

DESTINATION “MATERA 2019”: PROMOTING TOURISM IN THE BASILICATA REGION AS A WHOLE

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Abstract

According to the literature, organising a big event is a strategic choice for a destination. It is an opportunity to promote the territory and foster its relaunch, increase its attractiveness and build a strong destination image. The choice of “European Capital of Culture” is one such event. It represents a good marketing tool that can promote the chosen city’s key attributes, activate significant tourist flows and reposition the image of the destination. Such processes are also important for their effects on the local community hosting the event. They can help accelerate cultural exchanges in a context that is often in a state of flux. Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei (FEEM) conducted research involving residents, stakeholders and tourism workers to evaluate the impact of Matera 2019 on tourism and to investigate the local community’s perception of the mid to long-term opportunities offered by this event. The first part of this study is more theoretical, the second part analyses case studies of other European Capitals of Culture that have been successful in the past, focusing in detail on policies and tangible benefits to those cities. A qualitative and quantitative analysis follows, involving interviews with important witnesses and questionnaires administered to residents and hospitality operators in Matera and its hinterland. This provided important empirical data about Matera 2019 and investigated peoples’ perceptions of opportunities stemming from the nomination.

1. Introduction

Despite difficult economic situations in recent decades, tourism has grown considerably in terms of demand and supply. It represents a crucial driver for the Italian economy. According to the 2017 UniCredit report drawn up in partnership with Touring Club Italiano, “Italy has become one of the most desirable destinations in the collective imagination of many foreigners and this has had a considerable financial impact: the World Tourism Organization ranks Italy fifth for attractiveness, with 50.7 million international arrivals. World Travel and Tourism Council data for 2016 show that the Italian tourism is worth EUR 70.2 bn (or 4.2% of GDP). This figure rises to EUR 172.8 bn (10.3% of GDP) if all related industries are included”. Significant changes have emerged in buying behaviour and decision-making processes underlying demand and ways of experiencing tourism within the tourist sector. In recent years,

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alongside traditional destinations, “minor” tourist destinations have grown in importance. Such destinations are characterised by natural and cultural resources that are difficult to reproduce elsewhere and add up to a highly identifiable tourist product able to promote endogenous development models with the direct involvement of local communities. For this reason, the concept of “destination” is often associated with that of a global tourist product encapsulated in a supply that creates value for the territory’s stakeholders and components by tapping into an effective demand for goods and services. Policymakers are increasingly relying on major events to redraw the urban map of places (be they cities or small municipalities), revive marginal areas, build new infrastructure, trigger processes of change and attract investments. Such events become pillars of a strategy intended to improve the competitive positioning of a territory, generating benefits for internal and external stakeholders now and in the future. Tourist attractions and entertainment factors also bring about “a significant social impact on the host community as they help form a strong sense of belonging and a sense of place”. As an underlying principle, generating value through events is strongly correlated to the ability to engage people on a cognitive, affective and sensory level, offering them an opportunity to live experiences in accordance with their needs and desires while meeting their expectations. The study shows how events are local marketing tools that the local area can use to improve or reposition its image, attract tourist flows, enhance its resources and activate development processes. The aim of the study launched by Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei (FEEM) is therefore to better understand the local population’s perception of tourist development generated by major cultural events, including its perception of potential and hypothetical changes in the urban and territorial fabric of a destination. This paper describes an ongoing empirical study on Matera “European Capital of Culture 2019”. It focuses on the involvement of the local population and on the value that this major event will add to the hospitality culture. A participatory process can be more efficient and sustainable in the long term than top-down management. Destinations can use a participatory approach to encourage sustainable tourism development that considers the needs of the local community. It offers a valid alternative to traditional destination management when residents are often forced to passively suffer the effects of decisions and strategies adopted by others. Capital of Culture status enhances Matera’s cultural value and allows it to achieve a new model of local development. Winning the title has strengthened its cultural value. More importantly, it has launched a new local development model, involving the area in a social and economic revival. When it was awarded European Capital of Culture 2019 on 17 October 2014, thus becoming the first southern Italian city to receive this title, it became an important magnet for tourism and is increasingly establishing itself as a cultural tourist destination within Italy and internationally. The official statistics shows that in 2018, the town saw 344,813 arrivals (+22.5%) and 547,532 stays (+22.3%), confirming the destination’s overwhelming growth. The steady increase in tourist demand and the presence of the strong cultural attraction represented by the Sassi is now positioning Matera as a strong cultural tourism product that appeals to various targets and visitor flows. Significant benefits have been identified for this type of tourist development, which is sympathetic to local carrying capacities while enhancing and protecting iconic resources. Important among these is spreading a positive image of the destination at international level, bolstered by its successful candidacy for the title. The growth of tourist flows in the city raises the question of how to manage them sustainably to reduce problems that

tourist saturation could bring about in the town's social and economic fabric. The perception of residents is crucial. Overtourism happens when residents are forced to over-adapt their own daily activities to visitor flows and tourism becomes problematical. In this case, residents perceive the tourism as being "too much" and they are no longer sympathetic to the phenomenon. This study was inspired by a need to learn more about tourism in Matera, with a view to reconciling the desires of inhabitants and tourists.

