



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MACERATA

DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE DELLA FORMAZIONE, DEI BENI CULTURALI E DEL
TURISMO

CORSO DI DOTTORATO DI RICERCA IN HUMAN SCIENCES
CURRICULUM PSYCHOLOGY, COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
CICLO XXX

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND VALUE CO-CRATION:
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL AREAS

RELATORE

Chiar.mo Prof. Alessio Cavicchi

DOTTORANDO

Dott.ssa Eleonora Belletti

COORDINATORE

Chiar.mo Prof. Alessandra Fermani

ANNO 2018

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
Chapter 1. Authenticity in food festivals: a critical approach	11
1.1 Introduction.....	11
1.2 Literature review	12
1.3 Materials and methods	15
1.4 Case studies	15
1.4.2 Findings and Discussion.....	17
1.5 Conclusions.....	19
Appendix 1- Regional law proposal n.79 of 10 august 2016 (English version).....	21
Appendix 2- The Montecatini Code (or Manifesto of Authentic Food Festival_english version)	23
Chapter 2. Social Eating and Community-based tourism. Towards an integration of different models	25
2.1 Introduction.....	25
2.2 Background Context	25
2.3 Literature review	27
2.3.1 The contribution of sharing economy to the agrifood sector	27
2.3.2 Social Eating Platforms: A New Model of Food Sharing Economy	29
2.3.3 Community based tourism and food sharing initiatives	30
2.4 Materials and methods	31
2.5 Case studies	32
2.5.1 Background Context	32
2.6 Findings and Discussion.....	37
2.7 Conclusions.....	40
Chapter 3. Universities and “wicked problems” in rural areas: pitfalls and opportunities of participatory approaches for a sustainable development	41
3.1 Introduction.....	41
3.2 Literature review	42
Main Features and use of participatory approaches	42
3.3 Materials and methods	46
3.4 Background context and findings	49

3.4.1 Management of the agenda	50
3.4.2 Identification of participants	51
3.4.3 Structures and methods of participation (approaches and techniques)	54
3.4.4 Effects of participation on the decision-making process by the institutions and on the participants themselves.....	56
3.5 Discussion and Conclusions	60
CONCLUSIONS	62
References.....	64

INTRODUCTION

The European Commission adopted the first definition of rural tourism in 1988, in the publication of an official opinion (COM(88) 501 def) on the future of the rural world. In the document, rural tourism is defined as a bundle of tourism activities carried out in rural areas, in the form of an integrated recreational offer aimed to satisfy a demand motivated by an increasing will of the tourists to have a direct experience of the life in the local area and to interact with the locals. OECD (1994) provided a similar definition of “tourism happening in rural areas” (Santini et al., 2011), thus stimulating a long debate among scholars on the right assets of rural tourism (Lane, 1994; Hall, 2001) and on the term “integrated” (Saxena et al., 2007; Cawley and Gillmore, 2008). The debate reflects essentially the multi-functionality of the contemporary countryside (Pasian, 2014) and the growing need to align resources, services, goods and sectors in order to favour a rural tourism development based on network building activities (Mitchell et al., 2005), including a wide variety of local actors (Berti, Brunori and Guarino, 2010).

The European Union (EU) provided financial incentives through the LEADER programmes (91-93; 94-99; 2000-2006), promoting a bottom up approach in order to foster the creation of new sustainable sources of income, services, attractions, economic activities, more competitive local products and employment opportunities (Marques, 2006). The aim was to help many rural areas in Europe that were still disadvantaged and under-industrialized due to the lack of adequate physical resources, human capital and infrastructures (Marques, 2006). Those European incentives have helped to reinforce gradually the connection between agriculture and the tourism sector (Fleisher and Tchetchik, 2005), which has acquired even more importance in the rural development context over time. Furthermore, the relevant flows of visitors to rural areas in developed nations laid the foundations for the development of ideas and projects on sustainable, alternative tourism (Cohen 1987, Butler 1992) as an answer, on one side, to the emerging trends in tourism demand, focused on less standardized forms of exploitation of natural, cultural and wine and food resources (Belletti, 2010); on the other side to the demand for development by rural communities and environments (Bramwell, 1994).

The abovementioned measures and circumstances also drove many countries and regions to introduce new regulations for the agri-tourism sector, which includes so many different types of businesses and therefore aspects (Santini et al., 2011). Several traditional farming activities (formerly focused on the production side only) integrated their offer with hospitality and food services and events (Belletti, 2010), to exploit the new opportunities provided by a more holistic tourism approach (Cawley and

Gillmore, 2008). However, especially in Italy, rural tourism appears to be a sector with a huge potential but poorly developed: the real size of this phenomenon is actually difficult to measure and, although several positive examples can be found (Santini et al., 2011), its potential remains largely untapped in both economic and social terms. In addition to this, the promotion of strategies and place management actions needs to be redefined and strengthened (Mettepenningen et al., 2012), in order to boost local value and achieve economic and social benefits. In the most recent tourism literature, value co-creation (Binkhorst and Dekker, 2009; Edvardsson et al., 2011; Prebensen et al., 2013) is considered as a crucial element to achieve good development goals.

Scholars addressed the question from different perspectives (Galvagno and Dalli, 2014): from that of service science, of consumer science, and of local management. From the perspective of service science, companies should not focus on products but on services to build their offer and achieve the benefits requested by customers (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). From the perspective of consumer science (Holbrook and O'Shaughnessy, 1988; Belk et al., 1989), it is consumption that plays a relevant cultural and symbolic role, with consumers giving their own subjective meanings to products and services and co-creating value in collaboration with companies (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). From the perspective of local management, focused on collaborative and open processes (Galvagno and Dalli, 2014) among actors, cooperation among stakeholders proves to be relevant to co-create efficient destination marketing and sustainable development (Ryan, 2001; Jamal and Getz, 2005; Byrd, 2007; Baggio, 2011), both in terms of engagement in dynamic and coordinated actions among tourism businesses and in terms of mobilization of resources and information (Lemmetynen and Go, 2009).

However, at a European level, place branding and rural development are currently considered as “wicked problems” because managed by many stakeholders having different and contrasting purposes, thus resulting in local communities often distrusting any promotional initiative because all the initiatives supposedly lack a real interest in common good (Cavicchi et al., 2013). Moreover, the collaboration among local actors is not the only problem rural areas have: today they also face critical issues related to new consumers’ needs and the economic models taking hold. Every single aspect represents a challenge that rural areas and communities have necessarily to meet in order to achieve their goals, boosting the value of local goods and services and designing new tourist experiences as well as innovative business models. It is therefore essential to reflect on: the relationship between the tourist offer and new consumer needs, the emerging evidence of alternative business models in tourism and the managerial approach of stakeholders to local development initiatives and strategies.

Food festivals as an answer to new consumer needs

The first chapter of this dissertation is dedicated to food festivals. Today, food and wine events are growing in number all over the world: over the last years, UNESCO recognised the relevant role this type of festivals plays in local development, as they help to build and spread intangible cultural heritage among visitors. Hall (2003) highlights how the number of tourists traveling the world to follow their special interest in food and food events has grown. In Hall and Mitchell (2001), this phenomenon is called “food tourism”, including several kinds of food experiences as the main motivating factors for travel (Hall & Sharples, 2008). Getz and Andersson (2014) label food lovers as “foodies”, underlining the fact that food festivals seem to be very attractive to these people: foodies are interested in having authentic food experiences as their wish is to learn as much as possible about the local culture, practices and also to feel themselves as community members (Sholliers, 2001).

The authenticity issue represents a “hot topic” in literature because, as also Mac Cannell highlights (1973; 1979), it is difficult to establish whether a tourist experience is truly authentic. Authenticity can be considered as a multi-dimensional concept (Santini et al., 2013), in which each specific element related to the production and delivery of the event contributes to improve (or diminish) its perception (Clifford et al., 2007, in Santini et al., 2013). From the perspective of participants, the connection between food experience and a place seems to be very important, as well as the need to feel members of the community (Sholliers, 2001). In other words, authenticity in food experience is not only linked to the tasting activity, because a modern traveller is looking for emotions and involvement in special adventures, where he/she can be the protagonist, improve his/her knowledge and collect good memories (Gunnels, 2014). Moreover, according to Richards (2011) there are several trends, connected to postmodern and postmaterialist society, according to which people classify themselves in terms of what they consume, through the symbolic values involved in the consumption practice that in turn becomes a social ritual, allowing for the creation of new symbols of identification (Richards, 2011; 1229).

Bessière (1998) analyses this aspect in the food and gastronomy consumption in rural areas, defining local food as a symbol, a sign of communion, a class marker and an emblem, deducing that people do not only eat meals but also something intangible like symbols, dreams and imagination. Furthermore, according to Sidali (2013), local food and gastronomy can contribute to reinforce the “personal identity, the search for freshness, taste and authenticity, support for local producers, and environmental concerns”: this is a great challenge for managers, rural entrepreneurs and policy makers who aims at marketing food specialties and rural regions as tourist destinations (Andersson and Getz, 2007). With regard to this, Sidali (2013) observed an increasing number of food and wine

festivals in rural areas, as well as alternative food networks such as farmers' markets and agriculture-based community projects, aimed at "(re)establishing "closer" relationships between food producers and consumers (Holloway et al., 2007; Kneafsey, 2010).

At the same time, an increasing creative spirit has become widespread in the tourism sector, with a shift from a more tangible heritage towards a more intangible culture (Richards, 2011), thus from traditional mass cultural tourism to more innovative and specific niches. Creativity (Taylor, 1988; Richards, 2011) has become an added value and increased among experience economy assets (Pine and Gilmore, 1999), leading to more flexible and authentic experiences, which can be co-created between hosts and tourists. In the case of cultural events, including food and wine festivals, those become creative spaces where it is possible to renovate and reinvigorate local culture, for both residents and tourists (Richards, 2011; 1240); functioning as collectors of time and place, cultural events become important creative hubs allowing the different networks involved to collaborate with each other and local communities to play a crucial role in the co-creation process.

However, it is important to balance the promotion and commodification of everyday life, since creative tourism may become counterproductive when leading to new forms of commodification and therefore a further colonization of the lifeworld (Richards, 2011; 1245). On the other hand, culture is an evolutionary process, just like its negotiation and acceptance among people over time (Cohen, 1988): we can argue that the food and wine festivals, where a more creative spirit is evident and which benefit from consumers' and local community approval, creating together a virtuous co-creative circle, can be considered as an alternative to the new demand trends in tourist experiences.

Social Eating and Community-Based tourism as tools for rural development?

The second chapter of the dissertation discusses the theme of social eating. Over the last few years, many rural communities have organized and managed social eating events, thus gathering individuals connected by a common interest and by the will to commit themselves in socially innovative activities, sharing their own time and resources (Celata, Sanna, 2013) to safeguard local cultural and gastronomic heritage. The social eating practice can be considered as part of the sharing economy, a modern phenomenon based on the collaborative consumption model including food-sharing initiatives. First inspired by the need to reduce food waste and increase social connections, this innovative business model has also been boosted by the diffusion of digital technologies and the more recent, increasing interest in food tourism.

Culinary tourism is emerging as one of the most appealing elements of the tourism sector (Antonioli Corigliano, 2002), attracting those visitors interested in culinary experiences as well as in more authentic and sustainable cuisine. From this perspective, social eating can be considered as part of a real tourism marketing strategy. According to Privitera (2016), the social eating marketplace connects travellers and consumers with local hosts in home-dining experiences: food-sharing practices that are developed among small business and citizen-consumers can thus provide support to branding destination by offering special food experiences. With regard to this, as Prebensen (2013) highlights, experience-based consumption is essential in the value co-creation for tourism destination, as consumers are active actors and producers of their own experiences (Caru and Cova, 2007, in Prebensen 2013), through their involvement at the design level and through the interaction with people, services and servicescape of the destination (Dabholakar, 1990; Bitner, 1992; Holbrook, 2006).

Moreover, digital technologies help to reach groups of individuals not necessarily located in proximity to each other, but sharing interests, lifestyle, culture or something else (Privitera, 2016). Another element relevant to rural development through social-eating initiatives, especially in “those areas that today are excluded from the ongoing production processes and dominant market logic” (Saxena & Ilbery, 2010), is the relationship between hosts and visitors: “the patterns of integration between tourist supply and demand, which, in a relational space, become part of a single systemic process [...] pursue lines of development that are consistent and in harmony with the local culture and economy of the host population” (Tudisca et al., 2014). According to Naselli (2012), integrated relational tourism (IRT) is a form of tourism originated from the visitor’s need to discover local knowledge and to be immersed in the everyday life of the local community. Richards (2010) also highlights how IRT is based on the interaction among tourists and local people, and how this relationship provides both tangible and intangible benefits.

Thus, starting from the analysis of the existing literature, the paper presents community-based food initiatives as an embryonic form of both sharing economy and modern social eating platforms, strongly based on relational tourism features and aimed at bridging the gap between community-based tourism and food sharing initiatives on a digital level. At the end of the chapter, the relatively new community-based initiatives are conceptualized as a possible business model to be developed within the sharing economy model, as to encourage local communities to become more resilient within the modern digital food landscape.

Participatory approach as an answer to cooperation problems

The third chapter presents and discusses participatory approaches, as in the current evolutionary scenario of rural areas it is also crucial to identify an efficient place management strategy involving local stakeholders, through the adoption of a decision-making and development cooperative model (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Cai, 2002; Kavaratzis, 2012). However, nowadays many managerial practices are carried on by restricted groups of experts, thus making it difficult for local communities to perceive those as a real expression of common interests (Byrd, 2007). Kavaratzis (2012), for example, encourages a general rethinking of place branding and management through the implementation of participatory practices, which according to Cai (2002) may favour the creation of a coherent and unitary image of the destination and contribute to strengthen the cooperative attitude of stakeholders.

Moreover, as Cawley and Gillmore (2008) state, a collective action can empower people to address problems from a local perspective, and when this action is a real negotiation, the local community turns out to be stronger and more capable to address future development challenges (Hwang et al. 2012; Idziak et al. 2015). Komppula (2014) focused on the role of entrepreneurs related to the competitiveness of rural destinations, starting from the assumption that their relevance is usually underestimated, while the role of DMOs and public actors is overemphasized in several rural regions. In rural areas, DMOs often do not have a real control on the resources and are therefore unable to promote the tourism business. On the contrary, the influence of an individual entrepreneur is “long lasting and dynamic, and in many cases spans generations” (Ryan et al., 2012, in Komppula 2014). [...] The influence of entrepreneurs results in the creation of an entrepreneurial environment where the focus for development is on the area in general and not just individual businesses” (Komppula, 2014).

However, the literature discussed above does not imply that public actors cannot play a role in the development of a destination. On the contrary, they usually have exclusive access to special resources that can be crucial. According to the most recent scientific contributions, municipalities and Higher education institutions (HEIs) can play a crucial role as facilitators of an entrepreneurial environment, and Universities, in particular, have the “resources and capital needed to research the productive system, lead discussions among stakeholders, and report the progress in all the stages of the process” (Cavicchi et al., 2013). If destinations need “innovative, committed and risk-taking entrepreneurs” in order to develop themselves, there is also an urgent need for a closer collaboration among municipalities, DMOs and Universities. As Cavicchi et al. (2013) highlight, playing the role of facilitators offers HEIs a chance to reduce the wickedness of any particular problem, for instance territorial value creation, the main topic addressed in this study.

University can actually identify new perspectives and insights on local problems through the analysis of case studies, interviews and focus groups, increasing the knowledge transfer to stakeholders and the other way around. With regard to this, Trencher (2013, 2014a, 2014b) theorised the concept of “co-creation for sustainability” as a new function of HEIs, called fourth mission: a more dynamic vision that regard university as “a multi-stakeholders platform engaged with society in a continual and mutual process of creation and transformation” (Trencher et al., 2014, in Rinaldi et al., 2017).

This new paradigm implies that universities can collaborate not only with companies and local governments, but also with the community more in general, thus fostering a long-term cooperation and contributing to an economic and social development (Rinaldi et al., 2017) including innovative business models and resource management. However, the process described above cannot be easily developed, in particular when considering the above-mentioned cooperative problems. It is on public actors to try to take up the challenge in order to identify the most suitable moderating approaches in any situation, including economic crises and natural disasters, such as the earthquakes that hit the Italian region of Marche in 2016 and 2017.

Chapter 1. Authenticity in food festivals: a critical approach

1.1 Introduction

An uncontrolled increase in food festivals can be observed today in Italy and, even though food is an essential element for branding places and in particular rural areas, this phenomenon may pose a problem for local branding strategies and tourist development. On the one hand, many of these events do not seem to reflect accurately local cultural heritage; on the other hand, they often prove to be profit-oriented instead of being visitor- and community-oriented (Murphy, 1992). With regard to this, the executive director of “Italia a Tavola” magazine (www.italiaatavola.net), an expert in gastronomy and tourism, declares, “food and wine tourism and culture need authentic food festivals that help to better promote that asset that are Italian traditional and local products, turning food into the added value that can make Italy wealthier. On the other side, what is definitely not needed is the abundance of profit-making festivals” (Lupini, 2010).¹ Another eminent journalist of the Italian financial magazine “Il Sole 24 Ore” has a similar opinion, when stating the following, “Authentic food festivals, among the thousands labelling themselves as such, are not actually many [...] A food festival is the representation of the material culture of an area and its aim must be to safeguard, spread and promote the local heritage: a food festival combines gastronomy, culture, tradition and economy. However, are all the events called “food festival”, which are thousands in Italy, entitled to be given such a definition? It is now important to create a watershed between what is false and what is authentic” (Paolini, 2012).²

These critical positions are substantiated by the concept of authenticity provided in the scientific literature on food tourism (Hall, 2003; Everett & Aitchison, 2008) and tourism management (Blain et al., 2005; Dwyer et al., 2009), where authenticity is considered as a feature that “connotes traditional culture and origin, a sense of the genuine, the real or the unique” (Sharpley, 1994; p. 130). Authenticity could therefore be defined as a pillar of the tourist experience (Morgan, 2007; Kim & Jamal, 2007; Quadri Felitti, 2012; Richards, 2012), representing today one of the main travel motivation factors and bringing visitors satisfaction (Pizam et al., 1978; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). In Italy, food festival organizers are usually “Pro Loco” associations, not-for-profit groups of volunteers (belonging to the larger network of Unpli, the Italian National Association of Pro Loco) operating in collaboration with local governments. However, today, there are also other types of associations and

¹ Source: www.italiaatavola.net - Alberto Lupini’s editorial: “Per definirsi sagra, ora dovrà rispettare regole precise” (To define itself as a festival, it will have to comply with precise rules), 28 september 2010 (accessed on 25 may 2015)

² Source: www.gastronauta.it – Davide Paolini’s editorial: “Guida alle sagre gastronomiche” (Guide to food festivals), 5 december 2012 (acced on 25 may 2015)

local actors organizing food festivals. In fact, “the high fragmentation on the supply side has facilitated many private actors to get into the business of quality and typical food products and related events, with the final result of a proliferation of initiatives on the market” (Cavicchi et al., 2013; 254).

