
The Via Francigena: A Strategic Model for Territorial Marketing and Culture Development

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ABSTARCT: Sustainable and experiential tourism, specifically linked to the slow movement, is a theme which, in the post-pandemic context and with the advent of supra-tourism, is today one of the main vectors for the valorisation of the Italian cultural and landscape heritage, offering prospects for economic and social development at a global level. It is therefore a question of seeing alternative forms of tourism in which, as recommended by the Council of Europe and UNESCO/ICOMOS, a systemic approach is developed based on the human-centred approach, in which local communities, together with institutions and private companies, become engines of territorial development to stimulate the social and economic growth of this sector. This article addresses the issues of destination management and territorial marketing as innovative models for sustainable cultural tourism, and the qualitative methodology is pursued through the analysis of a case study, "the Via Francigena del Sud", a path which represents a bridge between Europe and the Mediterranean, whose function as a cultural hinge is still extremely relevant. The paper contributes to the literature by highlighting how the integration of public-private partnerships acts as a resource multiplier in the field of sustainable tourism, enabling the development of projects in which the various actors in the system work together to produce value for the community.

KEYWORDS: destination management/overtourism/public-private partnerships/sustainable tourism/ tourism management

INTRODUCTION

In the light of the difficulties that governments face in preserving and managing their rich public cultural heritage, which is often in a state of neglect, This study aims to identify a series of additional tools that can provide adequate financial resources and expertise for the management and implementation of business models aimed at enhancing Italian cultural heritage and tourism. The objective is to define a theoretical framework through the elaboration of PPP business models for the regeneration of structurally and socio-economically marginalised parts of the city, as well as a resource for stimulating development, Innovation and activation of new economies targeted at culture, tourism and environmental sustainability in order to contribute to the improvement of citizens' quality of life. The study develops a reflection on possible specific business models for the management of cultural heritage and sustainable tourism that have not yet been well defined, especially with reference to one of the institutional options, the adoption of PPP business models which, in addition to establishing the necessary links between public institutions and the business sector, They generate a strong involvement of society as a whole to promote the implementation of projects and accelerate the resolution of common problems. At local level, for example, private participation should be encouraged, with particular emphasis on the cultural proximity of the latter to the area concerned. This paper identifies some tools suitable for adoption in the field of cultural heritage and sustainable tourism that would serve as perfect examples of community involvement and commitment, and some useful case studies derived from the Italian context.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

This paper develops the theme related to the development of new business models focused on the creation of narratives based on culture type P4 focused on the creation of network stakeholder engagement and strategies aimed at promoting better coordination between institutional actors and the construction of new models of participation (public and private).

These objectives are based on the best practice "Via degli Dei" as a slow sustainable tourism experience in Italy, with significant effects on local economies, on the management and inclusion of territorial and experiential marketing processes, implementation of value systems for new communities open to temporary residents and the development of a collective narrative. The qualitative analysis of the case involved a first desk phase, in which public documents, materials and publications of a touristic-cultural nature

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were examined, as well as previous studies (protocols of understanding, public policy and programming of interventions, websites, press guides, communication projects, etc.). The next phase of field analysis included the provision of semi-structured interviews to the main operators, in order to deepen the strategies pursued, the opportunities for implementation in the works carried out, the funds used, the measures taken to increase territorial capital and encourage tourism in the areas concerned and the future prospects, with the aim of identifying: the potential and disadvantages of the territory; the role assigned to cultural and landscape heritage as a key sector for the revival of the local economy; the level of participation and involvement of local inhabitants and businesses in relation to the initiatives promoted; communication strategies to promote the experience. The contribution aims to highlight the innovative aspects in the management of the process of tourism promotion that is prefigured as an unprecedented form of participatory planning of territory on cultural and landscape assets, to be extended to all present and potential stakeholders. A development model that, based on a Human Centered approach, involves the link between political institutions and economic sectors, with strong community involvement in order to generate a co-value creation, both for the planning and design phases, but also for the construction, operation and management of local economic and social infrastructures. The analysis of experiences shows that the consolidation of road tourism is not only an important opportunity for the whole sector, but also a new model of territorial tourist district intended as a vivid example of community welfare focused on culture and the large-scale integration of different forms of cultural and economic activities, that by adopting a collective participation approach increase social awareness and participation regarding the management of cultural and landscape assets in Italy. In fact, the original aspects of the case study are presented in the translation and territorial projection of tourism marketing intentions which can be developed into forms of horizontal integration between several supply chains, also different, often distant and complementary or synergistic in terms of the governance of cultural assets and commons, taking on a dimension

The system must be characterized by a complex integration between numerous and heterogeneous actors, whether public, private or non-profit. Perspectives of analysis and intervention in which the institutional data is seen as a model of strategic administrative management through the multiple dynamics of multilevel governance linked to territorial cultural heritage, Offering possibilities for a deeper community involvement in the context of reticular administrative systems, modelled on the size of the tourist district in dialogue with civil categories and management efficiency needs. In this systemic dimension, the identity landscape heritage and its cultural growth are therefore thought of and guided as a lever to redevelop and enrich the territory with new production combinations, new spaces for relations, languages and representations, Integrating with the different sectors of local systems. Over the last decade, there has been an increasing focus on EU policies in the cultural/tourism sector and the Council of Europe and UNESCO/ICOMOS are encouraging a systemic approach based on sustainable cultural tourism, where local communities are the drivers of territorial development to stimulate the social and economic recovery of this sector. As elaborated in the document "Cultural and creative industries in the European Union: main developments, challenges and opportunities for the future", the role of artistic and cultural activities in European democracies is to: Strengthen cooperation with the Council of Europe's Framework for Indicators on Culture and Democracy, to ensure that freedom of expression is maintained, Consider funding projects for active citizenship and promote, through culture, the development of a narrative discourse common to all of Europe. There is now a general awareness of the importance of providing the actors of the system with appropriate planning and planning tools for tourism and territorial marketing, Capable of enabling destinations to compete on the international market with shared tourism policies and effective management models, to guide tourism managers and policy-makers in the development of tourism initiatives aimed at creating fruitful collaborations between similarly oriented organisations and methods for supporting sustainable tourist accommodation groups. The identification of sustainable tourism networks can help to identify potential actors for change, fuelling a widespread transition towards sustainability (Blasi et al., 2024). As stated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the quality of institutions and the efficiency of the legal system, the development factors related to technology and security, infrastructure and services, health and the environment, cultural attractors and natural resources are essential elements for the competitiveness of the system. It is a matter of making conscious choices dictated by an entrepreneurial vision of the tourist/cultural heritage rethought as a resource for growth, able to generate well-being for the community and value for visitors according to a human-based approach Centered where the disruptive innovations of the digital age coexist with the need for slowness and to deepen the way of living space and time of interpersonal relationships. This multi-stakeholder approach requires working relationships between all stakeholders and ultimately depends on the social infrastructure and natural ecology of the destination (Feyers et al., 2019). The Ministry of Culture, in line with the objectives of the PNRR (National Recovery and Resilience Plan) in the cultural sector, has four macro objectives: digitising cultural heritage, promoting the use of data and information, the provision of services within administrative structures and externally to specialists and citizens; the regeneration of small cultural sites and the dissemination of religious and rural cultural heritage in Italian regions and provinces; Interventions in the film and audiovisual sector, particularly within the framework of the Cultural and Creative Industry 4.0 (Iaccarino, 2024).

