

THE MOVIE INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF ROCCO SCHIAVONE AND THE AOSTA VALLEY

A INDÚSTRIA CINEMATOGRÁFICA E DESENVOLVIMENTO ECONÔMICO REGIONAL: O CASO DA SÉRIE DE TV ROCCO SCHIAVONE E O VALE DE AOSTA

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ABSTRACT

The movie industry is a creative sector that has the potential to contribute to (regional) economic development. Understanding the role of different stakeholders in the different parts of the process of movie production is paramount to provide an overview of the aspects that underlie an interaction that leads to regional economic development. Therefore, this study aims at investigating to what extent the interaction of stakeholders in the movie industry contributes to fostering regional economic development. A qualitative approach based on the single case study of *Rocco Schiavone*, an Italian tv series set in the Aosta Valley was used. A total of 14 in-depth interviews were recorded among different stakeholders using a snowball sampling, and the results point out to different interactions and power relations between stakeholders. During the three phases of pre-production, production and post-production, stakeholders also experience tensions. The paper concludes by underlining that despite the mainly positive outcome in terms of benefits for stakeholders and consequent economic development in the region, there are also challenges regarding the precariousness of jobs in the sector and the development of film-induced tourism products.

Keywords: Film Industry. Regional Economic Development. Stakeholders. Film-induced tourism. Italy.

RESUMO

A indústria cinematográfica é um setor criativo com potencial para contribuir para o desenvolvimento econômico (regional). Compreender o papel dos diferentes atores nas diversas partes do processo de produção cinematográfica é fundamental para delinear uma visão geral dos aspectos que fundamentam uma interação que pode conduzir ao desenvolvimento econômico regional. Assim, este estudo tem como objetivo investigar em que medida a interação dos atores da indústria cinematográfica contribui para a promoção do desenvolvimento econômico regional. Foi utilizada uma abordagem qualitativa baseada no estudo de caso único de *Rocco Schiavone*, uma série de TV italiana situada no Vale de Aosta. Recorrendo a uma amostragem em bola de neve, foram gravadas 14 entrevistas com diferentes atores (*stakeholders*). Os resultados apontam para uma diversidade de interações e relações de poder entre estes atores. Durante as três fases de pré-produção, produção e pós-produção, existem tensões. Este estudo conclui que, apesar do resultado sobretudo positivo em termos de benefícios para as partes interessadas e consequente desenvolvimento econômico da região, existem também desafios em relação à precariedade de emprego no setor e ao desenvolvimento de produtos de turismo cinematográfico.

Palavras-chave: Indústria cinematográfica. Desenvolvimento Econômico Regional. Stakeholders. Turismo cinematográfico. Itália.



1 INTRODUCTION

Over the last few decades, states, regions, and cities have been interested in developing their creative economy, corresponding to a rise of awareness of the benefits that creative economic activities have for the places and people. The work by Florida with a focus in the North American context (2006) explores the idea of talent and the creative class, building on the different creative economy categorization and policies like the United Kingdom's DCMS, in 1999. The reports by the UNTACD (e.g. 2008) and UNESCO/UNDP (2013) are a clear illustration of the attention given to the creative economy. Under the interest of developing their territories, many countries, including from emerging economies, like Brazil, have developed and, at least to a certain extent, implemented public policies which reinforce creative activities and entrepreneurship (EMMENDOERFER, FIORAVANTE; ARAÚJO, 2018). The development of policies, directly or indirectly aimed at the development of the creative economy, can also foster the emergence of top-down or bottom-up creative clusters, in particular in urban areas (MARQUES, 2017).

Film has become one of the most prominent creative sectors within the creative industries, moving creative flows, people, talent and, of course, money. The movie industry is therefore important in many regions of the globe, often contributing to the development of cultural tourism (RICHARDS, 2021). The potential positive impact of the movie industry in a certain territory has led cities, regions, and even countries, such as South Korea, to develop strategies related to this sector. These strategies include attracting external movie productions by offering economic incentives, such as tax benefits, or subsidies. Film commissions emerged in different countries to foster the movie industry and to increase the visibility of a given region. Understanding the role of different stakeholders in the different parts of the process is paramount to provide an overview of the aspects that underlie an interaction that leads to regional economic development. *Rocco Schiavone*, an Italian tv series set in the Aosta Valley, is an example of such interaction between stakeholders.

In-depth interviews were conducted with 14 different stakeholders to understand the role of local stakeholders in attracting external movie productions, such as the Aosta Valley Film Commission, and the department for cultural goods. It was of interest to understand the reasons that led a non-local movie production to choose the Aosta Valley as the main location as well as investigate whether direct and indirect economic effects took place within the region, by interviewing local crew and local stakeholders that have commercial activities (restaurants, shops, and touristic businesses).

This study aims therefore at investigating the modalities in which stakeholders interact with each other, the goals of each stakeholder, and their strategies. The findings of the current research can contribute to advance the body of knowledge on the movie industry as a creative sector with potentially



positive impacts on regions. For different players in the field, as well as for policy makers, understanding the challenges and strategies that can support the positive development of the industry in the territory can be part of the supporting mechanisms to develop a certain region. This study aims at contributing to this knowledge for scholars, industry practitioners and policy makers.