2. Role of resident community in planning a tourist destination and carrying capacity

The local population is crucial to developing a tourist destination because the social habits of locals represent a genuine attraction and can potentially contribute significantly to tourist development. The resources of a territory and the local community culture are considered a unique attraction and asset, giving the destination a competitive advantage. A participatory process involving local communities is more effective and sustainable in the long term than a top-down process. Tourism tends to transform the local area and the quality of life of those who live there in a positive way, but the impact can also be negative. Participation allows the local people to make their opinions heard and can be a means of protecting themselves and their local area. A participatory approach tends to be more sustainable because it avoids creating stereotypes while ensuring the local community is more involved in protecting itself and the surrounding environment from the effects of tourism. Magliulo (2010) explains that "excessive and uncontrolled tourism can deplete resources and have a negative impact on local development". However, proper protection and management of resources together with tourist activity geared to local needs, allows a destination to extend its life cycle and brings about greater and more lasting benefits for the local community (Confalonieri, 2008). The aim is therefore to promote a kind of tourism that distributes income fairly, is respectful of local communities and has a low environmental impact. This new idea of tourism is based on the belief that the local community can be the main beneficiary of development, with a desirable impact in terms of ethics, sustainability and accountability. Contact with other cultures and customs thus become unconventional aspects of an experience that seeks to forge links with what is foreign and with the culture of the place. The local people often see visitors as people who have a negative impact on living conditions and affect the local area, without distinguishing between visitors who travel in a sustainable and responsible way and those who practice mass tourism. Various studies show that a host community's reaction to the tourist phenomenon can be influenced by several factors: the cultural and financial gap between tourists and guests; the ability of the destination and its culture of hospitality to cope with the arrival of tourists physically and psychologically without changing or compromising their local activities and customs; the speed and intensity of tourist development; features of the burgeoning tourist industry and whether the destination's carrying capacity can cope with the tourist/resident ratio. The consent of the local community is therefore essential for developing tourism projects in any tourist destination. Some theorists have attempted to explain the attitude and involvement of local communities as the destination passes through the different stages of its life cycle. One of the main tools for analysing the relationship between tourists and residents comes from Doxey's model (1975), which analyses potential psychological reactions to tourist development within the host

community. According to Doxey, any destination affected by a tourism development process goes through four stages, each reflecting the different states of the relationship between tourists and the local population. The author describes these attitudes as euphoria, apathy, annoyance and antagonism as the life cycle develops in the host location. Stewart, Liebert and Larkin (2003) suggest that under certain circumstances residents may even undergo an identity change when interacting with tourists. However, the negative impacts of tourism are not only expressed through the relationship between tourists and residents. Tourism also has a significant impact on urban space, cost of living and the local manufacturing fabric. The debate over the tourism carrying capacity (TCC) of a destination and various impacts arising from local land-use has intensified. The World Tourism Organization (WTO, 1999) defined carrying capacity as the maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic, sociocultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors' satisfaction. The Touring Club Italiano Study Centre (2005) looked at ways the maximum carrying capacity of a destination can be changed by increasing the destination's capacity (supply) and redistributing the tourist load within the area. The theoreticians Bimonte and Punzo (2005, p.3.) explain that TCC reflects a set of capacities: capacity of the ecosystem, i.e. availability of natural resources in the destination in relation to human use (environmental relationship); aesthetic and experiential capacity, which is a measure of aesthetic and cultural satisfaction and the expectations of tourists who frequent the destination; socioeconomic capacity, which represents the social and economic satisfaction of the population inhabiting the destination with the tourist phenomenon (Satta, 2003). The local community's quality of life improves in the growth stage but decreases considerably when the destination reaches its own carrying capacity and moves toward decline. Therefore, in order to assess the TCC of a location, we must study and determine the characteristics of the two communities coming into contact with one another and their respective attitudes as well as the local physical characteristics. When interests coincide, "the relationship between tourists or alien species, and residents or endogenous species, can be synergistic but negative situations can arise when tourists are perceived as usurpers of resources and intruders in the community" (Gatti and Puggelli, 2010, p.81). The problem becomes more visible or acute when the "availability of resources is reduced and both categories are uneven (for example due to cultural diversity or conflicting aspirations over the use of common resources) and when the arrival of the "alien" species triggers conflicting reactions and interests in the host community" (Bimonte and Punzo, 2004, p.6). According to the 2017 Tourism Report, edited by UniCredit in partnership with Touring Club Italiano, "until a few years ago, Venice was the most obvious example of overtourism". However, other destinations (Barcelona, Amsterdam, Maldives and Iceland) soon raised the alarm that tourism had "evolved into overtourism, in other words a threat to environmental sustainability, with the progressive degradation of attractions that initially determined the success of destinations, and of social sustainability, as the public become increasingly exasperated by entire old town centres being taken over by "B&Bs and rooms for rent.""

