural pre-eminence of big capitals, has become a tool for development of marginal cities too. The high-point of the programme was achieved in 2000. This year represented an exception, for the first time nine cities, that is to say all the applying cities, were chosen with the motivation of the metaphoric meaning of the passage between two millenniums. It was a selection of urban cultures that with their differences in dimensions, history and culture symbolised the union in diversity.

3.1 Benchmarking and best practices

It is always more frequent that policy makers of regions and cities use the organisation of event to accelerate change processes and attract investments, raise marginal areas, build new infrastructures and redesign the urban plan. For a lot of European cities, the event "European Capital of Culture" represents or represented the opportunity to trigger the mechanisms of value creation crucial for the local development in an economic, environmental, cultural and social perspective. The mega event has certainly had an important impact on the cities that really invested on culture. One of them, definitely, is Santiago de Compostela (2000): this city revealed that it was not just an important pilgrimage destination linked to the most famous European route, and offered cultural and artistic attractions, in particular shows, live performances and music succeeding to increase the number of visitors by 15%. The main goal of Avignon (2000) application was its will to promote cultural tourism stimulating local creativity and strengthening its image as an important

international tourist destination. The events agenda was broad and included several cultural domains with positive effects on local tourism (+25%), economy and the international value of the city. Among the most important events that continued in the years following the title, there are the “Trans Dance Europe Network”, “Teorema Network” and the “Contemporary Art Museum Yvon Lambert”. The year 2004 marked in a strong and evident way also Genoa, that was renovated through the realisation of about 130 projects: some special projects were addressed also to children, schools and socially underprivileged people. Another relevant case is Pecs, European Capital of Culture in 2010. This city, situated in south-western Hungary, is one of the oldest Hungarian city. Close to the borders with Croatia and Serbia, it has represented a model of integration among people of Hungarian, Serbian, Swabian, Croatian origins, becoming famous and achieving important goals both on cultural and socio-economic aspects.

Six hundred and fifty projects were defined and 4,675 cultural events were implemented: they were characterised by a strong cooperation with both the other ECOC cities (Essen in the Ruhr and Istanbul) and the other Balkan Countries with the aim to create a new transnational region called “Southern Cultural Zone”. The European Capital of Culture in 2012 was Guimarães, a Portuguese city of Celtic origin. The designation was perceived as an opportunity for the development of the city and the surrounding region. The goal was boosting the improvement of the quality of life through social and economic renovation and the promotion and enhancement of city and its inhabitants cultural value. Around 2,000 events, involving 25,000 artists and professionals of music, cinema, photography, figurative arts, theatre, dance, street art, were organised during the whole year. In 2013 Kosice, a little city (with about 200,000 inhabitants) of western Slovakia was designated as ECOC and emerged as an international tourist destination thanks to the celebrity obtained through this title. The final cultural programme combined traditional art festivals and experimental art forms that reflected the multi-ethnic identity of the city. The cultural offer included about 300 events and the presence of around 1,000 artists during 2013.

4. The designation of Matera as European Capital of Culture 2019

4.1 The context

Matera, capital of the homonymous province, is one of the world oldest cities. Its territory proves to be settled since the Palaeolithic until the present

day without interruptions¹⁸. The city has 60,453 inhabitants (Istat 2015) and is located in Southern Italy, precisely in Eastern Basilicata, on the border with the Puglia. It sits at 401 m above the sea level between the Murge highland plateau at East and the Fossa Bradanica at West. Matera is well-known for its “Sassi” and the Rupestrian Churches of the 9th-11th centuries, still well preserved. The historical urban settlement comprises the Rione Civita and the Sassi Caveoso and Barisano, delimited by a natural canyon where the Gravina river flows. These are the three ancient city quarters dating back to Palaeolithic¹⁹. The Sassi, that represent a great cultural landscape, are on a ridge with an 80 m deep canyon carved out by the Gravina river. On the other slope, the Archaeological Historic Natural Park of the Rupestrian Churches lies, also known as the Park of Murgia Materana, whose landscape represents the original context of the place, developed in time with urban settlements only on the Sassi side. The morphology of the territory justifies the occupation of caves by nomads during the Neolithic era and their consequent transformation into real dwellings with an underground water collection system: “the palombaro lungo”²⁰.