2 REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE MOVIE INDUSTRY

Economic development is seen as a regional outcome driven by and spread from local realities such as regions, and cities (FLORIDA, 2005). Public institutions are interested in improving local and national economies through policies, strategies, means, and resources to achieve desired outputs (STIMSON & AL., 2006). One of the goals of local communities and public institutions is to stimulate job opportunities by using existing resources (human, natural, and institutional resources), and by mobilizing social and economic capital.

"Location theory" (STIMSON *et al.*, 2006, p. 24) analyses firms' behavior in choosing a location in which they can settle a business activity. Firms decide to settle in places in which they can minimize costs and maximize opportunities to reach market and profits. Firms may look for locations in which they can have advantages, or incentives, that minimize production costs. In this context, location theory and regional economic development have been applied to the movie industry and the phenomenon of runaway production. Runaway production takes place when a firm from the movie industry decides to film outside of Hollywood or outside a movie industry cluster (in Italy, for instance, in Rome), and moves temporarily to another city, or region, or state. Runaway production is a phenomenon that is becoming increasingly common within the movie industry panorama for two main reasons. First, the willingness to shoot in a different location is motivated by creative and artistic reasons, in order to differentiate the movie product from competitors (CHRISTOPHERSON; RIGHTOR, 2010). Second, there is the opportunity of minimizing production costs by choosing locations that provide tax benefits and economic incentives. Very often, producers look for places in which they can minimize their costs, and states and regions that want to attract movie productions offer lower labor costs and other lower marginal costs (CUCCO; RICHERI, 2011).

The importance of the movie industry can also be explained by the role of the knowledge-based sector in fostering economic development. The creative class (FLORIDA, 2006) is one of the main driving actors of the local economy, since it attracts subsidiary services, such as restaurants, cafés, and consequently low-skills workers (waiters, unskilled workers, drivers, and so on) (ONINK, 2012). The creative class can therefore be considered a consumer class and for this reason, it directly boosts the local economy, by spending resources on the territory.



What makes this paper diverse from Florida's analysis is the fact that runaway productions boost the local economy for a limited period. Runaway productions create a temporary movie industry cluster. However, at the end of the shooting period, they move back to their original locations. Consequently, local workers run the risk of not being employed for a long period in the movie industry, which can also mean that eventually they might choose a more stable sector to work in. Local services and commercial activities tend to have a dramatic economic boost during the shooting time, and then, to go back to their starting point. Even though runaway productions can have a positive economic effect in the short run, they can create an unstable economic and working situation in medium-long run periods.

To create a situation of economic stability, the region must create a stable movie industry cluster and develop an adequate infrastructure to attract film productions throughout the year (PÓVOA, REIJNDERS; MARTENS, 2021). In that way, local people can work stably in the movie industry and become professionals in the sector, by making the region increasingly attractive for runaway productions. It is not only a matter of economic incentives but, mostly, a matter of stable and professional local services, including local below-the-line workers.

Public institutions must intervene by allocating resources and making effective strategies to attract runaway productions in the long run and not only in the short run. For this reason, over the last decades, Film Commissions emerged in different western countries to boost regional economic development, through economic and non-economic incentives. Another goal of Film Commissions is to guarantee stable working conditions for the local crew, even though this can only be achieved if a stable movie cluster is set in the region. The creation of master classes, or academic courses regarding the movie industry, and filming, can be an instrument to attract young people to study there and to become professionals in the movie industry sector (NICOSIA, 2015).

3 FILM COMMISSIONS AND RUNAWAY PRODUCTIONS

When talking about the movie industry and its relationship with the territory, one of the main actors is the Film Commission. Film Commissions are regional organizations that aim at promoting the territory from an economic and cultural point of view. Those organizations are created and supported by local institutions, which means, both by the state and the region (sometimes also by the municipality), to attract audiovisual productions in a given territory. Due the benefits that movie productions can have within a territory, many regions offer economic incentives in the form of direct subsidies, tax benefits, or grants. These monetary incentives are a tool to attract foster stakeholders in filming in the territory and are meant to guarantee an economic return to the region. These incentives can foster beneficial



multiplier effects (NICOSIA, 2015; BRADBURY, 2019). Indirectly, by attracting stakeholders, they enhance expenditures on all the ancillary facilities that the region can provide: hospitality, restaurants, catering services, and the rent of locations.

Usually, the grants are provided to runaway productions at the beginning of the year through a 'call to action'. Film Commissions can provide direct grants to projects through an inner tool called Film Fund. Film Fund is given to productions when they present certain conditions: estimations of direct expenditures within the territory, or estimations of local employees that will be involved in the project (CUCCO; RICHERI, 2011).

Another goal of the Film Commission is to develop and strengthen a local hub of professionals, both 'above the line' professionals such as directors, directors of photography, writers, and 'below the line' professionals such as gaffers, electricians, dressmakers, among others (SARABIA; SANCHEZ, 2019). Below the line professionals are at the basis of the creation of a stable local movie industry. Furthermore, below-the-line professionals are of interest for runaway productions because it allows them to hire people at a lower cost than bringing external professionals to a given region. Hiring a local worker means not paying for their accommodation, travel expenses, or daily allowance because they are not working away from home (LITVAK; LITVAK, 2009).