3. Matera “European Capital of Culture 2019”: impact of tourism and transformation

The steady increase in tourist demand and the strong cultural appeal of the Sassi situates Matera as a strong and appealing cultural tourism product for various targets and visitor flows. Significant benefits have been identified for this type of tourist development that is sympathetic to local carrying capacities and believes in enhancing and protecting iconic resources. Important among these is the spread of a positive image of the destination at international level, bolstered by its candidacy for and winning of European Capital of Culture 2019. When Matera shot to prominence as “European Capital of Culture 2019”, this boosted the number of tourist arrivals and stays to levels unprecedented in Italy. The official statistics show that in 2018 the town saw 344,813 arrivals (+22.5%) and 547,532 stays (+22.3%), confirming the destination’s overwhelming growth. In one single year, from 2014, when Matera was appointed European Capital of Culture 2019, to 2015, demand increased by +40% in terms of arrivals and +44% in terms of stays. These data confirm that winning the European Capital of Culture title revived interest in the city. It became a useful tool for tourism development and brought about a tangible change in the town’s cultural and economic life. This is more evident if we take a quick look at the hospitality facilities in Matera. If we analyse official data for the period between 2009 (the year when the candidacy was launched) and 2018, we can see an exponential increase in hospitality facilities, which increased from 97 to a total of 639 units, of which no fewer than 608 are categorised as non-hotel, for a total of 3967 extra beds in the town. In a single year (2015-2016), the non-hotel sector increased by no fewer than 182 facilities. In just one year, from 2014, when Matera was awarded the title, demand increased by +40% in terms of arrivals and +44% in terms of stays. These data confirm that winning the European Capital of Culture title generated new appeal for the destination. It became a useful tool for the development of marginal towns and brought about a visible change in the location’s cultural life. Several European cities have been “able to satisfactorily exploit this opportunity and revive their cultural base, thus increasing economic development in various sectors and above all promoting quantitative and qualitative growth in the tourist sector”. Matera’s long journey began in 2009 when a group of citizens proposed its candidacy through actions to raise awareness of a goal that many believed was too far in the future. “Since the 1950s, Matera has been a hotbed of experimentation and innovation. It has attracted great filmmakers and artists but has also fostered fertile hybridisations between outside celebrities and local resources. Matera has made a huge effort. It has recovered from being a national embarrassment to becoming the first town in southern Italy to be named a World Heritage Site; from being an unknown town to one of the main ‘cities of art’ on the visitors’ map. It has undertaken significant actions to restore its fortunes but has not yet exploited its enormous cultural potential”. It is incredible that in just 64 years, Matera has shaken off the description of “national embarrassment” to become a World Heritage Site and grasped the opportunity to become a Capital of Culture. The destination is characterised by a tourism product largely based on the presence of a great cultural attraction in the form of the “The Sassi and the Park of the Rupestrian Churches” and a set of attractions that can mainly be categorised as historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, religious, natural and food and wine resources. Without losing its identity, Matera has managed to become a town that has shown itself capable of reinventing itself and opening itself up to sharing and active cultural

citizenship. It embodies a vision of culture as a means of social growth and not merely economic growth. It proudly owns its origins and specificities and uses these as a basis for enhancing the local area, building a positive image and carving out a position as a city of culture on the international market. The striking thing about this journey is the process of transformation that the town has undergone. It based its candidacy on this transformation and its clear vision of the future. The aim was to make Matera into an open cultural space able to attract tourists, whose presence decrees success or failure for European capitals, but also a hospitable space for human capital able to create added value in innovative sectors, such as the creative sector. It is also “a place: to live and produce culture, innovation and good practice; to establish Basilicata as an innovative region par excellence; to increase the impact of southern Italy as an Italian socioeconomic and cultural centre; to cross-fertilise culture and technology in the best possible way - and to attract new private investment and increase the number of residents in the Sassi”. Making Matera “European Capital of Culture 2019” opens up the idea that culture and tourism must be managed as fundamental factors in a clear strategy to develop the town as well as the region as a whole. “The parameters of tourism in Basilicata have changed; the main objective used to be to raise our profile on the tourist market but now it is to meet hopes and expectations aroused by Matera winning the title of European Capital of Culture. Matera and Basilicata will be measured against the yardstick of tourism organisation, service quality (beginning with logistical factors), and their ability to respond promptly to the multiple needs of growing demand. This is the challenge for public and private systems in the coming months and years”.

4. Research method

The field study took the considerations set out in the introduction as its starting point and set out to investigate the relationship between Matera as a place and destination from the viewpoint of tourists and residents. The method chosen for this stage of the study included quantitative information gathering and a qualitative investigation step to ensure the research was effective.

