

TO WHAT EXTENT ARE HERETICAL ENTREPRENEURS LIFESTYLE ENTREPRENEURS? INSIGHTS FROM TOURISM SMES IN REMOTE DESTINATIONS

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Abstract

The paper aims to understand the motives for entrepreneurship and business conducts of lifestyle entrepreneurs who run tourism ventures in remote and disadvantage places. For this purpose, twelve case studies are conducted involving tourism SMEs located in Calabria region (Southern Italy). The study enriches the scientific debate on lifestyle entrepreneurship in tourism. In particular, the “heretical entrepreneurship” is identified as a new type of lifestyle entrepreneurship that well suits to the destination remoteness and authentic development of unprivileged areas. Combining the theoretical and empirical research, this study proposes a framework in which the motivations for entrepreneurship and determinants of competitiveness in remote tourism destinations are considered.

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Keywords: *Heretical lifestyle entrepreneurship; Lifestyle entrepreneurship; Remote tourism destinations.*

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1. Introduction

Lifestyle entrepreneurship is arousing a growing interest among academics within the studies on the personal traits, attributes and characteristics of entrepreneurs (Peters *et al.*, 2009), and on the opportunities for entrepreneurship provided by surrounding environment (Ateljevic and Li, 2009). The relevance of this topic is due to the consideration of lifestyle as a key motivation for running the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) above all in tourism setting (Williams and Shaw, 2013) in which they represent the dominant firm size (Cerved, 2018). Tourism literature identifies two main types of entrepreneurial motivations (Thomas *et al.*, 2011): a) business-oriented, related to make a venture profitable or achieve a formal entrepreneurial success; b) lifestyle-oriented, regarding to enjoy the beauty of nature or secure a comfortable lifestyle (Shaw, 2014). In academia, there is not an agreed definition of tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs (Ateljevic and Li, 2009). Anyway, the latter are usually considered as people who launch touristic ventures to prioritize personal or family needs, expectations, preferences and values over economic growth and profit maximization, also driven by environmental considerations and desire for a sense of community. Accordingly, the ability to perpetuate the chosen lifestyle could measure the success of businesses run by lifestyle-oriented entrepreneurs. However, literature clarifies that the lifestyle is a complex concept, that can coexist with economic motivations (Hall and Rusher, 2004) varying within contexts (Carlsen *et al.*, 2008).

Being a context-dependent concept, it is interesting to understand the motivations, values and meanings of lifestyle entrepreneurship attached to remote tourism destinations. Scholars state that lifestyle entrepreneurs could contribute to the evolution of these areas characterized by a life of cycle different from that of the urban or less remote destinations (Rogerson, 2017; Carson and Carson, 2017). Specifically, lifestyle entrepreneurs could represent for the remote destinations a springboard of the tourism development acting as captains of tourism (Shaw and Williams, 2004) who see windows of opportunity even in hostile environments. Remote destinations have specific weaknesses such as the lack of physical infrastructures, information, and capital. Given that, domestic tourists and the tourism of visiting friends and relatives are dominant in these places (Rogerson, 2017). Despite the scientific interest in lifestyle entrepreneurship, this topic needs a new momentum in research in at least three directions. Firstly, to date research on entrepreneurship in hospitality and tourism setting is scant (Fu *et al.*, 2019). Secondly, entrepreneurial motivations to run business in hostile contexts require in-depth theoretical and empirical researches (Ciasullo and Festa, 2014; Skokic *et al.*, 2016) because lifestyle entrepreneurs are heterogeneous in the goals and intentions (Viera, 2017). Thirdly, further studies

are needed to investigate the influence of cultural, spatial, and social environments on motivations for entrepreneurship (Skokic *et al.*, 2016; Wang *et al.*, 2019). Thus, the paper aims to deepen lifestyle motives in starting up a tourism SMEs, the entrepreneurial behavior related to business conducts and the environment in which the entrepreneurs operate. The paper emphasizes the “heretics” as a new type of lifestyle entrepreneurs. They are tourism business owners having the lifestyle entrepreneur’s characteristics plus additional features that well suit to the destination remoteness.

Thus, the following research questions arise:

RQ1: Which do personal aspirations, values and motivations of heretical entrepreneurs underpin their decision for establishing a venture?

RQ2: Which goals guide their business conducts?

RQ3: How do heretical entrepreneurs’ choices can contribute to the development of a remote tourism area?

Twelve case studies are conducted involving tourism SMEs located in Calabria region (Southern Italy). It is a remote destination in terms of the peripheral position, modest industrialization, low population density, and partly uncontaminated natural resources (Nunnari, 2017).