The houses were completely excavated in the tuff and create a landscape unique in the world. In 1993, UNESCO declared the Sassi of Matera World Heritage site recognising their universal value related to the construction of the cultural landscape; they were the eighth Italian site in chronological order and the first site in Southern Italy to be included in this list. From 1993 the town started being repopulated and appreciated above all as a tourist destination. Nowadays, the Sassi and the Archaeological Historic Natural Park of the Rupestrian Churches permit a travel into different significant stages in human history and constitute the architectural evidence of a unique tale: the ability to create an environment suitable for living in through the accurate and frugal management of natural resources²¹.

The nature reserves, the parks, the protected areas characterising all the territory of Matera constitute a rare twine of nature, art and culture. The Park of Murgia Materana, the San Giuliano Regional Nature Reserve and the Colle Timmari, hosting both rare flora and fauna and archaeological objects, are the most interesting areas that can be visited. They constitute a territorial and thematic area able to express a strong cultural and naturalistic vocation with a rich food and wine offer, high quality typical products and minor tourist products. History, culture and nature combine and create a place rich of panoramas and landscapes whose incomparable charm is breath-taking and attracts also film directors and crews. The film productions produced in Matera have been several and they stimulated the growing phenomenon of “film-tourism” that is increasing in time.

¹⁸ Cfr. <<http://www.basilicatanet.com/ita/web/index.asp?nav=matera>>, 5.02.2018.

¹⁹ Becheri, Maggiore 2013.

²⁰ Battilani *et al.* 2014, pp. 15-42.

²¹ Laureano 1993.

4.2 *Matera 2019: path, dossier and proposals*

In contrast with other paths that in the last 50 years led to the positive change of the image and trajectory of Matera, the particularity of the path towards the designation of Matera as European Capital of Culture 2019 is in the fact that this candidature was planned also with inhabitants of Matera and Basilicata²². In fact, the application report given to MiBACT on the 19th of September 2013 opens with the following statement: «The citizens of Matera and Basilicata, men and women, elderly and children, want the city and the region to take part in the competition because they wish to open up to Europe, link up with other cultural inhabitants and, with them, look forward to a better future for our communities»²³. Matera, highlighting the social and collective dimension of culture and the role covered by inhabitants' cultural participation in the change and care of the city, prefigures a model of open culture, accessible to everybody thanks to license-free contents and new learning processes. This long path was started in 2009 by a group of citizens who proposed the candidature of Matera through actions aiming to raise awareness about a goal considered by most people too far in time:

Why our city can long for representing European Culture in 2019? Since 1950s Matera has been an important place of experimentation, innovation and attraction of famous artists and filmmakers, but also a place of fruitful hybridisation between foreign and local resources. Matera made big efforts: from a “national shame” to the first Southern Italy city to be nominated World Heritage; from an unknown city to one of the main art city to visit; Matera made important restoration interventions, but it has not promoted its enormous cultural potential yet²⁴.

In fact, considering that in 64 years Matera left the definition of “national shame”, became world heritage and seized the European Capital of Culture opportunity, this path proves to be an impressive result achieved in little time in contrast with the atavism and resignation of South Italy. Considered the capital of the Rupestrian culture, Matera has succeeded to become a city able to innovate and open to sharing and active cultural citizenship. It represents a vision of culture as a means for social and economic growth, the possibility to proudly regain its own origins and characteristics and upon them design the territorial promotion, the construction of a positive image and its positioning as a cultural city in the international market. This path is remarkable because the city transformed and Matera based its candidature on this transformation and its clear vision of the future. The goal is to make the city of the Sassi both

²² *Io sono cultura* 2015.

²³ *Dossier Matera 2019 Open Future* 2013, p. 2.

²⁴ *Documento di Indirizzo “Candidatura di Matera capitale Europea della cultura nel 2019”* 2011, p. 4 (translation of the author).

an open cultural place able to attract tourists (tourist presences are an indicator of European Capital of Culture success) and an attractive place for human capital able to create added value in innovative sectors as the creative one. Thus, the goal is also «to create a place to live in and make culture, innovation, best practices; to show the role of Basilicata as the ultimate innovating region; to increase the importance of Southern Italy as a socioeconomic and cultural hub; to combine culture and technology; to attract new private investments and increase the number of residents in the Sassi»²⁵.

