

Tourism in the “Sassi” of Matera: Better to be renewed or preserved?

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Abstract

Inhabited since the Neolithic Era, the town of Matera evokes a particular fashion linked to its peculiarities. Built on the rough faces of a ravine, Matera hides under the rock a tangle of grottoes, churches, crypts, tanks and houses, partially dug and partially built, which shape the very ancient “Sassi” quarters.

The tourist development of the town has a short history and the various operators have usually acted by their own without any shared purpose. The recent designation of Matera as European Capital of Culture for 2019 has fastened the tourist growth, pointing out the lacks of the system: a strategic tourism plan is urgent to favour cooperation among the different actors, to support common purposes and to encourage sustainable and cultural tourism.

After having described Matera and the tourism data, this study analysis the main features of its tourist growth and the weaknesses of the system through the point of view of some experts. Then there are some considerations to improve the tourist organization: actually the town has undergone a phase of renewal which has partially altered the old quarters; a phase of preservation is needed to foster the identity of the Sassi and ensure a sustainable and cultural tourism.

Keywords

Sassi of Matera, sustainable tourism planning, cultural tourism.

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Introduction

The Sassi of Matera have a complex ancient history: the inhabitants had a particular lifestyle based on conviviality and mutual exchange, in perfect symbiosis with the environment and nature. In the 1950s the Italian Government denounced the unhealthy conditions of the Sassi (men and animals lived together, many houses had no water and sewer system) and the inhabitants were obliged to move to new neighbourhoods.

In 1986 the State Law n. 771 started a phase of architectonic, urban, environmental and economic preservation and restoration of the Sassi. The same law safeguarded the *Parco archeologico storico e naturale delle chiese rupestri* (Archaeological, Historical and Natural Park of the Rupestrian Churches) which contains the remains of rupestrian monastic architectures and also a huge heritage of natural flora and fauna present in the “Murgia” area.

In 1993 the inscription in UNESCO’s list enhanced the awareness of the architectonic and cultural heritage: “the Sassi of Matera are made by minimal signs which contain in invaluable materials the wisdom of a population, of singular elements which acquire importance only in the whole set” (Laureano, 2002, p. 14). This recognition fastened the requalification process and brought in the old districts also “modern” activities which are slowly altering the perception of the Sassi.

The recent designation as 2019 European Capital of Culture, with the candidacy procedure and the events realized, has contributed to spread the city’s fame, attracting many visitors from all over the world; moreover the provisions announce the arrival of important flow of visitors in Matera during next years, with a great peak in 2019.

However the city has a short experience in tourism, many weaknesses have to be faced and solved in the shortest time and it is important to set up a tourism plan able to raise awareness among the inhabitants, to favour the offer organization and to encourage sustainable tourism. Through strategic planning the city can direct sustainable growth, enhancing the elements which mark its identity and constitute its “soul” because they represent the “common wisdom accumulated through centuries” (Vecco,

2007, p. 14).

Tourism in Matera: From the origins to nowadays

Basilicata is a small region in the south of Italy which still nowadays is the last but one in terms of tourist flows¹. Tourism is concentrated on the seaside (in 2014 30% of arrivals and 55% of presences were registered on the Jonian Coast, data APT Basilicata) and in summertime (57% of tourists arrived between June and September with 75% of presences of the whole 2014).