Additionally, a region with a strong hub of below-the-line professionals can be attractive for movie productions because they do not need to spend time training local people. In that way, runaway productions optimize their costs both on a monetary and temporary level. In this way, regions can ensure jobs for local people (LITVAK; LITVAK, 2009; FROST, 2006), even if temporary. It would seem then that by attracting runaway productions Film Commissions can contribute to develop all the local sectors involved.

However, studies based on runaway productions and Film Commission show that above-the-line professionals tend to be allocated in the most important movie industry clusters. By taking as an example the U.S. case, above-the-line professionals tend to move and live in New York and Los Angeles (FROST, 2006). Those two cities offer a high level of creative education, and all the facilities and services needed by a movie production, such as post-production professionals, and movie studios. Whereas, cities and regions that recently decided to invest in the movie industry are not able to offer those services and infrastructures. In those areas the movie industry is still an occasional activity, and does not operate at its full capacity (PÓVOA; REIJNDERS; MARTENS, 2021).

Runaway productions decide to shoot outside of movie clusters because of the natural and different landscapes that can be found abroad, and because of the fiscal incentives. However, once the movie is shot, they go back to the major cities because of all the professional facilities and services (FROST, 2006). Besides, runaway productions can decide to work with 'their inner' below-the-line professionals because



of the trust and good relationships that takes place among the crew. Often, movie productions decide to work with trusted people, even though, it is more expensive in terms of accommodations and daily allowance costs (CUCCO; RICHERI 2011). Film Commissions can use mechanisms for runaway productions to hire local people and invest more money in the territory and train local people to work in the movie industry. In fact, in order to get the Film Fund, a certain percentage of local people must be hired. However, runaway productions in Italy are not obliged to contact the Film Commission to get logistic support when filming in a given territory.

There are many cases, in the Aosta Valley as well, in which the Film Commission has not been contacted by runaway productions. Sometimes, the region itself can decide to be the intermediary between the movie production and the territory, whereas other times the movie production has already connections within the territory. In certain cases, there are still grey areas regarding the tasks and roles of the Film Commission and the region, and their roles can overlap. Not collaborating with the Film Commission, however, can imply a tense relationship with public stakeholders, no access to monetary grants and subsidies, and no access to useful information regarding the territory. However, not all the regions present a developed and effective Film Commission, so, it can also happen that external stakeholders do not need it as intermediary and facilitator to make the audiovisual product.

4 FILM-INDUCED TOURISM, A SPILLOVER EFFECT

Film-induced tourism is one of the objectives that Film Commissions can achieve by attracting runaway productions. For this reason, regions and states want to have images of their regions to appear in the movie scenes, and to be identified in the credits. Being showed in a movie or in a commercial can be an instrument to nurture civic pride and to attract visitors and conventions (CRISTOPHERSON; RIGHTOR, 2010). Sometimes, visibility in the long-term is more important than immediate direct economic effects.

Film-induced tourism takes place when visitors decide to visit a given area in which an audiovisual product was filmed, by allocating monetary resources to hospitality and catering, and to all the ancillary local facilities and commercial activities (BUSBY *et al.*, 2001; TKALEC *et al.*, 2017). The movie area becomes a touristic destination, and, consequently, new commercial and cultural activities can emerge, potentially leading to job creation. *The Lord of the Rings* is the most emblematic example of a movie that could induce tourism and develop territorial marketing. The movie itself enhanced the process of economic growth for New Zealand. There are other cases, in which the Film Commission and public stakeholders decide strategically to film a movie in a given area to improve the location's visibility, stimulate tourism, and contribute to economic growth (TZANELLI, 2004; COLANGELO 2018). Investing in the movie industry in a



given area can be an effective tool for territorial marketing, more than tv advertisements and brochures. By collaborating, public and private local stakeholders can invest in strategies and infrastructures to attract visitors because of a given audiovisual product.

5 STAKEHOLDERS MANAGEMENT IN THE MOVIE INDUSTRY

Producing a movie, especially in another territory that is not from the movie house production is not an instant and spontaneous process. It needs the interaction and collaboration of different stakeholders (KARLSEN, 2002). Making a movie is a matter of relationships among diverse people, from the executive producer to the catering staff. Many individuals and organizations are involved, which implies that many different interests, both economic and creative, are at stake. For this reason, one of the key points of this research is understanding how all those actors interact with each other, how all the stakeholders' interests can be satisfied during the movie production, and, why all those stakeholders need to interact with each other (FREEMAN, 2010).

Getz (2002) underlines resource-dependency theory to explain the reason why stakeholders interact with each other. Dependence takes place because of the asymmetry of information among all the parties. Every organization and individual have their own diverse resources and information, which they need to use and share to reach their common objectives. Collaboration is seen as an effective strategy to make stakeholders work together and reach their objectives, instead of competition that would create conflict among the stakeholders involved, with lack of trust and commitment (ANDERSSON; GETZ, 2008). An inter-organizational relationship is therefore a situation in which more organizations collaborate to overcome problems and challenges by using every party's complementary knowledge and resources.