In this context, it is possible to argue that “festival organizers are facing today new challenges related to their strategic management” (Getz et al., 2010); further, they are called to preserve authenticity to favor a virtuous local branding and tourist development. Over the last years, Unpli association also operated at the juridical level, submitting a draft law to Marche’s regional government (*Appendix 1*), following the example of the nearby Umbria region where a law was passed to safeguard authentic food festivals. According to the tourism assessor, the aim of Umbria’s law is “to redevelop a sector accounting more than 600 events; the law is meant to safeguard the original meaning of the word ‘festival’ (Sagra) and the actual promotion of local food and wine products and cultural heritage, as well as to promote greater protection for consumers”.

It is no coincidence that Unpli association champions it, since its National President signed an official document aimed at providing the guidelines to identify and preserve authentic food festivals. On 24 September 2010 in Montecatini Terme (Tuscany) pool of researchers and experts officially presented the “Manifesto della Sagra Autentica” (Guidelines for Authentic Food Festivals), a kind of Code of Conduct (*Appendix 2*) to manage food festivals in accordance to some guiding principles such as sustainability, historicity and local cultural heritage, which emerged from the most recent scientific literature on this topic. It is also important to clarify that the Manifesto “does not have the force of law, but it is a reference point for all the public bodies at National and local level wanting to better regulate and monitor the subject” (Cavicchi et al., 2013; 265).

The present work aims to understand the role of the actions carried out to preserve authenticity in food festivals planning and management through the adoption of a critical approach, exploring the current practices in two Marche’s food festivals and their compliance with the authenticity principles. The paper is structured as follow: a section dedicated to a literature review on authenticity in food festival; a description of the adopted method analysis; a presentation of a double case study of Marche’s food festivals; discussion and conclusions to provide some critical elements and suggestions for further research.

1.2 Literature review

In the field of Event studies, it is possible to identify several scientific contributions on the food festival topic. Many academics analyzed in particular the aspect of authenticity in tourist events,

especially in cultural and food festivals (Getz, 2010), focusing the attention on both the individual perception (Xie, 2004; Quan & Wang, 2004; Robinson & Clifford, 2012) and the role of the authentic food festival experience in the destination branding (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2006; Lee & Arcodia, 2011). According to Getz (2012:31-32), food festivals are “themed, public celebrations”, and they “celebrate community values, ideologies, identity and continuity”. He also highlights how the literature on festivals, in particular according to many sociologists and anthropologists, reveals much about the culture and functioning of societies, their need to have times and places for celebrations, to express their own identities, to connect with places, to communicate with the world. Getz also recalls how this process often takes place through the ‘dramatic presentation of cultural symbols’, characterized by a ‘participatory’ entertainment. This is the so-called phenomenon of “staged authenticity”, a concept introduced by Mac Cannell in 1979 in the context of ethnic tourism (Chabra, 2003: 705). MacCannell also affirms, on the basis of the Goffman's (1959) theory on the front-back dichotomy, that “often it is very difficult to tell for sure if the experience is authentic”, as the “tourist settings can be arranged in a continuum starting from the front and ending at the back, reproducing the natural trajectory of an individual's initial entry into a social situation” (Mac Cannel, 1973; 597).

Feeling a connection between food experience and the place seems to be very important from the perspective of participants at food and wine festivals, as well as feeling members of the community (Sholliers, 2001). The cultural value of food therefore appears crucial: the authenticity in food experience is not linked just to a simple tasting activity, because the modern traveler is always looking for emotions and involvement in special adventures, where s/he can be the protagonist, improving his/her knowledge and collecting good memories (Gunnels, 2014). According to Bessière (1998; 26), “the common heritage appears as a ritual code. It is recognized as a unifying sign or remembered as a common setting in a designated area. Tourism thus permits participation in consumption and celebration of a series of local rites, including numerous events set up to show off heritage riches, allowing the tourist social and cultural integration in the local group by absorbing and reproducing cultural codes”.

With regard to this, another relevant aspect is that of the community involvement in the event organization, considered as an additional strength for both the success of the event and of the destination promoted. In this collaborative (or community-based) tourism system (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Okazaki, 2008; Timothy & Tosun, 2003), there can be several benefits for visitors, who have the opportunity to live authentic experiences, and for the locals, who can share their knowledge and values and create new social relationships. The authenticity concept is actually linked to the concept of place identity (Kneafsey, 1998; Hall, 2008; Everett & Aitchison, 2008), which is the meaning of

places to their inhabitants and how this meaning contributes to individual conceptualizations of the self. These meanings are included in the visitor experience, becoming a tool to improve the destination image and to strengthen local community cohesion (Derrett, 2003).

The number of tourists traveling with a special interest in food and food-related events has quickly grown around the world: the phenomenon, called “food tourism”, is defined by Hall and Mitchell (2001: 308) as “visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a specialist food production region are the primary motivating factor for travel” (Hall & Sharples, 2008: 5). Food lovers are also called “Foodies”, and food festivals seems to be very attractive for them (Getz, Andersson et al., 2014): foodies are interested in authentic food experiences, tasting traditional dishes and taking part, for instance, in cooking classes. They are also curious about local stories, local habits, people, and food festivals may actually include all these elements.

Further, according to a recent study on food-event visitors carried out in different countries (Getz, Andersson et al., 2014), people attending food festivals are around 43% of the analyzed population and are interested in many aspects related to pure enjoyment, on the one side, and learning and interpretation, on the other side. Chabra (2003; 702) refers to this asserting, “Much of today’s heritage tourism product depends on the staging or re-creation of ethnic or cultural traditions”: from this perspective, perceived authenticity seems to play a key role to measure product quality and as a determinant of tourist satisfaction. However, in the same study, it emerges how a high perception of authenticity also can be reached when an event is staged in a location far away from the one where the cultural tradition originated.

In other studies (Cohen, 1988; Ranger & Hobsbawm, 1983), it emerges that culture is not something permanent and static, but an “evolutionary process”, which Cohen (1988) defines as “emergent authenticity”. He also underlines that “different people have different perspectives and needs”, so authenticity can be considered as something “negotiable” and “a cultural product, or trait thereof, which is at one point generally judged as contrived or inauthentic may, in the course of time, become generally recognized as authentic” (Cohen, 1988; 279–80, in Chabra 2003; 706).

When considering the above-mentioned scientific literature to assess the authenticity of Marche’s food festivals, a critical question arises on how to create a watershed between “false and true” or “authentic and non-authentic”. Would it be possible to identify any common element in the analyzed practices that are not showing such a clear-cut distinction between authentic and non-authentic food festivals? In order to identify any element and to encourage a critical reflection on the role played by regulatory initiatives aimed at preserving authenticity in food festivals, the present work adopted a

case study approach (Yin, 2003), analyzing two food festivals held in the Italian region of Marche where the aspect of authenticity do not seem to meet the principles of Montecatini Code and those of the regional draft law.

1.3 Materials and methods

This article adopts a case study approach (Yin, 2013), using a participant observation strategy (Kim & Jamal, 2007; Mayan. 2009; Pezzi, 2016) including semi-structured interviews, field notes and photos. More specifically, two food festivals held in the Italian region of Marche (one organized in the province of Macerata, the other in the province of Fermo) were investigated. They were chosen because of their particular features, partially not in line with the authenticity principles adopted in the above-mentioned initiatives. Semi-structured interviews, focused on the structure and the practices involved in the events, were arranged with key informants identified during the participant-observation sessions, more specifically the organizers of the festivals. The period of data gathering and analysis are very close to each other, globally running between July 2015 and September 2016. The data collected were analyzed with reference to the literature on staged authenticity (Mac Cannell, 1979) and emergent authenticity (Cohen, 1988); in order to identify any common element that may reduce the gap between the practices involved in authentic and non-authentic food festivals. The aim is to promote a more critical approach to the question of authenticity and to understand the role that measures for preserving authenticity can play in local branding and development.

1.4 Case studies

1.4.1 Background Context

The 28th ‘Sagra del Maialino alla Brace’ (Grilled Piglet food festival) in Camporota di Treia (16-19 July 2015)

Camporota is a small rural suburb of the city of Treia, a medieval village near Macerata, in the Italian region of Marche. The *Sagra del Maialino alla brace* (Grilled Piglet food festival) is an event managed by the local Pro Loco association in collaboration with another local association called “Pro Camporota ACLI” (Catholic Association of Italian Workers) as they launched the festival 28 years ago. The 28th *Sagra del Maialino alla Brace* took place in Camporota di Treia in mid July 2015 and, as usual, it followed an established agenda: the traditional religious program to celebrate San Vincenzo (Saint Vincent), who is the patron saint of the countryside, with a procession carrying the saint statue around for the blessing of countryside, tractors and animals; the lay program, according

to which visitors eat together in the outdoors belonging to ACLI association - the bowling green and the multi-purpose playing field - tasting a varied menu with the grilled piglet as the specialty. In addition to this, there is also an entertainment program with card and bocce games³, music bands, charity lucky dips, folkloristic groups and historic reenactment of old threshing traditions, street vendors and children's rides.

A temporary cash desk and two serving stations (one for drinks and one for take-away food) were set up. The staff also arranged a table service and many volunteers were working as waiters. There were many large tables (about 50) accommodating about ten consumers each. The staff was efficient and kind. The menu offered a selection of 8 different dishes, but only one of them was the grilled piglet. Prices were reasonable (8 Euros for a single big serving of grilled piglet) and no restaurant was involved (also because there are no restaurants in the nearby area). The entertainment program included dancing and concerts, besides games for adults and kids (for example cards). Some street vendors were located in front of the main square, the charity lucky dip close to the cash desk, the children's rides (a bounce house) close to the table area.

The 6th Sagra del Salmone (Salmon Food Festival) in Monteleone di Fermo (2-4 September 2016)

Monteleone is a small village in the Fermo province, in the Italian region of Marche. The *Sagra del Salmone* (Salmon food festival) was first created by a person native of Monteleone who lived in Finland for more than 20 years, in collaboration with the local Pro Loco association. The Salmon food festival is held at the beginning of September for 3 days (over a weekend): it is not held in the main square village's but in a space purposely arranged in front of the organizer's house, who cooks the dishes inside his kitchen with the help of several collaborators; the dishes are later served outside, where tables are set up.

Visitors can sit at any table and a person in charge goes around taking orders and instantly issuing a receipt to pay for the meal at the central cash desk. All the people involved in the festival organization are volunteers. All the dishes have smoked Salmon as their main ingredient and it is possible to choose a full-taste menu (20 Euros) including first course, croutons and stuffed fried olives, or just one or two dishes. There are no street vendors or musical entertainment; the location is quite small and quiet

³ ball sport belonging to the boules family, traditionally played on natural soil and asphalt courts, can be conducted between two players, or two teams of two, three, or four. A match is started by a randomly chosen side being given the opportunity to throw a smaller ball, the jack (called a boccino ('little bocce') or pallino ('bullet') in Italian, depending on local custom), from one end of the court into a zone 5 meters (16 ft.) in length, ending 2.5 meters (8.2 ft.) from the far end of the court.

despite the presence of visitors with their families. The organizer confirmed full compliance with healthy and safety measures.

1.4.2 Findings and Discussion

In both cases, it is possible to observe some elements in common with traditional food festivals: the duration of the events (2-3 days max), the management (local stakeholders and volunteers) and the arrangement (communal eating at tables, folklore and entertainment). The distinctive feature that make those two food festival different from others can be identified in the food supplied: on the one side there is the grilled piglet, a traditional food belonging to Argentinian culture, and on the other side the salmon coming from northern Europe, more specifically from Finland. In both cases, food is cooked following the technique and the tradition of its country of origin. This may seem clearly in contrast with the Montecatini Code and the draft law of Unpli Marche, according to which an authentic food festival has to provide exclusively local products and dishes, to best represent the culture and the history of a place.

When investigating further, it is found out that the grilled piglet is cooked following a secret recipe very similar to “Asado”, a typical Argentinian meat dish, because the planner of the festival has Argentinian relatives, who taught him the original recipe. The recipe is quite peculiar because of the long cooking time of the piglets (more than 20 hours) on large barbecues (placed in a special area close to the cooking stall) and the dressing that is the “chimichurri sauce”, prepared with finely sliced parsley, chili and garlic, vegetable oil and white vinegar (and other spices of your choice, since every person may have a personal recipe). The chimichurri sauce is usually used as a dressing (as in this specific case) but also for the marinade before cooking. During the food festival, organizers allow tourists to visit the barbecue area, sharing memories and anecdotes and letting them take pictures.

The event manager says to be very proud of the success of his secret recipe and how his village could grow over the years thanks to the festival: one of the organizers (a Pro-Camporota ACLI association member) refers that they cooked just 2 piglets during the first edition of the festival in 1988, while today they can cook up to 40, the meat coming from Argentina. The first edition was organized by the event manager and some residents involved in the Pro-Camporota ACLI association with the specific aim of collecting the money needed to build a bowling green and a football pitch for the local population (especially for the younger). The community engagement has gradually grown, and today the grilled piglet food festival involves many local volunteers (more than 90), also thanks to the fact that the festival is managed by the local ACLI association and sponsored by the Provincial

government of Macerata, the town government of Treia, the Pro Loco association of Treia and local Comunità Montana (a public body composed of cooperating municipalities aimed at jointly developing mountain areas). The event manager confirms, “There is a very strong collaboration among these subjects, and the volunteers – especially the younger ones – are happy to contribute every year to the organization of the festival”.

As Derrett (2003; p. 51) highlights, “a sense of community comes from a shared vision, where a clear sense of purpose values individual’s ideas and contribution and involves working together on community issues, celebrations, and problem solving” . With regard to food origin, which is not locally produced, the event manager declares, “I can say that the grilled piglet is an authentic and genuine dish, because the main ingredient and the recipe come from Argentina, and we cook it in full respect of the Argentinian tradition; all the other courses (pasta and vegetables) are made using excellent, local products. Furthermore, the event also involves the historic reenactment of the threshing that is part of our cultural heritage”. In other words, the manager’s Argentinian bonds seem to represent a sort of “cultural bridge” between two different countries (Italia and Argentina) and their traditional food and cultural heritages.

With regard to the salmon food festival, the event manager explains that the event reached its 6th edition, but its roots go back in time as he lived 20 years in Finland, working as manager in several restaurants. During his years abroad, he kept in touch with some Italian friends, who were producers of wine and traditional food, and he started to import to Finland their products to give them the opportunity to access a new sales channel. At the same time, he used to cook salmon dishes for his friends in Italy. When he came back to live in Italy, relatives and friends strongly recommended and supported him to start a project to connect Marche and Finland, so the idea of the Salmon food festival is just a part of a bigger plan. The project, which he launched together with his brother, has been named “MARCHETING: il territorio del sogno” (literally “the dream land”) and the aim is to promote the richness of Marche region in Finland.

At the same time, they want to promote Finnish cultural heritage, products, nature, food and gastronomy in Italy. The event manager also refers that the festival and the local community involvement are increasingly growing over the years. When replying to the authenticity question, he underlines, “The salmon food festival was designed above all as a cultural initiative, aimed at creating a cultural exchange between the two countries I lived in and feel both as mine. Food however is not the only element we propose: there are handicrafts, music and sport, and elements referred also to Finnish lifestyle. This festival wants to be a way to foster a cultural encounter and a real exchange of

knowledge”. Another element of uniqueness is the hot smoking salmon technique, very popular in Finland but not known and neither used in Italy.

Their next step will be to include a different type of fish in the salmon festival menu, mackerel, because, as the event manager says, “it is a fish coming from the Adriatic sea and closer to Marche’s cultural and food heritage; in the past, mainly in rural areas, marinated mackerel was the food eaten to observe the religious precept of abstinence from meat on Good Friday. I’d like to propose this product in a more modern way, cooking fresh mackerel together with salmon during the festival, thus creating a sort of gastronomic and cultural fusion”. He also has recently launched other initiatives such as dinners having pizza and salmon as main courses, and the opening of a Home Restaurant, located in Monteleone and called “Fumé”, having Salmon as the main ingredient on its menu. Moreover, several collaborations have been set up with other local stakeholders, for cultural and food initiatives, with the common intention of promoting the development of the territory.

1.5 Conclusions

The aim to point out some relevant insights from the abovementioned case studies helps to highlight how the cultural element plays a crucial role for the success and the acceptance of both the festivals. Even though the food and the culinary practices come from other countries, the organizers wish to create opportunities for knowledge and cultural encounters through the food festival; furthermore, people attending the events seem to appreciate this approach. The subjects interviewed do not regard the festival only as a source of profit, but as a tool for local development and promotion. Therefore, a new perspective seems to emerge from the investigated events, despite the authenticity principles listed in Unipli’s regional draft law for Marche, as they include a creative element not necessarily in contrast with the other shades of authenticity, but actually complementary to them.

Moreover, when considering the literature on the staged (Chabra, 2003) and the emergent (Cohen, 1988) authenticity, an innovative cultural product (as well as an historical or food festival), considered as contrived or inauthentic in the beginning, may actually be recognized as authentic over time. Beyond the cultural element, linked to the origin of food and recipes, the element of the learning experience also emerges, which is considered important in both cases by the organizers: it includes, on the one side, the storytelling related to products and traditions, and, on the other side, the know-how related to the culinary practices of the festivals. According to the literature, these elements play an important role in not only the planning and management of food festivals, but also in that of tourist destinations (Schianetz et al., 2017). Furthermore, it is important to stress the bond between Marche

and Argentina, the latter the destination of many migrant families during the first part of the last century. During that migration, the culinary culture contributed to recreate and cherish Italian identity in alterity, becoming a fundamental socio-cultural and economic element of innovation (Cinotto, 2013).

This article does not aim to question the adequacy of Unpli Marche draft law as the real goal is to encourage a critical reflection on the authenticity dilemma by activists, showing as any element, such as cultural roots and the learning experience, can be felt as a part of an authentic food festival, even though products and traditions do not strictly belong to the local area. The main limitation of this study is the limited number of cases analyzed, which however can boost further investigations on the topic of authenticity in food festivals.