Overall, the study enriches the scientific debate on lifestyle entrepreneurship research in tourism (Peter *et al.*, 2009; Wang *et al.*, 2019). In particular, it is dealt with a certain type of evolution where the entrepreneur’s lifestyle-oriented motivation overcome the professionalism, specialization, and economic relevance (Williams and Shaw, 2013). Moreover, the research offers insights on emerging conducts of SMEs able to providing an authentic tourism development in disadvantaged areas.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 delves on the literature review on the lifestyle entrepreneurship and remote tourism destinations. Then, Section 3 describes the applied research methodology. Sections 4 and 5 outline and discuss the findings of the research. Finally, Section 6 proposes theoretical and managerial implications.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Entrepreneurship and lifestyle entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurship has been studied in various fields such as sociology, anthropology, ecology, psychology (Peters *et al.*, 2009), marketing, management, and economics as the dominant approach. The first conceptualization of entrepreneurship derives from neoclassic economics in which the entrepreneur has a visionary and innovative picture (Schumpeter, 2000), that includes specific traits such as risk-taking and desire for achievement. Thus, entrepreneur is driven by motives of economic profit ma-

ximization or economic growth (Shaw, 2014). At the same time, another part of literature realizes that entrepreneurship is more of an economic phenomenon (Mastroberardino and Calabrese, 2019). The complex and dynamic entrepreneurial process is defined in broader terms. Personality characteristics – such as needs, attitudes, drives, beliefs and values – are taken into account shifting the focus towards social and cultural features. In this broadened view of entrepreneurship, it is highlighted the importance of context mixing cultural, economic, geographical, political and social factors. Getz *et al.* (2004) argue that the entrepreneurial process is not just an economic activity because it is also driven by the motivations of individuals who seek to satisfy their own personal, social, and economic goals. It has been argued that entrepreneurship represents a business philosophy, encompassing non-pecuniary benefits, such as “being my own boss” and “being creative” (Chen and Elston, 2013). Accordingly, scholars conceptualize lifestyle as a significant non-economic factor in motivating individuals to embark the entrepreneurial journey and the business formation (Shaw and Williams, 2004; Dawson *et al.*, 2011). Generally, lifestyle entrepreneurs desire to earn a respectable living, attain greater personal freedom, and spend quality time with family and friends. The conceptualization of entrepreneur based on lifestyle has received considerable attention from literature on small tourism businesses during the 1990s (Thomas *et al.*, 2011) emphasizing the large numbers of SMEs (Lashley and Rowson, 2010). The relatively low entry barriers, limited skills required, and few restrictions or regulations imposed in the tourism industry incite the proliferation of small firms (Morrison, 2006; Ateljevic and Li, 2009). Thus, tourism entrepreneurship is shaped by informality and flexibility, distinguishing features derived from conditions specific to the entrepreneurial tourism environment (Power *et al.*, 2017).

Williams *et al.* (1989) first observe the prioritization of consciously selected lifestyle motives in small-scale tourism businesses. The same authors describe a blurring of the boundaries between production and consumption, since many of the entrepreneurs were former tourists. Thus, literature investigates the lifestyle as key motivations for entrepreneurship in the tourism and hospitality sector (Marchant and Mottiar, 2011). Motivations attributed to tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs are personal or family priorities and corresponding to self-selected life choices instead of a career decision (Marcketti *et al.*, 2006). In a study examining the lifestyle orientations of Scottish guesthouse owners, Di Domenico (2005, p. 116) states that “*the proprietors desired a certain ‘way of life’ as determined by their specific needs and wants, with the business being used as an enabling tool to acquire this ‘way of life’*”. Similarly, Deakins and Freel (2006) point out that the primary motivation of lifestyle entrepreneurs is to live a desired quality of life by maintaining an income that allows them to survive. This is asserted by Pe-

ters *et al.* (2009), who argue that lifestyle entrepreneurs prioritize quality of life over profit maximization. Personal aspirations are represented by the amenity migration from metropolitan areas to rural ones, and place familiarity that is going back to the native land or in a desired place (Carlsen *et al.*, 2008). Aspects such as climate, landscape, and resources influence the attractiveness of the location. As noted by Stone and Stubbs (2007, p. 433), “a growing dimension of entrepreneurship is that associated with a relatively recent pattern of migration flows of people seeking lifestyle benefits in an attractive environment”.