In particular, the application dossier of Matera focuses on 5 themes that explain the concept “Open Future”:

- *Ancient Futures*: Matera is based upon an economic and social model whose roots are in the distant past and is now re-proposed worldwide in a modern perspective: an example is the reconsideration of the agricultural and ecological model. Matera is committed to bring together long-standing practices with accessible life models able to influence ideas about culture and development over the coming decades.
- *Roots and Routes*: Matera has been a land of exchange, transition and transformation. The city and the whole Basilicata have been characterised by long-standing mobility from Greeks, Byzantines and Romans’ paths to other forms of mobility related to new immigration and emigration, in particular of young people. The theme explores the several possibilities of mobility.
- *Reflections and Connections*: Matera proves that art, economy, environment, everyday life are aspects to reconsider in order to build new cultural and economic models for small territories, and to find a solution to life models being now in crisis.
- *Continuity and Disruptions*: The abandonment of Sassi cave-dwellings in 1950s represented the collapse of a community and the rupture with its own past. But now the Sassi are the connection to that past and become a place for experimenting new technologies, economies and residential models open to the whole Europe.
- *Utopias and Dystopias*: Matera symbolises the forgotten cultures, the Southern cultures that, with their values, can provide a different solution to European problems and create projects for designing new models for social and economic development. Matera will be the place where imagine alternatives to consolidated urban realities.

²⁵ Ivi, p. 5.

5. A survey on the territory: perceptions and attempts of a community involved in a mega event (Methodological Approach)

For this analysis a qualitative and quantitative methodology was applied through the use of survey tools as face-to-face interview to inhabitants of Matera and relying on the use of a semi-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured with closed-ended questions and was administrated to a sample of 300 citizens from July to September 2015. The questionnaire administration was done randomly, during the week in places where the citizens of Matera are used to meet. In fact, the data were collected as that the sample of respondents was the most representative possible. The questionnaire was divided in three parts – included personal data. The first one focused on tourism and the relation between territory and residents: so it questioned the citizens' behaviour towards tourists and their views about the territory they live in. The second part highlighted the residents' perception of Matera designation as European Capital of Culture. The third part investigated the respondents' characteristics (i.e. age, job, level of education and sex).

5.1 Results

The first section of the questionnaire had the specific aim to understand the relation among residents, tourists and territory. Some questions were conceived in order to analyse which are the positive and negative consequences of tourism on the territory and the city heritage according to the Matera's inhabitants and their involvement in the tourism planning.

The most part of them agree on the fact that tourist presence has positive effects and benefits for the community. In fact, 56% answered "I agree", while the 35% "I completely agree". Seventy percent of respondent think that tourist presence helps to improve the "identity and the cultural heritage of Matera", with a 66% of them indicating the enrichment of "the community's quality of life". It has to be noticed that the percentage of people giving negative answers is very limited. In fact, only 3% attribute to tourism no positive effects, stating that tourism damages "identity and local culture". In the context of the relation between tourism and territory, the residents were asked if they have the feeling to be involved in city tourist planning process and the answers were dual: 59% think their involvement "adequate/very adequate" while 41% find it "inadequate/completely inadequate". The second part of the questionnaire focused on the designation of Matera as "European Capital of Culture 2019".

In detail, the focus was on the awarding and evaluation of this title in relation to several social, cultural and economic aspects and the vision of the city in future. 43% of respondents think that the designation gives to Matera and the whole Basilicata region more visibility as a tourist destination, 26%

consider it an important recognition for the community as concern production and economy and 18% indicate as a benefit the realisation of projects of city requalification.