Appendix 1- Regional law proposal n.79 of 10 august 2016 (English version)

1. Food Festival objectives

-To promote the development of tourism and to enhance the natural, cultural, historical and gastronomic resources of the different territories of Marche region

2. Definition of Food Festival admitted products

-Farm to table products, Short chain products, Local products, Organic products, PDO-PGI-TSG (and the italian label IGT) products, QM products (a recent Quality regional label)

3. Definition of Authentic Food Festival

- Festivals are quality events with the purpose of enhancing a territory through the use and the administration of one or more products or processing of food and wine representative of culture, tradition and identity of the territory itself

-They can have a duration of 4 days max

-They have to administrate just the products admitted at the ART. 2

-They have to combine in the same experience local gastronomy, history, culture, folklore, landscape

-They have to be at least 25 years old, be located in village downtowns or in rural areas of origin of administrated products

-Local stakeholders have to be involved in the management and organization and food festival

-Organizers and volunteers have to use biodegradable products and to do the separate collection

-Organizers have to insure all the volunteers involved in the festival

4. Obligation of Region and Municipality

- The Region promotes, in respect of the state and community legislation in force, the quality festivals organization in its territory enhancing the role of voluntary work and of local association

- The region assigns the certificate of quality festival in projects aiming to create events with the requirements of ART. 3

- Projects identify the specific implementation of the festival and the forms of verification to ensure, at the expense of the organizers, systematic monitoring, independent and documented in order to comply with the requirements of ART. 3 in the implementation phase of the event

-The Region enters the food festival that have been awarded the certification "Quality Festival" in the timetable cited in ART. 5 notifying the respective municipality

-The results of the indicated in paragraph 2 shall be communicated to the Region by the organizers or the inspection bodies in accordance with procedures laid down in the Regulation referred to in ART. 6

-The municipalities promote, within available resources, the realization of the quality in their local food festivals

5. Regional agenda of Authentic Food Festivals

-It is established as part of the databases of regional interest, the regional calendar of quality festivals

-The regional calendar contains the name, duration, location and other specific information related to festivals

-Regional calendar is published to the portal of the website of the Region dedicated to tourism. They can not be included in the regional calendar year following the festivals organized by individuals who have violated the provisions of ART. 3 or who have not notified, pursuant to paragraph 4 of ART. 4, to the results of surveillance Region carried

6. Implementing Regulation

-The Regional Government, having heard the competent shareholders' committee, adopts the implementing regulations of this law. The regulation in particular identify: a) the criteria for drawing up the plans referred to in ART. 4; b) the procedures for conducting the checks aimed at ensuring a systematic independent and documented in order to comply with the requirements of ART. 3; c) the procedures for setting up the calendar and sealing referred to in ART. 5

7. Food Festivals Logo

-The organizers of the authentic festivals recognized under paragraph 3 of ART. 4 may bear the logo referred to in Annex A of this law

-The Unpli Marche and regional associations operating in the indicated materials in Article 1 may add their name in the logo referred to in paragraph 1.

Appendix 2- The Montecatini Code (or Manifesto of Authentic Food Festival_english version)

Definition: Food and wine festivals are part of the historical identity of communities and towns and should be considered as the perfect combination between local authentic cuisines and traditions. Thus, they are the expression of the culture of the territory and their main goals are: preservation, dissemination and promotion of cultural heritage. In order to be “traditional” a festival must have at least a link with the territory witnessed that is documented by oral and written tradition and the programmed cultural activities must reflect culture and tradition.

Main role of typical food: The type of food served and the way it is prepared and consumed hint at a community life and a food culture perceived as a sign of identity. The main dishes and recipes should be based on the main ingredients that are promoted through festivals.

Not for profit nature: The festival has no speculative purpose and should be a vehicle for developing the surrounding area and the community involved. Festival should become an opportunity for the local community (professionals in bars and caterings and common citizens) to think about their origins and their own resources. The festival must ensure at best traceability, dissemination, knowledge of its products and fiscal transparency.

Role of local community: The festival should represent an opportunity for the area to: improve the image of the community; involve the community in event supporting; develop new knowledge and skills; stimulate the spirit of participation aggregation, friendship and belonging. It is also a tool to raise people awareness towards a forgotten heritage including villages, peripheral museums, historical centers, churches and abbeys. The festival can also represent an economic tool for increasing the development of an area by creating new services for locals.

Stakeholders' involvement: The festival promotes forms of socialization and development related to the culture of local food by creating occasions for conviviality. It involves producers, services and resellers (such as wineries, producers, artisans, cooks, restaurateurs and bartenders). The well-being and satisfaction of all segments of the population are essential for sustainability over time of the event.

Time and Place: The festival must take place in a limited period of time for a maximum of seven days and must be tied to cycles of production and consumption. It must take place within the territory of origin of the product, recipe or processing typical in local environments; it should be also integrated into the landscape and capable to enhance cultural assets such as buildings and traditional environments. It may take place in urban or rural context. It can also include events located at places of production, taverns, restaurants and wine bars, creating a synergy between all public and private actors involved in the festival.

Management and human capital: The festival is organized and managed by non-profit associations that will continuously work together with other stakeholders at local level to develop and promote it through a

committee. The organizers of the festival should monitor that the tasks of environment safety and sanitary regulations are carried out with professionalism and accountability, ensuring competence and preparation of volunteers. Organizers must then rely on volunteers, who shall assume responsibility for tasks accomplishment. Organizers must also be aware that volunteers' work would be covered by insurance. The staff aims not only to disseminate information and insights, but also to raise awareness and educate visitors. Staff should be skilled, and be able to provide correct information about the product, anecdotes and expresses the sensory characteristics related to the territory. Any profits must be reinvested in activities for the protection and enhancement of intangible cultural heritage.

Environmental sustainability: The festival must respect its territory, paying attention to environmental impact and ensuring use of organic detergents and waste disposal. Dishes, glasses and cutlery used in public facilities must be made of biodegradable materials. The disposal of liquids and gases must be in accordance with the law.

Chapter 2. Social Eating and Community-based tourism. Towards an integration of different models

2.1 Introduction

Since ancient time, sharing food among families and local communities has been part of a cultural process that led to the development of specific social and economic structures. More recently, economic crises, as well as new consumers' attitudes and tourists' demand for local food has turned this traditional business model into innovative forms of collaborative entrepreneurial solutions (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). During the last few years, food sharing initiatives became a growing field of interest in rural areas both to address the need for higher sustainable and connected communities and to encourage local branding and tourism development. This emergence of interest in food experiences has also developed a model of collaborative economy based on sharing goods and services through digital platforms to build virtual communities of food. With the spread of sharing economy phenomenon, in fact, both consumers and producers have started to commit themselves into online communities by "sharing information, knowledge, and suggestions concerning new initiatives and or brands" (Privitera, 2016).

Simultaneously, the so-called "Food Surfers" have started to share their culinary passion, experiences, and products within social food networks. Given the dynamic nature of this complex phenomenon, this work aims at conceptualise the relationships between food sharing initiatives and platforms and communities-based typologies of tourism, to argue the existence of a new emerging model of local development in rural areas. The paper is structured as it follows: in the next paragraph a background context on platforms operating as digital sharing economies is outlined. Then, a literature review a) presents a general overview of the sharing economy as non conventional business model related to a new ethical feeling and based on sharing products and services throughout community-based, b) outlines a taxonomy of the existing food sharing models, and depicts social eating trends and their role in promoting sustainable food tourism. Then, a paragraph analyzes some case studies related to both offline and online food sharing initiatives by emphasizing common relations and patterns and to conceptualize an emerging integrated business model. The discussion section provides some suggestions about the relationships between these insights and outlines a potential model to be carefully studied in future research efforts.

2.2 Background Context

Over the past few years, platforms operating as digital "sharing economies" (Cohen & Kietzmann, 2014) are booming, building several virtual communities. As a matter of fact, in line with the first

overview of the worldwide data collection on the Sharing Economy, today we can count more than 7.500 sharing platforms with a market valued at \$15 billion only in its first 7 years of activities (Matofska, 2015). Not by chance, already in 2011, Time magazine had identified the collaborative consumption as one of the 10 new trends that would have changed the world. Among all the possible applications of the model, the food sector has been identified as a key industry to encourage, principally, sustainable consumption within food sharing initiatives and practices (OECD, 2001). There are already websites trying to connect home gardeners with food pantries through digital platforms, thus giving the chance to share extra portions of food or even apps that allow restaurants with unused seats to offer a last minute discount for clients to reduce waste.

To encourage more sustainable eating and support local food sector, platforms, such as Landshare (www.landshare.net) have been built as online social enterprises with the purpose to connect people who want to cultivate their own food, with those who have an unutilized land to share. Analogously, the model has been lately applied to the culinary tourism to find innovative ways to change the traditional tourism industry, to promote the role of food in marketing local destinations and to sell more authentic experiences. In order to support a community-based tourism in food sector, several apps have been created where private citizens can promote shared food experiences with the use of new media. “Cookpade”, for instance, is a free recipe app where users can share their traditional recipes with others, along with pictures of their homemade plates; “SkiffTake”, on the other side, is a worldwide app able to elaborate a list of pop-up restaurants and culinary events in a specific area, while “Lets Meet” helps people to find their foodies friends, people who share similar taste in order to let them enjoy a common meal in some selected restaurants.

In terms of digital platforms involving culinary tourism, the California-based food tourism startup TravellingSpoon (www.travelingspoon.com), has been founded for food travellers who want to turn their journey in true food adventures around the world, by tasting authentic culinary experience with the help of home cooks. Based on a similar concept, Social Eating platforms, a trend in vogue for some years now, represent another form of dining experience aimed mainly for tourists who look for an alternative way of exploring communities and their food cultural heritage. Social Eating platforms, in fact, consist of eating at others’ home (home restaurant) as a guest, to enjoy a meal together, socialize with strangers, to learn from cultural exchange and to share a proper social dining experience. Bonappetour (www.bonappetour.com), Suppershare (www.suppershare.com), PeopleCooks (www.peoplecooks.it), New Gusto (<https://newgusto.com>), Plate Culture (<https://plateculture.com>), Eatwith (www.eatwith.com) Cesarine Bologna (www.cesarine.it) Gnammo (<https://gnammo.com>) and VizEat (<https://it.vizeat.com>) are just a few social eating platforms that give us this portion-side trend.

As upgraded forms of food sharing initiatives and practices, the presented food sharing platforms make visible the renewed interest in food culture and food sustainability and show a marketing potential for tourism development, by facilitating the contact between tourists and food and hospitality players, also in rural areas.

2.3 Literature review

2.3.1 The contribution of sharing economy to the agrifood sector

Coming up with a common definition of the sharing economy is nearly impossible, but it is undeniable how the new business model has been causing a tradition market distress, by creating “market in sharing” (Schor, 2014). These forms of not conventional business models have been called in a variety of different terms. Sharing economy, Collaborative consumption, Peer-to-peer economy, On-demand economy are just a few labels, that help to give an interpretation to the idea of this alternative business model (Selloni, 2017). As a general definition, the concept has been referred as a socio-economic eco-system related to a new ethical feeling and based on sharing products and services between strangers, coordinated through community-based online services (Hamari et al., 2015) through different modality of interaction - P2P, P2B, B2P, B2B,G2G - (Schor, 2014; Selloni, 2017).

According to Schor & Fitzmaurice (2015) the new business model, established mainly on trust and reputation, can be classified into four major categories:

- re-circulation of goods;
- optimizing the use of assets;
- exchange of services,
- building social connections.

The re-circulation of goods is developed as an online marketplace where individuals are able to exchange products like on eBay and Craigslist platforms. The second category, optimizing the use of assets, represents a type of connected consumption where durable goods used intermittently are rented to provide people goods and services with a low-cost access. In this category, an early innovator was Zipcar, a B2P company born with the purpose to reduce urban car ownership, followed by the well-known Couchsurfing and Airbnb. The third major type involves the exchange of services rather than products. One example is time banking where individuals share their own time by giving support and help for “time dollars” in exchange. The last category, building social connections, is at the root of most digital platforms inside the sharing economy because it creates the so-called connected consumption (Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2015). These initiatives might be for profit or not for profit but the main goal is related to the possibility of encouraging community-based relationship to promote a more sustainable growth (Buczynski, 2013).

While the earliest research into the sharing economy field focused mainly on the accommodation (Juul, 2015) and transport sector, the collaborative economy is now affecting a number of other sectors including, above all, food. This emergence of interest in food and technology has promoted the creation of innovative food sharing models. Especially with the rise of Foodies Revolution, a “rebellion” guided by people, mainly Millennials, with an interest in food and beverages experience and strong social media skills, the whole culinary landscape has changed (Taste of Science, 2015). What is more, the digital revolution, with the quick spread of digital technologies, has given birth to new alternative distribution and consumption formats (Michelini et al., 2018) as much as the increase of food sharing practices. These models have been conceptualized and classified in three main clusters based on specific variables and categories referring to organization, involved actors, technology, delivery model and social goals/impacts. The identified food sharing clusters are:

- *sharing for money* - including profit organizations that operate exclusively online through web site platforms or mobile applications; the delivery model is B2C, hence the food is collected from distributors or producers and the final consumers are the beneficiaries;
- *sharing for charity* - the owners of the platforms are mainly non-profit organizations; the delivery model is primarily B2B and C2B, thus food is collected from the providers and it is given for free, or in a few cases at a discounted price, to non-profit organizations at local or national level;
- *sharing for community* – including profit and non-profit organizations that operate as pure players by using web platforms and apps. The delivery model is P2P, where food is collected from consumers and shared free with other consumers at local level, to create a community engaged in reducing food waste.

Within this classification, based mainly on redistribution of exceeding food resources, the latest food dining platforms, better known as Social Eating, represent a step forward into the sharing economy food business model. Born as peer-to-peer dining websites for profit purpose, they are becoming the next frontier of the dining experience (BBC Capital, 2015), also opening up to new collaboration with nonprofits and local entrepreneurs. They place themselves in the context of a further conceptualization and categorization of the food sharing models.

2.3.2 Social Eating Platforms: A New Model of Food Sharing Economy

Traditionally, the most important spread in sharing economy platforms has occurred in the United States, but the alternative collaborative system has already become a global phenomenon and represents the direct response to the need of new growth opportunities in different business sectors. Lately, the concept has become extremely relevant especially within the food industry and where food has, for the most part, become a form of experience and socio-cultural entertainment. This is particularly true in the case of Social Eating platforms, which represent both a social and sensorial experience for consumers who look for more sustainable and authentic “food for thought”.

The first experiments in social eating have taken off in the United States as a result of a reaction against the sterile, expensive and predictable traditional restaurant, which hosts most of the modern food experience, and against the culinary monopoly of few chefs and the conservative food industry. As claimed in different international newspapers, first the “Guerrilla Restaurants” enter this market made of unlicensed and secret events restaurants, disseminated by word of mouth and organized in apartments or other private spaces with a limited lifespan. Then there have been “Supperclubs”, (also known as home bistros, guerrilla diners, secret restaurants, paladares, puertas cerradas, pop-up restaurants, guestaurants and anti-restaurants) temporary dining spaces, even for one night only, mainly located on the edge of towns in rural area, with intimate atmosphere, high-class image, but with an affordable price for all (The Guardian, 2015). Lately, the phenomenon is spreading all around the world and it is building virtual communities of food.

Born with the purpose to give the chance to food lovers to meet up with others at the table, all those social platforms have a digital identity and they can represent an additional and alternative channel, not only for foodies, but also to reconnect restaurant managers, local growers, producers and consumers all together, and boost new form of culinary tourism.

Social Eating platforms can easily break down barriers and provide more affordable and immediate access to a wide range of services, thanks to a community-based commitment which encourage experiential learning (Bergin et al., 2015). Not by chance, what is happening now is that while the digital community paradigm keeps supporting the online connectivity, on the other side, the increase of digital tools is providing new chances to integrate digital channels with the traditional ones (Michelini et al., 2018). By responding to a growing request for quality food and alternative tourism experiences, food sharing platforms can provide more authentic and sustainable culinary experiences by directly interacting with the hosting communities to implement sustainable food tourism and preserve local heritage.

As upgraded forms of food sharing initiatives and practices on a local level, food sharing platforms have the capacity to protect local cultural heritage and provide alternative culinary tourism against

the globalization of flavours. While the digitized world is changing the way we connect each other, a community-based involvement in provincial areas, linked with the support of digital tools, can guarantee a higher standard in terms of food tourism production, more local processing, and territorial identity promotion. As a matter of fact, the new sharing platforms have the strength to better connect market and people, prove more affordable and immediate access to a wide range of services, rise reciprocal confidence and trust, promote spontaneous initiatives of “relational tourism”, and boost a more localized food culture while also encouraging the intercultural exchange.

2.3.3 Community based tourism and food sharing initiatives

As much as the sharing economy, the community based tourism (CBT) is a growing phenomenon, which is drawing the attention of economists, politicians, citizens and scholars. CBT has been defined “as a means of development whereby the social, environmental and economic needs of local communities are met through the offering of a tourism product” (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009; 4). In fact, today, there are many evidences of communities having a “direct role in determining their economic destiny” (Murphy, 1988; 97), due to their awareness of the local natural and cultural heritage, which has created the local lifestyle. Furthermore, the community engagement and the collaboration among stakeholders in the tourism planning process (Jamal & Getz, 1995) is recognized as a crucial factor for the local development (Okazaki, 2008). Not by chance Suansri (2003) identified CBT as a participatory model, that offers the chance to “create benefits for a wide spectrum of stakeholders both inside and outside the community” (Suansri, 2003; 7) due to the possibility to share the same natural and cultural resources.

Among the huge variety of attractive sources in rural areas, culinary tourism especially is nowadays emerging as one of the most appealing elements of the tourism sector (Antonioli Corigliano, 2002), able to attract those visitors interested in culinary experiences as much as in more authentic and sustainable cuisine. Nowadays, the food experience is considered by tourists not only a tasting activity, but also a special occasion to live new emotions, to improve personal knowledge and collect good memories (Gunnels, 2014); in light of this awareness, many local communities are arranging food initiatives as tourism marketing strategies, grouping individuals connected through a common interest and willing to be committed in socially innovative activities, by sharing their time and resources (Celata & Sanna, 2013) to safeguard the territorial heritage, the gastronomic culture, and the local economy. Moreover, the social dining marketplace “connects travelers/consumers with local hosts for home-dining experiences”(Privitera, 2016; 95), so the collaborative food sharing initiatives and practices developed by citizen-consumers. These marketplace can be a resource to support place branding by offering authentic food experiences.