Going over, many lifestyle entrepreneurs derive deep psychological pleasure from interacting with local people acting as cultural brokers (Shaw, 2014). These entrepreneurs become strongly embedded in the community acting as bridges between tourists and the local stakeholders and contributing to the regional sustainability (Horobin and Long, 1996). Their passion for the services offered is the driving force behind the establishment and success of an enterprise (Presenza *et al.*, 2016). The enhancement of life quality is not related to the only personal satisfaction. Lifestyle entrepreneurship is also oriented to the enhancement of wellbeing at levels of the employees, consumers, and community improving their lifestyles (Mbaiwa, 2011) and enhancing the overall socio-economic development. Thus, social values can be great motivators remarking the significance of the socio-cultural embeddedness of lifestyle entrepreneurs and may be highly significant in the tourism context (Mottiar *et al.*, 2018). In particular, the ability to interact with the community enriches the social ties enhancing the sustainability of many communities, especially the small and rural ones (Morrison, 2006). In fact, increased lifestyle entrepreneurship in a destination creates opportunities for other local businesses, and benefits local society as business owners are more likely to be involved in cultural life and environmental preservation (Bosworth and Farrell, 2011).

However, scholars do not ignore the negative characteristics associated with lifestyle entrepreneurship. They result from the poor professionalism of tourism entrepreneurs, without specific training in the business aspects and lacking professional experience. This causes poor economic sustainability of the enterprise, negative impact on the service quality and short life of businesses (Lashley and Rowson, 2010). Tourism entrepreneurs develop their businesses with minimal strategic planning and their ‘mediocre’ performance is arguably an outcome of their choice of lifestyle. Some researchers suggest that non-economic motives create difficulties also in terms of innovation and growth at the destination level (Lashley and Rowson, 2010). In sum, the overall resource poverty and the lack of management strategies make them unable to compete in terms of service quality and pricing.

The above analysis underlines that lifestyle values, aspirations and motivations require to be linked to the notion of business goals. In New Ze-

aland, Hall and Rusher (2004) point out that the objectives of lifestyle are not in opposition to economic ones and that lifestyle need to be considered as a strategic business goal for hospitality owners. However, lifestyle motivations and associated objectives are multi-faceted, dynamic, person and context dependent (Carlsen *et al.*, 2008). More in depth, they depend by the unique characteristics of the entrepreneur, prevailing environmental conditions, and specific stage of the destination's development.

2.2 Remote tourism destinations

Tourism entrepreneurship in disadvantaged territories has not received much attention in the managerial literature. As a result, there is not a clear conceptualization of remote place (Schmallegger *e al.*, 2010). Terms as 'rural', 'peripheral', and 'remote' are often used to mean tourism in non-urban settings (Nepal, 2005).

Following an economic geographical approach, peripheral destinations include isolated and remote places (i.e., deserts, polar or alpine regions, islands) that are at the extreme end of the periphery (Carson and Harwood, 2007). Fragmented and transient linkages with the metropolitan centers characterize the remote destinations. In general, they are unfamiliar, difficult to access due the lack in physical infrastructures, and susceptible to the marketplace shocks. In the tourist perspective, remote destinations are associated with risky and expensive travels because of these weaknesses (Carson and Harwood, 2007a). To overcome stagnation or decline of such territories, the tourism could contribute to the socio-economic growth of regions with few development options (Carson and Carson, 2017; Saarinen *et al.*, 2017). Tourism could catalyze the growth in three directions: a) providing direct income and employment opportunities for local people; b) generating revenue to finance other socio-economic activities; c) reinforcing social cohesion within the host communities. In sum, enhancement of attractive force embedded in remote regions represents an opportunity for development based on the principle of co-evolution between place identity, local community, and touristic economy (Salvatore, 2015).

Actually, a relevant push factor that drives the tourist's behavior is the reflexive modernization (Beck *et al.*, 1994) that is a matured sensitivity for the most remote places, and a greater awareness of learning different cultures. The contemporary tourist looks for authentic experiences because of the emptiness and alienation of the postmodern society (Castéran and Roederer, 2013). Thus, remote places become appropriate destinations for emergent niche tourisms that want to experience areas 'off the beaten track' with a slower paces and high environmental quality (i.e. rural, cultural, heritage, eco-tourism, eno-gastronomic, adventure tourism, backpacker, etc.) (Conradson and Pawson, 2009; Flanigan *et al.*, 2014; Boniface *et al.*,

