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MATERIAL CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Material Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development

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1. Introduction

This paper deals with culture and economic development. This connection only a few decades ago didn't much matter to the officials of national governments and international institutions. Culture was just a sign of civilization and the economic development was brought forth by planning investments in the industrial sector and enhancing regional institutional capacity (Lewis, 1954; Myrdal, 1957; Hirshman, 1958; Kuznets, 1966; Todaro and Smith, 2003). Nowadays culture is acknowledged as an asset to regional economies (World Bank, 1999; Throsby, 2000) and the road to the economic development goes also through localized industries made up of micro and small sized firms producing goods and services based on material culture and local traditions (Santagata, 2000). This new scenario of development is undoubtedly more respectful of the indigenous social values. As a matter of fact the geography of material culture shows a worldwide diffusion of great variety of regional handicraft products and defending material culture means consequently defending cultural diversity.

This paper will consider an old phenomenon through the lens of the economic discipline: it focuses on material culture. In the first part (section 2) some definitions of material cultural heritage are presented. In the second part (section 3) the main issues concerning the value chain of material cultural heritage will be discussed by comparing the experience of developing countries with two paradigmatic models, the first (HQM) is based on the production of art and design of high quality, the second (LCM) on the low cost production and counterfeiting of artisanal objects. In the third part (section 4) the two case studies of Pakistan and Ecuador will be discussed; this part will be aimed to analyze how can material cultural heritage be used as a strategic asset for sustainable economic development, especially for local communities.

2. Material, Tangible, and Intangible Cultural Heritage

2.1 *The UNESCO definition*

Inquiring into the relation between *material* culture and *endogenous* economic development is something new. It aims to show the economic value and the special economic organization for producing goods based on *material cultural heritage*, i.e. the special area bordering on *intangible-oral* and *tangible-natural cultural heritages*.

Through the *World Heritage Convention*, since 1972, and the *Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity*, since 2003, UNESCO now recognizes the worldwide value of both: the tangible cultural and natural heritage, as the historic centre of Florence, Galapagos Islands or the Fort and Shalamar Gardens in Lahore, and the intangible and oral heritage, such as the oral epic of the “al-Sirah al-Hilaliyyah” surviving in Egypt from generations to generations; or the dances, songs and drums of the “Tumba Francesa”, expression of the Afro-Haitian culture performed today in Cuba.

Nevertheless material cultural heritage, in which the intangible essence cannot be disentangled from the tangible essence, is not considered as a specific and autonomous notion, close to arts and crafts, and to the efforts humankind has made to improve its habitat and its living conditions.

Notwithstanding the growing attention paid to the specific components of human culture, it will be claimed in this paper that material culture, the oldest expression of our civilization, is in some way underestimated. Its autonomous and tacit acknowledgment is limited, mainly because of the old stereotype about the low quality/low economic value of handicrafts, the primary products of material culture. As a result, material culture is object of too little consideration in cultural programs and economic development strategies. Also in the UNESCO program there is a clear orientation in favour of the oral and intangible cultural heritage.

If, however, material culture got in the past a low profile, there is today a worldwide evidence that material cultural resources, namely culture-based goods show a main road to development, especially for micro and small enterprises and local communities, allowing them to develop according to their own characteristics, providing them with new economic activities and thus enabling them to become less vulnerable and less dependent on current more erosive development strategies.

In fact, as it is shown by the international experience, craftsmanship is not the realm of low quality production, but it may attain aesthetic quality and symbolic value as well as significant production value. The goods based on material culture have become a modern example of sustainable and endogenous growth based on the localized cultural industries, because they are the first front of industrialization, the closer to local resources and traditional knowledge, the less demanding in terms of financial capitals and technological innovations.

Indeed, when most of the economic and human resources are local, the economic process becomes endogenous. Of course, such evolution requires continual adaptation, but the strong advantages in providing technological innovation, sharing information, differentiating products, regulating the market and fostering idiosyncratic cultural links are reliable guarantees of sustainable growth (Piore and Sabel, 1984).

Material cultural heritage, and design-based goods, can all be articulated in chains of creation of value with innovative experiences apparent at every level: aesthetic, legal, productive, distributive, technological and educational. Moreover, such activities take on new economic significance when they assume the form of, and are governed in the logic of industrial cultural districts; they create a path to economic growth by means of growth of small and medium-sized firms which are intensely integrated within the territory and in the local community. In this sense, Italian industrial districts constitute an ideal model for the production of goods based on material culture (Pyke, F., G. Becattini and W. Sengenber, 1990; Becattini, Bellandi, Dei Ottati, Sforzi, 2003).