The relationship between visitors and local hosts evokes the relational tourism features: in fact, in this field, supply and demand of tourism services and goods are realized and enjoyed through a combination of interpersonal relationships, in which the subjects generators-packers (the hosts) present, beyond the sales orientation, a real attitude for a genuine form of hospitality, which recovers the pleasure of discovering the beauty and the peculiarity of the local culture, history, arts, food and humanity (Ruisi, 2009); this aspect is evident also in the social eating practices, where visitors tend to be involved and to create real linkages with the local community.

Regarding the support of digital technologies, Hamari et al. (2013) discuss how “community-based online services” and the social sharing practices (not for profit as well as for profit) can concern groups of individuals not necessarily located in proximity to each other, but sharing anyway interests, lifestyle, culture or something in common (Privitera, 2016). Overall, local food sharing initiatives, based on collaborative economy models, are attractive opportunities for diversifying production, relocating the value chain, retaining added value in the local territory, maintaining local employment, enhancing the quality of life, producing more incomes and becoming an important vector for rural growth. In Italy, there are several examples of these initiatives that the present work aims to investigate to compare with social eating digital platforms and to identify a new integrated business model.

2.4 Materials and methods

On the basis of the existing literature, this research has taken into account some case studies related to food sharing initiatives - both online and offline - to explore patterns of similarities and differences by using a Multiple Case Study analysis (Yin, 2003). More specifically, as described above, a review of scientific contributions on food sharing, social eating and community based tourism has been realized. Then, as part of the data collection process, we made a selection of latest online newspaper articles focused on the rise of both the sharing economy and the social eating platforms in Italy, especially treating the question of the link between new food sharing practices and rural areas. Both of the online and offline examples have been selected as example of long lasting community-based tourism initiatives.

In terms of food sharing economy platforms, a few social eating websites have been selected for their intent in preserving the culinary traditions of the Italian regions and interviews have been carried out with 5 key informants, owners or managers of these businesses. In all the selected cases, questions were formulated according to the personal experience of the people interviewed and their vision concerning the collaboration between different stakeholders both on a local and digital level.

The content of the interviews has been analyzed and triangulated with the most relevant data gathered from both the literature and the online articles. Moreover, to frame the context of community-based food sharing initiatives, the personal experience carried out by the authors during the last years as action researchers involved in rural development process, has been considered. Then, following the theory of multiple case studies as research strategy (Yin 1981, 1984), all the collected information have been compared to conceptualize a new combined model of community based tourism and sharing economy in food sector.

2.5 Case studies

2.5.1 Background Context

The case of “Le Marche in Valigia”

“Le Marche in Valigia” (literally Marche in the suitcase) is the name of a territorial project born in 2009 in Marche region, Italy. The project was designed and managed by the Agritur-Aso association, an association founded in 2007 in Valdaso, a valley characterized by a strong culinary tradition and a huge bundle of local products. According to the association, the main goal of Agritur-Aso is to promote collaborative and sustainable tourism by offering local gastronomic products for local foodies and international tourists.

The organization of the association is based on the assistance between different stakeholders who work for the social and economic welfare of the local community. From the interviews, it emerges that the adopted business model is characterized by a mutual collaboration both with actors of the tourism industry and with local food producers. With regard to this mutual assistance, the organizational management and business ethic of Agritur-Aso association is in line with the collaborative economy and the experience economy model. In fact, through public events, they offer to locals, consumers, producers, farmers and national and international tourists not only an alternative sustainable development in terms of provision of high-quality food and culinary experience, but also cultural and artistic events as well as folkloristic and traditional festivals.

Another relevant aspect of the “Marche in Valigia” project is the relational approach, which refers to the ability of country people to share through their actions the local identity and *genius loci* with visitors; in this specific case, the tourists who experienced the Fermo area often invite abroad, in turn, the hosts and the other community members they met, giving them the possibility to promote the Marche’s rural areas through presentations, workshop and tasting events. Furthermore, the word-of-mouth which starts with the Italian visit contributes to create a strong and efficient promotional tool, beyond the online channel (Bertella & Cavicchi, 2017).

According to the association website, the consumers have the possibility to experience cooking class with traditional products, fruits picking or bread baking, offered by the rural stakeholders and farmers who participate in the network. In this context, “the Marche in Valigia” project represents a valid opportunity for the local agribusiness sector due to the fact that farmers and SMEs are directly involved in the stakeholder network. “Le Marche in Valigia” project, in particular, is focused on the creation of links between different and geographically distant rural communities, thanks to the sharing of cultural and gastronomic heritage. As claimed during the interview, the main objectives of the project are the following:

- To broadcast the knowledge of local history, habits, traditions of local farming society by keeping alive the interest in the area
- To promote the mutual collaboration among several stakeholders and to improve the competitiveness of local producers.
- To promote the organic (or sustainable) farming for local products and to introduce a direct distribution channel between consumers and producers by improving farmers networks and the sustainability of rural settings
- To promote traditional recipes and spread the local heritage
- To promote experiential learning and experiential tourism both at national and international level

Moreover, inside “Le Marche in Valigia” project, the founders, as well as all the stakeholders involved in the network, are promoting a new action consisting in the possibility to create agreement with international tourists, in Europe and overseas, bringing them traditional food and products which come from local producers in Marche region. These international events allowed us to reflect also on the importance of cultural exchange that comes out during dining events, where the rural stakeholders cook traditional dishes of Marche Region. Thus, the project illustrates the possibility to export the local territory abroad, create a new link with foreign entrepreneurs and understand the importance of rural food network.

This approach also implements the local tourism. In this way, a virtuous circle is growing and tourists can live a great experience not just by observing the landscape or the habits of local communities, but directly participating to the Italian cultural heritage. In line with the above considerations, this agribusiness model can be considered as a good practice regardless the aspect of digital tools. On the other side, as claimed by one of the founders, the “Marche in Valigia” project is now facing a new challenge: following the example of the new social eating platforms, by expanding their online

network and creating a similar business to better spread their voice and the voice of the rural stakeholders.

The case of “Un Paese Cento Storie”

The project started in 2005 in the north of Marche region, exactly in a small town named Belvedere Fogliense, a fraction of the Tavullia Town. As reported on their website, the project meant to valorize the local territory and its culture through the concept of “family dinner”, in order to gather the local community and national and even international tourists around a dinner table that is considered a starting point to tell the story of a territory. Today, “Un Paese Cento Storie” (literally One Village and One Hundred Stories) is a live project, coordinated by the cultural association Storiememorie, counting on a stakeholders network composed of cultural actors, tourist operators, artisans, food producers, farmers, agritourism, wineries and guests (Bertella & Cavicchi, 2017). As claimed during the interview, the project consists in cooking for other families and consumers. During the so-called social dinners, local housewives cook for interested guests, traditional dishes belonging to ancient family recipes, sharing, in this way, not just food but also memory and identity. All the products belong to local farmers and small producers who live and work in the rural area. The project, that was born in another area of Marche region, in the North, presents some similar aspects and few differences.

The first big difference has to be searched in the origin of project: “Un paese Cento storie” comes into the world almost casually, as an unplanned event organized to share with few guests a social and culinary moment. The idea of social eating was already there, but not yet intended as a cultural or even a business model. To date, the project is proposed on a regular date. Day by day, as said during the interview, rural stakeholders decided to create a website and social media account both to maintain the local ties with the previous producers and consumers and to spread the project out of the national territory. Once again, as in “Marche in Valigia” case, this project well illustrates how rural entrepreneurship can operate in line with the sharing economy theory and the main features of the experience economy in order to promote a sustainable development in the area. What will be the next step? The idea of the founder, as claimed, is to invest in the expansion of the geographical area and on the enlargement of the stakeholders, connected in different alternative food networks, through the help of digital technologies, maintaining at the same time the value of the project: sharing traditional cooking, historical and personal memory of the community.

The case of “Le Cesarine Homefood ”

Le Cesarine was founded in 2004 by professor Egeria Di Nallo, a sociologist at the University of Bologna, in collaboration with the Association for the Guardianship and Protection of the Traditional Culinary-Gastronomic Heritage of Italy. Behind Cesarine there is Home Food, a network of Cesarine, which operates throughout the country and offers the chance to taste authentic dishes, discovering the best recipes of local cuisine and live an unforgettable social experience. To date, the organization has hosted more than 300,000 visitors since its inception. With 400 Cesarine in 150 places, homefood network gives the chance to enjoy a trip through Italian gastronomic culture and tradition from the regions.

As well explained during the interview, Le Cesarine is composed by landlords and food lovers who want to keep and spread the important heritage of traditional regional food in Italy. The platform offers both the possibility to discover quality and taste of the Italian food and the opportunity to live an authentic experience through local menu prepared by “domestic chef”. The mission of the social eating platform is to protect the traditional regional Italian cuisine and the transmission of family values linked to the food. In light of sharing economy and the experiential tourism, these kinds of experiences are based on the use of local products and traditional recipes which come from the local community and foster tourists and consumers to get involved in the culture of a territory. Local stakeholders collaborate together in order to create a win-win process of co-creation, also thanks to the use of digital technologies.

The case of “Gnammo”

Gnammo is a startup created in Turin by Gian Luca Ranno, Cristiano Rigon and Walter Dabicco in 2012, based on an online P2P socio-economic formula inside the hyper-connection world. Born with the purpose to allow users to organize or find culinary events, the platform has been growing especially in 2015 and consists of sharing recipes, food and personal space in order to transform user's food passion, into a social, touristic and cultural experience and promote the interactions among strangers. This trend has involved 1.600 cities so far, with some famous Italian cities, such as Rome, Milan Florence, Turin and Bologna at the forefront. The mission of the platform is to give everyone the possibility to take part in the Collaborative Economy, by transforming today's economic threats and limits in tomorrow opportunities, thanks to the digital technologies. Gnammo's work is mainly located throughout the national territory with Italian users but, in order to promote the national and local tourism, it has just launched the “Special Dinner” for incoming tourist, a new project born with the collaboration of “Ceneromane”, a Roman social network that works in the capital of Italy.”

“Special Dinner” project consists in inviting travelers to enjoy local food by offering high-quality products in special and beautiful locations, such as museums, with the purpose to promote and increase both the international tourism and the culinary and wine-growing Italian traditions. As a profit project, Gnammo has collaborations with international food brands (Barilla & Ferrarelle) and with big and private investors in order to increment its business but, at the same time, as claimed during the interview, it also has partnerships with small food entrepreneurs and local and alternative food networks all around Italy. To summarize a few local events, during the interview we focused on three main projects: Bio&Sisto, Altromercato and Birre Collesi -Alogastronomia 2.0 festival -. In the first case, according to the founder’s response, the rural event was organized in collaboration between the social eating platform and Bio&Sisto, an Apulian and young agricultural holding, specialized in the production of organic food with short production and distribution chain and direct sales. The aim of the free event was to give a chance to rural stakeholders and Apulian farmers to show their products to the local market and consumers.

The events were supported by social campaigns through social networks and Gnammo platform. A similar case is represented by the Altromercato event, an ongoing event created with the partnership between the social eating platform and Altromercato shops, food shops that actively support Fair Trade. The main aim of the event is to offer high quality and local food products that chefs will cook in front of the community in order to support Fair Trade dinner. The last event considered during the interview, it was the Beer Festival, organized with the mutual assistance between Gnammo and Birre Collesi Company. The aim of the collaboration was to organize a festival wholly dedicated to craft beer, produced in a small village in the centre of Italy. Once again, reflecting on the above considerations, the data collected suggest that, in light of the sharing economy theory in agrifood sector, social ties among online networks and rural entrepreneurs create new business opportunities with local, national and international partners and have the potential to promote the sustainable development and knowledge. From the interview, it emerges that the adopted business model is characterized by a strong collaboration between the digital platform and rural entrepreneurs able to promote both the experience economy in the territory and the creation of alternative food networks, based on digital communication.

The case of “VizEat”

VizEat is a meal-sharing website, created in 2014 in Paris by Jean-Michel and Camille Rimani, and where a growing number of hosts and guests find each other. Born with the purpose to offer the possibility to discover a city in an original and authentic way to locals and travelers, the social eating platform offers the possibility to choose a meal that whets the appetite, like a wine tasting on a Parisian

rooftop or homemade pasta in Rome. According to the website, VizEat platform is partnered with Airbnb and now features hosts in more than 65 countries and its mission is to engage energies and empower people and communities to a positive global citizenry. VizEat is the place for travelers who want to find a new way to explore countries and where they can meet locals who are willing to promote their culture. It offers a variety of options from drinks and buffet dinner to a full-course meal. At launch, the site started with just three European cities - Paris, Milan, Berlin - and few pioneer hosts. To date, VizEat connects more than 35,000 travelers and 10,000 local hosts in more than 65 nations. VizEat, as much as Gnammo platform, has commercial partnerships with international food brands and with big and private investors in order to increment its business.

At the same time, as claimed, the social eating platform has also partnerships with small food entrepreneurs and local and alternative food networks. The main partnership analyzed was the one with “l’Alveare che dice sì”, a Network of communities buying fresh food directly from local producers and farmers. The initial project born in France in 2011 with *La Ruche qui dit Oui!* followed in England by *The Food Assembly* and then creating different “alveary”, initially in Belgium, Spain and German. In Italy, the sustainable project was created in 2014 but it continues to spread all over the world. To date, VizEat is an active partner for “L'alverare che dice sì” because they both want to promote the idea of a social entrepreneurship culture, propose a new sustainable business inside the sharing economy and create new offline and online stakeholders’ networks in local communities.

2.6 Findings and Discussion

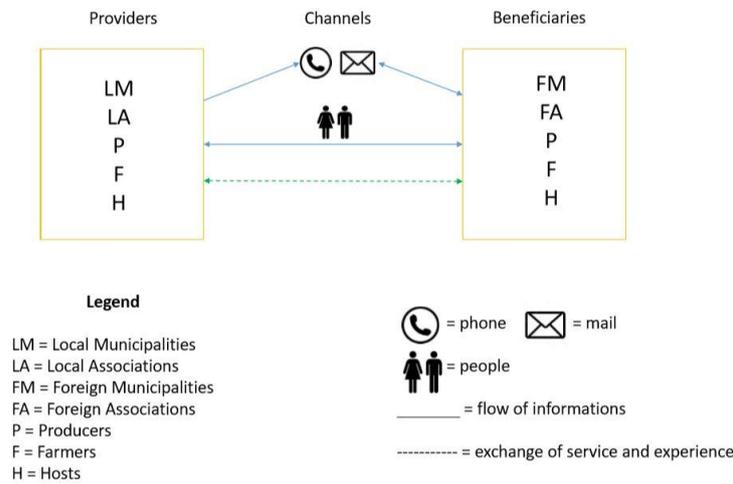
The main research question of the study addresses the initiatives belonging to offline and online organizational networks to obtain mutually beneficial goals and build new cooperative food systems for sustainable local development. From the analyzed cases, it emerged how collaborative economy between online and offline stakeholders has broadcasted the knowledge of local history, costumes and traditions by keeping alive the interest in the area. In the “Marche in Valigia” and “Un Paese Cento Storie” projects, the sense of belonging to a community seems to be the main tool to promote the *genius loci* and the identity of the local territories. The rural entrepreneurs interviewed, underlined the importance of creating a mutual network between stakeholders and digital innovative practices, in order to support and promote rural development. To date, in fact, if rural areas are reinvesting their role in the global market, they still need to transform the offline word-of-mouth in a digital one. However, as claimed in both of the interviews, the awareness about the fundamental role of the digital tools and the commitment to create online platforms to open up to the whole world, seem to be key points in the future business plan of the two projects.

Reflecting on the qualitative collected data, we can observe a progressive evolution towards the creation of web channels also for these more local realities. Moreover, if the digital tools are on the one hand useful to enlarge the stakeholders network, at the same time they represent a symbolic “passed of baton” from the old to the new generations of entrepreneurs more willing to internationalise the products. In both the investigated cases and according to the stakeholders interviewed, the link between digital networks and the multistakeholder collaboration implemented more and more every year, has increased the need for integrated and structured social online activities. Regarding the social eating platforms, “Le Cesarine”, “Gnammo” and “VizEat”, it is possible to highlight a sort of inverse process from the point of view of the use of information and communication channels.

As it is well known, they were born to work and create online networks mainly for cultural and economic reasons, rather than to promote a real change in the local agribusiness systems. Now, they are opening up to a new vision of the business model and to the local stakeholders, in order to create functioning networks through their online channels and to guarantee a high-quality food production and consumptions to their users. It should not be surprising that this new business model is developing also in countries, where food and culture go hand in hand and where the authentic cuisine represents a strong social, cultural and historical heritage. Thus, thanks to online and offline events, the Social Eating platforms are trying to localize the food system and encourage the contact between food producers and consumers in order to turn the local food in locality food, by improving food awareness and trust and so to invest in the future of the agri-food sector.

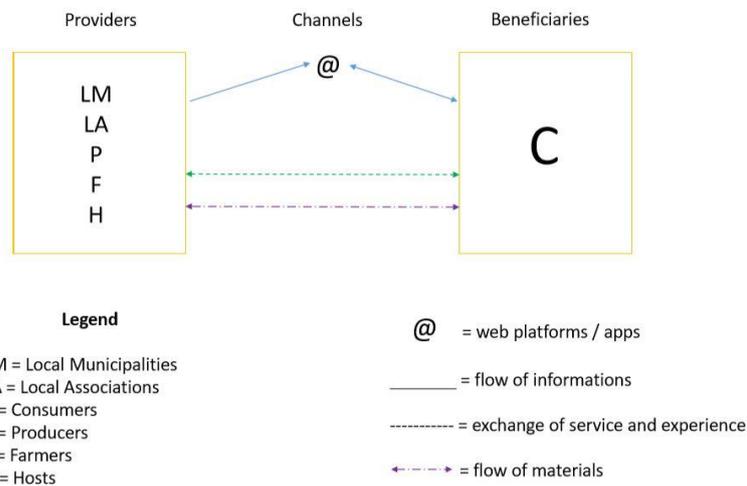
From an organizational perspective, in the light of Shor (2014), Privitera (2016) and Micheline (2018) studies, focused on the sharing economy market orientation (profit – no profit) and structure (B2C, B2B, P2P, C2B) – it is possible to identify the functional models connected to the analyzed cases. These models especially refer to the Micheline (2018) categories and variables, and they result different but interconnected at the same time. However, it is appropriate to highlight that the Micheline study addresses the food sharing issue in the original mean of reducing food waste and redistribution of goods with a positive social impact; nevertheless, the study also underline the relevance of the business opportunities created by the digital technologies and the potential value proposition of the alternative distribution systems. The “Marche in valigia” and “Un paese cento storie” business organisation appears compliant with the Sharing for Community – P2P model, since in this case we are in front of a bundle of no-profit activities with an exchange of services and experiences between all the involved stakeholders, to the aim to promote the cultural heritage and the identity of a specific destination.