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For this reason, in the above context, brand tourism stands out as a fundamental strategy to promote the identity of a destination through the enhancement of its distinctive features, Helping to build a positive and attractive visitor perception. The challenge is to develop a narrative that involves cultural heritage, local traditions and the unique atmosphere of the place, offering a memorable experience that goes beyond just travel (Morgan et al., 2004).

In recent years, globalization, the digital revolution and the development of new consumption patterns have imposed a profound change in traditional forms of economy and social life. The obvious transformations that have followed, increasingly lead citizens and our communities to the desire and the need to regain their individual and collective identity, and it is precisely thanks to this general framework that the exploitation of cultural/landscape heritage and a new territorial planning linked to innovation and creativity can also produce, together with economic growth, an important social value. Cultural heritage should create value for the heritage community. It can, for example, create jobs and contribute to skills development and economic growth through the promotion of tourism and in line with the concept of sustainable development; Ecological and environmental benefits are also another important value dimension. The use value may refer to the economic, social, cultural or environmental benefits for heritage communities arising from intangible cultural resources. In addition, an experiential value can be created for visitors or customers who "consume" cultural heritage-related products or services (Shakya & Vagnarelli 2024). Despite the structural crisis in the modern economies, the tourism/cultural sector, although with some problems linked to the sharp reduction of public commitment, shows resistance to the general slowdown of the economy, especially in terms of demand, the ability to create experiences and social networks, which have become a major factor in competitiveness.

For this reason, over time the nature of relations between public administration and private companies for the management of tourist/cultural heritage has changed considerably from a clear separation of functions to collaborative relationships in activities traditionally public responsibility giving rise to business models Partnership-Public-private partnerships (PPPs) that are implemented through forms of tourism and territorial marketing. An enterprise's business model can be defined as "the way in which the enterprise creates, distributes and captures value over time" (Osterwalder et al., 2005) and the protagonists of these initiatives are characterized by the will to pursue cultural objectives, social and economic sustainability objectives through value creation activities (Bromberger 2011). Six in particular are the characteristics that distinguish these models: the genesis process; the territorial rooting; the business model; the centrality of collaboration; leadership and people; the legal form.

The genesis process is the main driver of the PPP tourism/culture and concerns the sense of belonging and the desire to take care of one's heritage. We are in the presence of organizational entities that arise from processes of civic activation and reappropriation of the common good and that see the world of associationism and the third sector as the cultural ground for these experiences (Hyyryläinen & Viinamäki 2011). The genesis process is mainly activated by the social and cultural engine, while the objective of economic sustainability and the need to create a business is generally an instrument for being able to achieve one's cultural mission.

A second characteristic of this business model is the territorial rootedness and the role of the community within the territory itself: we are in the presence of initiatives where citizens, associations, entrepreneurs, Educational institutions are not just stakeholders to be reckoned with, but assetholder or not only stakeholders but also carriers of resources and expertise. For these realities citizens are not only potential customers, but interlocutors to be involved in the processes of activation and use of places, as it is through the involvement and participation of the community that it is possible to transform spaces into places (Zamagni & Venturi 2017). The third characteristic that is identified with the application of the PPP business model stems from the need to ensure the protection and conservation of heritage, to participate in the cultural development of the territory and to contribute to social inclusion processes (Boyd et al., 2009). The centrality of collaboration stems from the ability to collaborate rather than from a competitive spirit, and this is a particularly interesting feature of cultural heritage initiatives as it puts second the concept of competition, with the emphasis on collaboration, is a particularly innovative approach. Leadership and people, fourth characteristic, are defined by the cooperative approach that often characterizes this business model and which ensures an involvement and investment in the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of workers in order to build rewarding working relationships and the ability to Combine social and market missions (Peredo & Chrisman 2004).

The second characteristic of this business model is its territorial rootedness and Regarding the choice of legal form, the last characteristic of a PPP, Many organisations opt for a dual model using a form such as the association or foundation to achieve social goals and access special tax benefits and funding opportunities. In this context, it is possible to define an approach based on criteria of economy, efficiency and efficiency in the management of tourist/cultural heritage as a means for their better protection and public exploitation, Pursuing the constitutional principles of good performance and necessary balance of public budget (Kaplan 2009). In addition, involving the private sector in terms of greater autonomy and accountability can provide better guarantees on the implementation of policies for the development of cultural heritage that meet criteria of efficiency and

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effectiveness at the level of business management (Riccardi & Maramotti 2017).

These policies can leverage greater levels of self-financing through maximisation of sources of income and through control of operating costs, therefore it is necessary that At the same time, the policies implemented respect the conditions of use imposed by the protection objectives dictated by the Cultural Heritage and Landscape Code. The use of private financing for the management of cultural goods also makes it possible to transfer the financial burden associated with them from general taxation to the market; Enabling users to benefit from high quality of services and greater efficiency in service delivery. (Perrini & Teti 2004).