Fewer respondents, the 8%, consider it an opportunity to have more cultural events. Only 5% answer “I don’t know/I’m not interested in the designation”. Surely, the designation will be very useful for residents to enhance tourism in Matera, to contribute to the requalification of the historic cultural heritage of their city, to enrich the cultural offer and promote Basilicata territory, increasing its international notoriety and visibility. Analysing then the community’s information about the cultural path of Matera 2019, it can be seen that 33% of residents are informed through social networks and 32% through newspapers and local press. Fewer respondents indicate other digital media like the website of Matera municipality (6%) or the portal of Matera 2019. The important difference between the use of social media and other digital channels reflects the continuous and profitable communication work done by Matera 2019 web team during the application process. The web team’s work still continues to be followed to get information. The 56% of respondents in the future see Matera as a cultural and tourist city, whereas 12% a city where living, working and studying, 14% see it as a European city, 10% a city for young people, 5% see other. Finally, 3% see Matera as an experimental laboratory for innovation and technology. Most interviewed residents (92%) are convinced that Matera cultural sector can be attractive for external people, in detail the most important resource is considered the historic archaeological heritage (49.7%). While 91% think that the Matera territory cultural sector can have positive effects on regional economy, specifically 35% state that it can bring employment, 25% believe it can diversify productive sectors, 24% think it can restore historical memory. Finally, 30% of citizens highlight the possibility to improve Matera 2019 path through the organisation of international events and activities, the organisation of several meetings in town to discuss and participate to the programme (22%), the creation of a lot of events to discuss about Europe and its cultures (18%), the enhancement of research and detailed studies about digital and innovation (13%).

6. Survey on tourism operators

The research also involved the economic operators of the tourism industry considered stakeholders in the process of definition of territorial tourism strategies, in parallel to the questionnaire administration to residents. This research stage permitted to understand, analyse and clearly outline problems, weaknesses, but also strengths of the tourism industry that is being studied. The survey was conducted sending a questionnaire, and then administrating

it by phone to the economic operators of accommodation industry working in Matera and in the municipalities in province of Matera belonging to the Gal Bradanica (Irsina, Montescaglioso, Miglionico, Pomarico, Grottole, Grassano) and in Pisticci and Bernalda. In order to study the accommodation offer, an exploratory framework was created through the identification of the accommodation businesses in Matera and the other municipalities considered by this study. The analysis used an informative database made of data taken from the institutional source APT (Agency of Tourism Promotion) Basilicata. Two hundred sixty-nine businesses were contacted, 230 were non-hotel accommodation and 39 hotels. So, in detail most businesses participating in the survey belong to non-hotel accommodation category (tab. 1).

MUNICIPALITY	HOTELS	OTHER ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES
Matera	28	194
Bernalda	4	3
Pisticci	3	9
Grassano	---	2
Grottole	---	3
Miglionico	1	5
Montescaglioso	1	9
Pomarico	---	2
Irsina	2	3
	39	230

Tab. 1. Classification of the sample (Source: FEEM elaboration)

On 269 accommodation businesses contacted, only 144 answered to the questionnaire effectively. The telephone number, website and e-mail address of each accommodation business were found through a desk research (through internet and telephone), in order to create an up-dated mailing list of all the accommodation businesses of Matera and the neighbouring municipalities. During the research there were difficulties in finding information: the website of several businesses could not be found online and often telephone numbers were not useful. It is certain that this kind of difficulties leads to think of the low capacity of these businesses to be found online and offline.

The questionnaire was structured with closed-ended questions and aimed at investigating the main types of clients, measuring the relative weight and the dynamics and evaluating the actions of promotion and marketing done by accommodation operators and the market strategy adopted in connection with Matera 2019 designation. The analysis highlighted key-themes that are very important for the accommodation businesses: expected trends, background, quality of the accommodation supply, strategies and perspectives.

6.1 *Characteristics of tourism flows and post-designation types of clients*

When asked about the effects of post-designation “Matera, European Capital of Culture” tourism flows, 93% of interviewed operators declare having registered a real increase in presences after the selection of Matera. In contrast, the other 7% observe no increase, this percentage is made of operators managing businesses located in the Gal Bradanica municipalities. Only 70% of respondents answering positively about the increase of the tourism flows provide also a percentage of this increase. In detail, about 41% registered in his establishment an objective increase between 16% and 30%, whereas the perceived increase was between 0%-15% for the 24.27% of respondents, between 46-60% for the 18.8% and between 31-45% for the 8.9%. About 7% of respondents registered an increase of more than 60%.