Obviously, this set of learning and promotional activities means to stimulate new flows of visitors in rural areas to foster the sustainable local development. Moreover, several public and private stakeholders are participating, not only consumers; in addition, there is not a systematic use of apps and platforms but only more simple communication channels (email or phone), being personal contacts and relationships the main element in this context:



P2P Model - Stage 1 - «Le Marche in Valigia» and «Un paese cento storie» (adapted by Michelini 2018)

As mentioned before, managers of “Marche in valigia” and “Un paese cento storie” are inclined to making greater use of web platforms and apps, to expand their activities to Italian and foreign consumers; also in this second stage, the income and the local development is considered as a consequence of the networking - through web platforms and apps - and of the social dining experience of visitors, who have anyway the chance to buy any products or to organize special events providing a symbolic reimbursement to local structures, farmers or hosts involved in these activities:



B2P Model - Stage 2 - «Le Marche in Valigia» and «Un paese cento storie» (adapted by Michelini 2018)

This further structure could be considered as a sort of bridge between the first one and the real sharing for money model, that includes Le Cesarine, Gnammo, VizEat and the all other social eating platforms. These models, in spite of the similarities with the food sharing clusters, present any relevant distinctive elements; in fact, they put the value of relationship and experience as pillars of the whole system, and the economic development as an outcome of the learning and social eating activities.

In all of them, according to the owners interviewed, those initiatives have given successful results for all actors involved, both as a response to the lack of business incubators for rural entrepreneurs and as a way to do business for food platforms, thanks to social innovation projects within the rural world. Thus, the link between local food initiatives and social eating platforms can be considered as a bridge fundamental to give birth to new food hubs based on cooperation 2.0 and able to turn local food into locality food and according to Fonte and Cucco (2007), this link can become a source of innovation in the food sector.

2.7 Conclusions

From the analyzed cases, it emerged a crucial role of the online networks to support local farms and rural communities to face market challenges. In this context the social eating platforms, not yet structured as rural food hub, seems to have the potential to support local producers through collaborative engagement. In this way local food producers, who work within alternative food networks, will have the opportunities for scaling up production.

Hence, this new social eating platform can be seen as a potential tool to reconnect restaurant managers, local growers, producers and consumers all together, through interactive initiatives; further, they can easily break down barriers, nowadays, in order to better connect market and people, providing more affordable and immediate access to a wide range of services, rise reciprocal confidence and trust, promote spontaneous initiatives of “relational tourism”, and create a regional food culture. The relationships and concepts described in this work need to be validated through further research both qualitative and quantitative.

Chapter 3. Universities and “wicked problems” in rural areas: pitfalls and opportunities of participatory approaches for a sustainable development

3.1 Introduction

In the latest years, participatory approaches have become increasingly more widespread in the tourism industry, in particular in rural areas (Chambers, 1994). The use of participatory approaches, in Italy more specifically, dates back to the 1970s, a period marked by a strong battle carried out by political and grass-roots movements to claim rights such as democracy and social and economic equality (Moini, 2012). Over the years, due to the deep changes affecting society and institutions, participatory approaches gradually shifted their focus on some particular fields, such as welfare, environment, urban planning. At the same time the original *bottom-up* drive waned and was replaced by opposite-trend initiatives, the so-called *top-down* initiatives, which were “imposed” from the above as opportunities to exchange ideas and boost development on issues political and institutional stakeholders and citizens may have in common.

The participatory approach is the main feature of the style management of many modern institutions and organizations, among which higher educational institutions (HEIs). Many of them are adopting participatory approaches pursuing the principles of the third and fourth mission (Rinaldi et al., 2017) and that of Europe 2020 policy strategy (European Commission, 2012), in order to promote the launch of projects that may boost local development. The University of Macerata has been implementing and sharing a participatory approach for some years (Cavicchi et al., 2013; Rinaldi and Cavicchi, 2016), devoting its efforts to the management and promotion of the cultural value of Marche's rural areas as to allow them to gain social, environmental and economic benefits.

The university has been pursuing this mission despite the earthquakes that recently hit Central Italy, and in particular the above-mentioned areas, and caused much distress and suffering in many towns, in addition to extensive damage to both economic and public infrastructures. As a response to the earthquake, the university immediately launched initiatives to support local businesses: for example, it promoted the sale of products from companies damaged by the earthquake using the university e-commerce platform (UniaMoci project) and organized workshops, whose aim was to share and discuss ideas and projects for the development and promotion of local businesses and heritage, with many stakeholders from the political, corporate and academic worlds. In the latest years however, the use of participatory approaches by public institutions as a means of co-creation and discussion has been criticized; in particular, it is blamed for its poor impact on both citizens' participation and real effects on public decision-making processes (Gaudio & Zumpano, 2003; Bobbio & Pomatto, 2007).

According to some scholars, there are political and economic reasons for it: the consolidation of participatory practices would not be aimed at promoting a real democratization of decision-making processes, but, on the contrary, at promoting a consolidation of the neoliberalization of public action (Brenner et al., 2010; Moini, 2012), which may also lead to different kinds of contradictions actually due, among the others, to the same engagement techniques (Bobbio & Pomatto, 2007). The abovementioned considerations, which also affect the University of Macerata, even though indirectly, therefore demand for important, critical reflection.

The paper focuses on two particular events: the first dates back to 15/16 September, 2016 and was built around the strengthening and promotion of the tourism industry and tourism resources in the macro-region overlooking the Adriatic and Ionic seas, with a call dating back to a period before the earthquake; the other event dates back to 26 January, 2017 and was built around the recovery of the value of local areas after the earthquake had hit them on 24 August, 2016. Through a critical and self-critical analysis of the discussions, dynamics and interactions among the players, the paper aims to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the participatory processes activated by the University of Macerata, which were meant to improve the development and promotion of tourism resources and boost the economic and environmental recovery of the area after the earthquake.

To this aim, the paper is structured as it follows: in the next paragraph, a literature review on the participatory approaches features and on their use is outlined; then, a detailed description of the adopted methodology is provided; furthermore, a presentation of a double case study of participatory approaches initiatives set up by the university of Macerata; finally, discussion and conclusions highlight some critical elements for further research and some practical suggestions for other initiatives.

3.2 Literature review

Main Features and use of participatory approaches

In the latest years, the European Commission has acknowledged and regarded as critical the development and promotion of rural areas through innovative, cross-field policies, setting it as one of the first goals of the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP - European Commission, 2011). Many EU countries accepted the challenge as the recent economic crisis has pushed them to relaunch themselves at different levels, systematizing existing resources through new management and communication strategies. The scientific contributions about rural branding, which are usually quite rare in literature when compared to studies on other types of place branding (city,

region, country), define rural branding as the set of activities aimed at creating a strong regional/local identity that may bring social and economic benefits (Vuorinen & Vos, 2013), highlighting value as a leverage for tourism and local/regional development (Hall et al., 2005).

Furthermore, some authors (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Cai, 2002; Kavaratzis, 2012) champion the importance of involving local stakeholder in the process, adopting a decision-making and cooperative development process. Such an approach is diametrically opposite to the practices according to which very few experts take the decisions, which are not always perceived by the local community as a real expression of common interests (Byrd 2007). Kavaritz (2012), who in turn adopts an approach diametrically opposed to the top-down one, promotes a general rethink of place branding through the use of participatory practices that may encourage the creation of a consistent and uniform destination brand image within rural communities, which may also contribute to strengthen the bond between brand image and identity according to Cai (2002). The point is that it is actually possible to include all the different identities of a region/area in the branding and marketing process of a destination (Gibson & Davidson, 2004). Jamal & Getz (1995) underline the positive aspects of collaborative processes, with reference to the studies carried out by Gray (1985) on human relations and the interactions among people inside organizations (Gray & Hay, 1986): they include independence from stakeholders, the adoption of solutions resulting from a dialogue between different, contrasting perspectives, jointly-owned decisions, collective responsibility of the parties involved and collaboration meant as organizational activity, through which local players together can relate to the complexity of their own environments.

The above-mentioned findings and the European inputs explain how participatory approaches for tourism and rural development (or PRA, participatory rural appraisal; Chambers, 1994) have become widespread and been used in the latest years, also as a consequence of a gradually increased awareness, by executives, managers and scholars, of the effectiveness of those approaches to make latent ideas and proposals come to light within communities, to boost reflections, unity, and make people easily more aware of their own resources. At the same time, however, participatory approaches and their application in different fields of public life (political, social, health, environment) have been criticized from a scientific point of view. The book “Teoria critica della partecipazione” (Moini, 2012), in which the author adopts a perspective mainly based on a historical and sociological analysis, is a good source for questions and reflections and also helps to understand and revise the role of the university as a facilitator among stakeholders. First, it has to be noted that, in the last 10/20 years, a participatory approach has been chosen by countries characterized by a long, sound representative democratic tradition as well as by countries that only recently were freed from autocratic regimes.

With regard to the former, participation-based actions were aimed at improving the quality of democracy and focused mainly on the techniques for the creation of new *collaborative governance* (Newman et al. 2004). With regard to the latter, the aim was to promote a real consolidation of democracy (*emerging democracy*) and a real social and economic equality. In the case of Italy and other countries, the process of democratic consolidation mainly developed throughout the 1970s, when masses claimed their right to be involved in the political and institutional decisions in more than one field (school, work, culture, environment) with a strong bottom-up drive; participation therefore became a key tool for a real social and economic equality. In the 1990s, the scenario changed: the ideological and value-related connotations of the previous decade faded away and the forms of participation, besides focusing on some specific fields (environment, city planning, welfare), were no longer the result of conflicts between institutions and civil society (*bottom-up approach*) but an occasion offered by policy makers and institutional players (*top-down approach*). The difference between the two approaches is not always very clear, but it is useful to understand how the actual and real participation, which was strongly claimed as a right by the new political and social actors in the previous two decades, has increasingly decreased to our days, becoming more formal and technical.

The new form of personalization and subjectification of the experience may therefore be regarded to have facilitated the diffusion of weak and fragmented identities, thus making participatory approaches weaker and increasingly less able to really affect issues of collective importance (Moini, 2012). In addition to this, today participation seems to be entangled in a set of paradoxes. One of them is regulatory convergence, through which the means (participatory technique) becomes the purpose while the results of the relation become secondary to it. It can be added the paradox of de-democratization, as an approach developed to promote a stronger representative democracy and overcome by post-democratic processes, which are more economics-related than society-related. Last but not least, the low-impact paradox can be taken into account, which sees an increasing interest in participation by policy makers but with no certainties about its real effectiveness in setting goals and contents of public decisions (Moini, 2012). A similar situation can develop even in the implementation of disaster recovery projects and initiatives (for example, earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis). If on the one hand, there are several documented cases in which participatory approaches aimed at re-building and relaunching areas hit by disasters played a key role (El-Masri and Kellett, 2001; Davidson et al., 2007), in other cases, this approach was marginal and not effective (Davidson et al., 2007; Ganapati & Ganapati, 2009). If it is true that all the stakeholders in a community hit by a disaster can actively participate in reconstruction projects, it is also true that not all the participatory approaches guarantees the best use of stakeholders' abilities and skills (Davidson et al., 2007). On the contrary, real experiences show how, among the different participatory approaches, stakeholders

can be involved at different levels and in different ways, in some cases only as a workforce, in other cases personally taking part in the decision-making process and in the management of projects (C. Bobbio, 2006, in Moini, 2012; Hidayat & Egbu, 2010; Chang et al., 2011). More in details, a broad array of participation levels exist: for instance, *informing and informing/manipulate*, which means a limited engagement in the implementation stage, but not implying design and decision-making procedures. It is therefore a combination of a top down and a bottom-up approach: the *consultation* formula, with a fully top-down approach and no real engagement in other aspects; and *empowerment*, in which decision-making and implementation power from the bottom (bottom up) is at its highest level, in collaboration with other local players. What establishes the use of one approach or the other is the general organization plan, which needs to take into account from the beginning all the types of players and their relations and interactions (Davidson 2007).

Within such a context, a university, as a mediator and facilitator of a constructive dialogue among the parties, can thus play an important role, as it is an impartial subject with reference to interests and opinions, and also because it has the required financial resources and technical-scientific skills to support the process (Cavicchi et al., 2013; Rinaldi et al., 2018). According to Chambers (1994) and Chandra 2010, there are three key elements in the role played by universities in participatory approaches: 1) The personal responsibility and opinion of facilitators, who understand possible mistakes with self-critical awareness; 2) The commitment to equality, including and empowering everyone, above all those who usually are on the margins of or left outside the discussions; 3) Acknowledgement and promotion of diversity. Furthermore, a new and important function universities are requested to play is co-creation for sustainability, besides the third mission, (Trencher et al., 2013, in Rinaldi et al. 2017). In a nutshell, universities need to become more open towards the socio-economic context, through the promotion and transfer of expertise and knowledge, but also to take on the role of central coordinator in an ongoing process of mutual exchange with the stakeholders. This new role implies supporting and building relationships with political and economic players as well as with the entire community more in general, for a long-term cooperation (Rinaldi et al., 2017).

Nonetheless, despite the new role of universities as permanent coordinators and the new goals for development and support, working with stakeholders to implement effective development and branding strategies in rural areas looks to be quite difficult. The issue is formally defined as a “wicked problem” (Cavicchi et al., 2013), that is a complex problem, with many facets which is therefore difficult to manage, thus resulting in a weak and poorly structured tourism offer as it is still today (Cavicchi et. al, 2013; Lorenzini, 2011). The reasons for this, from the point of view of the

engagement of local communities, can be summed up in the fact that each type of stakeholders has to meet different, specific problems, which often require quick, even instant solutions. Furthermore, there seems to be a widespread lack of trust, which significantly reduces the more general inclination to collaborate actively in big, but above all, long-term projects. From the point of view of branding, there are similar problems, as the wide range of players and needs slow down usually decision-making processes (Therkelsen 2008), thus making it difficult to find a balance between the application of advanced destination marketing strategies and the management of a local realpolitik. A situation that can be often seen at a regional and national level too. Consequently, a new outlook is needed on the development and reconstruction projects of rural areas, reconsidering in particular the participatory approaches chosen by universities in their role of mediator and facilitator of decision-making and implementation processes. Any strength and weakness of these approaches should be highlighted in order to provide a problematization of the management of the participatory methods (Maguire & Cartwright, 2008) adopted by universities in the latest years, in a perspective of regional development and promotion.

3.3 Materials and methods

The article adopts a combined approach of case study methodology (Yin, 2003) and analytic autoethnography (Anderson, 2006). With regard to the former, the analysis focuses on a double case study, specifically two international workshops organized by the University of Macerata between 2016 and 2017, in which the author of the paper was an “insider”: she was directly involved in the organization, management and communication of those events and this allowed her to have open access to information, documents and interactions with and among the players involved. The selection criteria is temporal-dialectic, as the two workshops were organized one before and one after the earthquake that hit Marche region on 24 August, 2016, which is a fact that divides them not only from an historical point of view, but also changes partially the economic, political and social context. Some features of analytic ethnography (Anderson, 2006), in turn, were useful to achieve the goal of this paper. Analytical ethnography takes into account first the engagement of the researcher in the social context investigated known as CMR, complete member researcher: she is a PhD student of the University of Macerata and has been actively involved in the organization and management of the events investigated. Secondly, it provides for a critical element of analytical reflection, which expresses the subjective awareness of a connection required between the research context and the effects on it, or in a nutshell the need for mutual influence.

In this research, the reflection is meant to be critical (*critical reflexivity*, Cunliffe, 2002; Alvesson et al., 2008) and finds its justification in the statements by Cooper & Burrell (1988), according to which such a practice, used in research (Le Feuvre et al., 2016; Goulart & Giovanardi, 2017), helps to disrupt the constrictions of routine thinking and look at the world around with different eyes, without prejudices and standardized mind-sets. Furthermore, as Shön (1983) states, in particular with reference to professionals in five job fields (engineering, architecture, management, psychotherapy and city planning), a reflective professional has the ability to combine experience and the judgement about the experience in one, unique dialogue, both in the happening of the circumstances and in a retrospective manner. This will be based on his/her own memories and the implicit knowledge and expertise, which is defined by Reber (1989) as that cognitive process through which you know, by the means of the environmental stimuli, the external world and its dynamics, even the most complex ones, regardless of the conscious efforts to do it. This work is characterized by both of the abovementioned reflective forms (contingent and retrospective). Another important aspect is narrative visibility, that is in written texts, the personal, first-hand engagement of the researcher in the process investigated, including his/her own experience and sensations in the work, as they are considered essential elements to understand the social situation investigated.

According to some researchers, subjectivity should not be seen as an ancillary element in the personal notes of the researcher: even though notes are used to record the external data set, they also need to record the reactions and impressions of the researcher himself (Lofland & Lofland, 2001). Furthermore, in autoethnography, narrative visibility shows not only the personal engagement of the researcher in the situation investigated, but it also promotes critical inputs for further reflections and revisions of practices through the comparison between his/her experience and subjective thinking and those of other subjects. With regard to the latter, dialogue and interaction with other subjects is essential to exchange and share information, knowledge, and to promote greater objectivity of the outputs, avoiding any form of autobiographic solipsism (Rosaldo, 1993, in Anderson 2006). There is also the aspect of dedication and coherence towards the research program, as the aim of autoethnography is not just to record personal experiences or provide an insider perspective of situations, but also to “use empirical data to gain insight into some broader set of social phenomena than those provided by the data themselves. This data-transcending goal has been a central warrant for traditional social science research” (Anderson 2006). When considering the complex issues universities have faced and dealt with in the challenge of co-creation with other stakeholders (Cavicchi et al., 2013), the adoption of such an approach can become essential to identify weaknesses and strengths to use as a leverage to create new working procedures. Data collection can be divided into two main phases: the first phase took place between March 2016 and January 2017, the second

between March and September 2017. The first phase included periods of participant observation, during dialogues among collaborators, interactions with local stakeholders and external guests; review of miscellaneous information material (press releases, emails, brochures, posters, gadgets), creation of databases and reports for internal use (guest lists, accommodation, quotes), field notes, in order to better understand the context, the goals and the communication and relations dynamics among the players involved.