The Porter Value Chain tool is used to highlight how PPP forms can be used in the production process of cultural goods. At the methodological level, the choice to use the value chain can be summarized in the assumption that this model is useful as a method of analysis of the key activities and processes that determine the performance of an organization, As it allows to identify primary and secondary areas of a system and the sources that contribute to the realization of potential competitive advantage. For the elaboration of the value chain in the cultural field, the macro- functions that a cultural organization must oversee are identified for the satisfaction of its users' needs and the creation of public value (Solita, 2005).

These policies can leverage greater levels of self-financing achievable in this way; the value chain is a reference framework for analysing functions related to the conservation and management of cultural heritage, and the model aims to highlight the contribution of different activities to value creation, Assuming that these processes and functions contribute to the satisfaction of the needs of the users, of the community as a whole, in order to generate a competitive advantage (Porter, 1985). The macro areas identified are those which go to compose the three dimensions typical of the management of a cultural asset, namely: protection, conservation and management (Vaughan, 2001).

Once the macro areas were identified, it was possible to define the primary and secondary activities related to the core business of a cultural PPP for value chain processing (Ferrari et al., 2012).

The primary areas, which can be summarized in: research and conservation, exploitation and communication, planning and control and network management; while the support activities are related to human resource management, technology development, the company's infrastructure and supplies.

Tab 1: Value Chain Primary activities (Source: own elaboration)

Research and Conservation	Exploitation and communication	Planning and control	Network management
Research	Marketing Communication	eWork organization	Management integration of the territorial tourism/cultural system
Heritage conservation	CRM services	Assistance planning and control	Integration of cultural and tourist districts
Monitoring and control of the territory	Reception services and information systems	Performance measurement systems	Integration with Institutional Actors and Stakeholders

Tab 2: Value Chain Secondary activities (Source: my elaboration)

Human Resources	Development of technology
Management of staff and collaborators	IT services
Research and training	Development of application

In this context, heritage partnerships should aim to ensure continuity and good planning of conservation activities to avoid being involved in fragmented and unvirtuous projects and resources should be used for the conservation and continuous exploitation after these plans have been implemented.

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Starting from the elaboration of the value chain it is possible to start thinking about the evolution and the transition from the concept of 3P to 4P. In the academic field among early scholars, the concept was conceived and studied by Wisa Majamaa, who argues that a P4 business model "It has created the possibility of involving new methods and solutions for proactive and positive participation, not only for the early stages of the development process or planning and design, but also for construction, The operation and management of local economic and social infrastructures". Therefore, the involvement of social and economic actors plays an important role in government processes, especially at local level, and reveals opportunities for implementing innovative, proactive and positive ways to participate not only in project development, as for example the decisions related to investment and provision of services which are generally taken during the planning and design phases, but also for the execution and operational phases, giving rise to forms of tourism and territorial marketing bottom up. In addition, research within the tourism sector is an evolving field which seeks to understand the impacts of tourism activities as a socio-economic force on the well-being of different actors in the functioning tourism ecosystem, including individuals as tourists; employees as suppliers of goods and services, and resident communities as destinations (Uysal et al., 2025).

The involvement of the whole community is strongly recommended also in the heritage conservation process and one of the prerequisites for sustainable operations is that each individual Stakeholder puts on the table all their expertise thus becoming Assetholder. As illustrated in the theories of Eduardo Rojas, situations characterized by some form of social concern embody the most advanced expression of urban heritage conservation as we know it (Rojas 2012).

A public-private partnership P4 therefore refers to philanthropic cases where there is community support and ordinary citizens act as project developers. The private entities that may be involved are of a civic nature and can be natural persons, legal persons with non-profit purposes such as ecclesiastical bodies, non-profit organizations, associations and various types of foundations. Adding to the P3 model the contribution of the general population, a model based on P4 will emerge, which not only involves the link between political institutions and economic sectors, but also community involvement, which encourages the implementation of projects and makes more effective the solution of collective problems (Dente et al., 2005).

Therefore, a P4 business model involves the following stakeholder groups: Public Entities, Private Entities and People. The European Commission has published a report on the Organisation, as a heterogeneous and coherent set of socio-economic actors cooperating with each other and with public institutions and where non-governmental actors are actively involved in solving common problems. The role of non-governmental organisations is mainly to identify heritage, provide public patronage, support and start the process of upgrading. In addition, the third sector can also play a relevant role in providing equity position, heritage conservation expertise and long-term supervision and assisting the public partner in marketing the project to potential private partners (Rypkema & Cheong, 2012).

For a P4 initiative to be financially sustainable, an adequate risk assessment must be carried out and as in the case of a P3 business model, the main categories to be included are policy-consistent risks, environment, finance, design, development, restoration, unforeseen events, end-user demand and/or revenue, operations and maintenance (Martin, 2016). Therefore, collaboration in the development phase also involves combining a range of skills and identifying roles across sectors, as it highlights the need to link activities together, Functions, skills and roles to effectively manage the complexity of a project (Codecasa, 2010).

The P4 tools are funding and management models to conserve and enhance tangible and intangible cultural heritage based on citizen involvement such as civic crowdfunding, online petitions and contributions from foundations, these tools are in fact examples of self-organization, which have led in response to the challenges posed by complex systems such as cities and societies (Cameli, 2019) and are supported by philanthropy, volunteering and new technologies and for this purpose, We should also stress that digital technologies and social media play a critical role and offer new opportunities for the development and implementation of such models (Martin, 2018).

This strategy is in line with the Faro Convention, which stresses the need to involve society as a whole in the definition and management of cultural heritage, Recognises the collective nature of this effort and promotes synergies of expertise between public and private actors. Article 2 of the Convention stresses the importance of the concept of "heritage communities" as consisting of "persons who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, in the framework of public action, to support and pass on to future generations". Article 11 provides for "possible joint action by public authorities, experts, owners, investors, enterprises, non-governmental organisations and civil society", the development of "innovative ways for public authorities to cooperate with other actors", and encourages "Non-governmental organisations interested in heritage conservation to act in the public interest" (Council of Europe, 2005).

The Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach developed by UNESCO also promotes the application of a range of traditional and innovative tools to be adopted at local level by involving stakeholders through participatory planning and consultations. These may include civic engagement, knowledge, planning and financial instruments and regulatory systems. The HUL approach requires all levels of governance (local, regional or national/federal) to define and develop conservation policies based on public-private

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cooperation, Not surprisingly, many practical guides and reports testify to an increasing number of cases of implementation of this approach (UNESCO 2019). Influenced also by some urban planning studies developed during the 1960s (Davidoff, 1965), current public management is recognizing some limits in traditional focused models, as they are, solely on economic performance and is instead considering new holistic approaches including qualitative aspects such as the democratization of the administrative process, social equity, community involvement and individual well-being (Park & Joaquin, 2012). Although prize valuations are a difficult task, one of the main advantages of PPPs is that it adopts a life cycle approach aimed at preserving the function and usability of an asset for the contractual period which generally corresponds to its useful economic life.

The National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) also devotes particular attention to the creation of public/private partnerships with a national or territorial relevance, identifying six areas of intervention that include: green transition; digital transformation; Smart, sustainable and inclusive growth; social and territorial cohesion; economic, social and institutional health and resilience; policies for the younger generation, children and young people. One of the main functions of a PPP business model is to perform a multiplier action of resources as it is able to increase the resources invested in a given territorial context in order to develop projects where the various actors of the The synergy of the coproduce value for the community (Attanasio et al., 2021) . Business models of type P4 are defined in the literature as innovative, and therefore have the typical characteristics of the concept of Business Model Innovation. The BMI aimed at improving the company's established skills and routines for organizing product, service or technological innovation, has been described as the process of finding a new way to do business, This results in the reconfiguration of mechanisms for creating and acquiring value, by modifying one or more of the constituent components of the business model (Bashir et al., 2017). Public-Private Partnerships in the field of cultural heritage have taken on a wide international scope and are directly linked to human rights and the concept of democracy because of the close connection between them and the reference community.

The many definitions given to PPPs allow us to identify recurring features which are common elements of this form of collaboration, as well as the presence of both public and private legal entities, the sharing of skills and assets, resources, risks, responsibilities and benefits between them. In particular, the benefit to the target community is also of particular importance, especially where interventions are aimed at achieving forms of territorial development. In the preliminary phase, the company is a qualified interlocutor for the joint definition of the objectives of the partnership, possibly taking part in its activities in different forms, for example through representative associations. The presence on the territory and, in some cases, the status of users of the services rendered by the partnership, makes the community of reference relevant also when monitoring the correctness of the activities carried out. The importance of PPP led in 2004 to a discussion on this institution in relation to the legal framework for public contracts (public procurement and concession contracts), underlining that the development of PPP can generally be seen as part of a wider shift in the role of the state in the economy from a direct operator to an organizer, regulator and controller. The comparison had made it possible to take into account in European law some elements that normally characterise a relationship of PPP in international context (in particular foreseen in the 2010 National Council of America for PPP), going so far as to qualify PPP as "long-term contracts between two units, whereby a unit buys or builds a good or set of goods, manages it for a period and then delivers the good to a second unit. Such agreements are generally between a private firm and the government, but other combinations are possible, with a public company as party or a private non-profit institution as second party"(Bovis 2013).

At the European level, efforts to standardize the use of PPP in the various national legal systems have led to the creation of guidebooks for project financing, particularly in the field of cultural heritage, have seen the development of forms of cooperation between authorities in different States for the dissemination of best practices, also considering the possibility of combining PPP with European funds. The study and preliminary definition of the contractual terms governing a PPP may involve an analysis of possible public or private partners that it is considered appropriate to involve, a comparison with the citizens and relevant stakeholders, the development of a risk matrix and a detailed commercial and financial analysis, since the extension of the analysis to the field of protection and valorization of cultural heritage allows consideration to be given to promoting initiatives in the Active citizenship and the third sector.

The involvement of voluntary organisations, citizens' associations, non-profit organisations, foundations and private companies in carrying out activities of general interest requires the development of new forms of governance which has economic and legal effects on the territory. The participation of communities as non- institutional and non-profit actors allows to renew, manage and rethink in an innovative way the use of public goods of cultural relevance. In this way, In recent years, cultural heritage has been revitalized as a laboratory for new forms of life, work, learning and collective exchange, thus meeting different needs of the community.

With regard to the French experience in the exploitation of cultural assets, the concept of "patrimoine" is linked to the concept of heritage and highlights an idea of the transmission of artistic historical heritage to future generations resulting characterized by

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the heterogeneity of the elements that distinguish it. France, in terms of PPP is a forerunner within the cultural goods sector and has encouraged private operators to enter this sector by introducing very advantageous tax concessions (Penalva-Icher & Lazega 2013). For many years now, the aim has been to modernise museums by means of hybrid management tools capable of reconciling the interests of the various players involved in the cultural sector, the first concept of a partnership contract was introduced in 2004, as an instrument through which the State or a public body entrusts to a third party an activity relating to financing, the construction or conversion of works or equipment, as well as their maintenance or operation, which also applies to local authorities. A first example of how PPP have enabled urban regeneration and economic development in the French cultural heritage sector concerns the Musée de la Mémoire in Caen. The infrastructure, entirely built with public funds, places the management and operating costs at the expense of a mixed company, Société d'Economie Mixte, in which the city of Caen is the majority shareholder. In order to spread more widely the values of the museum structure and to encourage financial autonomy of management, an extension of the memorial was planned.