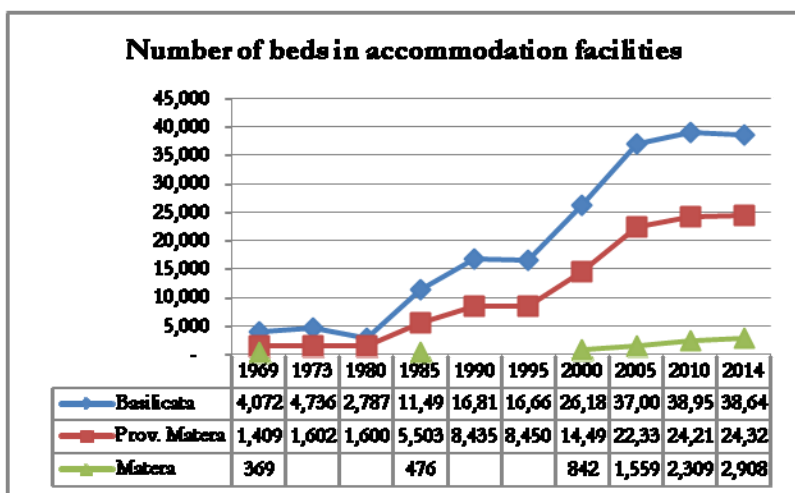


Figure 1. Number of beds in Basilicata from 1969 to 2014.

Source: ISTAT, APT Basilicata.

Tourism in Basilicata is quite recent: there were only 242 accommodation facilities and 4,072 beds in 1969 (first data available at ISTAT offices); at that time Matera had 9 accommodation facilities (most of all were hotels with 3 and 2 stars) and 369 beds. There has not been a constant growth over time both in terms of number of facilities and of beds (figure 1). Matera is slowly improving its position in terms of accommodation, but only over the last years: there has been an

increase after the year 2000, when UNESCO's acknowledgment was giving the first results and the Sassi had already undergone an initial phase of restoration. The number of beds almost doubled from 2000 to 2005 (from 842 to 1,559, +85%) and once again between 2005 and 2014 (from 1,559 to 2,908, +87%).

Analysing the relationship between the amount of facilities and beds in Matera, it is possible to notice a great increase in the number of accommodation facilities (in spite of the number of beds), because of the recent boom of bed & breakfasts whose majority opened in the restored houses in the Sassi.

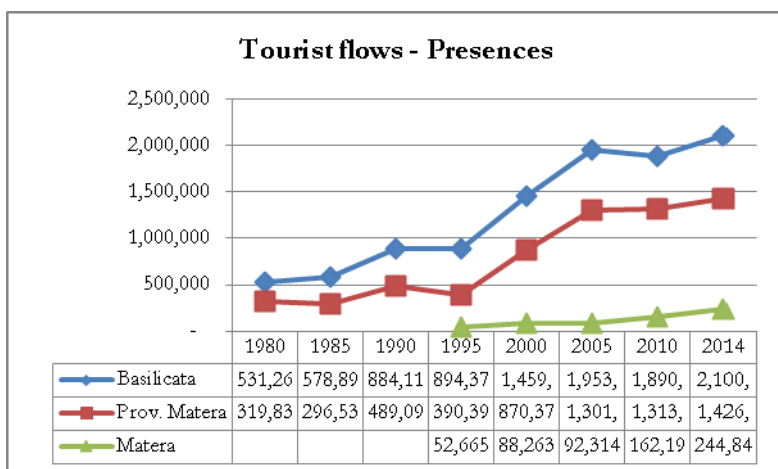


Figure 2. Presences in Basilicata from 1969 to 2014.

Source: ISTAT, APT Basilicata.

In terms of tourist flows (figure 2), Matera does not add much importance on the whole region, even if recently there has been a constant growth (+454% arrivals from 1995 to 2014, +52% from 2010 to 2014): the arrivals' increase proves the success of promotion campaigns, in particular the candidacy as European Capital of Culture for 2019.

In 2014 a total of 153,005 tourists arrived in Matera; in relationship to 2013 the number of arrivals increased by 16% and the number of presences by 18%. Nowadays there are 2,908

beds in hotels and other facilities, such as holiday homes, farm houses, bed & breakfasts.

The graph below (figure 3) points out the relationship between the increase of tourist presences and the beds available per day²: even if there has been an increase of presences, the number of beds grows faster and do not favour the increase of the occupation rate, which in 2014 was 26.33%. Moreover tourist stays are too short (about 1.6 nights per stay, without any substantial change since 2005) if we consider the great amount of sites to see in Matera and the surrounding area. It should be noticed that the tourist season is concentrated from April to October, with small flows in winter time which in Matera (and southern Italy in general) is not really cold.