As concern international markets, the percentage of arrivals of international tourists varies in each establishment. According to most respondents (20.14%) the presence of foreigners is between 0-5%, while according to the 17.26% it is between 41-50%. The interviewed operators indicate France and England as the main Countries of origin of the foreign tourists. A lot of tourists come from Germany, Netherlands and Belgium too. The data concerning the presence of tourists from non-European Countries is interesting and reveals that they come from USA and Australia. As concern the domestic market, data are consistent with the regional trend and tourists above all come from Lazio and Lombardy, followed by Campania, Puglia, Tuscany and Veneto. These data are encouraging since they show how the designation of Matera as “European Capital of Culture” meant a change of the tourist presences in Matera. While the presence of tourists coming from the neighbouring regions is a constant, the increase of tourists coming from Central and Northern Italy is staggering.

The average overnight stay of tourists is 1-2 nights for 85.4% of respondents, between 3 and 5 nights for the 13.2% and 6 nights for a weak 1.4%. This highlights the fact that tourists in Matera are above all itinerant tourists and they consider Matera as part of a journey made of several neighbouring destinations located above all in Puglia. Actually, Matera is often part of an itinerary including more destinations in Puglia than in Basilicata. In this perspective, it is very important the creation of a “tourist product” that will make usable and integrate several resources inside the destination Matera. The operators were asked about the holiday motivational factors leading tourists to stay overnight in Matera, also after the designation as European Capital of Culture (tab. 2). The data collected through questionnaires show the motivations are linked consistently to the city cultural attractions (47.8%), followed by the attractiveness of the natural resources (16.6%) and food and wine (16.1%). Only the 7.6% of tourists come to Matera for discovering local events and traditions.

Attraction Factors	%
Cultural Attractions	47.8%
Natural Resources (parks and protected areas and lakes)	16.6%
Food and Wine Heritage	16.1%
Discovery of Local Events and Traditions	7.6%
I'm here for work	2.4%
Other	9.5%

Tab. 2. Factors of attractiveness – % answers supposed by operators (Source: FEEM elaboration)

According to the hoteliers' statements the figure concerning business tourism is the lowest (2.4%). At the question about tourists' further motivations to come to Matera, 9.5% of respondents indicate the factor curiosity of the "place to discover" after the ECOC designation and this is an interesting factor. From the analysis, it results that the target choosing to stay overnight in accommodation establishments is constituted by young couples (29.4%), families (27.3%) and elderly married couples (18.8%); followed by groups of friends (11.9%), organised groups and people travelling alone (both with a percentage of 6.3%). When asked to indicate the priority order of the means of transport preferred to come to Matera, 90% of respondents indicate the car as the preferred means. Then, there are the plane followed by the bus, while the train is the last choice.

Another significant aspect, emerged from the analysis of the tourist operators' answers, is that the main destinations (in both Basilicata and the neighbouring regions) included in the tourists' journey, beyond Matera, are the Puglia region and in particular the Salento area and Alberobello. The main destinations in Basilicata are the Lucanian Dolomites (linked to the Volo dell'Angelo – The Angel flight), the Ionian coast (for its seaside activities in summer) and Craco, a ghost town (for its film tourism interest). The lack of an offer of tourist packages related to Matera 2019 represents a weakness. In fact, the economic operators' answers reveal that 80% of them, at the present day, do not offer thematic tourist packages related to Matera 2019, while 20% offer tourist packages, including stops at the Sassi, the museums of the city, the Park of the Rupestrian Churches, the Crypt of the Original Sin, the Murgia Park, the CEAS, the Casa Noha, farms located in the surroundings of Matera and the literary Park of Aliano, but these packages are not really related to the European Capital of Culture title awarded to the city.