The study set out to record the behavioural profiles and satisfaction levels of tourists. The questionnaire prepared for this purpose allowed us to record all decision-making process and consumption stages involved in a trip to Matera by the sample concerned. The survey was carried out on 1039 questionnaires (51% Italians, 49% foreigners) to ensure greater representativeness. Data analysis was subdivided into three sections. The first section drew up an identikit of the sample. The second section analysed the behaviour of tourists during the process of choosing and buying a trip to Matera. The third part analysed the satisfaction of respondents with the services and resources they experienced, using fuzzy methodology. The same methodology was used on residents and involved administering a specific questionnaire designed to conduct a social and tourist-oriented assessment of the impact and perception of the major event on the hospitality culture. Destinations can use participation as a tool to encourage sustainable tourism development based on the needs of the local community. This offers a valid alternative to traditional destination management, when residents are often forced to passively suffer the effects of decisions and strategies adopted by others. All data were recorded in such a way as to ensure that the sample of subjects interviewed was as representative as possible. The questionnaire was divided into two sections.

5. Results

5.1 Tourist identikit

The typical profile of the tourists interviewed was that of a person over 40 years old, employed or self-employed, with a medium-high educational background (graduate or at least high school leaver); from central northern Italy and western Europe, travelling as part of a couple or with their family, taking a holiday of no longer than two days in the town of Matera. Fifty-five per cent of respondents reached the location by car, while 13% chose a combination of low-cost flights combined with car or bus (foreigners chose the latter option).

They gathered information on the town of Matera through the medium of “word-of-mouth through friends and acquaintances”. Foreigners were much more likely than Italians to use digital means. Tourist guides, information from travel agencies and tour operators, consultation of specialist magazines, television and radio were much less important. The least popular tools were trade fairs and package tours. They visited Matera mainly due to its cultural heritage. Thirty per cent mentioned that it was a UNESCO heritage site and 27% mentioned that Matera was European Capital of Culture. Great importance was also attached to food, wine and local cuisine. The trip was mainly organised by obtaining information online and from guidebooks. Tourists were interested in visiting other places in the region of Basilicata, prompted by the culture, nature and local food and wines. They considered the local people to be welcoming and hospitable and judged the hospitality and the quality of the restaurants to be more than satisfactory. Their feedback on care for the urban environment, the road system and connections to Matera, such as signage, was less positive. However, they were so satisfied with their trip that they planned to return in the future. When providing general feedback on their trip to Matera, 51% said they were very satisfied and 41% said they were quite satisfied.

Matera is visited by loyal tourist customers. Among the sample interviewed, 61% were repeat visitors who had already visited Matera. Most of those interviewed said that they mainly stayed the night in Matera (54% Italians, 66% foreigners). Only 31% of Italians and 31% of foreigners stated that they had spent the night in a place in Basilicata other than Matera.

For the positive impact of the European Capital of Culture event to spread throughout Basilicata, tourist flows must be encouraged to move out from Matera to the rest of the region through strategic planning, but this currently appears to be weak. Only 19% said that they returned home on the same day and these respondents were part of the day-tripper target group.

5.2. Residents

The field of analysis was defined by means of qualitative and quantitative methodology using face-to-face questionnaire surveys. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions and was administered to a sample of 300 citizens randomly on different days of the week and mainly in places where the inhabitants of Matera congregate and frequent. All data were recorded in such a way as to ensure that the sample of subjects interviewed was as representative as possible. The questionnaire was made up of eight questions. It was divided into three sections (apart from the section on social and personal details). The first focused on the relationship between “Tourism, Destination Matera and Residents”. It was concerned with the attitude of

citizens toward guests and the way citizens see the territory where they live. The items in the second section focused on the “Economic, sociocultural and environmental impact of the tourist destination” during Matera 2019, while the last section monitored the opinion of citizens on work carried out in the tourism sector regarding the future of Matera 2019, together with aspects that may be relevant to the development of the town and the rest of Basilicata. The main sociodemographic characteristics of respondents (age, profession, qualifications and gender) were also recorded.

5.2.1. Sample characteristics

The survey was conducted on a sample stratified by gender, age, educational qualifications and professional status. The sample was evenly distributed by gender (about 53% men and 47% women). As far as age distribution was concerned, most respondents (43%) were concentrated in the intermediate range between 26 and 45, while 24% were aged between 46 and 60 and 20% were aged between 18 and 25. Only 13% were over 60. Fifty-five per cent had gained a high school diploma and 33% were graduates, 2% of which held a postgraduate qualification (Masters, PhD etc.) Only 8% finished their education after leaving middle school and 2% left after completing primary school. The main employment categories were employees (18%), students (18%) followed by freelancers (14%) and pensioners (9%). Sector professionals amounted to only 5%, with businesspeople (5%) and shopkeepers (4%).