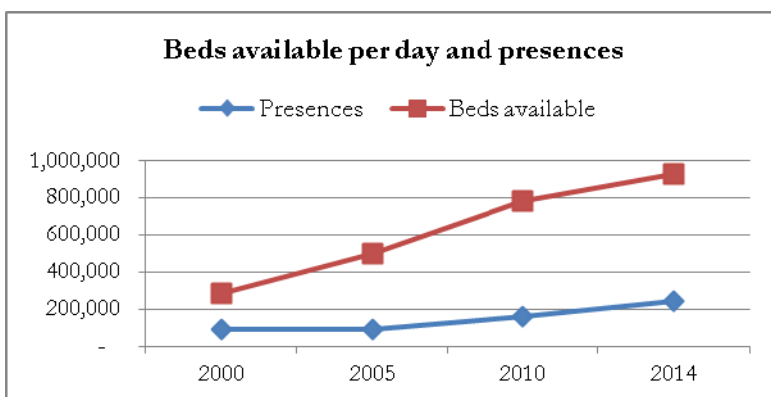


Figure 3. Relationship between the increase of tourist presences and the number of beds available per day from 2000 to 2014.

Source: APT Basilicata.

A comparison among the main tourist areas of Basilicata (figure 4) points out that Matera is second in terms of arrivals and presences: if compared to the Jonian Coast the number of arrivals in Matera is high, considering that the coast counts 5 municipalities; moreover the high number of presences of the Jonian Coast is due to the tourists' vacation of an average of 7 days.

In terms of foreign tourists, Matera is the first town of Basilicata (exceeding also the values registered in the Jonian Coast) with 48,049 arrivals and 85,301 presences in 2014 (average stay of 1.8 days). This demonstrates the appeal that the city has abroad, but it is not enough.

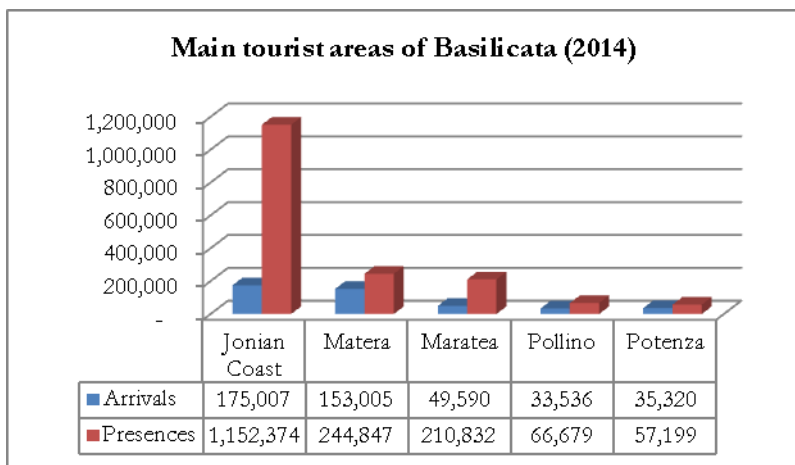


Figure 4. Relationship between the increase of tourist presences and the number of beds available per day in 2014.

Source: APT Basilicata.

Basilicata does not have a long tourism history: originally due to seaside vacations, tourist flows are gradually interesting also the inner areas of the region. Matera had only 7 tourist facilities before the entrance in UNESCO's list, when tourist flows were really irrelevant. Over the last years, thanks to the restoration of the Sassi, the international promotion and the candidacy process as European Capital of Culture 2019, Matera is slowly becoming a tourist destination. However it is important to improve some policies to have economic benefits from tourism, first of all to manage the increase of tourist facilities and beds, to encourage tourists to spend more days in Matera and, therefore, to increase the occupation rate.

Tourism evolution or preservation of values?

Even if Matera has a cultural-historic heritage of great value, the tourist flows are below its potentialities: this situation depends on various organizational and structural factors, but also on the weak “tourism culture”, that is the capability to recognize the heritage value by itself and the tourist attraction capability it expresses (Bitetti, 2002, p. 2). The attraction of a tourist area depends also on the quality of the different components of the offer and on “the way how they are functionally integrated in a network logic” (Bechieri, 1998, p. 43).