2016). Carson and Harwood (2007a) examine the authenticity in remote areas analyzing the market conditions that enable to better position themselves in the light of the physical and cultural features of remoteness and how these are related to the perception of authenticity. The authors investigate how local tourism firms in remote areas must “*reflect the simplicity of nature and are consistent with the surrounds*” (p. 6). Authenticity – expressed by genuineness, reality, and truth – may be also connected with the tradition and culture of a region (Akhoondnejad, 2016). Initially, objective authenticity is seen as the original backstage of the reality (e.g., culture and tradition) (MacCannel, 1976). This static view is later challenged by the constructive authenticity. It embraces a dynamic view where judgements, beliefs, meanings are constructed by tourist and mixed with setting. Tourists’ perception of authenticity is formed by the social interaction with local culture, traditions, people, food, events, rituals and so on. Finally, existential authenticity refers to situations where personal or interpersonal feelings are activated by the process of tourism activities (Wang, 1999). In this perspective, tourists look for authentic encounters in the places visited. More in depth, tourist searches both to get in touch with his deep feelings and senses (intra-personal existential authenticity) and to achieve a sense of togetherness with others (interpersonal existential authenticity). Anyway, existential authenticity can be achieved thanks to meaningful interactions between guests and hosts, especially when hosts communicate in sincere way local values and identity to visitors (Taylor, 2001). In a philosophical perspective, existential authenticity embodies a psychological elevation through an internal fulfilment, in which individuals feel that they are true to themselves, or are in touch with the real world and with who they really are (Steiner and Reisinger, 2006). It relates to an emotional state that tourists can experience when they are actively involved in the tourism experience (Knudsen and Waade, 2010). Following Heidegger’s (1996) thought according to which autochthony is the basis for understanding a place and explicating existential authenticity, Shepherd (2015) emphasized the rootedness of authentic being shaped by host community when it shares the same norms, assumptions, and culture. Thus, authenticity is formed through ritual, tradition, and the distinctive atmosphere of the place in a mutually way. Szmigin *et al.* (2017) found that authentic experiences can be produced and co-created through socio-spatial factors such as local people, custom, tradition, local product, ethnic background, making the atmosphere unique.

Experiential authenticity is a key issue in hospitality setting, despite empirical works are scant (Ye *et al.*, 2018). In the context of the rural tourism, for instance, it is embedded in the spatial-cultural identity of rural areas, social identity of home accommodation, and phenomenological identity of rural image (Di Domenico & Miller, 2012). Anyway, from the

tourism supply's side, physical and subjective changes could damage the rural identity authenticity. More in depth, a staged authenticity will alter the experience environment diminishing the home's uniqueness and distinctiveness and making rural hospitality a mass-produced product. Furthermore, a staged authenticity will negatively affect the sincerity and genuineness host-guest relationships damaging the social and emotional engagement (Ye *et al.*, 2018).

Staged authenticity and its relationship with authenticity and commodification are largely debated in tourism. Literature discusses on the commodification that occurs when distorted representations staged by suppliers provoke standardization influencing the tourist's perception and satisfaction of existential authenticity (Robinson and Clifford, 2012). In sum, commodification is detrimental to place identity if practices, symbols, values, and interactions lose their originality and genuineness. However, commodification may re-create authenticity when new authenticity's forms are generated by strategies in which creativeness and innovation may sustain folk custom, traditions and suggestive representations of pristine (de Azeredo-Grunewald, 2002). Hence, tourist should be actively engaged in living experiences (Pine and Gilmore, 2008) and there is a need of genuine relationships to enhance the existential authenticity and make a memorable impression on the tourist.

3. Method

An explorative analysis is conducted using the case study methodology as *"a unique approach to research that concentrates on the study of complex phenomenon within a real life context"* (Lindstrom and Benz, 2002, p. 70). Multiple case study is chosen for the following reasons. Firstly, it is one of the most fitting methods for understanding under-investigated phenomena (Gummesson, 2006). Secondly, it is based on evidence rising from the cross-case analysis adding accuracy and generalizability to findings (Yin, 2017). Moreover, this methodological approach has allowed to contribute to the theory from the case studies' exploration.

3.1 Study setting

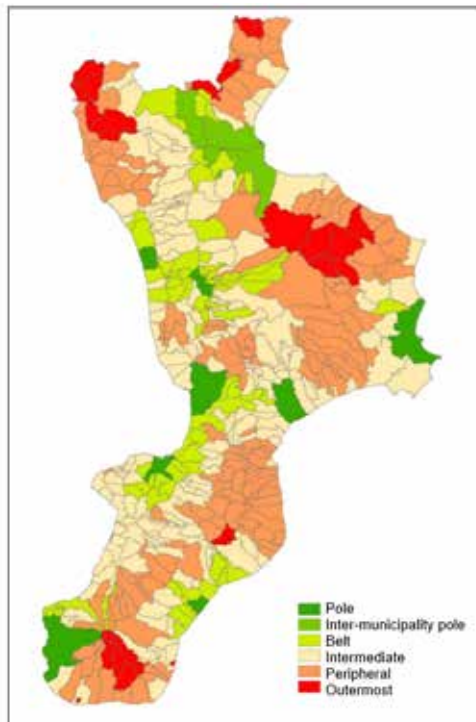
Tourist area is identified using a regional scale. In particular, the empirical study is focused on the receiving area where tourists stay temporarily to enjoy features and attractions that are not found in their home areas (Boniface *et al.*, 2016; Saarinen *et al.*, 2017).