Considering material culture, the pure distinction between tangible and intangible cultural heritage doesn't appear to be a clear-cut dichotomy, apt to divide the field of cultural

heritage in two exhaustive and opposite parts. Some goods and services supplied by local communities are made up of both tangible and intangible factors, and this co-existence and union of traditional knowledge, skills and corporeality are their very substance. So three concepts of Cultural Heritage are worth to be worked on:

- *Tangible Cultural or Natural Heritage*, that is works of art, monuments, historic centres, parks or natural sites in which the corporeity and the beauty of nature are the dominant character;
- *Intangible or Oral Cultural Heritage*, that is oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, landscape, social practices, traditional knowledge, competences, and *savoir faire*;
- *Material Cultural Heritage*, that is goods based on material culture (functional objects, functional artefacts) mainly supplied by industrial districts: design-based goods, textile, apparel and fashion, ceramics and furniture, eno-gastronomic products, etc. Material cultural heritage is based on tangible and intangible components associated with a local community.

These three concepts of cultural heritage are a development of the UNESCO Convention for the *Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (October 2003). Defining intangible cultural heritage the UNESCO Convention (art.2) lists the domains in which intangible cultural heritage manifests itself:

- (a) *oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;*
- (b) *performing arts;*
- (c) *social practices, rituals and festive events;*
- (d) *knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;*
- (e) *traditional craftsmanship*

and makes reference to

“... the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.”

There is something blurred in the UNESCO’s definition of intangible and oral cultural heritage. In its actual form it safeguards the intangible traditional knowledge, *as well as the tangible transformation of that knowledge: “...the instruments, objects, artefacts...”*, the product itself, which is nonetheless part of material cultural heritage.

The asserted definition of humankind heritage based on the three concepts called up before - tangible, intangible and material cultural heritage - presents, thus, a new item with respect to the UNESCO approach: *material cultural heritage*, consisting of goods that are simultaneously and inextricably *intangible* in their intellectual nature and *tangible* in their substance; goods that are *material* in the sense that they are the result of the accumulation of material culture, that is the answer that a community has given to its needs or to the search for its style of living. The material cultural goods are the bridge towards the markets and the economic development. If only the intangible part of the material cultural heritage is safeguarded, the result is limited to the transmission of the skills to the next generation. In this way we risk to miss the real effect of preserving and fostering the culture-based goods production, namely its economic value and impact on the local development.

2.2 *Material Cultural Heritage*

Anthropologists have pioneered the concept of material culture. The anthropological point of view on material culture is based on the notion of “*the secondary environment*” that the man has built “*from the materials of his habitat*”. According to Keesing: “*Material culture has the special distinction of linking the behaviour of the individual with external man-made things: artifacts*” (Keesing, cap VIII, 1958).

Artifacts have a function and a form. “*In more valued artifacts, the form is likely to include refinements of crafts and design expressive of interests and effort beyond the narrowly utilitarian*” (Keesing, cap VIII, 1958). In this sense the functional artifacts are opposed to the works of art, like paintings or sculptures, that are in-utile and conceived without an intentional functional form.

According to this definition the list of goods the human kind has produced to protect, satisfy, and get better living is impressive. Table n. 1, primarily based on Keesing’s description of the artifacts of the material culture (Keesing, 1958, cap VIII), takes a first informal glimpse at the large and rich classification of the artifacts concerning material culture.

Table n. 1 Artifacts from material culture

UNIT	Artifacts	Uses
Natural food and beverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultivated plants. ▪ Domesticated animals of land and sea. ▪ Beverages: palm toddy, sugar cane juice, maguey juice, kava, honey, milk, coconut milk, tea , coffee, cocoa. ▪ Cheese ▪ Fermented Beverages: wine, beer, cider, liquors, whiskeys, rum, cognac, grappa, vodka, tequila, papaya. ▪ Marmalades, Olive oil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traditional Cuisine
Natural products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultivation of natural drugs ▪ Production of natural cosmetics, soap, henna ▪ Spices : pepper, coriander, cumin, etc. ▪ Tobacco, salt, incense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Homeopathic medicine ▪ Medicinal herbs ▪ Traditional medicine
Vegetal materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Artifacts: Cork, timber, rattan, jute, natural fibers 	
Animal materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Artifacts: plaiting baskets, wickers, vegetable fiber-works, straw covering (Panama hats) 	
Mineral materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Artifacts drawn from wax, ivory, bone, horn, shell, sea shells, mother-of-pearl. ▪ Artifacts drawn from stone, glass, alabaster, marble 	
Textiles and Clothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clothing made of linen, cotton, silk, wool, animals skin. ▪ Fabric and textiles made of wool, cotton, silk and synthetic materials by plaiting, weaving, knot making. ▪ Tatami mats, carpets 	
Fashion accessories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leather products ▪ Glasses, spectacles ▪ Hats, gloves ▪ Scrapers, buttons, bone needles ▪ Umbrella ▪ Watches 	
Personal Adornment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jewellery of silver, gold, copper, other metals. jade, diamonds ▪ Perfumes 	