The tourist growth of Matera has not been substained by policies able to favour the organization of the system: the different operators have often improvised their actions and activities to satisfy the sudden tourists’ requests. Even if more than 20 years have passed after UNESCO’s acknowledgment there are no common policies nor systematic plannings which put together the different public and private actors.

The tourist operators increasingly urge the public administrations to organize the territory, complain about the insensitivity of inhabitants towards tourists and actively act to support the Sassi reorganization in order to favour tourism quality, even if they often create difficulties for residents (as for example the restricted traffic zones).

To better understand the present situation of tourism in Matera some experts³ with personal experiences in tourism and which participated to the city evolution were interviewed. They have been asked about:

- a) the tourist evolution of Matera over the last 30 years;
- b) the relationship between inhabitants and tourists;
- c) how to improve the tourist development of the town.

Here below there are the considerations which came out, divided per topic.

Birth and quality of tourism

According to Pietro Laureano before the inscription in UNESCO’s list (1993) tourism in Matera did not exist. There

were only “small presences of tourists, discoverers and intellectuals” and Matera gave the impression to be “a city without future; no bars were opened on Sunday, there was just one hotel, few restaurants. The Sassi presented covered up doors and many closed ways to prevent access”.

Also Matteo Visceglia confirmed that in the 1990s there was no actual tourism in Matera, on the contrary there was a great indifference towards the Sassi which were used only as “panoramic view” for photo memories.

Pio Acito points out that “Matera is as a rural town developed over centuries. Actually there is no hospitality culture and tradition, unlike other tourist realities. Tourist culture has to be developed with patience, otherwise gross mistakes could be made”. According to Acito there is an “improvised” tourism which fills up the mobile phones’ memory with lots of photos without creating permanent memories and emotions.

Franco Bitetti stated that “Matera entered tourist market in recent times, with non episodic and even more consistent tourist flows. Still nowadays tourism is mainly due to daily trippers (individual and organized)”.

In the end Paolo Verri described Matera’s tourist growth as a phenomenon “at times, characterized by waves without continuity”.

They all agreed about the recent tourist development of Matera: the system has to be organized yet. The lack of hospitality culture makes more complex tourist planning and the organization of synergic actions with public administrations. It is fundamental to analyse in detail the complexity of tourism phenomenon, to quantify the negative effects and favour a sustainable use of territory: we should not forget that “the territorial system, intended as all the interrelated material and immaterial resources, constitutes the territorial offer basis” (Cairolì, 2006, p. 133).

Moreover it is important to look after the town’s image and promotion, to avoid tourism discontinuity and encourage longer stays. Images play a fundamental role in tourism, in fact as Miossec (1991, p. 29) affirms “tourist space is above all an image.

An image made by tourists and given by the holidays’ organizers”. Images are therefore the first part of every travel and create expectations in the visitors. The “congruence among the prebuilt image and the one really perceived represent a decisive factor in the satisfaction degree of the travel experience” (Borghi, Celata, 2009, p. 99). In the end, it is important that the images used directly and indirectly to promote a territory are monitored by the whole tourist system.

Relationship between inhabitants and tourists

According to Pietro Laureano the relationship between the inhabitants of Matera and tourists is “generally very good. The traditional inclination towards conviviality and extraordinary hospitality was totally demonstrated by the explosion of participation and welcome for the Matera 2019 challenge”.

The good relationship between inhabitants and tourists has been affirmed also by Pio Abiusi who thinks that it has to “mature as everything after all. It is spontaneous and therefore fragile and human. Public administrations have to take on more seriously the planning and management of welcome services, first of all accessibility and parking”.