Hence, study setting is Calabria, a decentralized region located at the extreme South of Italy. It is a predominantly rural region: 80% of the re-

gional territory includes internal areas far away from urban centers. There is a strong incidence of the peripheral and outermost municipalities (40%) with high hydrogeological instability (Regione Calabria, 2015). Figure 1 shows the municipalities' distribution on regional territory.

From a social perspective, Calabria is involved in a process of marginalization characterized by the low population density and abandonment of settlements, scant of collective services, and presence of criminal organizations. Economic situation is characterized by a permanent underdevelopment because of the industrial desertification, decline in employment and land use, and an inefficient local government that hinders the development of the region. Despite these weaknesses, Calabria has several potential strengths embedded in the landscape and local culture. In fact, the area is rich in beautiful and not contaminated physical resources as well as culture, history and folklore that could well suits with the tourism. To date, tourism is limited to the seaside one and the touristic flow is very low being Calabria the twelfth region in the Italian touristic ranking. The total presences of tourists in 2016 have been 8.511.581 million, of which a higher number of domestic (3.27%) than foreigner (0.93%) arrivals (Becheri & Ciccarelli, 2018).

Fig. 1: Geography of Calabrian municipalities



Source: Regione Calabria (2015), p. 24

3.2 Multiple case description

Twelve SMEs operating in tourism and hospitality setting are analyzed (Tab. 2). All the sample cases belong to the heretics' group. It embraces Calabrian entrepreneurs actively engaged to enhance the natural and cultural unexpressed resources of the territory. Heretical entrepreneurs own the small firms located in peripheral and outermost municipalities of Calabria (see Fig. 1).

Tab. 2.: Tourism heretical SMEs

Company name	Year Founded	Tourism activity field
Le Case del Nibbio	2005	Diffuse hospitality
La Piazza	2011	Festival
Living Nature	2003	Excursion
Home for Creativity	2015	Co-living
Orme nel Parco	2008	Eco-experiential park
Villa Vittoria	1998	Agritourism
Kalabrian H2O	2013	Excursion
Nido di Seta	2014	Restaurant Excursion
Jacurso da vivere e da imparare	2016	Diffuse hospitality
Visioni Mediterranee	2012	Bed & Breakfast
Locanda Pecora Nera	2007	Bed & Breakfast
Misafumera	2002	Trekking

Source: Authors' elaboration

3.3 Data collection and analysis

Data collection has followed a specific protocol. Initially, researchers looked for secondary data dealing with the background of the multiple case. They were collected from: institutional website of Heretic Entrepreneurs' group (www.ereticamente.it); additional data sources such as corporate websites, newspaper articles, media interviews, and web data (i.e., external links). Then, primary data were collected according to the research questions. They were collected from June to October 2018 by in-depth interviews to 12 entrepreneurs. The interviews were conducted via Skype and each of them lasted for about 40 minutes. They were audio-taped and transcribed *verbatim*. So, data triangulation was applied using different data sources in order to limit the bias effects of interpretation of a single data source.

According to the research questions and using an interview guide (Patton, 2002), the following open-ended questions were posed: "What did per-

sonal factors guide your decision to become an entrepreneur?"; "What are your motivations for entrepreneurship in the tourism business?"; "What are reasons that motivate you to venture in Calabria region?"; "What kind of specific characteristics drive your business choices and behaviors?"; "What are the objectives in operating your business?"; "Do you think that your venture contributes to the development of place?"; "Why and how do you contribute to the development of your land?"; "What do you think about the future touristic development of your area?"

A qualitative content analysis was adopted to interpret textual data (Weber, 1990). Using an open coding approach, the researchers read the documents and the transcriptions of in-depth interviews. Then individually, they proceeded with the coding procedures through the software Nvivo 10. A schema of categories was identified: "values", "personal aspirations", "entrepreneurial motivations", "entrepreneurial orientation", "business goals", "experiential authenticity", "place development". During this stage, the coding results were compared and discussed in the case of disagreements. Then, a connection between the categories was set out; finally, a report was written.