According to Batt & Purchase (2004), stakeholders that share their complementary knowledge create a 'knowledge-driven network', aiming at the maximization of knowledge through network collaboration. Knowledge-driven network rises thanks to the collaboration of external stakeholders that can supply intangible resources to the firm in need. It has been seen that intangible resources are more difficult to imitate and trade, representing an asset that makes the firm more competitive. Making a knowledge-driven network is making a trade among two parties, the one that owns tangible resources, and the one that owns intangible resources. For this reason, it is a 'give and take' relationship in which all have something to win, if all the parties collaborate.

When a movie troupe moves to another territory, they need local stakeholders to help them with all the practicalities, from where to sleep and eat, to how to get a legal permit to film in a given area, how to reach local professionals that can join the crew. The Film Commission acts as a catalyst by collecting all



the individuals, professionals, and local organizations that can be of interest for an external movie house production and share its knowledge and information by providing both tangible and intangible resources (SARABIA; SANCHEZ, 2019). The Film Commission shares knowledge in the change of direct economic benefits, namely job opportunities for local people, and indirect economic effects in the middle and long-term perspective, such as territorial marketing and tourism.

However, according to Batt & Purchase (2004), knowledge-driven networks, or collaborative networks, are not only effective because there is an economic interest behind them, but also because there is a social interest. So, not only an economic relationship based on legal criteria, such as contracts, takes place, but also a social relationship based on mutual trust and commitment is developed. For instance, an individual that does not trust the Film Commission would not share their curriculum with the organization, or allow giving legal permits to film in a given area. Besides common economic interests, mutual trust, and commitment, a collaborative relationship among stakeholders can also rely shared values, and identity (VOSS, 2000). This is in line with Getz (2002) idea that organizations tend to collaborate because of common goals and shared values. For non-for-profit theatre organizations these are mostly artistic and social values (BOERNER; JOBST, 2011; KARLSEN, 2002), whereas between the Film Commission and the movie house production, shared values can be societal, artistic values, but also economic values. Besides, both Film Commission and movie house production share common aspects in their identity, because they both work within the movie industry and aim at excellence values in terms of artistic and quality values.

The values and objectives of internal and external stakeholders can also be different, but they still decide to collaborate, because collaborating is still worth reaching their goals (VOSS, 2000; BOERNER; JOBST, 2011). Compromise however takes place for every stakeholder at a certain stage of the collaboration. The satisfaction of everyone's interest is the priority and the intersection of all the interests is pivotal to making stakeholders' management effective and sustainable (FREEMAN, 2010). Without the intersection of all the interests, there would not be a network and a collaboration.

The present study looks at these relationships looking at the case of the tv series Rocco Schiavone, which is filmed in the Aosta Valley, in Italy. This paper aims at answering the following research question: to what extent does the interaction of stakeholders in the movie industry contribute to fostering regional economic development? Then four sub-questions followed to have a deeper understanding of the phenomenon:

- How does an external movie production choose a movie location?
- How does the Film Commission play a role as an intermediary between the territory and the movie production?
- How do local stakeholders stimulate the spillover effect after the movie production?



- How do stakeholders interact with each other?

The interest of this study is to get a deeper understanding of the movie industry on regional economic development, but also to understand how the different stakeholders, both local and non-local, private and non-private, are involved in this process.

6 METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on inductive research, starting from theoretical constructs (HOYLE; HARRIS; JUDD, 2002). The research design applied to this research is a case study analysis, because of the possibility of analyzing in-depth and in context a given phenomenon "within its real-world context" (YIN, 2014, p. 16). Case study research was applied to one single case for which the relationships of stakeholders in making the tv series *Rocco Schiavone* in the Aosta Valley Region was analyzed. *Rocco Schiavone* is nowadays one of the most watched tv series in Italy (PETRUCCI, 2018), and over the last years, it made the Aosta Valley, and in particular the city of Aosta, more visible.

Moreover, the Aosta Valley Film Commission is a recent Film Commission, founded in 2012, but effectively, it started working in a more impactful way in 2016 thanks to the tv series *Rocco Schiavone*. It is of interest to investigate whether the tv series has had an impact on the territory that is released at the national level, and also, to understand the role of the Film Commission.

In this context, the case of *Rocco Schiavone* has been used to study the involvement of stakeholders, such as the movie production, the Film Commission, the region, and other private stakeholders, and how all the stakeholders interacted to develop the project, and consequently, to see what were the effects of this cultural and economic strategy.

Primary data have been collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, which is a qualitative interview broadly used for case study research, and it is a type of method suited for in-depth investigations (FARQUHAR, 2013). It is a method that allows the research to be flexible and contextual. Qualitative interviews tend to be particularly focused on the interviewees' point of view, and since they are made of open questions their objective is to get rich and detailed answers (BRYMAN, 2012). Interviews have been conducted until point of saturation, i.e. until when the information obtained was being repeated. A total of 14 semi-structured interviews were made following the core concepts established in the theoretical framework. To ensure construct validity, the concepts deriving from the literature review were defined and used as a basis for developing constructs. These were then worked into item questions to put together the interview guide (see Table 1). The main constructs fall under two main themes which were used to design the interview guide (see Appendix A):



Regional economic development was divided into direct and indirect economic effects of the movie industry: the creation of new jobs, direct expenditures on the territory by the movie production, positive effect on local commercial activities (hotels, restaurants, etc.), leisure expenditures by the movie troupe, film-induced tourism, and territorial marketing.