Personal services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ health and hygiene ▪ hotels and restaurants ▪ thermal baths 	
Decorative items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ceramic, pottery, pottery for cooking, storing, brewing ▪ embroidery, glass, crystal, glazes ▪ industrial design ▪ plastic, porcelain paper ▪ statuary, tiles, tobacco pipes 	
Travel and Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ footgear, moccasins, sandals, shoes ▪ ski, travel articles 	
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ buildings, huts 	
Furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wood and furniture, ▪ designed furniture ▪ bamboo handicraft ▪ kitchenware, cutlery, crockery, utensils ▪ wooden office furniture 	
Entertainment and Cultural Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Calligraphy, pens ▪ <i>Cromos</i> ▪ Etching, serigraphy ▪ Musical instruments (violins & parts, harmonium, santoor, veena, sarod, bongo, tabla sitar, tanpura, etc.) ▪ Printed paper ▪ Toys 	
Publishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ books, printed materials 	
Weapons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ clubs, axes, quarterstaves, swords ▪ firearms ▪ shields ▪ spears, boomerangs, harpoons, throwing knives, bows and arrows, slings, catapults, bolas 	Ceremonial or decorative purposes
Metallurgy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Objects made of copper, bronze, tin, iron , brass 	

Sources: Keesing F.F. *Cultural Anthropology: The Science of Customs*, Stanford, 1958 ; International Trade Center, UNCTAD/WTO *Marketing Crafts and Visual Arts: The role of Intellectual Property: A practical Guide*, Geneva, ITC/WIPO, 2003

The other social sciences do not add so much to the former definition and actually there is no universally acceptable economic definition for artisanal products. According to UNCTAD "*Artisanal products are those produced by artisans, either completely by hand, or with the help of hand-tools or even mechanical means, as long as the direct manual contribution of the artisan remains the most substantial component of the finished product. These are produced without restriction in terms of quantity and using raw materials from sustainable resources. The special nature of artisanal products derives from their distinctive features, which can be utilitarian, aesthetic, artistic, creative, culturally attached, decorative, functional, traditional, religiously and socially symbolic and significant*".¹

¹ , Definition adopted by 44 countries' representatives participating in the UNESCO/ITC International Symposium on "Crafts and the International Market: Trade & Customs Codification" (Manila, 1997). The following is added: "Artisans can be basically defined as persons who carry out a manual work on their own account, often helped by family members, friends or apprentices, even workers, with whom they constantly keep personal contacts, which generate a community of intellect and attachment to the craft."

In the European Union material culture, represented by craft-trades, plays an important role, but while there is a definition for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, there is no a unique definition for craft enterprises (European Commission, 2001). Spain, and in some way United Kingdom, include in the craft production the artistic activities, others countries refer the definition of craft enterprise to the profession of the independent worker or to the economic activities carried out. The three European countries where craft enterprises are more diffused are Italy, France and Germany.

3. Paradigmatic models of the value chain for material cultural heritage

3.1 Economic importance of selected material-culture-based-sectors: an international comparison

Each national economic system has, in principle, ever been engaged in satisfying the material and, let's say, anthropological needs of its citizens. Nevertheless the goods based on material culture are in relative economic terms more important in the developing countries, where technological innovations and industrial mass production are rare.

During the XX century, and even more dramatically during the colonialist era, the production of goods based on material culture was dominated by the western nations whose exports weakened the productive capacity of the developing countries. The developing countries were neither capable in substituting imports with national competitive production, nor in improving the value of the local production, enhancing the links with the local culture, perfect expression of traditions and customs. However at the beginning of this new century, developing countries seem to be in a better position, given that local productions are self reinforcing and can generate a beneficial flow of exports.

In this sense the *Export/GDP* ratio will be the first indicator of the importance of a sample of goods based on material culture for a selected number of developed and developing countries. Let's take, just as an exercise, some example of products based on material culture. The table 2 shows the percentage of the export over the GDP in men wear woven, women wear woven, total wear woven, clothing accessories, and pottery. As it can be observed, in the developing countries the average ratio is permanently superior in the developed countries. Considering that usually export comes after satisfying the domestic demand, this result seems to confirm a global trend in the importance of the material culture for the economic development of the developing countries.