4. Findings

All respondents reveal lifestyle-oriented motives for establishing their ventures. In particular, a strong desire for a change and an alternative lifestyle emerge. The group founder affirms: *"We are the real engine of change because entrepreneurs are critical actors playing the roles of custodians and developers of territory"*. Another entrepreneur emphasizes: *"It is a monumental time where ideas and opportunities need to be embraced to activate the actors of change"*. The desire for a new life is due to anxiety and hopelessness caused by the abandonment of own land and missed enhancement of its potentialities. Local authorities also provoke the desire for a new life because of their low support to initiatives of tourist development. However, such feelings are experienced proactively because a strong desire to overcome difficulties is their intrinsic need. Noble sentiments and genuine values inspire the styles of living and doing business of heretical entrepreneurs. An interviewee declares: *"I love my territory and feel the need for valorizing it because I belong to it as active part"*. Another entrepreneur states: *"After many years in Northern Italy, I have returned to Calabria to construct a different future for this land, its people and my family. I fight to realize my project and the difficulties or sacrifices do not discourage me"*. Thus, the values of courage, tenacity, and place attachment pull entrepreneurs to establish and perpetuate enthusiastically their enterprises. Positive emotions fuel motivations and mobilize energies in running businesses and pursuing challenging goals. An

entrepreneur affirms: *"I'm following a passion, a dream. Entrepreneurship is in my blood because my dad was an entrepreneur"*. Another interviewee states: *"Doing business, it's just passion. You'll have business success only if you have the vision and passion in running your firm"*. Another entrepreneur declares: *"I am motivated by passion but I feel the need to improve my business skills: if the passion is complemented with skills, there will be successful entrepreneurs"*.

A strong sense of identification with ventures influences the management of business activities. An entrepreneur states: *"To earn is not a primary motivation for establishing an enterprise. Doing business means to have dedication to own work that expresses personal interests and talents. If there is love mixed with profit, the commitment required to entrepreneur will not be a sacrifice. In my life of entrepreneur, I feel like burning flame because the love motivates me"*. What is more, the sense of attachment and identification with his/her venture fully express the need to engage in creative paths of action based on the habitual behaviors' break and exploration of uncharted domains. In this respect, heretical entrepreneurs innovate enhancing the territory's hidden potentials. They exploit opportunities aiming to achieve social objectives rather than economic ones. A strong sense of responsibility for own territory emerge showing regard for ethical principles. An entrepreneur states: *"My entrepreneurial behaviors are oriented to get a positive balance between local resource consumption and value creation in favor of my territory. This is a moral commitment, which no rule or contract can replace"*. The value of responsibility is connected with the value of people centrality. The group founder states: *"I have gathered some enterprises, that are primarily human and then economic. They are similar to community based on shared objectives and cohesion. For this reason, the employees' needs and their professional and personal growth matter"*. An interviewee states: *"Employing only the residents, I guarantee a future to my land. I commit to offer a safe job to people who would otherwise emigrate from Calabria and, at the same time, I avoid to lose the local customs and traditions well-known only by the people born and raised in these places"*. The centrality of tourist is also recognized as confirmed by this statement: *"Tourists who arrive in our places are not common tourists: they are precious resources who must be actively engaged in discovery of place and themselves"*. Another informant states: *"We felt the responsibility to allow tourists to enjoy a memorable experience encouraging spontaneity and sincere interactions"*.

Moreover, proactively lived existential responsibility involves the interviewed entrepreneurs. Their projects of territorial redemption are shared mainly during social events when each entrepreneur tells his/her experience. This implies the collective learning of good examples and best practices. An entrepreneur states: *"The cooperation is so obvious to us. Right from the start it's been a gang that functions together"*. It demonstrates that the social relationships come before business relationships. An entrepreneur reports: *"Relationships are essential inside and outside our entrepreneurial group. They*