Stakeholders' management and interaction were divided into the role of stakeholders, in particular, the role of the Film Commission, the values and goals of each stakeholder, and relationships among stakeholders.

Table 1. Concept table

| CONCEPT | DESCRIPTION | AUTHOR |
|---|--|---|
| Regional economic development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Measured jobs - Investments - Working conditions | STIMSON <i>et al.</i> , 2006; COLANGELO 2018 |
| Movie industry on economic growth | Encourage external investment into a nascent industry that spill-overs onto complementary industries to generate economic growth | NICOSIA, 2019 |
| Economic outcomes of the movie industry | Tourism, employment, innovation, attractiveness, and value-added | CHAPAIN & STRYJAKIEWICZ, 2017; COLANGELO 2018 |
| Film Commission | Organizations that aim to promote from an economic point of view, but also an artistic point of view, film production in the territories in which they operate | NICOSIA, 2015; COLANGELO, 2018 |

Source: the authors

The analysis is focused on the stakeholders, which means actors involved directly or indirectly in the process of decision making at a local and non-local level for stimulating regional economic development through the movie industry. For this reason, it was decided to interview individuals that do represent the different roles, positions, and, sometimes, goals. In the sample also included individuals who did not contribute directly to the movie production or decision making at the regional level, but who experienced directly the outcomes of the movie production: such as workers employed during the filming, or professionals of the tourism sector.

Interviewees were selected via snowball sampling, which is a method of selecting individuals based on the nonprobability sampling technique (BABBIE, 2014). Snowball sample has been also an important part of the inquiry, not only because of the possibility to define the sample and find individuals to interview but also because it showed the dynamics and roles of the social network that the research is studying



(CHAIM NOY, 2008). It happened that interviewees did not want to introduce other actors, most probably because of the lack of trust among some stakeholders. A total of 14 stakeholders were interviewed during the period between April and May 2020. All the interviews were conducted via Skype and were recorded. Table 2 shows the list of stakeholders that have been interviewed. They have been grouped accordingly to their origin, role, and task.

Table 2. List of stakeholders interviewed

| PRE-PRODUCTION PHASE | Non-Local Stakeholder | Role | Task |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| | Rai Fiction (Public tv broad-casting) | Director | Co-produces the tv series |
| | Cross Productions | Executive producer | Produces the tv series |
| PRODUCTION PHASE | Local Stakeholder | Role | Task |
| | Aosta Valley Film Commission | Director | Production and relationship with other stakeholders |
| | Aosta Valley Film Commission | Secretary | Budget |
| | Aosta Valley Film Commission | President | Symbolic role |
| | Department for cultural goods | Management of specific cultural locations | Allow the production to film in locations |
| | Department for cultural goods | Management of cultural and heritage sites | Allow the production to film In locations |
| | Department for cultural goods | Coordination of movie troupe | Support external productions + help the Film Commission |
| | Hotel Duca d'Aosta | Manager and director | Host the movie production + movie location |
| | Local shop of clothing | Owner | Movie location |
| | Local crew | Location manager | Find movie location + legal permits |
| | Local crew | Runner | Help the movie troupe and the production when filming |
| POST-PRODUCTION PHASE | Local stakeholder | Role | Task |
| | Local professional – tourism sector | Tour operator | Movie tour based on Rocco Schiavone |
| | Local professional – tourism sector | Manager | Study and analyze the effects of the Film Commission on the territory |

Interviews have been transcribed both manually and automatically by using the online program 'Amberscript'. The interviews were held in Italian, mother tongue of the stakeholders. All the extracts used in this paper are the responsibility of the authors. The transcripts were analyzed with open coding with the support of the Atlas. Ti software. Open coding is a technique that implies the "classification and



labeling of concepts in qualitative data analysis” (BABBIE, 2014, p. 410). Within open coding, codes are created by the researcher after having analyzed and questioned the data. By reading the transcripts, key concepts emerged and gave the possibility to find patterns among all the interviews and to identify all the relevant concepts for the subject to study (BABBIE, 2014, p. 410). However, before starting the open coding process, *a priori* categories were made based on the theoretical framework (see Table 1). After coding the transcripts, the themes were clustered, and the analysis was conducted. The interpretation of results was then made in comparison with previous studies.

7 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rocco Schiavone is the end product of a dynamic process of different relationships. Different interests and goals are at stake in a vast network of stakeholders, external and internal, private and public. The tv series effectively represents the creation of a knowledge-driven network (BATT; PURCHASE, 2004) through collaboration among stakeholders, but it also shows the difficulties and the necessity of compromise to reach every stakeholder’s goals. Relationship among stakeholders is not only based on collaboration, but also on resources’ dependence (GETZ, 2002; ANDERSSON; GETZ, 2008).

Rocco Schiavone is a tv series based on the homonym series of novels written by Antonio Manzini, a writer from Rome who recounts the investigations of the detective Rocco Schiavone in the city of Aosta and in the Aosta Valley region (see Figures 1 and 2). The copyrights of his series of novels were bought by the movie house production Cross Productions from Rome. The tv series was later co-produced together with Beta Film, a German movie house production, and Rai Fiction, the department of tv series of the Italian public tv broadcast RAI.