Through questionnaires it was possible to evaluate the state of facilities. The hoteliers were asked to indicate the presence of facilities for the accessibility of people with special needs in their hotel. The questions were formulated in order to make the respondents provide more useful details for the survey. As regard to the presence of a private parking area belonging to the hotel, 66% of respondents answer negatively, 30% state having car parks and 4% declare

having a private garage. Most part of hotels without a private parking area respond to its clients' need by indicating them a public or private parking area near the hotel (72%). Some hotels have a convention with a private parking area (25%), while others do not deal with this problem (3%). According to the hoteliers' opinion (85.4%), interventions, by public or private investors, for the requalification of new city areas to use as parking areas would be suitable. In contrast, other respondents state that they do not need the construction of new parking areas because they think the city has enough car parks or they propose the reopening of disused infrastructures.

In the end, in reference with business tourism hoteliers were asked if their hotels have dedicated rooms for conference. Eighty-seven percent have no rooms for hosting conferences, while 13% have facilities connected to the specific rooms used for hosting business activities. So as to increase tourist flows in the city in view of the event *Matera 2019*, 32% of hotel managers see the need to enhance traditional communication, including the participation to fairs and educational tours; 19% opt for the creation of integrated tourist packages organised with the neighbouring regions in order to use the celebrity of other areas registering more tourist arrivals; another 19% are convinced that all the communication and promotion channels, mentioned in the answer options, should be enhanced. Among the least considered answer options there were the creation and promotion of road show in Italy and abroad and the enhancement of non-traditional communication channels. As concern the creation of cooperation forms (existing or in progress) among the operators of *Matera* territory, the interviewed operators divided equitably: 51% know or are involved in collaboration forms, 49% do not know forms of cooperation.

Sixty percent of respondents talk about collaboration forms consisting in friendly relationships among similar businesses that collaborate in a completely spontaneous way. Fifteen percent are members of a consortium, 14% are involved in a business networking (the *Welcome Matera* business networking was specifically mentioned), the remaining 11% are member of an association (tab. 3).

Cooperation Formulations Between Operators	%
Consortium	15%
Enterprise Network	14%
Association	11%
Other	60%

Tab. 3. Forms of cooperation among tourist businesses (Source: FEEM elaboration)

7. *Conclusions*

The empirical survey framework showed that Matera community is aware of the city cultural value, its cultural heritage, beyond the exposure that the city will have in tourism market and the economic advantages originated by the Capital of Culture status. In citizens' perception the event impact causes a positive change of the city image, and implies the community stronger involvement. As Palmer and Richards²⁶ observe, a primary factor for the success of the European Capital of Culture is the involvement of citizens, that constitutes an important step and is considered the preliminary phase of a communication strategy. The most successful European Capital of Culture have invariably been supported by their residents.

Case studies analysis revealed European Capital of Culture title as a tool that offers important benefits to the hosting city. This tool encourages the economic growth of the elected territory considering cultural heritage as a resource. The main reflection however is that benefits can be produced only if the event in its whole is well-managed and if there is a detailed planning applied with competence and determination²⁷. Naturally, the post designation opens questions about the best strategic assets to follow in order to ensure to the city a socio-economic legacy that is very positive both in terms of appeal and destination image. Surely, the mega event represents the real big bet of the oncoming years and it will let the whole Matera territory and the Basilicata be strengthened both in their economy and infrastructure. One of the sectors to be mostly impacted by this designation, considering the data, is the tourism industry. Presently, it is expected an increase of the domestic and international flow of arrivals and a wider fruition of the area, with presences also in more marginal areas where this phenomenon is new. Certainly, the analysis of the flows reveals a situation that is evolving also in reference to the post designation developments. For example, it is the case of the extra hotel accommodation industry with the expansion of Bed and Breakfast: in fact, with their little seize and their position in the urban context Bed and Breakfast intercept an important target of demand and in particular the foreign demand.

Therefore, the survey on the accommodation industry showed an important gap between Matera and its hinterland concerning the post designation tourist arrivals (only the hotels of the future Capital of Culture benefited of these arrivals), and the tourists' interest only in Matera rather than in the other territories of the region. In the current situation, the connection of the tourist flows between Matera and the remaining regional territories appears weak and it is not supported by adequate policies of integration and promotion. In view of the mega event year, the wish is that the main strategic guidelines in relation

²⁶ Palmer, Richard 2004.