5.2.2. Relationship between residents/tourists, tourism and Destination Matera

Our results show that 62% of citizens interviewed considered their behaviour toward visitors to be “friendly”, while 16% considered it to be “professional”. Interestingly, a substantial 18% reported an “indifferent” attitude toward guests while 4% actually described them as “non-existent”. This shows that a general benevolent relationship toward tourists is widespread among nearly all interviewees although a small minority of our sample experiences the interaction (guest/resident) passively, while maintaining a certain detachment from those who are observing. This might be a method for local people to preserve their own customs and traditions and offer tourists what they expect to see. Using the Likert scale on degree of agreement/disagreement and choosing between four response options (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree), respondents were asked “whether tourists visiting this area bring benefits to the community”. Fifty-seven per cent of residents confirmed (agreed) that the presence of tourists helps the town and benefits the community. A solid 32% chose “strongly agree”. It can therefore be said that a favourable attitude toward tourism prevails and it is not surprising that residents attach greater weight and value to economic effects. However, a small percentage of our sample (11%) believes that tourists do not benefit the community. According to claims in the literature on the life cycle of a tourist destination, the tourist phenomenon in Matera has not yet peaked and the relationship between tourists and guests is still friendly. Regarding the positive effects of tourism on the destination, just over half (57%) of respondents believed that tourism “increases the economy and well-being of the town”, revealing a widespread awareness of its importance for the local economy. Another 40% confirmed that “it improves knowledge and dissemination of local traditions and cultures”, followed by a substantial 30% who responded that it “ensures the destination is better-known”. This suggests that the local community’s sense of belonging to the local area (community

attachment) assumed significance after Matera was made a UNESCO site and “European Capital of Culture 2019”. Only 17% believe that tourism encourages the “development of new entrepreneurial activities” and “increases employment” (16%). This confirms that residents have a specific view of the positive perception of tourism in the economic sphere. It is important to emphasise the value attached to tourism as a vehicle for promoting awareness of the destination. Conversely, it was found that residents who perceive tourism negatively do so because they blame it for an “increase in the prices of goods and services” (57% of respondents), followed by 53% who claimed the negative effects were “caused by a deterioration in services and quality of life”. Forty-three per cent believed that it “threatened the identity of Matera” and “brought about a degradation of the natural landscape” (20%). A smaller proportion (10%) cited “overcrowding and disorganisation”. This suggests that the carrying capacity has not yet been exceeded. In summary, this analysis shows that the proportion of residents who see the tourist phenomenon in a negative light attribute this to an increase in the cost of living and a deterioration of services with landscape degradation, creating difficulties for the local population. Sixty-one per cent of respondents believed that tourism helps improve the identity and cultural heritage of a place, while 24% stated that it improved conservation. This also shows that the local community places a high value on the town’s cultural aspects. However, 10% gave a negative response, believing that the tourist sector had “no effect”. These responses show that most of our sample acknowledged the positive effects of tourism, while a minority was somewhat exasperated by the fact that more importance is attached to tourism than the needs of inhabitants. Despite the overriding positive view of tourism, a smaller yet significant share of the population views tourism more negatively. Moving on to consider the specific relationship between residents and tourists, we found that 40% see visitors as “welcome guests” and 19% see them as a “resource to be exploited”, while 18% defined them as “temporary residents”. This key definition cropped up again in the “Matera 2019” cultural file. This very positive feedback confirms the hospitality of the target community. Negative expressions such as “outsiders we have to put up with” did not feature at all. These findings show that the interviewed sample is currently unperturbed by the presence of visitors.

5.2.3. Destination Matera: perception by residents

Respondents were then asked to suggest reasons why people might make the trip (attractions). According to 62% of the sample, “art and culture” was the top reason for travelling to Matera. Then 19% cited the “natural landscape”, while 13% believed that food and wine is an attraction worth developing. Conversely, a low proportion (2%) opted for “traditional and artistic handicrafts”. “Relaxation and well-being” (1%) and “shopping and business” (1%) ranked at the bottom of the scale. When asked the second reason for choosing the “European Capital of Culture 2019”, 35% of citizens interviewed cited the “natural landscape”, followed by 23% “art and culture” and 19% “food and wine”. Nine per cent indicated “traditional and artistic handicrafts” as a second choice. None of the sample we interviewed considered Matera to be a tourist town due to “leisure and entertainment” or “worship and religion”.

In line with the reasons given for making a trip to the destination of Matera, it is interesting to note that residents associate the town with adjectives such as relaxing (73%), exciting (57%), appealing (89%), elegant (52%) and also descriptors more focused on aspects such as “welcoming” (67%) and “safe” (77%).