According to Matteo Visceglia the inhabitants of Matera have not acquired the awareness of being a tourist destination yet, both in terms of citizenship and welcome: there is “a certain amateurishness where proper exigencies prevail on the satisfaction of tourist needs. This phenomenon is more evident in the recent explosion of the extra hotel facilities: many private citizens are investing huge sums of money to restore their main and secondary houses (above all in the Sassi) to carry out beds for tourists, considering the increment of flows expected for 2019”. According to Visceglia, it looks like public and private actors have “no vision over the common mission”: there is no planning nor definition of the actors’ role with impromptu interventions to satisfy immediate needs.

Paolo Verri instead put in evidence the conflicts which exist between inhabitants and tourists: the citizens who live in the Sassi would like the comforts of a city neighbourhood, with the

free circulation of cars and the presence of shops to satisfy primary needs; this request contradicts the tourist operators' one who, on the contrary, aim for the realization of big pedestrian precincts, large amount of artisans shops and tourist facilities. According to Verri "the conflict exists because there is no management. Tourism is spontaneous because only welcome is managed. There is a contrast among who wants no one and who wants a lot of people at any cost".

According to Franco Bitetti it is important to raise the local inhabitants' awareness about their history, culture and traditions (they should be helped to take their identity back) and also the hospitality culture to enhance the fruition of historic and cultural heritage.

The experts' opinions are different about the relationship between inhabitants and tourists: on one side some believe in tourism benefits and do not catch critical aspects; on the other the majority notice how the exigencies of the natives are often in contrast with the tourists' ones. This disagreement is mainly due to the lack of proper tourist policies and planning, essential to monitor the sustainability level and combine the exigencies of the inhabitants of Matera, temporary citizens and tourists. Moreover it is fundamental to raise the inhabitants' and tourist operators' awareness to enhance the value of the territory and its resources, to safeguard tourist sustainability and to fulfil actions to satisfy the tourists' demand, putting aside all the "impromptu" and individual actions which are not in line with an organized tourist system.

Tourism has to be considered as a process whose results are the fruits of a spatially or temporally defined change: for example the construction of a hotel or a souvenir shop is part of a larger transformation process which concerns both cultural and recreational needs of the hosting community and the tourist destination development: in fact "the challenge towards development is even more a competitive challenge among complex territories, made by the interrelation of the different social and natural components. Only those territories which are able to extol internally a united and hospitality-open community,

through cooperation and subsidiary help, will have the cultural strength and energies not to be swallowed up by globalization and to put in action and make prevail their proper identity” (Fabbri, 2001, p. 3).

Improving the tourist offer

According to Paolo Verri, it is important to enhance cultural tourism, enclosing in tourist tracks some resources which are outside the Sassi (as for example the Spatial Geodesy Centre, the Tufa Quarries, etc.) to lengthen the visitors’ permanence and lighten the pressure on the Sassi. Also the reasons why tourists come to Matera should be looked after. Tourists have to participate to a process which should start before departure: they should come to Matera “to do something” so that they could leave something to the town, in a sort of exchange useful also to strengthen the awareness that “whoever arrives in Matera has a great responsibility”.

Also Pio Acito opposes excursionist tourism and affirms that “we should explicitly reject quick gateway tourists and prefer slow, patient and attentive tourists”. The town’s history should be narrated by story-tellers (and not by quick guides) who could carefully describe the water gathering history and the flowered walls (there are rare species in the Sassi and on the Murgia, as the *Campanula Versicolor* which is on the verge of extinction). Acito reminds that Matera entered UNESCO’s list because of the 150 rock-hewn churches but only few of these are accessible for tourists: “if there were 50 accessible churches and tourists could visit 5-6 per day, they would stay 10 days to visit all of them”.

Pietro Laureano points out that “with the increase of economic appeal we should be aware of large interventions which could attack quality and landscape” but could also lead to “the control of tourist exploitation on behalf of improvisers and unauthorized persons”.

According to Pio Abiusi the weak point of everything seems to be “the public administrations who slowly react to changes; it is important to listen to the tourists’ opinion to give them advice, but also to modify the offer. There should be a daily dialogue

with mutual helpfulness and a lot of understanding”.

The public sector inefficacy matter was complained also by Matteo Visceglia who urges the realization of a “Local Tourist Plan” able to fix the role of the diverse actors, to identify the common goals and plan the activities to be carried out over the medium to long term.