The second phase included nine semi-structured interviews with key subjects (*Tab.1*), 5 of whom belonging to the academic world, and the other 4 external to it and chosen among the participants to the workshops held during the first phase of data collection. Interviews were 20 minutes long in average and were conducted via Skype®. The questions asked were aimed at understanding the critical opinions of the interviewees on A) the level of participation of stakeholders; B) the role of the initiatives in order to reach the goals set; C) the role of the university as a mediator; D) the role of the participatory approach for local development/promotion, recalling those that in literature are identified as the most problematic issues related to the use of the participatory approach by Italian institutions today.

Table 1_ Interview Participants

Code	Institution/Company	Role
O1	Cultural association	Founder member
O2	Company operating in the tourism and culture sector	Chief Executive Officer
O3	Company operating in the tourism and culture sector	Chief Executive Officer
O4	EU Project Management Agency	Project Manager
U1	University	Student
U2	University	Student
U3	University	Student
U4	University	Researcher
U5	University	Researcher

The contents of the interviews were analyzed according to a categorization developed by Bobbio and Pomatto (2007), in which the participatory approaches used by public institutions are traditionally classified within four theme-based macro-areas: a) themes and the definition of the agenda; b)

Identification of participants; c) structures and methods of participation; d) effects of the participatory processes on the decisions of the institutions and participants themselves. Those macro themes seem to be compatible with the contents collected, thus simplifying their conceptual framing and critical discussion. In particular, within each theme, recurring issues were identified that helped to highlight key elements divided into strong points and weak points of the participatory approach used by the university.

The analysis carried out is based on the inductive method, in line with the aim of the investigation to detect elements (data) on the field that can be interpreted according to the reference theory. After the interviews were verbatim copied, coding activity was carried out first of all, highlighting the relevant meaning units within the data set; after that, a reduction of data was carried out, identifying important issues according to the abovementioned four theme-based blocks. In order to protect the privacy and guarantee that interviewees remained anonymous, interviewees were numbered from 1 to 9 and in the table only the general type of institutions and companies and the role participants held in them were indicated, without providing further details that may be used to identify them.

3.4 Background context and findings

In the following paragraphs, the results are presented based on the abovementioned method, using as logical structure the macro-themes of Bobbio and Pomatto (2007) on the use of the participatory approach by institutions, and highlighting the main topics within them as emerged from the analysis of the interviews. As already said, the work focuses on the analysis of two workshops in particular, organized by the University of Macerata and both characterized by the use of participatory approaches. More in details, the first workshop, whose title was “*Enhancing sustainable tourism in Adriatic-Ionian region through co-creation. The role of universities and public-private partnership*”, was held on September 15-16, 2016, and its aim was to compare the experiences of researchers and professionals from the tourism industry to set some guidelines useful to develop further sustainable and cultural tourism in the areas overlooking the Adriatic and Ionian seas, in line with the European strategy on the development of those areas (EUSAIR).

The second workshop held on January 26, 2017, whose title was “*Recuperare il valore del territorio dopo il sisma. Opportunità per agricoltura, cultura e turismo*” (*Recovering the value of the region after the earthquake. Opportunities for agriculture, culture and tourism*), was organized to provide a response to the damages caused by the earthquakes and was open to all the citizens, universities, associations, economic operators, institutions and all those interested in giving an active contribution

to the creation and development of shared strategies and solutions to reconstruct and relaunch the areas most affected by the earthquake. In both cases, the program was planned and managed by the university, through the Department of Education Sciences, Cultural Heritage and Tourism, in collaboration with some recent entrepreneurial experiments launched by the university itself (spinoff companies and cultural labs).

3.4.1 Management of the agenda

Manipulation

With regard to the management of the agenda, in literature there is a hot debate about the sensitive issue of manipulation of the participatory event agenda by institutions (Regonini 2005): institutions actually seem to organize the agenda only to have the decisions already taken be confirmed and to achieve consensus, avoiding any kind of objections to be made and their own basic guidelines to be changed. Such an aspect also seems to emerge from the interviews (O2, O3, U5):

- *“We no longer delude ourselves... we participated in several workshops organized by public institutions, universities, regional and provincial departments, tourist consortiums, but they seem to be useful solely and exclusively at the time they are organized to achieve consensus, have an article written on newspapers and that's it... the story ends and nothing is done after that”* (O3, Eusair).

Furthermore, the goals of the workshop did not seem so clear and easy to understand (O3, U1, U2, U3, U5):

- *“In my opinion, it's a marketing strategy decided upstream, but apart from this I ask myself: the university organizes a workshop, but what's the purpose? What role do they think to play in it? (U5, Eusair).*

Therefore, despite the exchange of information by e-mail and the information material created and distributed before the events, in the welcome phase it happened that participants asked the organizational team, including the author of the paper, questions about the goal of the meeting and why they had been involved (O3, U1, U2, U3, U5):

- *“I was there on that day, but I could not understand easily the goal, like many other people who were there too. When speaking with other entrepreneurs outside the meeting, we asked each other what the university may have wanted from us, why they tell us those things, what their aim is. Do they want to help us? Or do they want to find new training solutions for us? Do they want to fund us? What? There is no real goal set, it seems they have more than one, but this is not clear”* (U5, Eusair).

Communication

The issue of agenda manipulation, which seems today to be a hot topic in the critical literature review on participatory approach, is therefore close to the issue of communication, as several stakeholders said they did not fully understand the *goals of the workshops* and the reason of their engagement in the initiatives. Furthermore, according to some of them, the communication gap could also be felt with reference to the *promotion and advertising* of the initiatives (O2, O3, U1, U2, U3, U4, U5):

- *“These events have not been well promoted and advertised. They are highly advertised in the university but not very much outside it. They use social media, but (...) in my opinion those events should be promoted using also other means and channel; a better dialogue with other institutions should be built, radio stations and local TV news programs could be used; in this way, those events would be more useful, also to help citizens to understand that Macerata is working for the entire area surrounding it and it is not an elite organization as it may seem to be. I always saw almost no promotional material around, such as flyers or billposters”*(U4, Eusair and Earthquake).

- *“In my opinion, this aspect (Communication) is a tough question for the university as well as for other institutions, also because professional figures such as social media managers are lacking almost everywhere and nowadays they can make a difference (O4, Eusair)”*.

The author could note personally, with regard to offline advertising, a real delay in the distribution of some advertising material, as well as a non-homogenous distribution of the same material throughout the whole area interested by the events; social media were mainly used in combination with the official website of the university and informative e-mails. Therefore, a burning issue seems to be a more strategic and structured management of the communication between the university and citizens, compared to what is currently done; communication strategies are needed that pay more attention to the clarity of contents and the goals of the events, pursuing lower self-referentiality (Cassone & Zaccarella, 2009).

3.4.2 Identification of participants

Engagement

From the point of view of engagement, while for the Eusair, more technical workshop, participants were selected with a clearer target in mind, for the post-quake workshop participation was free, which means that every citizen could choose to take part in the process. This dynamics is technically called “the principle of self-selection” or, more commonly, “the open door principle” (Bobbio & Pomatto,

2007). It is an engagement technique with several advantages, such as the opportunity to attract citizen more easily respecting their individual freedom (O1, O4, U1, U2, U3, U4):

- “*These events can make many different stakeholders meet, because the university is a strong attractor for people, companies, for anyone*”(O1, Eusair and Earthquake).

There are nonetheless some disadvantages related to the *number of participants*, which usually is very small compared to the total number of inhabitants of the area, and to *lack of homogeneity in engagement* (Vargas & Zamuer, 2006, in Bobbio & Pomatto, 2007). Only some categories of people walk actually through the door (activists, active citizens), while others self-exclude themselves for major reasons (family, work) or different political ideas (Allegretti, 2006, in Bobbio & Pomatto, 2007). Therefore, a meeting based on self-selection technique “is not always able to truly mirror all the points of view of the target population” (Bobbio & Pomatto, 2007).

Moreover, the *method of identification of participants* could directly affect the *quality and the results of the debate*, sometimes creating “hotter” discussions among more competent citizens, who are active and interested in the topic, other times “colder” ones among less competent citizens, who are less active at a social, cultural and political level (Archon Fung & Wright, 2003, in Bobbio & Pomatto, 2007). In the former case, the discussion is usually richer, and results are more concrete and can be more easily turned into something real; in the latter, there is the risk of manipulation of the discussion by politicians or facilitators (Regonini, 2005).

On the other hand, in the debate among active citizens, people may not be willing to move from their position thus preventing actual learning from each other, while common citizens have a fair discussion, as they are not entangled in preconceived ideas, thus resulting in a greater willingness to listen and collaborate with each other (Bobbio & Pomatto, 2007).

The relationship between university and stakeholders

The interviews draw the attention to a widespread *lack of trust* towards the initiatives of the university, which may be due to what can be called lack of cultural preparation for some stakeholders: they may not be very familiar with some practices and, sometimes, have expectations that go beyond the real goals of the events, thus being left disappointed. On the other hand, several subjects look at universities and other public institutions as entities far and separate from them, lacking pragmatism and unable to keep up with the pace of corporate and individual businesses (O2, O3, U1, U2, U3, U5):

- *“There are very few people inside universities, in the departments, who are practical, but at the same time companies lack a broader vision on human capital, on the need to invest in skills and expertise, because they are interested in balancing the account at the end of the month. There is clash between different visions and mind-sets (U1, Earthquake)”*.

- *“I see that there is a widespread lack of trust: all the companies I have been talking to lately, above all medium-sized enterprises, are always very critical towards universities, as they are seen as something very, very far from them, as it happens for all the public institutions in general” (O2, Eusair)*.

In other words, there seems to be a clear division between a world of experts, who do not know local expertise and know-how deriving from direct experience, and the world of lay persons, that is common citizens and companies, who are not familiar and do not understand data, hypotheses and scientific theories (Bucchi, 2006, in Bobbio & Pomatto 2007).

According to Gaudio and Zumpano (2006), such an imbalance between “theory and practice” or, as it may be called, between “model and reality” may be due to the difficulty *institutions* may have to combine their own rational, *strict and bureaucratized action* with the dynamism of local players, who have more flexible times that can hardly be adapted to those of the universities or other institutions. Bureaucratization is actually one of the problems most felt and least tolerated by companies or in general by private stakeholders (O2, O3, U1):

- *“We did not have a nice experience with Italian universities. We had the opportunity to have other experiences abroad with foreign universities, for the promotion of our region and local areas. Those institutions offered us practical models we could immediately apply to our area. On the contrary, we found that Italian universities still act following the most cumbersome bureaucracy. This is what shocks us most; we had to deal with this awful bureaucracy that did not allow us to carry out our projects (in Italy)” (O3, Eusair)*.

In order to avoid or at least to control the administration burden, which is one of the most recurring obstacles and interferes with the implementation of local development projects, as well as other types of projects, the university could play a coordination role somewhat more effective than its current one, both inside a single project, and among many projects. This could be done starting from a more transparent distribution of the roles and functions in collaboration with other local institutions involved. Such a process, which certainly cannot be immediate, seems to be essential to guarantee a real integrated approach to rural development (Mantino, 2001, in Gaudio & Zumpano 2006).

However, the role of the *university* as an *impartial and authoritative figure*, especially as a mediator, is largely acknowledged and supported (O1, O4, U1, U2, U3, U4):

- *“When the university is the player summoning other subjects, be they public or private, there is a feedback; on the contrary, as I also participated to other meetings organized by cultural associations and other associations, I saw that there were very few people. Therefore, the University as an institutional figure is well established and acknowledged at a local level, it is important to recognize it” (O1, Eusair and Earthquake).*

- *“I think people appreciate university’s impartiality, the opportunity to speak to someone who is not the one who will finance you but who provides you with knowledge, or better to say, it helps you to learn skills you may not have; a relation of trust is therefore built towards it” (O4, Eusair).*

Regardless of the goals to be achieved, the participatory processes activated by the university seem to lead to the positive effect of settle, symbolically and practically, the traditional conflict between public institution and citizens, public and private interests, putting both the categories in the same arena and facilitating a direct confrontation between the parties on a neutral ground. Furthermore, the fact that the university is regarded as a great attractor, despite the organizational issues and the communication gaps already mentioned, can be considered a first step towards a new definition of the role of the institution as a facilitator, on the one side, and as an active project coordinator on the other side; the university is the one that is equipped with knowledge and human capital resources, which have always been its distinctive features and can be regarded as a unique added value:

“I think that a university like yours, with very skilled people, could play such a role, could be a coordination body using the resources of local companies and entrepreneurs (...) who know where to go, what to discuss, the market needs and everything else: together they can create a project and a product to sell” (O1, Eusair and Earthquake).

3.4.3 Structures and methods of participation (approaches and techniques)

Organization of the participatory experience

In both workshops, a *single-issue* approach was used: an approach based on specific themes and, as already noted, with ad-hoc arenas focusing on the themes discussed. The workshop on the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-region was organized as an alternation of plenary and parallel, listening and confrontation sessions on the chosen themes, in order to develop some guidelines useful to the development of sustainable and cultural tourism in the area. In the second workshop, an open-space

technology approach was used (Owen, 2008): some macro-themes of common interest to several subjects were identified and for each of them a focus group was set up, with facilitators coming mainly from the academic world, such as for example PhD students, among whom there was the author of the paper. The key question about it is “whether this expertise should be left outside public institutions or whether it should/could be internalized, also considering the recurring debates on the use of external consultants. In principle, it would be advisable that all the administrations make investments in this direction, in order to enrich the expertise of their own employees more frequently involved in participatory approaches” (Bobbio & Pomatto, 2007).

However, two main limits have been identified: one is connected to the sporadic nature of participatory projects, for which it would not be convenient to create a permanent apparatus to manage them; the other is impartiality, that is the potential lack of neutrality by subjects who are not completely external to the projects they work in. The above considerations are mainly related to the risk of possible manipulations, even though in the case of the events investigated not all the facilitators were directly involved in the projects of the university and there had been a previous preparation phase (theory and practice) to help them to keep the right objectivity on contents and situations. When considering the single interviews, another cultural and technical limit can also be identified, as not all the participants in the focus groups are able to understand how groups work and their goal, thus not recognizing the meaning and the advantage coming from them (U1, U2, U3):

- *“In the workshop held on January 26, the organization based on focus groups is not something for which everyone was prepared (...) Maybe you have a holiday farm but you may not understand immediately why it is important to participate in a focus group, above all when you have a particular goal and are there listening to more general topics. This annoys people as they participate to those initiatives thinking they will find ready-made solutions to their real practical problems” (U3, Eusair).*

Consumption of the participatory experience

Even in this case, mutual misunderstanding seems to be the recurring issue between institutions and citizens (or companies). Besides this, another issue is the low willingness of the stakeholders to discuss arguments that may combine more needs instead of just their own personal need, as they consider their own needs and ideas more important than those of others (O2, O3, U1, U2, U3, U4, U5):

- *“I participated to more than one focus group and I could experience that people with even a strong cultural background were not willing to give up anything on their proposal” (U3, Eusair).*

- *“The risk is to complain almost all the time, and nothing useful comes at the end of the meeting. I am not saying that a solution must be found, but maybe this is the reason why the workshop does not seem to be so useful... there are focus groups full of people complaining, who want to state their opinions, but who are not willing to have a constructive position” (U1, Earthquake).*

There seems therefore to be an individualistic component that may overcome the aim of making local players discussing and collaborating with each other. Such a phenomenon mirrors what already stated in the literature with reference to the new trend of personalization and *subjectification of the experience*, in which fragmented identities end up de-potentiating participatory practices and making them ineffective on issues of public importance. Furthermore, the lack of trust towards others and the general trend to avoid disclosing one’s own projects seem another obstacle to the opportunity of growing networks and activating collaborations profitable for both individuals and the community.

In such a scenario, the role of the university not just as a mediator between stakeholders, but also as an educator and instructor is important, in particular when considering the lack of corporate training and planning, which is recognized as a big issue in rural areas, because of the limited time, funds, personnel, skills and experience (Verbole, 2003, in Cavicchi et al., 2013).

3.4.4 Effects of participation on the decision-making process by the institutions and on the participants themselves

Role and operating mode of the university

According to critical literature, for those who participate in experiences like the ones described and analysed it can be frustrating to become aware that the conclusions mutually agreed and reached (when it happens), thanks to the dedication of the participants and despite the difficulties, are later ignored, manipulated or distorted by policy makers (Bobbio & Pomatto, 2007). When *empowerment is threatened* or citizens understand their opinions are not regarded as important, it is hard to call it participation.

- *“In my opinion, that event organized by the University of Macerata could be a very nice thing, the beginning of something... I went, participated and after that... nothing more, this is what I think. I mean, I have not received any news about what was being done. On that day, there were several companies and I can say there were many people participating, the room was full, but the feeling I had is that there has been no follow-up. I was there discussing my idea, but no one contacted me later on, I heard from nobody” (U4, Eusair).*

- *“I participated, bringing my own contribution, and I can say I saw a high participation rate: there were the university staff and many companies, and after the presentation of each contribution. I also witnessed their interest in understanding how to connect needs with research or how to find practical solutions to issues that had been highlighted by research. However, I don’t know what happened after it, what effects it had...” (U5, Eusair).*

This is probably because the bond between stakeholders and mediators seems not to be actually strengthened (Bobbio & Pomatto, 2007), in particular with reference to *one-spot participatory experiences*, which is also due to the *lack of an upstream planning and strategy*.

As soon as the meeting is over, even though it was interesting and full of contents, participants usually go back to their daily, private activities and work and no further actions or calls seem to be carried out by the entities promoting the events (O2, O3, U1, U3, U4):

- *“We were engaged as speakers, but almost nothing came from the meetings, I mean in the end everyone walks away. You discuss, talk to each other, but no great partnerships are created” – “I think it was a way to collect ideas from this and that, that’s it” (O2, Eusair).*

- *“I think more round tables are needed to be organized over time; not just one occasion in which ideas may be discussed, but many meetings, over time, that may help to create a network among the stakeholders and to come up with new ideas. One meeting is not enough, even though the effort made by the university to come in contact with local business is valuable” (U3, Earthquake).*

More in general, human capital is more likely to grow when participatory processes occur at a micro-local level, when people voluntarily participate and processes are constantly developed over time. Such a growth is less likely to occur with impromptu processes, carried out on a large scale, using the random selection method.