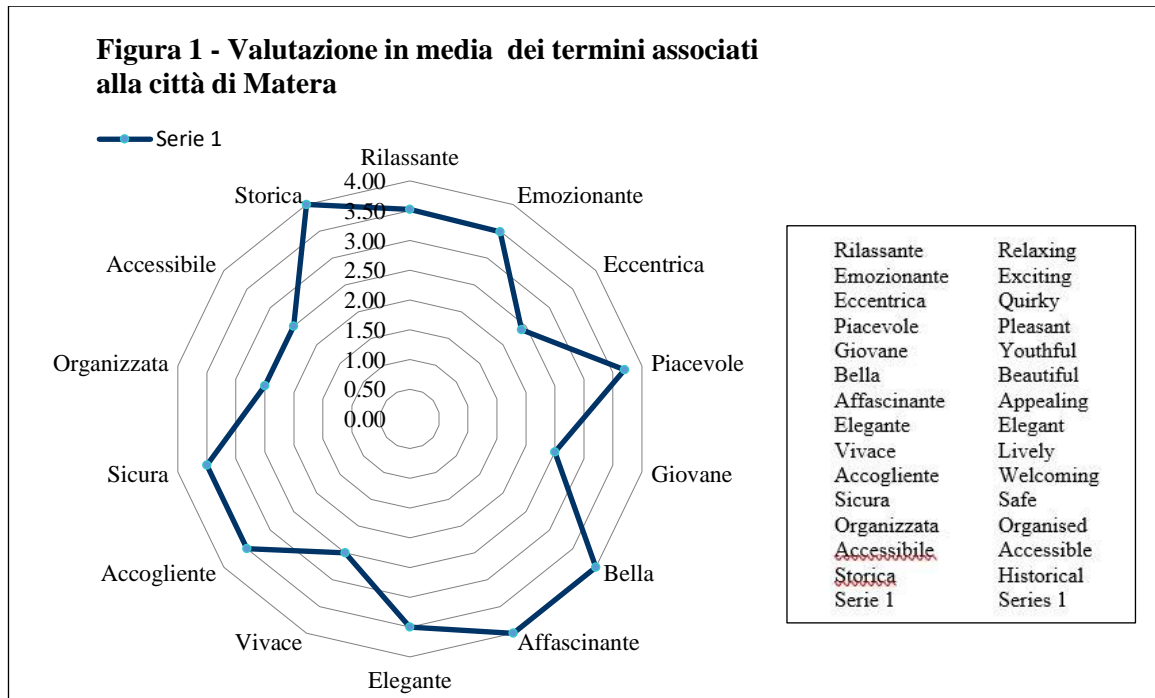


Figure 1: Average assessment of terms associated with Matera and key to the diagram.

According to respondents, Matera is not very “youthful”, not very “quirky”, and not very “accessible” and “organised”. The options respondents were asked to choose between were rated on a 4-point scale (where 1 = not at all 4 = a lot) and the findings show (Fig. 1) that the highest average scores were allocated to the adjectives “Safe”, “Historical”, “Pleasant”, “Beautiful” and “Relaxing” and “Welcoming” (average score of nearly 4) while the lowest average scores went to the attributes “Exciting” and “Elegant” (average score of just over 3). Average scores of under 3 were given to “Quirky”, “Useful”, “Lively”, “Organised” and “Accessible” (for which the average score allocated was 2.48). The picture that emerges when we analyse the adjectives that residents associate with their town is that of a place where a kind of harmony and beauty reign, and these aspects are captivating because of the town’s history. Matera is hospitable but also not very organised. It needs to be made more accessible.

5.2.4. *Economic, sociocultural and environmental impacts of the tourist destination “Matera 2019”*

We asked some questions to try to establish the effects of tourism on the town and the quality of life of its residents due to the tool of “Matera European Capital of Culture 2019”. Respondents were asked to express their agreement/disagreement with certain statements by allocating a score from 1 to 4 (where 1 was “strongly disagree” and 4 “strongly agree”). Sixty per cent of residents interviewed believe that tourism due to Matera 2019 has brought about a considerable hike in property prices. This finding was also reflected in data published by the monitoring unit of Immobiliare.it, one of Italy’s main property websites. According to the monitoring unit, in 2017 alone property sales prices in Matera rose from EUR 1671 per m² to EUR 1847 per m² (0.69% more than in 2016), even exceeding EUR 2000 per m² for penthouses and lofts

located in the town centre. This trend is the reverse of findings for the region of Basilicata as a whole. More than 50% of respondents also believe that tourism is responsible for a positive effect on the “development of new enterprises and job opportunities for residents” while 43% gave general responses varying from “somewhat disagree” to “strongly disagree” to the statement that there have been no positive consequences on the growth of new business activities or job opportunities for the Matera community. For “attraction of investments”, 50% of residents believed that there had been no positive effects, or the effects had been of little significance, while 46% believed that the effect had been positive (28% agreed and 18% strongly agreed). In short, no clear view emerged about the negative/positive effects of tourism. Residents believe that tourism mainly has a positive impact on the development of new contacts and cultural exchanges (42% agreed, 33% strongly agreed). The analysis also shows that designating Matera a UNESCO site has increased its residents’ awareness of living in a city with a prestigious cultural heritage protected by UNESCO (86% of all respondents). Interestingly enough, when the sample was interviewed about the phenomenon of “depopulation of the old town centre”, they tended to “strongly disagree” (43%) or “somewhat agree” (32%). This means that the respondents do not believe that tourism is currently causing inhabitants to abandon the old town centre. Another opinion that is particularly important for research purposes concerns the degree of agreement over the effects of tourism on “open spaces and deterioration of services”. Scores showed that 71% strongly agree that since Matera became European Capital of Culture 2019, congestion has arisen in urban spaces and services for residents have worsened due to the impact of tourism. Furthermore, more than 50% do not believe that tourism has made the location more accessible and reachable, while 48% strongly agree that the destination of Matera is more accessible and reachable. Feedback on the increase in entertainment events and initiatives since Matera was designated a UNESCO site was positive (56% of respondents), although a substantial 44% somewhat disagreed. However, 57% of respondents believe that tourism has improved the city’s shopping network. A significant proportion of respondents did not believe tourism had led to an increase in town orderliness, such as street cleaning, sign maintenance and care of green areas. Fifty-eight per cent believed there had been no improvement or that the improvements had been insignificant, while 42% believed that town orderliness had improved. Significantly, more than 70% of respondents believe that Matera is a “safe city”. Feedback on the improvement of accessibility to tourist sites was also overwhelmingly positive. More criticism was reserved for the topic of waste: 70% of respondents believe that tourism has led to an increase in waste. Half of those interviewed also noticed no improvement in local public transport or any increase in parking spaces. However, air quality and noise were not considered to have deteriorated. When asked how the sustainability of tourism could be improved in Matera, 69% of respondents believed that the impact of traffic on the old town centre must be limited but the flow of tourists through the Sassi must not be restricted. Fifty-nine per cent did not agree with limiting the number of visitors or charging to enter the Sassi. However, a far from negligible percentage (17%) believe that the number of visitors entering the Sassi should be greatly restricted. Almost all the respondents (79%) believe that in order to optimise the tourist sustainability of Matera, we must greatly improve waste management, keep down energy consumption by applying available technologies and improve the quality of life of residents (83%) and the job quality of those employed in tourism services (71%). The findings reveal