According to Franco Bitetti the difficulties to keep visitors more than one day reflect, apart from the weak position on the market of local mediator operators, the lack of elements which could ensure an effective fruition of the cultural-historic-environmental heritage and support the appreciation of its value (organized guided tours, information services, etc.).

The different points of view point out once again the lack of a strategic integrated plan, in which the different actors should cooperate actively to put in network all the resources, transform the weaknesses in strengths and support a sustainable tourist growth but raise the inhabitants’ awareness. To plan strategically it is fundamental first of all to make an accurate analysis of the territory and its resources, using dynamic previsions able to get round unexpected or sudden problems. Strategic planning represents a “collective decision method on the future choices of a territory, through a shared and negotiating path aimed at involving all the stakeholders, connecting in a network both institutional actors and economic and social agents, public and private, to define a long term development project” (Meola, 2006, p. 23): public bodies should assume a central role to coordinate the actors, define the strategic goals and use the resources effectively.

To safeguard the heritage?

The inhabitants of Matera have a high regard for the conservation of the original aspect of the Sassi, in fact they denounced more than once some architectonic eyesores which sacrificed the landscape to favour tourist fruition. For example in 2012 nine local associations⁴ got into action against the realization of three elevators in the Sassi: in particular they

collected some signatures for a petition to be submitted to UNESCO in order to stop an artistic and landscape eyesore⁵. This activity drew also the media’s attention which raised the citizens’ awareness. A part of responsibilities has to be attributed to the municipal administration which not always carefully watches over the recovery methods.

If we key on Google *ascensore nei Sassi* (elevator in the Sassi) there are 18,500 results (research made on 01/04/2015) and this demonstrates how this kind of matters are followed with interest by the inhabitants and the associations of Matera, most of all the environmental ones.

Another debate took place when an iron bridge in the Sassi was built to connect two streets with difference in high (106,000 results for the research *ponte nei Sassi* – bridge in the Sassi – on Google) with a expense of public funds of about 400 thousands Euro. The political group *Movimento 5 stelle* is denouncing the improper public and private investments in the tourist sector (and not only) in Matera and affirmed that “the bridge’s cement matches all the other cement castings everywhere in the Sassi, mostly quickly made in December 2013 to guarantee the visitors’ security (?) during the living nativity event”. Alas, the bridge is still there like the cement in the Sassi!

The environment association *Legambiente* asked many times to the municipal administration to open itself up at an exchange before any intervention. Pio Acito, vice president of *Legambiente Basilicata*, affirmed that “the residents of the Sassi’s interests are different from the tourist operator’s ones. The first care about the quality of life and so are not pressed by the interest of greater profits but only by the old neighbourhood’s safeguard” (Mastrangelo, 2012).

Sustainable tourism can be reached only through a constant monitoring of “impacts” and the introduction of precautionary and/or corrective measures where needed; an efficient organization is needed to encourage synergy among the different actors and guarantee an articulated offer able to satisfy the even more complexes exigencies of tourists, in the respect of the territory and local communities. If on one side tourism can favour the natural resources’ protection and stimulate the

recovery of cultural and historic heritage, on the other it can impact on the environment: the overcrowding of destination areas, diminishing of social and cultural identity of hosting communities, pollution, consumption of resources and space, alteration of landscape, are only a few of the possible negative consequences (Cicerchia, 2009, pp. 19-28). Tourist planning should be made very carefully because both the previous evolution of the territory and its original features have to be taken into account. As Claude Raffestin affirms (1991, p. 8) “not all places are touristic, but all of them can become so”: for this reason it is very important to organize in detail the tourist offer, but also the marketing actions which promote the destination among the potential tourists.

Destination “Sassi of Matera”

As tourist destination Matera is in its first “life-cycle”: it is in an ideal condition to direct its development in a coherent and sustainable way, organizing a “complete” cultural offer able to enhance the value of all the expressions, material and immaterial, of the local culture.