Figure 1 – Landscape with Roman ruins, Aosta, Aosta Valley, Italy



Source: Photo by Babak Habibi on Unsplash (2022)



Figure 2 – Landscape, Aosta Valley, Italy



Source: Photo by Valeria Pagani (2018)

The relationship between Cross Productions and Rai Fiction had to be a collaborative relationship based mostly on compromise from Cross Productions' side because Rai Fiction is the body in charge of both producing and distributing the tv series on public tv. This makes that Rai Fiction it is the dominant stakeholder in terms of economic and authority/hierarchical aspects (VOSS, 2000).

Three phases have been identified regarding the realization of the project and the relationship among stakeholders. The first phase is identified as the pre-production phase, a moment in which local stakeholders are not involved yet, but only the stakeholders involved in the preparation of the optimal conditions to make the tv series. In this phase, the movie production houses interact with each other to



make decisions regarding the screenplay, the allocation of budget, as well as the decision on above-the-line professionals, and locations. Since *Rocco Schiavone* is co-produced by Rai Fiction and Beta Film,

Cross Productions needs to work together with Rai Fiction to select above-the-line professionals, such as main actors and the tv series director to get funds to make the tv series. In this first phase, Rai Fiction plays a dominant role because it intervenes dramatically in the choice of those professionals. Cross Productions is dependent on funding and support from Rai Fiction. It is also in this phase that the decision-making on the location takes place.

Even though the Aosta Valley Film Commission can provide economic incentives and tax benefits to external movie productions to film in the territory, this body is still not actively in this phase of the process. It emerged from interviews that Cross Productions selected the Aosta Valley because of artistic and creative reasons. Contrarily to what some authors suggest in previous studies (e.g. NICOSIA, 2015; CUCCO; RICHERI, 2018), economic incentives are not sufficient to attract runaway productions to a region. In this case, the movie production considered the Aosta Valley as the most suited region to film due to its landscape, light, cultural heritage, and atmosphere. At the beginning of the location inspection another location, Trentino Alto Adige region, was also considered:

“The reason why we chose the Aosta Valley is that we wanted to make a *noir* movie, so we needed a *noir* city. We did not want to give a feeling of the bright city as it can be in the Dolomites [...] We were also interested in a less known city, and it [Aosta] was interesting for us.” (Interviewee 5)

Furthermore, the tax benefits and economic incentives of the Aosta Valley Film Commission are lower compared to other Italian Film Commissions and the entire tv series budget. Hence big movie house production might consider public incentives a benefit, however not the main reason to choose a location. This could explain why, at the moment, the Aosta Valley Film Commission seems to have difficulties in attracting external movie production:

“Our funding is way lower compared to the other Film Commissions... Our maximum financial contribution at the moment is €180.000... And that is our maximum financial contribution... that is very low, that is something we have to change within our policy.” (Interviewee 2)

In this first phase, different stakeholders have different roles and power relationships. Once Cross Productions together with Rai Fiction has decided who are the above-the-line professionals and the location to shoot, the second phase can start.

The second phase corresponds to the production phase, and it covers all of the shooting period. This is also the moment when the Film Commission starts to play a pivotal role and becomes the main node of the knowledge-driven network of internal and external stakeholders (BATT & PURCHASE, 2004). The Aosta Valley Film Commission becomes the main actor that Cross Productions interacts with and



becomes the main intermediary between the movie house production and the local stakeholders. Cross Productions applies for the funds that the Film Commission can offer, under the condition that these funds create a multiplier effect on the region, and that local professionals are involved.

As with many of other funding bodies, there are certain parameters to respect. Especially at the beginning of the relationship between those two actors, when mutual trust and commitment are being built (COLANGELO, 2018). At the times of the interviews, Cross Productions had worked together with the Aosta Valley Film Commission for four years, which meant that the economic relationship was integrated with a social dimension.

As shown in COLANGELO (2018), also in this context even though the Film Commission plays an important role in the relationship with Cross Productions, in the end, it cannot act as a dominant stakeholder, as it does not have economic power over the movie house production. The relationship even though is collaborative appears to be also subordinated.

From the interviews, it seems that economic reasons are not the main motivations that led Cross Productions to collaborate with the Aosta Valley Film Commission, since the Film Fund is low when compared to the entire budget of the tv series. What is of interest for Cross Productions is to overcome the asymmetry of information regarding the region through the help of the Aosta Valley Film Commission. Being based in Rome, Cross Productions, does not have all the necessary information regarding the region (locations, how the bureaucracy works, etc.). In addition, collaborating with the Aosta Valley Film Commission is also part of a political strategy, because, in that way, Cross Productions has more possibility to reach the information and stakeholders in a collaborative way (KARLSEN, 2002).

Both stakeholders are interested in the quality and excellence of the tv series *Rocco Schiavone*, mainly for economic and visibility reasons. With trust and commitment from both parties, the movie crew of *Rocco Schiavone* is appreciated and supported by the local community of the Aosta Valley, and its inhabitants are proud to be living in the same region of *Rocco Schiavone*. Furthermore, during the shooting period, hotels, restaurants, and shops work more, benefitting economically. Local professionals are also able to gain more knowledge and skills by working with the movie production (see Figure 3).