a desire by respondents (87%) for better protection of local identity, promotion of local handicrafts and produce (64%), development of local food and wine and organic produce and environmental certifications as well as for more sustainable urban mobility and the introduction of public green areas. Feedback by residents on the way tourism is currently managed in Matera showed that a proportion (39%) is concerned about “how tourist planning is implemented in the town” and would like to see “greater involvement and participation”. However, 30% state they are “satisfied with tourism in Matera” and would like it to “continue to grow in the same way”. On the other hand, 14% gave negative feedback, stating that they were “not satisfied with tourism in Matera and would like it to develop in a different way”, while another 14% were not “happy with the way tourism has developed” and would like it to “develop in a different way”. Only 3% definitively fail to appreciate tourism and would like to see “an alternative development option”. When specifically asked to indicate aspects that were important to the development of Matera and the rest of Basilicata, high approval ratings were given to the variables: “town orderliness/cleanliness/conditions of visual impact” (89% responded “a lot”), “possibility of reaching Matera by public transport” (89% responded “a lot”) and “language skills of staff in tourist information facilities” (86% responded “a lot”). Eighty-four per cent also responded “a lot” for the factor “links with public transport in other regional tourist locations”. The only variable for which interviewees gave average feedback was the “possibility of getting around by public transport within Matera”. To sum up, respondents hope for more sustainable tourism with a focus on the environment. The results also show that the indigenous population is mostly interested in forms of sustainable tourism that can involve the community and respect the natural environment. As previously mentioned, this is not always the case. Sometimes the local community itself encourages forms of mass tourism, aiming for immediate gratification without giving any thought to the medium- and long-term effects. For these reasons, the participation of local communities must be guided by a number of stakeholders able to mediate between the various needs and guarantee sustainable tourism development and reassessment of the tourism supply through the participation of residents as well as visitor-facing communication and education. It is important to make tourists more aware and encourage them to adopt more sustainable practices. This can be achieved by promoting alternative mobility, as previously stated, but also by consuming and purchasing zero-km products.

	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 agree	4 strongly agree	Don't know
Increase in property prices	5.02%	6.02%	27.42%	60.20%	1.34%
Development of new enterprises and job opportunities for residents	16.39%	27.09%	37.12%	18.39%	1.00%
Investment attraction	15.77%	34.23%	28.19%	18.12%	3.69%
Development of new contacts and cultural exchanges	6.42%	15.54%	42.23%	33.11%	2.70%
Conservation and protection of cultural heritage	2.69%	9.09%	32.32%	54.21%	1.68%
Increased awareness of living in a town with a prestigious cultural heritage protected by UNESCO	1.01%	8.08%	24.24%	65.99%	0.67%
Depopulation of the old town centre	43.43%	31.65%	14.14%	8.42%	2.36%
Congestion of urban spaces and deterioration in services for residents	11.19%	16.61%	24.75%	46.10%	1.36%

Location more accessible and reachable	21.28%	29.73%	34.12%	13.85%	1.01%
Increase in entertainment events and initiatives	18.64%	25.08%	28.14%	27.12%	1.02%
Improvement in the town shopping network	10.51%	30.85%	40.00%	16.61%	2.03%
Improved town orderliness (street cleaning, sign maintenance, care of green areas)	27.61%	30.30%	26.26%	15.15%	0.67%
Town is less safe	52.04%	21.77%	16.67%	8.16%	1.36%
Improved access to tourist sites	8.11%	21.62%	46.28%	21.96%	2.03%
Increase in waste	8.47%	17.63%	27.80%	42.37%	3.73%
Improvement in local public transport	20.95%	32.77%	29.39%	10.81%	6.08%
More parking places	43.10%	19.19%	24.92%	11.11%	1.68%
Deterioration in air quality	52.19%	22.56%	14.48%	6.40%	4.38%
Worsening noise levels	50.84%	18.52%	18.52%	9.76%	2.36%

Figure 2: Impacts of tourism on the town.