The latter type of experiences described are however still poorly widespread and “nobody can tell about the consequences they may have if systematically applied” (Ginsborg, 2006, in Bobbio & Pomatto 2007). Someone regards the attitude of the university, dubbed as a subsidy-based one, as the real cause of the poor impact of participatory experiences on public decisions and the citizen themselves (O2, O3, U1, U2, U3, U5):

- *“I can say that those efforts to create a network among local stakeholders is important, but often institutions and even the University are too far from business and corporate reality. There seems to be a lack of understanding of the real needs of entrepreneurs, which results in a lack of initiatives that help businesses to earn money, and in the end to create job opportunities; usually they*

[participatory experiences] *are planned according to a subsidy-focused or “cultural association” mentality... you can work well with those projects at a scientific and academic level, but they are not actually able to get the economy moving. This may explain why there is no follow-up to those events”* O2, Eusair).

Furthermore, according to some, there may be a bias in many university workshops, and not only one: workshops are seen as a networking opportunity, but this opportunity should be created before the events in order to avoid them to become an end in themselves. Moreover, attention is drawn on the fact that there is often a lack or a low presence of international stakeholders, while the confrontation with international peers to discuss already structured, defined projects could be crucial for a real promotion and development of the local area (O2, O3, U1, U3):

- *“The workshop is a great system to do business, but not among local entrepreneurs. The workshop should be organized with the participation of international industry players. After we sit at the table and develop a project, then we could organize a workshop starting from that. I don’t think it is worth organizing workshops to create business networks, we’re far from that. First you need to create the network, a work group, a project and then you put it on a platform and organize a workshop. I also noticed that in the workshops organized by Marche regional government there are always the same people discussing their own needs (...) There are always the 4 or 5 of us familiar with those events. However, no results can be achieved in this way”. ”* (O3, Eusair).

Other interviewees (O2, U1) also blame the *humanistic character of the university* as an obstacle to approach the business world, even though in literature this aspect is regarded as a strength and not a weakness, when also considering the economic, social and cultural context the humanistic university (SSH social sciences and humanities) is located and works. There can actually be different types of goals, related to the business world and to the third and fourth mission, that universities can achieve (Kempton et al., 2013, in Rinaldi et al., 2017), boosting creativity and innovation in younger entrepreneurs in particular.

The cultural element is the common factor in this process: according to recent studies on tourism and community development, the cultural element has the same dignity and value of scientific and technological elements, as it is not in contrast with but integrates them. Furthermore, despite the criticism, several participants confirmed they appreciated the methodology *“that aims at engaging participants as much as possible, unlike traditional, one-way lectures”*, as it is more inclusive and democratic. In addition, when participatory processes are turned into permanent processes extended in time, there seems to be the risk of limiting the participation to the most active and proactive citizens to the detriment of others, so the limited time of the workshops may not be a real obstacle to the

achievement of solid and implementable results. Considering the above analysis, it is possible to sum up the key issues as well as the strengths and weaknesses identified inside the reference macro-themes as follows:

Table 2_Strengths and weaknesses of the participatory method adopted by the university

MACRO-THEMES (Bobbio & Pomatto, 2007)	IDENTIFIED ISSUES	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Themes and the definition of the agenda management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda manipulation • Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of a large number of stakeholders (citizens, companies, institutions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor communication of goals • Poorly structured promotion of the events
Identification of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship between university and stakeholders • Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University as an impartial and authoritative figure • University as a strong local attractor • University as a coordinator of development projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of engagement homogeneity • Poor quality of the results from the participatory experience • Cultural asymmetry • Lack of trust in university initiatives by stakeholders • Over-bureaucratization
Structures and methodologies of participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization and consumption of the participatory experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-issue, inclusive and collaborative approach • Use of facilitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top-down approach with consultation technique • Risk of avoiding topics of discussion interesting for stakeholders • Subjectification of the experience by stakeholders
Effects of participation on the decision-making process by the institutions and on the participants themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role and operating mode of the university 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanistic character of the university • Know-how and human capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of empowerment • Lack of strategy (one-spot events)

3.5 Discussion and Conclusions

This investigation focuses on the role of the University of Macerata as a mediator of participatory experiences in the local area. It refers to the previous works in which such a role was problematized and discussed, in the view of development and rebranding (Cavicchi et al., 2013; Rinaldi et al., 2017), but it also aims at recalling and integrating the scientific contributions on the use of participatory approaches by public institutions. Taking as a starting point the four macro-themes developed by Bobbio & Pomatto (2007) on participatory processes, it was possible to identify important issues within those themes that show the strengths and weaknesses in both the organization and the implementation of those types of events. The issues are the following:

-Manipulation of the agenda: the agenda sometimes is managed by public institutions, as also highlighted in the literature, with the aim of avoiding objections and criticism to ideas and decisions already taken in a certain field, thus creating conditions for discussion that are more formal than real. The cause for this, as highlighted by Moini (2012), could be the essential will to promote the stabilization of Neoliberalism in the public sector, far from the will to make decision-making processes more democratic;

-Communication: the aim of the workshops does not seem to be always enough clear and well defined in the eyes of stakeholders and this is due to a non-optimal management of the informative and advertising channels used by the university.

-The engagement and the relation between university and stakeholders: despite the university is acknowledged to play the role of an impartial and authoritative institution, which is able to attract a potentially large audience and has the resources to coordinate projects in collaboration with other local players, there are some critical issues that do not help to implement such a mechanism. One of them is the lack of cultural homogeneity among local players, which often causes a lack of understanding of the procedures, thus undermining the general level of participation (Gaudio & Zumpano, 2003). Furthermore, a feeling of a lack of confidence in public institutions grows gradually among stakeholders in addition to ideas about the self-referentiality of public institutions (Bobbio & Pomatto, 2007) and their subsidy-based approach; this is also connected to political and historical stereotypes, thus failing the effort of developing environments for cooperation and creativity. Within this context, the issue of over-bureaucratization (Mantino, 2011) is a further obstacle to the implementation of local development and promotion projects, as it dramatically slows down the process and makes the institution be bound by obligations not easy to overcome;

-Organization and consumption of the participatory experience: on the one side there is the university organizing ad-hoc meetings on specific topics, mainly using a top-down approach; on the other side there are companies and citizens who are not able to adopt a perspective of sharing ideas and projects, being clung to their personal needs, because of the modern mechanism of personalization and subjectification of the experience;

-Role and operating mode of the university: the humanistic spirit of the university makes the attention and the skills be drawn more on the social and cultural aspects of the projects and less on the technological ones; furthermore, the university usually organizes one-spot events that do promote neither empowerment, with the lack of follow-up events based on the results of the workshops, nor strategy. Strategy is actually seen as a major problem to which all the others are connected. It is no accident that strategy and vision are regarded as the cornerstone of any good planning that aims at being effective and sustainable in time, on most of the studies on branding (Pike, 2005; Morgan et al., 2007) and management (Getz, 1997; Blain et al., 2005).

However, public and higher education institutions can regard all those critical issues as an occasion to re-think the use of the participatory approach, leveraging the strengths identified during the investigations. The present paper, besides contributing to the integration of scientific literature on the use of participatory methods by universities within the local context, also aims at providing them with some material to discuss about their current behavior and work and the possible alternatives to the use of the participatory approach to increase credibility and effectiveness.

The limits of the present paper are represented by the limited number of participatory experiences investigated that were organized within the academic world and the fact that both the experiences are connected to the tourism and agro-food sector, not taking into consideration all the others. Furthermore, a qualitative approach was used in place of quantitative surveys, even though such an approach may be considered a starting point for further investigations that may analyses more in details the topics discussed from a less interpretative, but more positivist perspective.

CONCLUSIONS

The present work explored the current scenario of rural tourism in Marche region, by analysing the relevance of food festivals, alternative business models and participatory approaches as leverage for local development in the value co-creation perspective. In fact, the collaborative environment results to be relevant to build a more efficient marketing and management of tourism destinations, including Italy and Marche region; the focus on food events and innovative agricultural business models comes from the awareness that, in these places, farming products and activities represent the main resources to base sustainable economic advantages, since the growing interest of consumers in this field and the urgent need to develop rural areas. To this aim, it is relevant also to identify the most useful coordination strategy for the designated institutions such as the University, that is currently working on the territory as facilitator of a productive dialogue among stakeholders.

In the case of food festivals, the community involvement and the cooperation among local actors (public and private) result to be crucial to achieve good social and economic goals. The cases outlined in chapter 1, emphasize how the cultural element play a crucial for the success and the acceptance of both the festivals; further, it seems that codified authenticity is not a unique factor of food and wine festivals enhance visitor experience. In the “Marche in valigia” and “Un paese cento storie” projects, depicted in chapter 2, the coordinated work of key stakeholders and local community fosters the creation of new tourist experiences who recall the features of both social eating and relational tourism; the substantial difference compared to the most common digital platforms of social eating, such as *Gnammo*, *VizEat* and *le Cesarine*, is the use of the relationship between local actors and visitors, rather than online channels, to invite the guests to live authentic experiences of involvement with the local community.

However, in recent years, both the projects are showing an increasing openness to the use of the web as an additional channel of engagement of new tourists; in light of this, they could be considered as innovative business models, based on the link between local food initiatives and social eating platforms and able to create new food hubs based on the cooperation 2.0, which can become a source of innovation in the agricultural sector. In this dynamic scenario, in which whom the cooperation between public and private actors appears to be fundamental for the local development, can be relevant to analyse role and the methodological approach of higher education institutions (HEIs) in facilitating the dialogue among stakeholders on the territory. In fact, for a long time, HEIs have been considered as too distant to understand the needs of the entrepreneurial and local communities.

This is also the case of the University of Macerata, that in last years, notwithstanding many network building troubles (so-called “wicked problems”), worked to fill this gap by enabling its third and fourth missions, trying to support the other actors in terms of physical space, material resources and scientific expertise to address social and economic development challenges. A new conscious of the relevance of 3 e 4 mission is particularly important in lite of the eocnomic especially on the light of the economic crises triggered from the earthquakes that hit the Italian region of Marche in 2016 and 2017.

From the research carried out on two specific participatory events, some critical issues emerged, especially from the organizational and communication side. In fact, many participants had difficulties to understand the real aim of the encounters; then, they had a sort of emptiness, not having any feedbacks on the emerged contents and proposals in the following period, and not receiving further invitations for new initiatives. This lack of continuity and clarity of intents seems to seriously compromise citizens, associations and entrepreneurs trust in University, making more difficult the HEIs role as mediator. Thus, in order to enhance all the efforts to foster a sustainable local development, HEI’s may get all the identified critical issues as a chance to re-think the use of participatory approaches.

References

- Allegretti, G. (2006). Politiche di partecipazione in Venezuela: tra discorso costituzionale e pratiche sperimentali, *Democrazia e diritto*, n. 3, pp. 42-69.
- Alvesson, M., Hardy, C., & Harley, B. (2008). Reflecting on reflexivity: Reflexive textual practices in organization and management theory. *Journal of management studies*, 45(3), 480-501.
- Anderson, L. (2006). Analytic autoethnography. *Journal of contemporary ethnography*, 35(4), 373-395.
- Antonioli Corigliano, M. (2002). The route to quality: Italian gastronomy networks in operation. In A. Hjalager, & G. Richards (Eds.), *Tourism and gastronomy*, pp. 166-185. Routledge, London, 2002.
- Axelsen, M., & Swan, T. (2010). Designing festival experiences to influence visitor perceptions: The case of a wine and food festival. *Journal of Travel Research*, 49(4), 436-450.
- Bergin, J., Manns, M. L., Marquardt, K., Eckstein, J. & Sharp, H. (2004). Patterns for Experiential Learning. Retrieved from <http://www.pedagogicalpatterns.org/current/experientiallearning.pdf> (accedes on april 2016)
- Bertella, G., & Cavicchi, A. (2017). From sharecroppers to *flying farmers*: new forms of tourism entrepreneurship in rural area. *E-review of tourism research*, Vol. 14, No 3/4 (2017).
- Bessi re, J. (1998). Local development and heritage: traditional food and cuisine as tourist attractions in rural areas. *Sociologia ruralis*, 38(1), 21-34.
- Blain, C., Levy, S. E., & Ritchie, J. B. (2005). Destination branding: Insights and practices from destination management organizations. *Journal of travel research*, 43(4), 328-338.
- Bobbio, L. (2006). Dilemmi della democrazia partecipativa. *Democrazia e diritto*.
- Bobbio, L. (2008). Amministrare con i cittadini. *Viaggio tra le pratiche di partecipazione in Italia*, Napoli. Esi.
- Bobbio, L., & Pomatto, G. (2007). Il coinvolgimento dei cittadini nelle scelte pubbliche. *Meridiana*, 45-67.
- Botsman, R., & Rogers, R. (2010). What's mine is yours: The rise of collaborative consumption.
- Brenner, N., Peck, J., & Theodore, N. (2010). Variegated neoliberalization: geographies, modalities, pathways. *Global networks*, 10(2), 182-222.
- Bucchi, M. (2006). Scegliere il mondo che vogliamo. *Cittadini, politica, tecnoscienza*, Bologna, Il Mulino.
- Buczynski, B. (2013). *Sharing is Good. How to Save Money, Time and Resources through Collaborative Consumption*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.
- Byrd, E. (2007). Stakeholders in Sustainable Tourism Development and their Roles: Applying Stakeholder Theory to Sustainable Tourism Development. *Tourism Review*, Vol 62, No 2 (2007).
- Cai, L. A. (2002). Cooperative branding for rural destinations. *Annals of tourism research*, 29(3), 720-742.
- Cassone, A., & Zaccarella, P. (2009). Il bilancio sociale delle universit . *Inventario dei problemi e analisi comparata delle esperienze italiane*. POLIS Working Papers, (130).
- Cavicchi, A., & Ciampi Stancova, K. (2016). Food and gastronomy as elements of regional innovation strategies. European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Institute for Prospective Technological Studies, Spain. EUR 27757 EN; doi:10.2791/284013

- Cavicchi, A., & Santini, C. (2014). *Food and wine events in Europe: A stakeholder approach*. Routledge.
- Cavicchi, A., Rinaldi, C., & Corsi, M. (2013). Higher education institutions as managers of wicked problems: place branding and rural development in Marche Region, Italy. *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review*, 16(A).
- Cavicchi, A., Santini, C., & Belletti, E. (2013). Preserving the authenticity of food and wine festivals: the case of Italy. *Il Capitale Cultural: Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage*, (8), 251-271.
- Celata, F., & Sanna, V. (2014). *Community Activism And Sustainability: A Multi-Dimensional Assessment*. Working paper, 137.
- Chambers, R. (1994). The Origins and Practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal. *World Development*, Vol. 22, No. 7, 953-969.
- Chandra, G. (2010). Participatory rural appraisal. *In* Katiha, PK, Vaas, KK, Sharma, AP, Bhaumik, U. & Chandra Ganesh (Eds). *Issues and tools for social science research in inland fisheries*. Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute, Barrackpore, Kolkata, India. *Bulletin*, (163), 286-302.
- Chang, Y., Wilkinson, S., Brunson, D., Seville, E., & Potangaroa, R. (2011). An integrated approach: managing resources for post-disaster reconstruction. *Disasters* 35 (4):739-765
- Chhabra, D., Healy, R., & Sills, E. (2003). Staged authenticity and heritage tourism. *Annals of tourism research*, 30(3), 702-719.
- Cinotto, S. (2013). *The Italian American Table: Food, Family, and Community in New York City*. University of Illinois Press.
- Cohen, B., & Kietzmann, J. (2014). Ride on! Mobility Business Models for the Sharing Economy, *Organization & Environment* 27, (3), 279-296.
- Cohen, E. (1988). Authenticity and commoditization in tourism. *Annals of tourism research*, 15(3), 371-386.
- Cooper, R., & Burrell, G. (1988). Modernism, postmodernism and organizational analysis: An introduction. *Organization Studies*, 9, 91-112.
- Crompton, J. L., & McKay, S. L. (1997). Motives of visitors attending festival events. *Annals of tourism research*, 24(2), 425-439.
- Cunliffe, A. L. (2002). Reflexive dialogical practice in management learning. *Management learning*, 33(1), 35-61.
- Davidson, C. H., Johnson, C., Lizarralde, G., Dikmen, N., & Sliwinski, A. (2007). Truths and myths about community participation in post-disaster housing projects. *Habitat international*, 31(1), 100-115.
- Davis, A., & Martin, A. (2014). Festival Place or Place of Festival? The role of place identity and attachment in the festival environment.
- Derrett, R. (2003). Making sense of how festivals demonstrate a community's sense of place. *Event Management*, 8(1), 49-58.
- Derrett, R. (2008). *Regional festivals: Nourishing community resilience: the nature and role of cultural festivals in Northern Rivers NSW communities*. Theses, 90.

- Digital Agriculture: Improving Profitability. Retrieved from Accenture Digital Agriculture Solutions: https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/Accenture/ConversionAssets/DotCom/Documents/Global/PDF/Digital_3/Accenture-Digital-Agriculture-Point-of-View.pdf (accessed on 23 march 2016).
- Dwyer, L., Edwards, D., Mistilis, N., Roman, C., & Scott, N. (2009). Destination and enterprise management for a tourism future. *Tourism Management*, 30, 63-74.
- El-Masri, M., & Kellett, P. (2001). Post-war reconstruction: Participatory approaches to rebuilding the damaged villages of Lebanon, a case study of al-Burjain. *Habitat International*, 25, 535–557.
- Euromonitor International Report (2014). Food Trends to watch in 2014, part 1-2-3.
- European Commission (2011). Green Paper on promotion measures and information provision for agricultural products. http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/promotion/policy/green-paper/com2011-436_en.pdf (accessed on 2 august 2016).
- European Commission (2012). Getting the most from your rdp: guidelines for the ex ante evaluation of 2014-2020.
- Everett, S., & Aitchison, C. (2008). The role of food tourism in sustaining regional identity: A case study of Cornwall, South West England, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16, 150 — 167.
- Fonte, M., & Cucco, I. (2017). Cooperatives and alternative food networks in Italy. The long road towards a social economy in agriculture. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 30, 1e12.
- Frisby, W., & Getz, D. (1989). Festival management: A case study perspective. *Journal of Travel Research*, 28(1), 7-11.
- Fukuyama, F. (2001). Social capital, civil society and development. *Third world quarterly*, 22(1), 7-20.
- Fung, A., & Wright, E. O. (2003). Deepening democracy: Institutional innovations in empowered participatory governance (Vol. 4). Verso.
- Galli, F., & Brunori, G. (2013). Short food supply chains as drivers of sustainable development. Evidence document. 2013.
- Ganapati, N.E. & Ganapati, S. (2009), “Enabling participatory planning after disasters: a case study of the World Bank’s housing reconstruction in Turkey”, *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 75 No. 1, pp. 41-59.
- Gaudio, G., & Zumpano, C. (2006). La programmazione negoziata fra vincoli istituzionali e sviluppo partecipativo. Politiche, governance e innovazione per le aree rurali, Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 231-258.
- Getz, D. (2008). Event tourism: Definition, evolution, and research. *Tourism management*, 29(3), 403-428.
- Getz, D. (2010). The nature and scope of festival studies. *International Journal of Event Management Research*, 5(1), 1-47.
- Getz, D. (2012). Event studies: theory, research and policy for planned events.
- Getz, D., & Getz, D. (1997). Event management & event tourism.
- Getz, D., Andersson, T., & Carlsen, J. (2010). Festival management studies: Developing a framework and priorities for comparative and cross-cultural research. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, 1(1), 29-59.