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are informal relationships based on the exchange of ideas, knowledge and resources that enrich us as people and entrepreneurs". An entrepreneur tells: "Our meetings are real experiential laboratories where we propose ideas and share new projects". Another entrepreneur says that he is enthusiastic about the initiative because it gave rise to the idea of providing a "genealogical research service for customers interested in rediscovering their Calabrian origins". Another entrepreneur tells the idea of promoting and sharing with all entrepreneurs in the area cooking lessons, food traditions and exchange of local products as forms of integrated tourist offer that enriches the experience of tourists. Last but not least, forms of collaboration are activated with the University of Calabria in order to maintain and recovery the Calabrian cultural identity. Their market offers represent highly targeted value propositions based on thematic paths (culture, nature, sport, food and wine, etc.) that follow the territorial vocations and are attractive for niche tourists. One entrepreneur declares: "I live in an inland village where the historic area is crumbling and desert. Despite that, this village actually lives again thanks to our festival. Until a few years ago, it was an event for local community; today, it is growing in popularity. We meticulously planned all the activities to make the event more attractive to visitors and to strengthen its usefulness and impressiveness". Another entrepreneur states: "It is a unique event and gives people an idea of what really happens here because we make live our traditions, myths, legends, typical productions, and our handicrafts are made and offered by the local people". A hospitality entrepreneur reports on his collaboration with the local farmers through the organization of the 'agriculture day': "My guests spend a spring day on local farms enjoying all the rural activities. The idea is to let the tourists the experience of a perfect interaction between place, nature and culture". An interviewee reports: "We have created an eco-experiential park in a place as beautiful as wild: no electricity, telephone coverage and services of any kind, away from the first town about 20 km and characterized by extreme weather conditions. Thus, tourists immerse themselves in the nature living eco-sensorial experiences. We have invested many time and money in our business idea and actually the park is one of the most visited Italian parks". Interestingly, interviewers also report the need of support that heretics demand to local tourism government. More in depth, a more active collaboration of Calabrian municipalities is required. In the heretics' opinion, close and institutionalized collaborations would allow both to make known the remote areas' offers to tourists that are spending their holidays in the region, and, to spread the remote areas' image as potential destinations in the mind of national and international audience. In this regard, group founder states: "It is crucial to reinforce the image of our land and we have a need of an active support of public government in facilitating the destination's development. Marketing organized by themselves through websites, international guidebooks and word-of-mouth is not sufficient".

5. Discussion and development of framework

The paper purposes were to examine motivations and entrepreneurial orientation of heretical entrepreneurs who run their tourism businesses in remote and disadvantage areas of Calabria. Values, personal aspirations, motives, and entrepreneurial behaviours have been analysed to provide a comprehensive understanding of their entrepreneurial intention.

Personal aspirations related to a strong desire to effect change in the native land have emerged as an important motive for heretical entrepreneurship identifying in the tourism business one of the greatest opportunities to achieve these personal aspirations. Thus, heretical entrepreneurs as heroic individuals (Nicholls, 2010) try to activate a social change playing an active role in advancing local networks, developing common visions and goals among the local community. Moreover, passion (Presenza *et al.*, 2016) nurtures the heretical motivations and mobilizes their energies pursuing challenging goals together with tenacity, willingness and commitment. In particular, passion is revealed as a typical trait that is both antecedent to and consequent to their entrepreneurial efforts. In the first case, the belongingness to the place, local history and socio-cultural traditions enhances heretics' attachment to the territory raising the desire and will to redeem own land from economic and social remoteness. This increases their responsiveness informing an entrepreneurial long-term vision (Ryan *et al.*, 2012) and catalyzing a collective conscience oriented to the shift from rural to tourism area.

In the second case, a strong self-recognition emerges in heretics' ventures in which business and personal development goals are combined. More specifically, heretics consider business as a way to enact their vision according to value system that reflects their identity (Bredvold and Skålén, 2016). The latter affects the entrepreneurial efforts oriented to the identification, evaluation, and exploration of opportunities enhancing both local community's well-being and socio-economic value. In other words, the adopted strategies are aimed to create new livelihood opportunities that enrich local people not only in economic way but also in terms of capabilities and skills. Moreover, innovative niche products are sustained by social networks for the purpose of jointly develop creative solutions for emerging segments of high value.

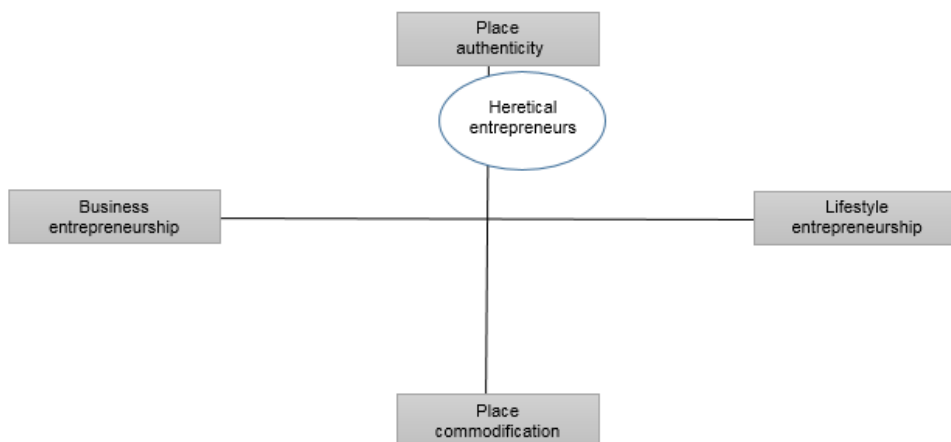
They are carefully designed on the local traditions, culture, custom, and symbolic representations of the place's heritage improving the tourist experience's value in terms of existential authenticity (Ye *et al.*, 2018). Hence, their business behaviors are oriented to innovate on the organizational, productive, and market levels (Hall and Williams, 2008). In sum, heretics show the innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking in their business strategies combining social and cultural values as success factors along

with goals of development and business growth (Bosworth and Farrell, 2011). Anyway, these entrepreneurs consider the growth in quality and value but not in volume as an important business goal.