Table n. 2 Export/GDP %, Selected countries and items, 2002

Country	MENS/BOYS WEAR WOVEN Export/GDP %	Women Wear Woven Export/GDP %	TOTAL WEAR WOVEN Export/GDP %	CLOTHING ACCESSORIES Export/GDP %	Pottery Export/GDP %
Developing					
Mexico	0,323	0,271	0,594	0,052	0,010
India	0,211	0,366	0,578	0,047	0,003
Indonesia	0,601	0,659	1,260	0,056	0,039
Morocco	1,523	2,282	3,805	0,088	0,179
China	0,600	0,732	1,332	0,172	0,119
Thailand	0,481	0,436	0,917	0,066	0,144
Bangladesh	4,270	1,713	5,983	0,028	0,017
Hong Kong	0,835	1,545	2,380	0,000	0,000
Turkey	0,603	1,096	1,698	0,236	0,015
Pakistan	0,864	0,286	1,151	0,447	0,000
Korea Rep.	0,128	0,134	0,262	0,152	0,004
Ecuador	0,019	0,002	0,021	0,021	0,013
AVERAGE	0,872	0,793	1,665	0,114	0,045
Developed					
Italy	0,227	0,283	0,510	0,168	0,025
Germany	0,084	0,127	0,211	0,025	0,021
France	0,004	0,080	0,084	0,027	0,015
Usa	0,007	0,004	0,010	0,010	0,001
Belgium	0,390	0,404	0,795	0,102	0,029
United Kingdom	0,003	0,045	0,048	0,043	0,023
AVERAGE	0,119	0,157	0,276	0,062	0,019

Sources

GDP: World Development Indicators database, World Bank, July 2003 4

EXPORT: International Trade Statistics, International Trade Center, UNCTAD/WTO

3.2 Two models, two policy options

Considering the absolute values of export in total wear woven, clothing accessories and pottery, just as an example, it may be noted that Italy and China emerge as leaders of two groups of countries: developed and developing.

But at the same time two models of material cultural goods supply may be identified and called "HQM" (High Quality Model) and "LCM" (Low Costs Model). They are the two poles of an axis that measures the quality of the products based on material culture. HQM represents the maximum level of aesthetic, design and symbolic value. LCM, largely involved in production under foreign licenses, in copying and counterfeiting, gets on average a low-minimum level of quality.

This phenomenon divides the world of production of material cultural goods in two groups of countries. This division may be expressed in two different ways; first of all the countries can be grouped according to their level of development: developed ones are headed by the best HQM

and developing ones by LCM. As shown in the graphic n.1 this division is based on a sharp discontinuity between the two models.

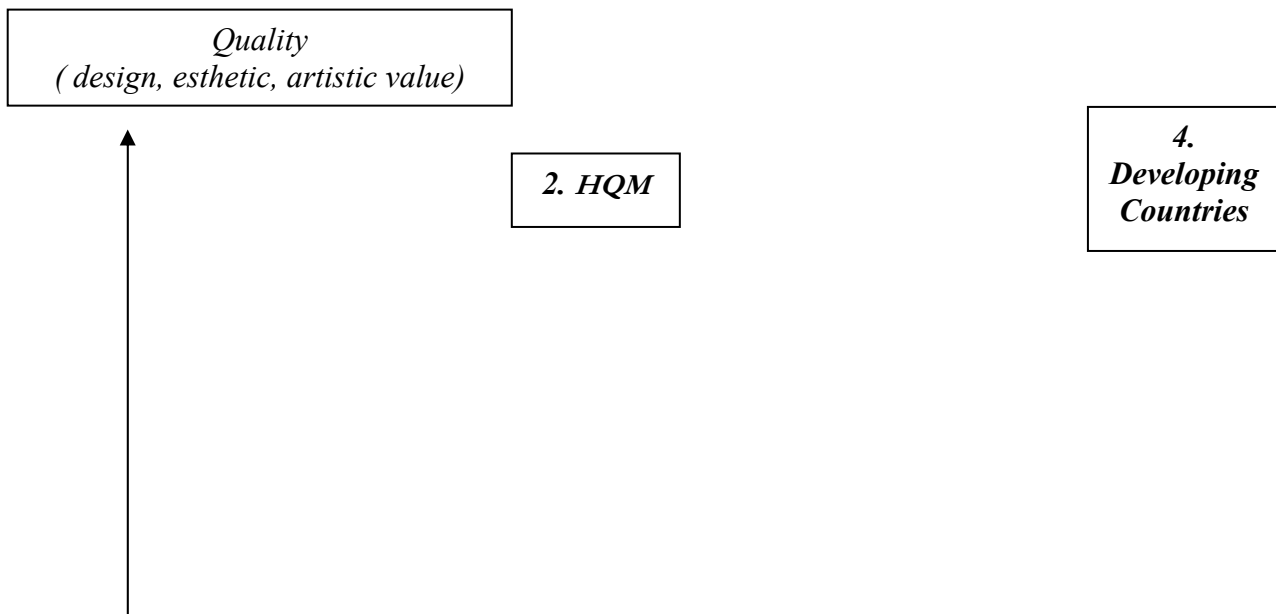
The variable on the axis of the ordinates may be intended as a composite indicator of the product quality. Observing the market for goods based on material culture, the following characteristics should be included as indicators: design value, esthetic value, artistic value, symbolic value, quality of the raw materials. On the axis of abscissas is just indicated in a informal way the importance of goods based on material culture over the national economy. To be more precise this notion should be expressed by variables like the value added in the material culture sector over GDP or the economic value of the international and national reputation of material culture sector per country.