To become a quality tourist destination Matera should improve its services as soon as possible and monitor the tourist satisfaction level, aiming at a cultural tourism and encouraging longer stays, as suggested by the experts interviewed.

First of all the tourist offer should be better organized, for example favouring the visit to sites which are located outside the Sassi, pointing at the territorial peripheries (as the Norman Farm Houses in the Murgia area), at the interesting heritage in the province of Matera (as the Abbey in Montescaglioso) and organizing theme routes (for families, food and wine paths, trekking, etc.). The accessibility and fruibility of cultural heritage should be improved, possibly restauring the rock-hewn churches not suitable for public access, supporting the reorganization of public means of transport and enriching tourist information with qualified staff, in different information points and through the distribution of multilanguage material.

Secondly the image of Matera should be looked after more carefully both at national and international level: it is important to aim at specific targets which prefer cultural tourism and long stays in town and launch promotion and marketing campaigns of events and intense activities. Those actions have positive consequences also after the end of the holiday because satisfied tourists could visit the town again and promote it through word of mouth.

In the end it would be important to improve the infrastructures to favour both the arrivals to Matera (more public means towards the airport of Bari and the train station in Ferrandina, improvements in the suburban streets) and the urban mobility (more car parks, better organization of the public means towards the points of interest, innovative and green sustainable means such as electric cars).

To achieve those aims it would be sufficient to adopt the strategies used by more expert cultural towns (such as Florence or smaller realities such as Assisi) or ask for the advice of specialists in the sector: is it possible that over last years there has been no actual tourism management neither by the town council nor by the regional tourism agency? Why is there much talk about the increase of tourist flows towards Matera but no one creates the basis to improve welcome facilities? How come do tourist operators continue working as single individuals and not favour synergy in the tourist system? How will the flows expected for 2019 be managed if the system is not organized by a local tourist plan right away?

At this point it could be useful to value the opinion of the candidate mayors for the next local council elections, to verify which actions they intend to carry out in tourism field and to point out if they have analysed the tourist system's deficiencies: the majority of programmes made by the candidate mayors do not express any concrete proposals to overcome the actual problems and, as a consequence, to improve the quality of tourism in Matera; they propose ideas which do not respond to immediate exigencies. In detail, the centre-right coalition candidate do not dedicate any parts of his programme to tourism

(even if he talks about improvement of urban and suburban road network, adjustment of services according to European standards); on the contrary the centre-left candidate, that is the former mayor, dwells on the tourist topics expressing the wish that the average stay lengthens, planning the accessibility and sustainability improvement and proposing the realization of a town museum system with a single integrated ticket. The candidate supported by a civic list talks about visibility improvement, realization of a tourist plan with targeted investments, new technologies to favour smart mobility (more car parks, bike sharing, real time urban transport information), increase in value of local traditions and products. Finally the candidate of a national civic movement (*Movimento 5 stelle*) listed some concrete proposals (such as free shuttles from and to the Sassi, realization of an integrated tourist circuit and individuation of new niche tourisms) which however are not enough to seal the gaps. The proposals to improve tourism in Matera conceal the gaps and problems (which are never fully explained) and are not aimed at favouring the system organization and the synergy among the different actors. Electoral promises, after all, are only a little more ambitious than the ones made over last years: in spite of the ten-year tourist experience in Matera, there has never been a significant improvement in the tourist offer and only a few things will change if solutions are proposed and the basic problems are never analysed!

To be competitive from a touristic point of view it is not sufficient that a territory has an attractive landscape, environmental and cultural heritage “but it is necessary that around those elements there is a complex system of services, of organization and of overall social quality, both inside the tourist sector strictly speaking, and outside it” (Cicerchia, 2009, pp. 49-50): planning the territory’s activities in a systemic way tourism can offer benefits to all the sectors of society.

Conclusions

The recent candidacy procedure as European Capital of Culture for 2019 favoured the awareness’ increase of the old town intrinsic value and there has been a sort of “race” to secure for the last available locations in the Sassi⁶.