Figure 3 – A Rocco Schiavone's scene in Aosta's square, Italy



Source: Photo by Valeria Pagani (2020)

The knowledge-driven network (BATT; PURCHASE, 2004) is activated for example when Cross Productions films in the Aosta Valley Region, and an exchange of knowledge and resources from both parties takes place. On the one hand, Cross Productions makes direct expenditures on the region; on the other hand, the Film Commission provides economic incentives, as well as provides access to locations, legal permits, accommodations, restaurants, and local crew. Whereas, by hiring local individuals, Cross Productions trains them for professions in the movie industry. There are some examples of young individuals from Aosta Valley that became part of the Cross Productions crew also for other projects. With these dynamic relationships and exchanges, *Rocco Schiavone* is the platform for a knowledge-driven network based on collaboration.

Besides Cross Productions and the Aosta Valley Film Commission, other stakeholders have also been taken into account, providing other perspectives of the movie industry in the region. These were all local stakeholders, including the department for cultural goods of the Aosta Valley Region and some local inhabitants. These stakeholders are diverse from each other in terms of roles, values, and objectives (BOERNER; JOBST, 2011).



The department for cultural goods is a branch of the Region and shares values and goals with the Aosta Valley Film Commission. They are both interested in promoting the region through culture and contributing to the valley's international visibility. The Film Commission is exclusively concerned with the promotion through audiovisual productions, whereas the department for cultural goods uses other tools such as exhibitions, and live cultural events (festivals, concerts, theatre plays, fairs).

The department for cultural goods is part of the Region since its birth, while the Film Commission was founded in the Valley only in 2012, following a general tendency in Italy. (COLANGELO, 2018) Before that date, the department for cultural goods was in charge of being the intermediary between movie productions and the region. Even though there were no fixed criteria to select movie projects, there was also not a fixed strategy to attract external productions or to support local artists. After the foundation of the Film Commission, however, tasks that usually fell under the department, were shifted to the Film Commission.

This led to a certain overlap of tasks and strategies, which is sometimes the cause for some tensions. Both stakeholders are interested in making optimal conditions for external movie production, but at the same time, competition and conflict are tangible, which is a common trait when dealing with different stakeholders (KARLSEN, 2002).

In general, external movie productions do not have direct contact with the department for cultural goods, as they go first to the Film Commission. The Film Commission holds the position of gatekeeper between the movie production and other local stakeholders.

From the findings, it emerged that there are some issues of trust and credibility between the different stakeholders, for example, related to the fact that non-locals can have roles on representing the interests of the valley. However, since it is in the interest of all parties to make the movie in the region, they eventually find common ground and collaborate.

Other stakeholders are the local inhabitants that have been involved by the Film Commission during the shooting period of *Rocco Schiavone*. Some of them are professionals who every time there is a movie production in the Valley are called to work as gaffers, catering people, location managers, casting assistant directors, among others (the so-called below-the-line professionals). As shown in the revised literature (CUCCO; RICHERI, 2011; COLANGELO, 2018) Local audiovisual professionals benefit economically by being involved by the Film Commission and they guarantee access to information and services that the external movie production needs.

For instance, the location manager is a key figure for movie productions, because they know the territory, can recommend places to film, and have all the know-how and contacts to film in given areas. Another type of local stakeholder are services such as accommodations (hotels, B&B), catering (restaurants,



and bars), or commercial activities. From the interviews with both groups of local stakeholders, there was a positive assessment regarding the external movie production and the effort of the Film Commission on the region. In fact, the tv series production enhanced investments and economic growth in different sectors, such as hospitality and restaurants (CUCCO; RICHERI, 2011). Furthermore, Cross Productions was able to create a positive atmosphere and environment during their stay in the Valley so that local inhabitants have the pleasure of hosting them in their hometown.

Locals also understand the positive impact of the tv series on the region, also for a matter of local pride. Inhabitants seem to look positively at the Aosta Valley Film Commission because it can guarantee jobs in the movie industry during the year, and because it is a body that is present for the local community. Those aspects are of interest because both Cross Productions and the Aosta Valley Film Commission can be accepted by the local community.

However, even though local stakeholders recognize the effort of the Film Commission and are interested in working in the movie industry in the Valley, their working conditions are often unstable and precarious. Throughout the year, the local crew is not able to work exclusively for movie productions because there are not enough projects, which means that they are need to shift to other sectors or even move to other regions. The opposite happens when there is more than one production at a time in the region, as it is not possible to sustain the high demand for local crews. In the long term, this could be a problem, because it could make below-the-line professionals move to other regions, and make the Valley without a local crew (again).

To conclude, the third and last phase was identified as the post-production phase, so a phase, in which exclusively local stakeholders are involved. In this phase, local stakeholders try to make strategies to stimulate spillover effects of the audiovisual product filmed in the region (NICOSIA, 2019). Those spillover effects are mainly territorial marketing and film-induced tourism. In this phase, public and private stakeholders do work together to attract tourists to the region (PÓVOA; REIJNDERS; MARTENS, 2021).