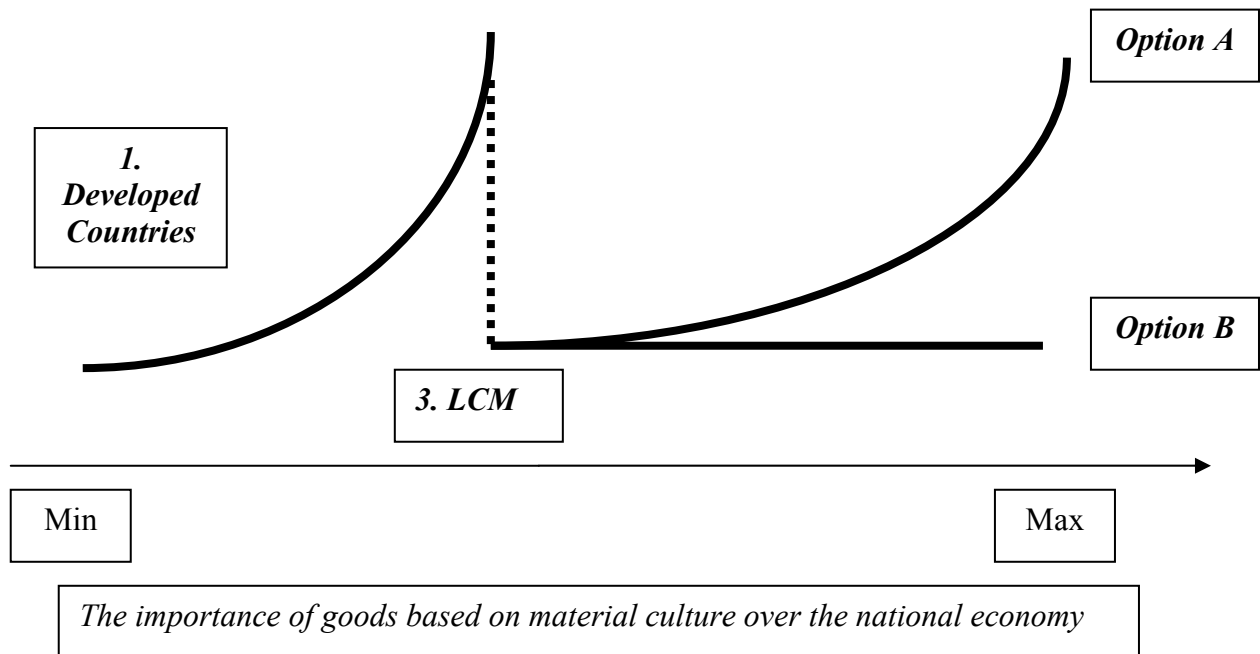
HQM and LCM divide the world into two groups: the developed countries, which, the more important material culture become for their economies, the more they pay attention to quality, and the developing countries whose future trend seems for the moment uncertain.

HQM appears as the new frontier of the production of goods based on material culture. But developing countries face two options, or opportunities: if the option A is chosen, it means that the country will move towards high quality production; if option B is selected, it means that the country will follow the LCM model, more market, low costs oriented and less sustainable in countries without that massive local market.

Which option will prevail, it depends on the evolution of four models, namely the models representing the production of material culture in Developed Countries and Developing Countries.

Graphic n. 1 *Four models for material culture production*





3.3 Strategic choices

According to the international and historical experience, the developing countries should choose their option for the quality, the *option A* above. However this choice will depend on the evolution of some strategic issue related to individual and collective behavior, and the model of industrial organization. In short, the main issues involved into their choice are the following.