In view of the additional revenue for the company operating the facility, in 2002 the city decided to renegotiate the contract by guaranteeing the local government an income related to the management of the museum. Also noteworthy is the creation of one of the most advanced examples of "cultural arbitrage" through a partnership between Agence France-Museum and the Abu Dhabi Investment Council. The objective of the agreement, lasting 15 years, is the creation of a new museum called "Louvre Abu Dhabi", which thanks to an investment of 27 billion dollars will become the new cultural district and tourist landmark, providing for an economic return of more than one billion dollars in exchange for the sale of the right to use the Louvre brand, loans of works of art, exhibitions and scientific assistance, management and organization. This form of collaboration shows how an efficient management of cultural heritage can allow its social and economic exploitation, which can bring new resources to the sector. In the German legal system, the Weimar Constitution of 1919 already recognized the freedom of art, science and their respective teachings, placing protection under the control of the State.

In Germany, PPPs have become more widespread as a tool for private resource identification over the years, the municipal level has been the most active in Germany in the implementation of projects on the ground and the main legal instrument for financing these projects are municipal PPP models. Most projects involve small and medium-sized PPPs, also referred to as "three-stage projects", where the private investor only has to finance the construction phase while the subsequent management is financed by the municipality.

Two examples of particular interest concern the city of Ingolstadt and Hamburg. In 2008, the Initiative Regionalmanagement für die Region Ingolstadt was set up as a PPP, with the participation of local authorities and major enterprises in the area. At the same time, with the aim of attracting new generations and encouraging innovation in the area, the Foundation for Concrete Art and Design Ingolstadt was established as a PPP structure to exploit the interconnection between the city and the automotive sector. In this report the sponsorship and promotion of initiatives related to the city museum collection are charged to the company Audi. This activity led to the relocation of museum spaces (2015) in an area to be redeveloped by transforming an ex-factory into a modern cultural center. The City of Hamburg has carried out an analytical study for the preliminary definition and implementation of a legal relationship of PPP with stakeholders present on the territory, with the aim of enabling collaborative dialogue between partners and creating a multi-stakeholder collaborative ecosystem. The analysis led to the publication of a call for proposals at European level (in 2014) and the establishment, in 2020, of the company eCulture Service GmbH quale PPP for the implementation of activities aimed at both the digitalization of culture (within the local digital agenda) and the promotion of local tourism.

In Spain, the first references to cultural heritage date back to 1926. The Spanish Constitution of 1978 expressly recognized cultural heritage, a fact that gave rise to an organic discipline. In Spain, PPP models have been used in particular for the construction of national infrastructures (e.g. rail and motorway) and are also subject to different legal frameworks. PPPs are commonly implemented through concession contracts governed by public procurement regulations, which also include a specific contractual type of partnership. In order to ensure the economic and financial balance of contracts for PPPs, the Spanish National Evaluation Office was created in 2015 with the sole purpose of analysing the financial sustainability of existing and new PPP.

These contractual forms have recently found application in the cultural sector as a tool for the recovery of real estate belonging to the Spanish heritage. Private partners finance the restoration and maintenance of these facilities, making them usable as luxury accommodation (Gonzalez Garcia 2018). These interventions enable the administration to cover the costs associated with the management of these assets and indirectly promote the development of rural tourism, highlighting its historical-cultural importance. The Spanish "Paradores" include restored and modernized ancient castles, convents, monasteries, hospitals and parks) and offer more than two million beds to visitors, guaranteeing 3,500 jobs. The economic value created by these structures on the territory has been quantified at 230 million euros.

In today's competitive market, where products and services can be easily replicated, business model innovation can be a significant force factor, Especially in times of recession and instability as it is a tool to address regulatory, social and technological changes.

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Successful business model innovation can lead to improved competitiveness, increased market share, higher profitability and sustainable growth, especially in a digital environment (Zott & Amit, 2017). To increase and spread a business model P4 aimed at the exploitation of tourism/ cultural heritage, the key is to leverage on the integration of tourism and territorial marketing. The tourism/cultural system achieves success in the medium and long term to the extent that, in the activities of Destination Management, a balance is achieved between tourist marketing and territorial marketing. The first one follows a market driven logic, that is to say, of identifying those combinations of available resources which allow the best exploitation of the opportunities in the tourism market, while maintaining coherence with the long- term vision of tourism development, by bringing together the offers of each actor present in the territory in a value proposition that is recognizable by the tourist-target at a distance and at an earlier time than that of the enjoyment, accessible in spatial and temporal terms. It is inclusive, sustainable and usable in ways consistent with the global experience that tourists expect. The second, instead, adopts a resource-based logic, that is to say, of identification and subsequent development of the resources necessary to bridge the gap between the current tourist identity of the area and the identity that is considered necessary to assume in the future, in function of the possible evolutionary scenarios (Bonetti & Simoni 2011).

Destination management is an enrichment of the classic themes of tourism marketing, which are typically focused on the objective of increasing the number of visitors, the length of stay, the average level of expenditure. Although destination management is regarded as the supreme discipline in tourism management, destination development receives little attention, especially from a geographical point of view. Instead, it is essential to analyse the development of destinations and propose key strategies for a positive future development of destinations in terms of sustainability, accessibility and economic prosperity (Pillmayer 2024). In a context of post-pandemic and climate crisis, the long-term competitiveness of a locality risks being an illusory concept if not associated with that of a sustainability of tourism development which, besides being of an economic and environmental nature, must also include social, cultural and political aspects. (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999). The destination management process must therefore set itself a series of strategic objectives which, in the long run, are able to guarantee the survival of the locality and the prosperity of all the actors that insist on it, including: Improve long-term well being for the community, maximise visitor satisfaction, maximise profitability of local businesses and multiplier effects, Optimise the impact of tourism by ensuring a lasting balance between economic benefits and environmental and socio-cultural costs (Buhalis 2000). Furthermore, destination management must support the process of achieving wider regional development objectives and ensure a fair return on resources used for the production and delivery of tourism products, as well as the regeneration of resources.

The logic of destination management and the integration of tourism and territorial marketing find their expression in the so-called Cultural Districts and Tourist Districts. In cultural districts the catalyst for local development processes is "culture" itself. This has a decisive impact on the criteria used to set priorities and define economic policies. Putting culture at the centre of the development model means using culture as a great opportunity to support a process of sustainable and lasting growth, combining economic, social and environmental benefits. In this case the role of territory can be effectively expressed with the metaphor of the "source", in fact, it is not only a region suitable for a particular sector or a destination for incoming tourists, but a source of values and opportunities that can foster different development processes (Maggiore & Dell'eco 2012).