- Getz, D., Andersson, T., & Larson, M. (2007). Festival Stakeholder Roles: Concepts and Case Studies. *Event Management*, 10 2: 103-122.
- Getz, D., Andersson, T., Robinson, R., & Vujcic, S. (2013). *Foodies and Food Tourism*. Oxford: Goodfellow Publishers
- Gibson, C., & Davidson, D. (2004). Tamworth, Australia's 'country music capital': place marketing, rurality, and resident reactions. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 20(4), 387-404.
- Ginsborg, P. (2006). *La democrazia che non c'è*, Torino, Einaudi.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday Anchor Books.
- Goodman, D., & Goodman, M. (2009). Alternative food networks. *International encyclopedia of human geography*, 2009, 3: 208-220
- Goodwin, H., & Santilli, R. (2009). Community-based tourism: A success, ICRT Occasional Paper No. 11.
- Gorenflo, N. (2016). The new sharing economy. Retrieved from <http://www.shareable.net/blog/the-new-sharing-economy> (accessed on 8 July 2016)
- Goulart Szejnberg, R., & Giovanardi, M. (2017). The ambiguity of place branding consultancy: working with stakeholders in Rio de Janeiro. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 1-25.
- Gray, B. (1985). Conditions facilitating Interorganizational Collaboration. *Human Relations* 38:911-936.
- Gray, B., & Hay, T. M. (1986). Political Limits to Interorganizational Consensus and Change. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 22:95-112.
- Gunnels, J.M. (2014). An examination of cultural motives, festival motivator attributes, desired experiences and authenticity in tourists to Oktoberfest in Helen, Georgia. All Theses. 1945.
- Hall, C. M. (2012). The contradictions and paradoxes of slow food: Environmental change, sustainability and the conservation of taste. *Slow Tourism: Experiences and Mobilities*, Channel View, Bristol, 53-68.
- Hall, C. M., & Mitchell, R. D. (2001). *Wine and food tourism*.
- Hall, C. M., & Sharples, L. (2003). *Food tourism around the world: Development, management and markets*. Routledge.
- Hall, C. M., & Sharples, L. (2008). *Food and wine festivals and events around the world: Development, management and markets*. Routledge.
- Hamari, J., Sjöklint, M., & Ukkonen, A. (2015). The sharing economy: Why people participate in collaborative consumption. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 2015.
- Harris, E. M. (2004). Eat local? Constructions of place in alternative food politics. *Geography compass*, 2010, 4(4), 355-369.
- Haven-Tang, C., & Jones, E. (2010). Delivering quality experiences for sustainable tourism development: Harnessing a sense of place in Monmouthshire. *The tourism and leisure experience: Consumer and managerial perspectives*, 44, 163.
- Hidayat, B., & Egbu, C. (2010). A literature review of the role of project management in post-disaster. *Procs 26th Annual ARCOM Conference* (pp. 1269-1278). Leeds, UK: Association of Researchers in Construction Management.

- Hingley, M., Boone, J., & Lindgreen, A. (2010). Development of local and regional food networks: Cases from the UK. In: 26th IMP-conference, Budapest, Hungary, September 2010, pp. 1-21.
- Hughes, G. (1995). Authenticity in tourism. *Annals of tourism Research*, 22(4), 781-803.
- ICA Guidance notes. Retrieved from <http://ica.coop/en/blueprint-themes/identity/guidancenotes> (accessed on 7 maj 2016)
- Jackman, S. & Sniderman, P. M. (2006). The Limits of Deliberative Discussion: A Model of Everyday Political Arguments , *The Journal of Politics*, 68 (2), 272-283.
- Jamal, B. T., & Getz, D. (1995). Collaboration theory and community tourism planning. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 22(1), 186-204.
- Jorgensen, B. S., & Stedman, R. C. (2001). Sense of place as an attitude: Lakeshore owners attitudes toward their properties. *Journal of environmental psychology*, 21(3), 233-248.
- Juul, M. (2015). The sharing economy and tourism. European Parliament briefing. Retrieved from [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/568345/EPRS_BRI\(2015\)568345_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/568345/EPRS_BRI(2015)568345_EN.pdf) (accessed on 2 august 2016).
- Kavaratzis, M. (2012). From necessary evil to necessity: stakeholders' involvement in place branding. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 5(1), pp. 7 – 19.
- Kempton, L., Goddard, J., Edwards, J., Hegyi, F. B. & Elena-Pérez, S. (2013). Universities and Smart Specialisation (No. JRC85508). Institute for Prospective and Technological Studies, Joint Research Centre.
- Kim, H., & Jamal, T. (2007). Touristic quest for existential authenticity. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(1), 181-201.
- Kneafsey, M. (1998) Tourism and place identity: a case-study in rural Ireland, *Irish Geography*, 31(2), pp. 111–123.
- Kneafsey, M., Venn, L., Schmutz, U., Balázs, B., Trenchard, L., Eyden-Wood, T., & Blackett, M. (2013). Short Food Supply Chains and Local Food Systems in the EU. A State of Play of their Socio-Economic Characteristics (No. JRC80420). Institute for Prospective and Technological Studies, Joint Research Centre.
- Koetsier, J. (2015). The Sharing Economy has created 17 billion-dollar companies (and 10 unicorns). *Venture Beat*, 2015, 4.
- Lang, R. (1988). Planning for integrated development. In *Integrated Rural Planning and Development*. edited by F.W. Dykema. 81–104. Rural and Small Town Research and Studies Programme. Sackville, New Brunswick: Mount Allison University.
- Le Feuvre, M., Medway, D., Warnaby, G., Ward, K., & Goatman, A. (2016). Understanding stakeholder interactions in urban partnerships. *Cities*, 52, 55-65.
- Lee, I., & Arcodia, C. (2011). The role of regional food festivals for destination branding. *International Journal of Tourism Research* 13(4): 355–367.
- Li, X., & Petrick, J. F. (2006). A review of festival and event motivation studies. *Event Management*, 9(4), 239-245.
- Lofland, J., & Lofland, L. (2001). *Handbook of ethnography* (pp. 1-7). P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, & S. Delamont (Eds.). London: Sage.

- Lorenzini, E. (2011). Territory branding as a strategy for rural development: experiences from Italy, 51st Congress of the European Regional Science Association: "New Challenges for European Regions and Urban Areas in a Globalised World", 30 August - 3 September 2011, Barcelona, Spain
- Lorenzo, I.M. (2014). Organizational structures of alternative food networks fitting sharing economy principles. MSc Thesis, MST Food Technology, Wageningen University, August 2014.
- Lupini, A., (2010). Per definirsi sagra, ora dovrà rispettare regole precise. Retrieved from <https://www.italiaatavola.net/articolo.aspx?id=17370> (accessed on 25 may 2015)
- MacCannell, D. (1973). Staged authenticity: Arrangements of social space in tourist settings. *American journal of Sociology*, 79(3), 589-603.
- Maguire, B., & Cartwright, S. (2008). Assessing a community's capacity to manage change: A resilience approach to social assessment. Canberra: Bureau of Rural Sciences.
- Malandrin, V., & Dvortsin, L. (2015). Eating from the farm: the social, environmental and economic benefits of local food systems. Brussels, Friends of the Earth Europe, 2015.
- Mantino F. (2002). Fondi strutturali e politiche di sviluppo, Il Sole 24ore, Milano.
- Mason, M. C., & Paggiaro, A. (2012). Investigating the role of festivalscape in culinary tourism: The case of food and wine events. *Tourism management*, 33(6), 1329-1336.
- Matofska, B. (2015). What we know about sharing economy. *Compare & Share*, March, 2015, p.5
- Mayan, M. J. (2009). *Essentials of qualitative inquiry*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Michelini, L., Principato, L., & Iasevoli, G. (2018). Understanding Food Sharing Models to Tackle Sustainability Challenges. *Ecological Economics* 145 (2018), Elsevier, 205-217.
- Mills, A. J., Durepos, G., & Wiebe, E. (2010). *Encyclopedia of case study research*. London, Sage.
- Moini, G. (2012). *Teoria critica della partecipazione. Un approccio sociologico*. Franco Angeli.
- Morgan, M. (2007). *Festival spaces and the visitor experience*.
- Morgan, N., Pritchard, A., & Pride, R. (2007). *Destination branding*. Routledge.
- Murphy, P.E. (1988). *Community Driven Tourism Planning*. *Tourism Management* 9:96-105. New York: Harper Collins.
- Newman, J., Barnes, M., Sullivan, H., & Knops, A. (2004). Public participation and collaborative governance. *Journal of social policy*, 33(2), 203-223.
- Okazaki, E. (2008). A community-based tourism model: Its conception and use. *Journal of sustainable tourism*, 16(5), 511-529.
- Okazaki, E. (2008). A community-based tourism model: Its conception and use. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16(5), 511-529.
- Owen, H. (2008). *Open space technology: A user's guide*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Paolini, D., (2012). Guida alle sagre gastronomiche. Retrieved from <http://www.gastronauta.it/blog/1242-guida-alle-sagre-gastronomiche.html> (accessed on 25 may 2015)

- Penn, J., & Wihbey, J. (2015). Uber, Airbnb and consequences of the sharing economy: Research roundup Journalist's Resource. Retrieved from: <https://journalistsresource.org/studies/economics/business/airbnb-lyft-uber-bike-share-sharing-economy-research-roundup> (accessed on 3 June 2016)
- Pezzi, M. G. (2017). When History Repeats: Heritage Regeneration and Emergent Authenticity in the Marche's Peripheral Areas. *Almatourism-Journal of Tourism, Culture and Territorial Development*, 8(7), 1-20.
- Pike, S. (2005). Tourism destination branding complexity. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 14(4), 258-259.
- Pizam, A., Yoram, N., & Arie, R. (1978). Dimensions of Tourist Satisfaction with a Destination. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 5: 314-22.
- Privitera, D. (2016). Describing the collaborative economy: forms of food sharing initiatives. Proceedings of the 2016 International Conference "Economic science for rural development", No 43.
- Puccio, A., & Pozzoli, A. (2015). The Role of Technologies. *Equilibri*, 2015, 19.1: 21-32.
- Quadri-Felitti, D., & Fiore, A. M. (2012). Experience economy constructs as a framework for understanding wine tourism. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 18(1), 3-15.
- Quan, S., & N. Wang (2004). Towards a Structural Model of the Tourist Experience: An Illustration from Food Experiences in Tourism. *Tourism Management*, 25 (3): 297-305.
- Ramli, A. M., Zahari, M. S. M., Suhaimi, M. Z., & Faat, F. (2015). Food heritage from the food experts' perspectives. *Hospitality and Tourism 2015: Proceedings of HTC 2015 (Malacca, Malaysia, 2-3 November 2015)*, 273.
- Ranger, T. O., & Hobsbawm, E. J. (Eds.). (1983). *The invention of tradition* (p. 211). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Reber, A. S. (1989). Implicit learning and tacit knowledge. *Journal of experimental psychology: General*, 118(3), 219.
- Regonini, G. (2005). Paradossi della democrazia deliberativa. *Stato e mercato*, 25(1), 3-32.
- Renting, H., Marsden, T.K., & Banks, J. (2003). Understanding alternative food networks: exploring the role of short food supply chains in rural development. *Environment and planning A*, 2003, 35.3: 393-411.
- Richards, G. (2012). Food and the tourism experience: major findings and policy orientations. *Food and the tourism experience*, 13-46.
- Rinaldi C., Cavicchi A., Spigarelli F., Lacchè L., & Rubens A. (2017) "Universities and Smart Specialisation Strategy: From Third Mission to Sustainable Development Co-creation". *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*.
- Robinson, R. N. (2009, August). Old Food was Never Better: Augmenting event authenticity at a medieval festival. In *International CHRIE Conference-Refereed Track* (p. 26).
- Robinson, R. N., & Clifford, C. (2012). Authenticity and festival foodservice experiences. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(2), 571-600.
- Rocchi B., Cavicchi A., & Baldeschi M. (2010). Consumers' attitude towards farmers' markets in Tuscany, *International EAAE-SYAL Seminar Spatial Dynamics in Agri-food Systems: Implications for Sustainability and Consumer Welfare*, Faculty of Economics - University of Parma, 27th - 9th October 2010.

- Rombach, M., & Bitsch, V. (2015). Food movements in Germany: slow food, food sharing, and dumpster diving. *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review*, 18(3), 1
- Rosaldo, R. (1993). *Culture and truth: The remaking of social analysis*. Boston: Beacon
- Rossi, A., & Brunori, G. (2010). Drivers of transformation in the agro-food system. GAS as co-production of Alternative Food Networks. In: *Proceedings of 9th European IFSA Symposium, Vienna Au. 2010*. p. 1913-1931.
- Ruisi, M. (2009). Per un turismo relazionale: opportunità e criticità di sviluppo. *Annali della facoltà di Economia. Università di Palermo*, 2009, 169-187.
- Salerno, I. (2013). Narrare il patrimonio culturale. Approcci partecipativi per la valorizzazione di musei e territorio. *Rivista di Scienze del Turismo* 1-2/2013.
- Santini, C., Cavicchi, A., & Belletti, E. (2013). Preserving the authenticity of food and wine festivals: the case of Italy. *Il Capitale Culturale. Studies on the Value of Cultural Heritage*, (8), 251-271.
- Schianetz, K., & Kavanagh, L. (2008). Sustainability indicators for tourism destinations: A complex adaptive systems approach using systemic indicator systems. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 16:601-628.
- Scholliers, P. (2001). Meals, food narratives, and sentiments of belonging in past and present. na.
- Schön, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner*. New York: Basic Books.
- Schor, J. (2014). Debating the sharing economy. Great transition initiative, October 2014.
- Schor, J.B., & Fitzmaurice, C.J., (2015). Collaborating and connecting: the emergence of the sharing economy. *Handbook of research on sustainable consumption*, 2015, 410.
- Selloni, D. (2017). New forms of economies: Sharing economy, collaborative consumption, peer-to-peer economy. In *CoDesign for public-interest services*, edited by D. Selloni. New York City, NY: Springer International Publishing
- Sharpley, R. (1994). *Tourism, Tourists & Society*. Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire: ELM
- Suansri, P. (2003). *Community based tourism handbook*. Bangkok: Responsible Ecological Social Tours (REST).
- The Guardian (2015). How to start a supperclub, home restaurant or pop-up. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/guardian-masterclasses/2015/jun/17/how-to-start-a-supperclub-home-restaurant-or-pop-up-tony-rodd-food-and-drink-course> (accessed on 15 may 2016)
- Therkelsen, A., & Halkier, H. (2008). Contemplating place branding umbrellas. The case of coordinated national tourism and business promotion in Denmark. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 8(2), 159-175.
- Timothy, D. J., & Tosun, C. (2003). Arguments for community participation in the tourism development process. *Journal of Tourism Studies*, 14(2), 2.
- Tkaczynski, A., & Rundle-Thiele, S. R. (2011). Event segmentation: A review and research agenda. *Tourism Management*, 32(2), 426-434.
- Trencher, G., Yarime, M., McCormick, K. B., Doll, C. N., & Kraines, S. B. (2013). Beyond the third mission: Exploring the emerging university function of co-creation for sustainability. *Science and Public Policy*, 41(2), 151-179.

- Turner, J. C. (1982). Towards a cognitive redefinition of the social group. *Social identity and intergroup relations*, 15-40.
- Van der Ploeg, J.D., Renting, H., Brunori, G., Knickel, K., Mannion, J., Marsden, T., & F. Ventura (2000). Rural development: from practices and policies towards theory. *Sociologia ruralis*, 40(4): 391-408.
- Vargas Céspedes, J.-P. & Zamuner D. A. (2006), Dalla retorica partecipativa alla realtà quotidiana: lo stato attuale della democrazia partecipativa in America centrale , in *Democrazia e diritto*, n. 3, pp. 24-41.
- Verbole, P. (2003). The Role of Education in the Management of Rural Tourism and Leisure. In *Food Tourism around the World: Development, Management, and Markets*. Edited by C. M. Hall, L. Sharples and R. Mitchell, 183-193. Elsevier.
- Vuorinen, M., & Vos, M. (2013). Challenges in joint place branding in rural regions. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 9(3), 154-163.
- Wagner, T., & Kuhndt, M. (2015). Listening to Sharing Economy Initiatives. Report on a Global Survey.
- Wang, N. (1999). Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience. *Annals of tourism research*, 26(2), 349-370.
- Williams, L.A. (2015). Top 10 trends 2015. Taste of Science. Retrieved from: <https://www.tasteofscience.com/articles/278/top-10-trends-2015.html> (accessed on 15 may 2016)
- Xie, P. F. (2004). Visitors perception of authenticity at a rural heritage festival: a case study. *Event Management*, 8(3), 151-160.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Sage publications.
- Yin, R.K. (1981). The case study as a serious research strategy. *Knowledge: Creation, Diffusion, Utilization*, Vol. 3, No. 1. Sept. 1981, 97-114
- Yin, R.K. (1984). *Applied social research methods series Case study research: Design and methods*. L. Bickman. Vol. 5, 1984.
- Yoon, Y. & Uysal, M. (2005). An Examination of the Effects of Motivation and Satisfaction on Destination Loyalty: A Structural Model. *Tourism Management*, 26, 45-56.
- Yuan, J. J., Cai, L. A., Morrison, A. M., & Linton, S. (2005). An analysis of wine festival attendees' motivations: A synergy of wine, travel and special events?. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 11(1), 41-58.
- Zhu, Y. (2012). Performing heritage: Rethinking authenticity in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(3), 1495-1513.

Web References

- <http://www.appe.pd.it>
- <http://www.europarl.europa.eu>
- <http://www.gastronauta.it>
- <http://www.italiaatavola.net>
- <http://www.vitalruralarea.eu>
- <https://ec.europa.eu>

<https://www.euromonitor.com/>

<https://www.ica.coop>

<https://www.tasteofscience.com/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/international>