1. The capacity to organize the production system as cultural districts or cluster.

The concept of industrial district is dating back to the XIX^o century, but new to most of developing countries. The cultural district or cluster is a variant in which most of the goods are produced with the symbolic and aesthetic potentials attached to the local culture. The Italian experience shows that a process of endogenous economic development can be supported by a strategy based on cultural districts models. These models represent good practices of sustainable endogenous growth led by individuals, communities and local public authorities. Even if a district is supported by a mix of selfish individualistic behavior and boosts of cooperative spirits, the role of local and regional governments is an imperative aspect of the consolidation of success of these models. Given that most of the developing countries are in their evolution process of decentralized government structures, the concept of full cultural districts will take time to be implemented. Nevertheless in developing countries many *potential* industrial districts exist, whose characteristics match those single out by the theoretical analysis: a density of small and medium sized enterprises belonging to the same value chain and producing a good based on the local material culture; positive externalities generated by the free circulation of knowledge and skilled workers; trust and cooperation; some local institutions supporting the local system.

2. *The capacity to assign and manage collective and individual intellectual property rights.*

To assist the change from potential to real districts can be useful the assignment of the collective intellectual property rights. While the *individual* intellectual property rights safeguard individual producers providing them with the efficient incentives to invest, mostly in quality and reputation, the *collective* intellectual property rights pertain to all the producers located on a given territory. *Geographical indication* and *Appellation of origin* are two collective rights that revealed themselves as very important in the start-up phase of the potential cultural districts or clusters.²

The assignment of collective intellectual property rights yields particularly interesting positive consequences: as they create a monopolistic privilege, they allow an increase of prices and of yields, which contributes to a substantial accumulation of capital; legal protection generates incentives so that producers find their incentives in the investment and valorization of products that have been selected through a long cultural tradition; legal protection and economic incentives lead to better control of the productive and distributive process, with a remarkable increase in the quality of the products.

3. *The involvement of local communities.*

Local Communities are the real actors of their development, and have shown more and more interested in models based on cultural capital.

4. *The business development services*

The use business development services in order to develop cultural districts or clusters are fundamental. This way its members can take full advantage of their “industrial atmosphere”.

5. Some suggestion from the cases of Pakistan and Ecuador.

The two strategic models outlined before may be personalized thinking of Italy, the leader among developed countries in the HQM and China, the leader among developing countries in the LCM. As shown, the dynamics of the LCM presents two opposite options: moving towards high quality or staying in the low costs model. The evolution of the LCM is specific to each country, according its local traditions, human capital, and the openness to the international markets. “*One country, one story*” means that the strategic choices for sustainable economic development are extremely variable and tailored. The two examples of Pakistan and Ecuador are a first view of how local social and economic conditions influence the start up or development of cultural districts.

4.1 *Cultural districts for material culture based goods: the challenging case of Pakistan*

² In the ITC-WIPO definition (ITC-WIPO, 2003 p. 10): “ An appellation of origin is the geographical name of a country, region or locality, used to designate a product that originates there, and that has quality and characteristics that are due exclusively or essentially to the geographical environment, including human factors”. The appellation of origin gives rise to an exclusive right, namely to a monopolistic power which is shared among the producers located in one protected area.

The promotion of goods based on material culture needs development within the local communities. In countries like Pakistan culture-based goods are not produced, developed and promoted on a very formal level. In the public sector, although a department of small industries has its institutional basis, its access is just limited to some urban communities while far-flung rural communities are deprived from it. In rural communities individuals are producing some culture-based goods, but they are of low quality, poor designs and with a little consumption on local level. The whole process of this production is very informal and the producers are just involved in it for their survival, to earn some money and poorly sustain their livelihood. But most of the local producers are living in a despair situation. Craftsmen guilds and associations are absent and individuals are producing goods but vastly exploited by the local middlemen.

The new generation is alien from their ancestor's occupation. Once they have gone through the modern schooling then they never go near to their ancestor's occupation, just looking towards a job in any public department. The school curricula have no space for the indigenous skills; local productions and resources. There are some institutions in Pakistan offering courses in arts and crafts design but to most extent these are not fulfilling the needs of rural communities particularly. The elitist style of these institutions has made it very costly which limits it only to the elite populations of the urban communities.

Economic globalization is taking place through its technological tools and systems. To compete in such a technological era, someone has to be more developed and innovative in technology to survive. But countries like Pakistan are far away from developed countries in this regard.

The developing consumer culture needs more luxury goods to consume on a mass level. Locally produced goods are not of the needed quality because design strategies and creative mechanisms are absent. The products are not aligned with the fashion trends and developing consumption need.

Culture based goods of Pakistan are deprived from the appropriate export policies and practices. A very little concentration is given to it, which is not enough for the promotion and distribution of these goods on a global scale.

All the above-mentioned reasons are causing a serious decline of culture-based goods production in countries like Pakistan. On one hand the indigenous skills are obsolescing, and on the other hand the economic statuses of local communities are worsening day by day. Local communities are badly becoming dependent on the global market for their needs and local interdependency and self-reliance are vanishing in illusions. This entire situation is not so encouraging for the local economy.