Within the Cultural District, a dynamic vision prevails, where territory is not just a physical place, but a "space of possibilities", which can evolve in multiple directions depending on a dialectical relationship with the people who inhabit it. Success depends on the richness and abundance of the "territory of origin", but also on the ability to direct the potential energy that resides in cultural resources towards effective purposes, activating virtuous circles in the local social system. In this context, the mission of the district is to increase the value of cultural resources, where the expression "increase in value" should be seen as more complex than simply using tourist attractions to generate tourist flows such as in tourist districts or exploiting local expertise to support competitive enterprises such as in industrial districts (Diamantini & Zanon 2000).

In the Tourist District, instead, the role of catalyst is played by the "destination", understood as both physical and "mental space", corresponding to the image of the area as perceived by its stakeholders. The perceived image of the destination becomes the reference point for the efforts of local actors, all committed to consolidating and promoting this perception. So, for example, if the tourist district has taken root, all restaurateurs, hoteliers and operators will adopt behaviors and attitudes consistent with the destination image, aware that the success of their companies depends on that of the entire territory. Here the territory acquires the connotations of "product", since it is not only the place where production is organized, but also the heart of the supply system. The territory changes its function: consumers become part of the system and play a fundamental role in the integration process that produces network externalities. The territory is not a simple back-office for productive activities, but the focal point where the "moment of truth" takes shape (Normann, 1991), thus becoming the central theme for the mix of destination marketing. Therefore, the mission of the tourist district is to increase the flow of tourists, which is the vital condition for any possible development process. All the stakeholders of the territory are, in fact, focused on the provision of services able to enhance the

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capacity to meet the tourist demand.

Each is important, as the overall experience of a visitor is determined by the combination of a large number of small events that occur during the visit and each can make a positive or negative contribution to the visitor's experience, influencing the level of customer satisfaction. Stakeholders must cooperate to provide an effective response to user demands, including sacrificing their immediate interests to contribute to the destination's overall competitiveness.

3. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The heritage, the cultural heritage, is an immense archive, more or less accessible, interrogable, preserved that contains our memory of the past; but above all it is a living environment, where to make experiences and recreate knowledge and identity. (Ragone et al., 2011). Throughout the cultural institutions sector, changes in public participation require new ways of sharing knowledge and visualizing partnerships both online and on-site. This transformation in cultural communication increasingly suggests that a new type of mutually beneficial exchange between the public and cultural institutions is needed, and that those acting as agents of cultural change must be aware of how culture will guide our future institutional missions (Pauluzzo et al., 2024). Cultural tourism is today one of the largest segments of the tourism market and represents an important sector, recognized by the Council of Europe as a vehicle for communication, cultural exchange between nations and a tool for consolidating the European identity. The Via Francigena is one of the main itineraries which, also due to its geographical position, represents the heart of a network of ancient routes that cross Europe: it is an itinerary that since the Middle Ages has brought together travelers from all over the world and connects a heritage of European art, history and culture capable of attracting a notable tourist flow. This sector today is booming and in particular, this study focuses on the potential development of the Italian market related to historical-religious paths, focusing on the Via Francigena of the South.

The Via Francigena is reliving today the starting stage that the Camino de Santiago experienced in the early 1990s. An inter-generational path that is giving rise to a great opportunity for social, cultural and economic development in the territories concerned and together with all the other paths connected to it is fertile territory for experimental platforms that have translated into the Cultural District. Italy is one of the major destinations for world tourist flows (Ejarque, 2003; Angeloni, 2013; Grechi et al., 2017) and the Via Francigena is one of the most relevant Italian Cultural Routes. Travelers heading from Italy to Santiago crossed the Via Francigena in the opposite direction, a bundle of roads that from the regions of north-west Europe leads to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Even though there are many "minor" pilgrimage routes directed to particular places of devotion, in these years there is a consistent growth of interest in these "paths of faith" through the historic routes of Italy and interest is also found in the rediscovery of traditions now considered lost, in the valorization of ancient routes and in the creation of new itineraries. Historically, the Via Francigena is the route that comes from "France", in the past several routes were called that came from the west and entered Italy. From Rome the road continues along the Via Francigena del Sud, and in the Holy Land it continues with the Via di Acrida, thus reopening the road for pilgrims. For the protection, promotion and valorisation of the itinerary, the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism (MIBACT), local authorities and associations for the Italian route, started a process in 2006 with which a single route was recognized which extends for approximately 1,031km between the Gran San Bernardo Pass and Rome. This route affects the administrative territories of 140 municipalities crossing 7 regions: Valle d'Aosta, Piedmont, Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, Liguria, Tuscany, Lazio. Over the years the path has undergone some changes aimed at making it more usable, both in Swiss and French territory and with regards to its southern extension.

Thanks to the Via, small villages and municipalities have the opportunity to make themselves known and appreciated by acquiring an important European dimension; this represents an opportunity for the birth and development of a sustainable economy and the valorisation of environmental policies characterized by the rediscovery of "slow" tourism. The growth and expansion of the Route is the result of a far-sighted policy of managing a territory, of adequate investments to improve the usability of the route, therefore of hospitality and reception infrastructures and services, especially in reference to the "poor" one for pilgrims, but also of safety, information and signs. This policy approach has given rise to what can be defined as one "Francigena Economy". (Gazzola P., Grechi D., Romanelli M. Pollice F. 2020).