²⁷ Greg 2010, p. 214.

to the global aim of economic development of the Basilicata tourism industry will be identified and actuated in order to achieve a high level of competitiveness of the regional area connected to Matera. And it is expected that the effects of this mega event will go beyond it and be long-lasting. In detail, a cultural event can become a key tool in the set of territorial marketing strategies because it shows exhaustively the rich tourist offer of Matera and the whole Basilicata region, through the definition of a clear unitary profile and the use of strategies of demand segmentation.

The opportunity is to integrate in the territorial offer all those “destinations” that can become tourist destinations simultaneously to the event. For a policy maker, a cultural event not only contributes as an action for the promotion of the economic development and employment, above all in marginal areas or during crisis or decline phases; but it is also a tool for enhancing social inclusion, the construction of a sense of community, to restore a lost identity²⁸. However, at the present moment it is certain that the city identity, in its citizens’ daily perception, has changed. The citizens of Matera are aware of the opportunity provided to their city and, in the current state, Matera has the chance to find a new excellent position in the international market. This new international role, on the one hand, implies the admission in the globally competitive cities network; on the other hand, on a local level, it means the presentation and the strengthening of the specific urban context vocation and the achievement of a better long lasting quality of life. In light of these dynamics, the answers of residents seeing the designation as an opportunity to renovate the image of city and its territory seem natural. According to the citizens if the event is well managed, it can cover an important role for the city economic and social development, by the optimisation of the potential benefits and taking into account the characteristics of the place. On this subject, Bramwell and Rawding²⁹ asserted that from the perspective of the development of a local community, residents can be unsatisfied if the images of the place completely ignore the local features. These features will help people to be enthusiast of living there and they will be motivated to understand their territory and to identify in it. Then, it must be highlighted that the percentage of people considering tourism in a negative way because it brings no benefits on the community is really low.

Allen stated that residents must have an active role in the process of tourism development in a destination that aims at becoming a region based on tourism economy³⁰. In fact, from the analysis of the respondents’ answers, it is clear that the citizens of Matera wish to be more involved in this process because they are aware of the importance and the necessity to protect their territory,

²⁸ Bonetti *et al.* 2010.

²⁹ Bramwell, Rawding 1996, p. 203.

³⁰ Allen *et al.* 1988.

their identity and their economic growth. The changes determined by tourism depend on the interaction between tourists and residents; the nature of this interaction is the main factor influencing the positive or negative size and direction of the tourism impact³¹. A systematic analysis of the tourism impact can help both local institutions in planning and decision makers and promoters of tourism in the identification of the real conditions and the potential problems of development in relation to policies and actions to take³². And according to residents' answers, they have a clear idea on the role of the sector "Culture", on it Matera will base its positioning in the market. In fact, as written above, all respondents consider Matera cultural sector an attraction able to bring external people and flows in its territory, able to create employment and differentiation of productive sectors in the city, in addition to the creation of economy in the whole region. Citizens' awareness and wish to characterise Matera as a cultural tourist destination is further confirmed by the fact that 56% of respondents in future see Matera as a cultural and tourist city. The application dossier of Matera as European Capital of Culture seems to have been fully accepted by the community. Therefore, the positive effects should not end when the mega event is concluded, but there should be benefits also in the long term. Nevertheless, the possible threats linked to a bad management of the event should not be underestimated. Even if the expectations are encouraging, the risk of failure exists and it scares. So, the event represents an opportunity to trigger policies with a strong impact that can generate visible and long lasting effects on the territory.

The changes in the hosting cities sometimes delineate new social models that redefine the structure of the territory and concern all the aspects of the social organisation, from production to marketing, from free time to politics³³. The benchmarking analysis outlined that the most successful cases are cities where important projects were realised through the collaboration of organisers and all the local stakeholders and through political and cultural practices to reuse in future. So, a mega event potential is in the overall territorial marketing politics: it has to enhance impact and outcomes in long term and obtain competitive advantages also through information exchange, experiences and creation of partnerships and strategic alliances among other continents Regions and Countries, in an international perspective.

³¹ Maeran 2004.

³² Fluperi 2008, pp. 61-76.

³³ Dansero 2000.

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