Decentralization and encouraging signs for cultural districts. Most of the developing countries, including Pakistan, exercised the devolved and decentralized local government structures in last few years. As the very representatives of grass root level newly established local governments are interested in culture development but are, to some extent, unable to get proper steps for its development. The main causes of these limitations are lack of theoretical basis and skills regarding cultural development, lack of sound human resources that can play a vital role in community mobilization, indigenous resources utilization and partnership building

between local governments and communities. New governance system of local governments is open and supportive in the utilization of indigenous resources and culture-based goods promotion that can give birth to the cultural districts concept in Pakistan. So keeping in mind the situation, there is a need to involve local governments, youths and communities in a process of reflection and action that would lead them towards strengthening of local economies through production and marketing of cultural goods and development of cultural districts.

Potentiality of Cultural Districts in Pakistan. Many districts in Pakistan have characteristics of cultural districts. It just needs to be structured, systemized and recognized as cultural districts and promote its potentials. For example District Swat is very famous because of its fine cloth made by hand in most of the households. The local cloth called *Khadar* is wear through out the Pakistan in winter. The quality and culture touch of *Khadar* shows the identity of its district. But all these production of *Khadar* is not formalized to enough extent. Similarly Tharparker is producing a very fine quality caps and clothe called *Ajrak*. The local cultural aesthetics and elements are very obvious in it. But the marketing of all these production is limited within Pakistan and can hardly be obtained in other countries. Likewise the *Pashmeena Shawls* of Kashmir, embroidery products of Balochistan, ceramics of Hassan Abdal, foot ware of Charsada and visual arts of Lahore have the basic characteristics of local cultures and are worth to be distributed worldwide but in most cases such products are deprived from export favors.

To develop these potentials of cultural districts it is imperative to assemble the local artists and make strong partnerships with the newly established local and district governments to formulate sustainable strategies and favorable policies. NGOs can play role of catalysts and a bridge between artists' communities and district governments for the promotion of cultural districts.

4.2 *Cultural districts for material culture based goods: the case of Ecuador*

When referring to cultural districts in Ecuador, one must review some basic notions about the cultural districts theory, namely that a cultural district can not simply be created from one day to the other - cultural districts are the result of a historic process, of time and space-specific creativity - and that a distinction should be made among existence of potential cultural districts and development of cultural districts. Taking this into consideration, one can analyze the current situation of cultural districts in Ecuador, their immense potentiality and the implications of material cultural capital for their development.

Background of cultural districts. Ecuador, the smallest of the Andean states, is considered to be a multicultural country, which encompasses a large cultural richness, especially but not exclusively, hold by indigenous people. Within indigenous communities, cultural expressions and manifestations are deeply intertwined with their daily activities - just to give an example, family members wear textile crafts produced by them and traditional dances are performed for harvesting time or for religious celebrations.

Cultural activities have been performed for centuries all over the country, but each region has developed its own cultural expressions according to local habits and available materials. As time passed by, each region specialized in certain kind of culture-based products,

especially in crafts production, and even within regions clear differentiations in aesthetical, functional and structural terms from one small village to another could be perceived. Progressively, incipient but well-rooted cultural districts started to emerge and consolidate and their importance started to grow notoriously.

Spanish invasion occurred afterwards. Most authors agree that the arrival of the conquerors dramatically interfered with the evolution of the cultural districts and caused a significant diminishment of existent cultural capital. Some other authors consider that as a result of Spanish conquer; syncretism took place and enriched cultural manifestations, which accordingly encompass both indigenous and Spanish origins. In any case, cultural districts survived and after more than 500 years, they have started to regain importance and its wide potential cannot be neglected.

Current situation of cultural districts. Cultural districts in Ecuador exist then as a result of a historic process. They are mainly located in the Highlands and the Coast Regions and their production can be easily identified as pertaining to one sub-region or another. Apart from product distinctions, most cultural districts in Ecuador share general features and obstacles. Some examples of main obstacles include:

- No mechanisms for selecting artists and promoting the inclusion of talented individuals into the cultural district.
- Unprotected individual and collective intellectual property rights.
- Design not in accordance to market trends.
- Low quality of crafts.
- Lack of market access both at national and international level.
- Demand hasn't been sufficiently generated at a national level.
- Training and funding limitations.
- Progressive abandonment of districts by artisans unable to sell their products and forced to emigrate and look for jobs in other sectors.
- Inexistence of an institutional framework able to coordinate efforts of individual artisans within the districts and generate networking.
- Lack of alliances with local governments, private sector, and other cultural sub-sectors.