After more than 20 years from UNESCO’s acknowledgment, Matera shows the effect of an economic stall which is linked to a demographic one. The cause is to be found in the lack of an unitary vision of the future socio-cultural and productive system of the Sassi, but it is also due to the inadequate management capabilities: the new ruling class is not using at best the cultural heritage which should be the main resource of the economic growth. By chance, in favour of the Sassi enhancing politics, there is the huge attention that the inhabitants put on their heritage. Moreover the international public opinion is often enhancing the town, augmenting its visibility and the local authority responsibilities for the preservation of heritage.

If it is true that the restoration of the Sassi and UNESCO’s acknowledgment have brought fame to Matera and enhanced the tourists’ gradual increase, it is also true that there is much to do, in particular to support the old areas’ architectonic restoration and the evaluation of the socio-cultural heritage of the Sassi. The inhabitants of Matera are not aware of the huge potentialities which the town can express and the role it can conquer in the international debate on new cultures and the new welfare forms: the sustainable structure which characterizes the Sassi, for example, can become a reference point for a new town generation, attentive to natural resources and lacking in the auto destructive consumerism of modern societies. All in all “to look at the future of the Sassi, so that they can be integrated and functional to the urban development of Matera, it is important to grant the temporal continuity of the architectonic-urban tissue and rise the awareness of the historical experiences” (Fonseca, Demetrio, Guadagno, 2003, p. 121).

The considerations which result from the present contribution stimulate another reflection, needed to respond to the title’s question: is it better if the Sassi are renewed or preserved? The

recovery actions carried out until nowadays where, from my point of view, aimed most of all at renewing the old districts and caused their alteration from an aesthetic and functional point of view. Matera urges a careful cultural planning to preserve conservation and “to materially grant the physical safeguard of cultural and landscape heritage of public and private property” (Amari, 2006, p. 105). This way it will be possible to enhance the places’ value, highlighting their identity and, as a consequence, stimulating economic growth and development: the restored and conserved heritage has to be reused and re-enhanced and therefore a new social function is to be assigned (see Vecco, 2007, p. 105). As a consequence the development of Matera will live a new phase, marked by cultural and sustainable tourism.

¹ The data refer to the tourists who spent at least one night in the accommodation facilities of Matera. Source: ISTAT (data from 1969 to 1998), APT Basilicata (data from 1999 to 2014).

² The “days available per day” consider the number of beds available multiplied per the days in which potentially those beds could be used.

³ Direct interviews have been carried out to:

- Pio Abiusi, responsible for *Associazione Ambiente e Legalità* (Environment and Legality Association);
- Pio Acito, responsible for *Legambiente Matera*;
- Franco Bitetti, expert in Tourism Economy for *Centro Studi Unioncamere Basilicata* (Study Center Unioncamere);
- Pietro Laureano, promoter for the inscription of Matera in UNESCO’s list;
- Paolo Verri, director of *Comitato Matera 2019* (Matera 2019 Committee);
- Matteo Visceglia, responsible for *Centro Elaborazione Dati APT Basilicata* (Data Elaboration Center of the Territory Promotion Agency of Basilicata).

⁴ Legambiente, WWF, Città Plurale, Il Ciclamino, Falco Naumanni, Brio, Sui Generis, Mutamenti a Mezzogiorno, Volontari per l’Ambiente.

⁵ One of the elevators was built in an old building nearby the cathedral (Palazzo Venusio, now known as Palazzo Viceconte). In 1996 a builder submitted to the municipality a recovery plan which included an elevator to the sixth floor. The public administration approved the project with a rule: the elevator should reach the meeting room, that was on the fourth floor, “to avoid any

environmental impact”. The company however built the elevator until the sixth floor and, having won an appeal at the regional administrative court, it will not be removed!

⁶ The great part of locations in the Sassi, which can be used as shops or houses, are state-owned and are granted for maximum 99 years to the private people who make application and guarantee their restoration. At the beginning locations were assigned following direct requests, then the increase of demands required public notice procedures. Nowadays there are numerous free locations but the assignment procedures have been suspended.

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