Specifically, the institutionalization of the Via Francigena in Southern Italy is the result of a participatory process triggered by the European Association of the Vie Francigene (EAVF) with the support of the Italian Geographical Society and which has seen the convergence of local authorities, public and private institutions, cultural associations and territorial groups. During this route, first of all, the five Regions crossed by the route were involved (Lazio, Molise, Campania, Basilicata, Puglia), as the coordination of policies on an interregional scale is an essential condition for the concrete realization of the itinerary and for conferring unity and coherence in the management of mobility and services (Di Paola, 2019) and furthermore, around 150 municipalities were involved, those directly crossed by the Via Francigena but also those close to it that see the itinerary as an opportunity to reduce their marginality through inclusion in an inclusive and sustainable tourism project (Bozzato, 2016). In 2016, the Council of Europe

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recognized the Via Francigena of Southern Italy as an integral part of the cultural itinerary, starting its concrete implementation in the territories concerned and in particular, the regions took action to include the Via Francigena in policies for the promotion of internal areas, territorial cohesion and local development. The five Regions have, therefore, promoted the Via Francigena in the relevant context through a series of resolutions and the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism has defined, also through the project "Cammini d'Italia", the framework to which the individual procedures designed to transition, in a coordinated and effective manner, from theory to practice should refer. To enhance the Via Francigena del Sud and configure it as a Cultural District, it is necessary to identify the actors in the tourist offer and the structure of relationships that allows them to cooperate, acting in a systemic logic. Tourism is in fact a strongly people-based activity where the role assumed by specialized territorial stakeholders is extremely important. When analysing the system, it is therefore essential to bear in mind the aims it pursues, its mission and its culture, and it is necessary to deploy territorial marketing tools to define the market segments chosen as targets, on which to design tourism experiences (Pennarelli T., Forlani F. 2011). For the purposes of valorising the Southern Via Francigena, territorial marketing has made it possible to enhance the strengths of the territory, making it competitive compared to other areas, achieving sustainable development of the territorial context.

The strategic objective was to create the conditions for a better match between territorial supply and the different types of demand based on three activities: demand analysis, to segment and position supply; product-territory development, to attract demand; the communication of the territory.

The territorial marketing strategy and operational actions also required collaboration between local government, local administration and private entrepreneurship, thus consolidating their Public- Private Partnership business model. Territorial demand is made up of: people and economic subjects belonging or not to the territory, who respectively constitute internal demand and external demand. Internal demand is made up of people and economic subjects who reside in the territory and is made up of groups with different needs and objectives, often in competition with each other, and it is the task of local governance to respond to the needs relating to each segment of demand, in order to guarantee all components equal opportunities for development and well-being.

The product-territory and its development, however, are the result of two components: the tangible and intangible parts. The tangible elements are represented by the geographical position, the public infrastructure, the artistic and cultural heritage, the public service system, the local productive fabric and the characteristics of the market.

The intangible elements, on the other hand, are made up of all those intangible components that favor the valorization of tangible resources and are the system of civil and social values, cultural tradition, schooling, the degree of social maturation and the distribution of well-being, the level of skills of the productive and social fabric, the intensity of economic and cultural exchanges with the outside world.

The value of a territory and therefore the resulting competitive advantage for it in the eyes of a user/ traveller is given by the combination of tangible and intangible characteristics. To be effective, territorial communication must create territorial alliances to make the most of the resources existing within it and those available in other areas to develop communication and promotion campaigns linked to the development of the territory which bring benefits to the community even though each area still has its own vocation, derived from geographical, climatic, structural, cultural and legislative characteristics which will attract a particular type of demand (Verticchio G. 2012).

To be the subject of effective marketing actions, a territory must acquire its own distinctive connotation, its own identity.

In the Historical Cultural Itinerary Via Francigena, the tourist/pilgrim actively participates in the production process, covering the role of producer exclusively. The reputation of local tourism systems is based on the image that emerged from the set of tourist experiences lived in that given System and the consistency with the reputation designed by the governing body, also using territorial brands. The local tourism system is able to identify the territory as a tourist destination, a place of promotion and production of tourism activities, recognizing the characteristics of relations between public and private actors and the importance of the governing body of the territorial system (Pennarelli T., Forlani F).

Good governance practice is essential to ensure the development of a Cultural Route and this will have to support multidisciplinary projects and research programmes, taking into consideration the involvement of the local population, focusing on residents' appreciation of the diversity and their perception of the landscape and cultural heritage (Beltramo S. 2015). The Via Francigena, as a European Cultural Route, foment the valorization of Italian heritage, together with the promotion of a quality tourist offer, capable of acting as a driving force for the cultural, social and economic development of the territory.

To validate the "via Francigena" as best practices semi-structured interviews were carried out in order to highlight two main themes the participation of the community and citizens within the decision-making process to increase a model of publicprivate partnerships and the effectiveness of territorial marketing tools as drivers for economic growth in the sector.

The interviewees were divided into two categories that formed two clusters, the political- institutional cluster and the marketing

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and communication cluster.

The questions addressed to both actors were:

1. Identifying the right marketing tools is one of the keys to developing destinations, if inserted in a context of clear identification of trends in place for territorial marketing development programs. In the case of the Via Francigena, what were the main marketing and territorial communication tools used for the Way of the Gods project?
2. In the Via Francigena, the municipalities, provinces, regions and Italian mountain communities participate in various ways in order to highlight a territorial governance model for the implementation of a participatory process. In your case it is possible to say that over time the municipality and the city have transformed from simple Stakeholders with which to deal, to Asstholder or not only stakeholders but also carriers of resources and expertise and if so how?

The interviewees were respectively for the institutional political cluster: Culture councilor Alessandra Croci, municipality of Viterbo, 66,323 inhabitants; Mayor Giulia De Santis and culture councilor Renato Trapè, municipality of Montefiascone, 13,000 inhabitants; Culture councilor Paolo Paoletti, municipality of Nepi, 9284 inhabitants; Mayor Mario Mengoni, municipality of Ronciglione, 8377 inhabitants; Uo manager. Culture, Tourism, Public Education and Productive Activities Corinna Pernigotto Cego, Municipality of Acquapendente municipality of Acquapendente, 5265 inhabitants; Mayor Roberto Pinzi, municipality of Proceno 517, inhabitants; Mayor Adalgisa La Torre, municipality of Ortona, 2816 inhabitants; Mayor Enrico Franza, municipality of Ariano Irpino, 20,588 inhabitants.