Despite their efforts, heretics' concern is a greater support of local government to develop the remote areas for touristic purposes. Interestingly, they do not request financial supports but training programs and integrated territorial marketing. Overall, heretical entrepreneurs take the responsibility for the touristic development of the remote areas acknowledging that the improvement of the place image increases their competitiveness (Ryan *et al.*, 2012; Kompulla, 2014).

Combining the literature review with the key findings, it is proposed a perceptual map in which motivations for entrepreneurship (horizontal axis) and determinants of competitiveness in remote tourism destinations (vertical axis) are placed (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Mapping heretical entrepreneurs



Source: Authors' elaboration

Obviously, it is a simplification because both axes represent a continuum along their polarities.

Heretical entrepreneurs contribute to the emerging the place image by enhancing its authenticity acting on the following levers: a) the offering as result of the synergistic symbiosis between the folk custom, traditions and symbolic representations of pristine, local community, and local business-

ses; b) networks based on the closed and co-created relationships; and, c) commitment to the tourism business through investments and activities aimed to innovate, valorize, and strategically recreate traditions and specificities of the place. Overall, findings of this study support the vital role that innovative, committed and risk-taking entrepreneurs play to flourish the destination (Barile et al., 2013; Ryan et al., 2012; Kompulla, 2014).

Hence, this entrepreneurial orientation is shaped by entrepreneurial motivations as a critical antecedent consisting of specific values, needs, wants, and goals. Anyway, tourism destination development requires a local level policy cooperation to facilitate the entrepreneurial responsiveness.

6. Conclusions

This research proposes interesting insights on the lifestyle-oriented motivation and tourism SMEs entrepreneurship. Firstly, findings contribute to theory highlighting advancements in the extant research on entrepreneurial motivations to run tourism businesses in remote and disadvantaged territories. In particular, this paper defines heretical lifestyle entrepreneurs as heroic business owners able to shape an authentic tourism destination. Secondly, the study proposes a link between lifestyle entrepreneurship to remote tourism destinations through a framework based on the motivation for entrepreneurship and determinants of competitiveness.

This is an important contribute because remote destinations need different theoretical approaches to study tourism entrepreneurship.

In addition, a majority of the literature has examined the motivation for entrepreneurship ignoring the socio-economic context around the entrepreneurs (Wang *et al.*, 2019). In this regard, this study reveals that entrepreneurship can occur despite environmental, socio-economic conditions inhibit it. From a managerial perspective, the study acknowledges the importance of incorporating the heretical lifestyle in business conduct in remote destinations. Thus, heretics could represent a best practice to safeguard and to enhance environmental and cultural characteristics of places turning them into social, economic, and cultural drivers for growth.

For this reason, managing tourism businesses in heretical way could be effective not only for Calabria but also for all disadvantaged territories.

Not surprisingly, entrepreneurs of Northern Italy are also joining the Heretic Entrepreneurs' group.

Although the study provides interesting insights, there are some limitations. Firstly, a wider number of cases could improve the generalizability of the results. Secondly, further researches on the proposed framework are needed to better understand both the variables and their impacts on the destination development. At this end, a longitudinal research could examine

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if and how entrepreneurial motivations change in the different stages of the life cycle of destinations. Moreover, a statistical correlation between motivations for entrepreneurship and determinants of competitiveness could test the framework. Finally, future researches could be conducted in other settings to explore other factors affecting entrepreneurial motivations.

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Riassunto

Il *paper* analizza le motivazioni all'imprenditorialità e il comportamento di imprenditori *lifestyle* alla guida di imprese turistiche operanti in territori remoti e svantaggiati. A tal fine, vengono studiate dodici PMI turistiche calabresi. Lo studio contribuisce al dibattito scientifico sull'imprenditorialità *lifestyle* nel turismo. In particolare, l'imprenditorialità eretica viene identificata come un nuovo stile di vita imprenditoriale le cui specificità ben si adattano alla natura remota delle destinazioni e allo sviluppo autentico delle aree svantaggiate. Combinando la ricerca teorica ed empirica, lo studio propone un *framework* che connette motivazioni all'imprenditorialità e determinanti di competitività nelle destinazioni turistiche remote.

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