There is also a need to teach people to respect the area and sort their waste for recycling. This can only come about with the support of local communities and tourist operators, who play a key role in spreading good practices since they represent the main interface between tourists and the local area.

6. Comments

When it won the title of European Capital of Culture 2019, Matera embarked on a journey to regenerate its image at home and abroad. The picture we have been able to build up based on empirical research showed how this conceptual model is reflected by substantial development of the tourist phenomenon, in a complex interaction between the culture and lifestyles of residents, the size and origin of tourist flows, type of tourism and behaviour of tourists. Some important reflections and considerations emerged from our overall interpretation of survey results.

Firstly, the main point we confirmed is that the “European Capital of Culture” tool increases the visibility and renown of a minor destination. The steady increase in tourist demand and the presence of the powerful cultural attraction represented by the Sassi positions the town as a strong and appealing cultural tourism product for various targets and visitor flows. The findings show that winning the title revived interest in the city. It became a useful tool for tourism development and brought about a tangible change in the town’s cultural and economic life. Despite the highly encouraging trend in arrivals and stays, the average stay in accommodation facilities is still low (1.6 days). This type of hit-and-run tourism typical of artistic cities fully reflects some of the sociological variables of cultural tourism: the primary element is growth in overall interest for culture, short breaks or city trips and multi-purpose holidays.

Interviews with tourists show that Matera is only one of the stops on a tour/journey that unfortunately still only partly involves the rest of Basilicata. Most visitors interviewed stated that they stayed in Matera for only one or at most two nights and then moved on to other neighbouring regions such as Puglia or places in Calabria or Campania. This finding is confirmed by responses from accommodation facility operators in Basilicata which, apart from notable examples such as the Matera-Lucan Dolomite axis created by the pulling power of the *Volo dell’Angelo* zipwire ride, reveal a certain detachment between Matera and the rest of Basilicata. One strategic step to amplify the positive impact of this major event would be to improve the connection

between tourist flows in Matera and the rest of the region because this currently appears to be unsupported by satisfactory integration and development policies.

If we look at the results for a target sample of tourists visiting Matera more generally, we note the absolute predominance of cultural travellers visiting the Sassi, driven by the motivating force of the European City of Culture title. More specifically, visitors were very satisfied with Matera and found it to be welcoming and hospitable. The biggest problems were perceived to be accessibility and the transport system within and outside the region. Some services - particularly information points, the quality of roads and care for public areas - were sometimes judged to be inadequate by tourist respondents. However, points of excellence included the local food and wine delicacies on offer, the hospitality of local citizens and the natural environment (landscape). The overall feedback on a visit to Matera is overwhelmingly positive, indicating a good ability to respond to the needs of holidaymakers.

The major event is also having a great impact in terms of culturalisation, which is particularly evident with regard to the resident population. This impact is due to the various activities carried out by Fondazione Matera Basilicata 2019, which has been active socially. An overall reading of the results shows that local communities have a strong awareness of Matera's potential through the European Capital of Culture award and that the title can act as a driving force for tourism and economic development of the city and the Basilicata area. Residents have equally clear ideas about the role of the "Culture" sector on which Matera will base its market positioning. The findings also show that citizens consider tourism to be a resource for local development and that landscape plays a strategic role within the region. There is a need to unite rather than fragment, to increase the overall supply of tourism provided by the area as a whole and not just provided by a single location. The attractions offered by the entire region must be enhanced using a network approach. Product diversification and internal structuring could deseasonalise tourism and offer solutions to cater for several target traveller groups. For Matera to become a tourist resource capable of reviving the entire Basilicata Region, sustainable management policies must be implemented. An authentic tourist product must be created that can transform potential attractions present in Basilicata into competitive, visible tourist products.

An integrated set of products offers the undoubted advantage of conveying a structured, substantial message about the destination to the outside world, instead of it simply being seen as a set of interconnected elements without any overarching pattern of development and promotion. Marketing the area holistically will certainly make local tourism more visible and appealing for potential or current tourists. Shortcomings in infrastructure and public transport inefficiency could also be overcome in a creative and sustainable way. A targeted strategy could turn this weakness into an opportunity, stressing the attributes of slow travel and going off the beaten track. Adopting a slow mobility approach would appeal to the growing slow tourist movement and visitors who seek unique experiences, quality, low impact and respect for the environment and local resources. A system of discovering the area through responsible, eco-compatible mobility and nature tourism looks like a promising opportunity for internal areas of Basilicata, where visitors can be in contact with the environment and nature while enjoying a host of tourist products. This plan showcases gastronomic delicacies, which are among the most important factors motivating a trip to the region while also representing an essential part of any interaction between visitors and the local culture.

To conclude, though Matera is the linchpin of the entire area, we need to come up with strategies to connect the town to the rest of the region, through participatory, holistic planning for 2019 and beyond.

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