For Marketing and communications sector: Maria Novella Sbaraglia SL&A tourism and territory consultant; Silvio Marino, communications manager Via Francigena; Angelofabio Attolico AEVF Puglia region contact. From the analysis and cross-checking of data relating to semi-structured interviews, two critical points have emerged on which to work that can be synthesized in the realization of an effective communication plan for the delivery of the "product" I go through effective and uniform and consistent territorial marketing tools throughout the Via Francigena and the improvement of the governance model, focusing more on bottom up focus and active participation of municipalities, mountain unions and regions.

The criticalities and gaps found have laid the foundations to work on the construction of guidelines for the formation of a tourist district linked to sustainable slow tourism as a tool for organizations in order to use it for economic and social growth of a particular place. The objective is to make use of cultural heritage as a factor for the development of the territory through the construction of an integrated supply system between the cultural, social, economic and environmental resources of the territory. These guidelines aim to provide a strategic and operational tool to support and accompany the territories in the experimentation of a district intervention model based on cultural heritage. The guidelines paper was divided into six sessions:

Section 1, Analysis and assessment of the reference territory. Specifically to the assessment of the territorial context in which the Via Francigena takes life, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses, the socio-economic characteristics of the territory, cultural and institutional aspects.

Section 2, Definition of strategic and operational objectives. Specifically, reference is made to the system of actions to be implemented for the development of the territory and institutional and governance objectives, objectives related to the "product" territory, communication and promotion objectives and economic/ financial goals. The practical activities to be carried out in order to convey and put into practice the strategic objectives are also defined.

Section 3 Definition of the governance model. With a specific focus on the bottom-up model in order to achieve coordination between the implementation of the declared strategies and, at the same time, meet the need for consistency in the behaviors of the subjects and institutions involved in various capacities.

Section 4 Definition of the communication plan. In particular reference to the system of rules for communication and promotion of the territory, methods and time of implementation of the visual identity system and web communication with its coverage plan.

Section 5 Definition of the business plan. In particular, an estimate of the cash flows of investment costs, operating costs and revenues, cash flows and financial sustainability of the project is made.

Section 6 Definition of measurement and control systems for results. Elaboration of quantitative and qualitative models with which it is intended to monitor the data for a correct management of the Via Francigena.

In order to apply these guidelines, it will be important to leverage: public authorities, real estate operators and local communities to identify the objectives that the fund intends to pursue by identifying respectively the environmental, social and economic impact lines; in this first phase, Specific skills will therefore be required from all the actors involved, for the part of co-design and co-design of the objectives that the fund intends to pursue.

Specific analytical skills of the actors involved, in order to be able to perform data analysis both to define objectives, impact lines and strategies to implement the objectives by monitoring the progress of actions undertaken. In this last part it will be necessary to involve all types of actors involved that can carry out this task and appropriate communication tools and channels to promote

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the existence of the fund, through the implementation of appropriate communication campaigns that will allow reaching a large pool of users who can join the initiatives.

In addition, agreements with crowdfunding platforms may be activated to collaborate on project selection. The platforms will host the selected projects and finalize the collection campaigns, in compliance with existing regulations related to the different modalities (donation, reward, equity, lending). Adequate space should be reserved for 'follow-up' to report to funders on the progress of the project, its impact, its results and any changes in progress. Through innovative tools, such as digital tokens built on blockchain, it will be possible to involve in real time the funders in subsequent strategic choices, through democratic voting tools.

Compared to the objective of supporting public administrations in "civic crowdfunding", the territorial dimension plays a strategic role. In a public finance regime that tends to limit the resources available over time, crowdfunding may aspire to become an instrument of active participation in local administrative choices. In particular, by targeting investment objectives and public-private partnerships, making the most of tangible and intangible territorial heritage. It will therefore be necessary to build local networks that, involving public bodies, businesses, citizens and the third sector, promote 'bottom-up financing' and increase the sense of belonging and involvement of citizens for their territory. At the policy level, it seems appropriate to reduce the bureaucracy that is too complex and sometimes difficult to overcome, which can make some projects of civic crowdfunding pushed by local governments unfeasible.

4. FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

The future implications of this study have two main aims: first, to highlight more clearly the link between business and community. To achieve this, the intention is to develop P4 development models which include not only public institutions and enterprises but also people and community participation. This approach will ensure that initiatives are truly inclusive and oriented towards the common good. In addition, the intention is to develop guidelines for the creation and management of partnerships between companies and communities and the impact on territories. In order to achieve the above objectives, it will also be essential to carry out an in-depth analysis of the regulations affecting the case study. Local and regional laws and regulations governing the management and promotion of routes, including provisions on tourism, environment and culture, will be examined. This approach will help to understand how these regulations affect strategies and operating practices. The impact of public policies and regulations on exploitation projects will be assessed, identifying potential issues and opportunities for improvement. Based on these analyses, recommendations will be made which could facilitate and stimulate further progress and discussion.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The in-depth analysis carried out in this study has shown that the integration between tourism and territorial marketing, combined with innovative development models, represents a strategic lever for the valorization of experiential and sustainable tourism. In a post-pandemic context, slow tourism, linked to the rediscovery of territories and the promotion of cultural and natural heritage, emerges as a central vehicle for economic and social regeneration. The adoption of systemic approaches, such as the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and the Public-People-Private Partnership (P4), promotes the development of participatory governance models, where the community is a stakeholder, which contributes directly to the creation of collective value.

The concept of brand tourism, defined as the ability of a destination to build a distinctive image that attracts and retains visitors, is central in the case study analyzed. The Via Francigena has shown how the valorization of a cultural and landscape path, through an effective multilevel governance, can become a powerful tourist brand. The promotion of an immersive experience, combining nature, history and culture, has allowed the route to become an internationally recognized destination, while contributing to the growth of local economies. The strategic use of territorial marketing has made it possible to position the Via Francigena as a distinctive tourist proposal, integrating public and private actors in an efficient collaboration network.

The integration of sustainability, innovation and active participation emerges as a key factor in ensuring the long-term competitiveness of tourist destinations.

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