As a way to try to use the existing resources for tourism development, the Aosta Valley Film Commission designed a strategy in collaboration with the municipality of Aosta to make a virtual tour based on Rocco Schiavone's locations. There is also a local tour guide who planned a tour based on Rocco Schiavone around the city of Aosta. Even though there is a desire to collaborate and develop tourism products based on Rocco Schiavone, this phase is still at the beginning.



8 CONCLUSION

The Aosta Valley Film Commission had a pivotal role in the making of the tv series Rocco Schiavone, because of all the information and relations with local stakeholders. Even though the Aosta Valley Film Commission played an important role in the making of the tv series, its economic incentives were not the main motivation which attracted this runaway production to the region. In fact, Cross Productions chose the location for this tv series independently from the Aosta Valley Film Commission's financial incentives. This corroborates the idea that economic incentives are not the main reason behind the selection of a location for runaway productions. It would seem that artistic and creative reasons are more crucial in the decision making process.

Due to its limited economic power, the Aosta Valley Film Commission cannot play a dominant role in relation to runaway productions. Therefore, its main task is not related to attract runaway productions, but to support them in the making of the audiovisual product. By connecting the runaway production with local stakeholders, the Film Commission is capable of making all the parties satisfied, including the Film Commission itself, in the sense that increases its reputation, capability of coordinating diverse stakeholders, and it gives visibility to local human resources. Another important factor that strengthens their role relates to the ability of creating a strong knowledge-based network.

In the production phase of the tv series, the Film Commission acts as a central node of a collaborative and knowledge-based network, composed by the runaway production and all the local stakeholders, both private and public. All the stakeholders benefit from being part of the same network, and, for this reason, the relationships that take place within the network are based on collaboration. These are often economic relationships, because stakeholders can benefit economically, both directly and indirectly. By demonstrating that the network is based on resource dependency, it emerged that players interact with each other by exchanging information and economic resources (job positions, money, and visibility).

Despite this main framework,, in this specific case study, only one regional stakeholder within the network didn't seem to be satisfied, as it emerged that lack of trust can be a major issue hindering the relationships in the network. Tensions take place, for example, when the role of stakeholders in the network shifts and some perceive it as losing power. The importance of this sector in the creative economy of a region, and consequently in its potential regional development, becomes clear in the case studied in this paper. The Film Commission played (and plays) a central role in incentivizing direct expenditures on the territory, and supporting local job creation. However, it is still unable to create stable economic conditions for regional stakeholders throughout the year. Everything depends on the runaway productions that decide to film within the region. To foster stable job opportunities, bodies such as Film Commissions,



should create a strategy to make the local movie industry a more stable and sustainable industry. One of the most challenging issues in this creative sector (and in culture in general) is the fact that local crews only have short-term collaboration contracts as freelancers as there isn't sufficient demand. As corroborated in other regions of the globe, filmmaking is still an occasional activity within the region (PÓVOA; REIJNDERS; MARTENS, 2021).

If within the region there are not enough job possibilities in the sector, these professionals will move to other sectors that can assure them continuity in working, or they will move to other regions in which the movie industry is more developed. Hence, to make more favorable conditions for local workers, Film Commissions should develop strategies to attract more external productions that can ensure continuity and be sustainable over time. To make a sustainable movie industry, however, many infrastructures are needed such as rehearsal theatres, rental equipment, costumes rental, post-production studios, and film academies. In the present case study, there is a willingness in seizing the opportunity of Rocco Schiavone to stimulate economic spillovers, such as territorial marketing and film-induced tourism, which is still in its early days as an organized product.

The findings of this study suggest the need for further research, in two areas in particular. The first relates to strategies to overcome the temporary nature and consequent precariousness of the jobs in the sector. The second area would be to understand how sustainable tourism products, fitting with the region and the local community, could be developed. In this way, spillover effects of a runaway production could be enhanced and contribute more systematically to the economic and social development of the region.

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APPENDIX A EXAMPLE OF INTERVIEW GUIDE

| | |
|---|---|
| Introduction | Can you tell me a bit about the tv series Rocco Schiavone and your role in Cross Productions? |
| Relationship between Cross Productions and the territory | What steps did the production take to film in the Aosta Valley? |
| Funding | How did you get the funds to film the series, from who, and which were the conditions? |
| Relationship between Cross Productions and the Aosta Valley Film Commission | How is your relationship with the Aosta Valley Film Commission? |
| Relationship between Cross Productions and the Aosta Valley Film Commission | Did you get any financial incentive to film in the Aosta Valley from AVFC? |
| Relationship between Cross Productions and the Aosta Valley Film Commission | Did you get any other kind of incentives from AVFC? |
| Production expenditures | How much did the production spend during the filming in the Aosta Valley? And what kind of expenditures? |
| Production expenditures | How many local people have you employed for each season? Have you worked with the same local people for all the seasons? |
| Media Tourism | Did you have any contact with the ministry of Tourism? |
| Media Tourism | In which way did the tv series <i>Rocco Schiavone</i> promote tourism in the Aosta Valley? |
| Rocco Schiavone | Can you tell me a little bit more about RS? 1) How did that project developed? 2) How would you describe any potential impact? |
| End of Interview | 1) Do they have any contacts that I could talk to? 2) Can I go back to this person if I have more questions? |