Even though the obstacles seem to be significant and general requirements for the existence of cultural districts - stated in the previous section - seem not to be accomplished, crafts cultural districts have demonstrated to have economic significance for the country. Just as examples, one can consider the importance of ceramics, textiles and leather regarding GNP, Foreign Trade and employment, as table 3 shows:

Table. 3 *Ecuador, Economic information on Ceramics, Textiles and leather, Toquilla Straw (Panama Hats)*

	<i>Ceramics</i>	<i>Textiles and leather</i>	<i>Toquilla Straw (PanamaHats)</i>
	Highlands districts	Highlands districts	Coastal districts

GNP	Excluding oil, food, chemic products and machinery, ceramic production represent 40% of total production of manufactured goods.	This sector represents 15,7% of GNP (30% of which is hold by leather).	n.a.
Foreign Trade	Ceramics total exports represent 8% of non-traditional manufactures. Craft ceramic exports represent 33,5% of total ceramic exports.	Since 1987, textiles and leather have occupied the second place in importance within industrial activities, being one of the most stable products.	Ecuador holds a 11,95% share of Panama hats world market Panama hats: 50% of production is exported to Europe
Employment	In Azuay Province 12% of the total working population is devoted to ceramics In 1998, almost 7000 people worked in ceramics It has been estimated that between 5000 and 7000 craftsmen work in small ateliers.	800,000 people rely on leather-related activities in the country, including craftsmen and their families, both in the formal and informal sector - Leather treatment ateliers: 100000 workers - Shoes ateliers: 330000 workers - Leather products commercialisation: 290000 workers - Others: 80000 workers In year 2000, it was estimated that there were 1582 leather-based ateliers, in which 7910 people worked. Each atelier hires around five craftsmen.	More than 40000 people are related directly or indirectly to the sector (from which 72,6% are women). 90% of craftsmen (women) live in rural areas or economic depressed areas. Activity represents 8,5% of national working population.

From existence of cultural districts to development of cultural districts. Under appropriate conditions potential of cultural districts seems to be significant. Even though there seems to be no disagreement about the possible outcomes of cultural districts in Ecuador, it appears to be more difficult for policy makers and other stakeholders to adopt proper strategies aimed to achieve cultural districts development. It is in this context that a proper comprehension of the importance of material culture becomes fundamental. Efforts must be especially aimed to support the material component of cultural districts.

Cultural districts in Ecuador need to be structured. They require an institutional framework capable of coordinating actions, developing networking capabilities, establishing a formal system for creation and protection of intellectual property rights, in sum, providing members of cultural districts with the necessary services they require. For this means, conformation of craftsmen organizations would have to be promoted and supported. These organizations could take the form of cooperatives, associations, non-for profit organizations, or any other, and would be mainly in charge of providing craftsmen with Business Development Services, which really constitute corner-stone for a proper development of cultural districts. Special emphasis would have to be given to training, fund raising, market access, demand development, among others.

The special insight that material culture gives to cultural districts is that if especial attention is given to the support and promotion of the material component of cultural capital of the cultural district, then cultural districts would be able to become self-sustained given that it is by means of the marketable part of cultural products and services that income is generated. This income can serve of course, and is vital actually, for the preservation of tangible cultural assets and especially for the maintenance and continual regeneration of intangible cultural capital.

It seems difficult to imagine negative effects of developmental strategies based on the cultural districts formula - especially if they are founded on their material component. However, certain aspects would have to be taken into consideration in order to achieve a proper development, such as applying permanently a multi-stakeholder approach and allowing craftsmen to be promoters of their own initiatives, if projects aim to be successful in the long run.

5. Conclusions

To sum up, one can say that even though potential cultural districts in many developing countries already exist, their vast potentiality still has to be developed and for this means a strategy based on their material component seems to be more than appropriate.

Cultural districts need to be structured, require an institutional framework that shall allow them to benefit from “industrial atmosphere” generated by cultural clusters. To this end, the conformation of associations and cooperatives seems crucial, as well as the providence of business development services. In this perspective the public support for potential cultural districts and their economic start-up is not conceivable as violation of free market rules or undue interference and limitation of the virtues of free competition at a global level. On the contrary assisting the start-up of a cultural district is a way to keep alive the world cultural diversity; it is a guarantee that the free competition is safeguarded from monopolies and multinational cultural invasions.

One must not forget that material cultural heritage is the ground of a wide range of artifacts produced since the dawn of humankind. Material cultural heritage defines, along with tangible and natural heritage, and intangible and oral heritage, the richness of the world cultural diversity. As it has been suggested in this paper, to transform potential cultural districts in actual clusters producing goods and services based on material culture needs quality, that is provided by the original traditions, the institutions of the intellectual property, the community capacity building, public policies, and marketing support crossing the path to more alive cultural diversity and to more sustainable development.

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