

CRAFTSMANSHIP

A renovated way of making and marketing a job

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“Che cosa sia poi, la natura umana è appunto ciò che qui si vorrebbe dipanare. Per raccontare la natura umana, molti si sono serviti di idee molto semplici, tradizionali, chiamate anche archetipi. Può darsi che il telaio primitivo sia anch'esso un archetipo [...]. Ai nostri giorni, un attrezzo (o, se vogliamo, un archetipo) come il telaio potrebbe orientarci nel nostro mondo, che è ancora tutto pieno di fili [...]. Anche gli uomini moderni si comportano ancora spontaneamente (o naturalmente) come dei fili: formano tra loro quelle reti o gerarchie, che chiamiamo tessuto sociale o tessuto culturale. Preso in se stesso, ogni singolo filo non è altro che un conduttore [...]. Preso in se stesso, ogni singolo filo è poco di più che un segmento [...]. Quando i fili si collegano insieme, formano qualcosa che prima non c'era: fabbricano un tessuto. Questo tessuto si impone come una realtà concretamente diversa dai fili e dai flussi che corrono dentro a ogni singolo filo. Se si tornano a considerare questi singoli o individui, essi figurano solo come segmenti più o meno intercambiabili della grande struttura complessiva: è nel suo tessuto che appare risiedere l'assoluta realtà, materiale e ideale al tempo stesso.”

Luciano Gherzi

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A renovated way of making and marketing a job

ABSTRACT

Is it possible for craftsmanship to survive today? And how?

These are the questions from which this work moves. Everyone can see the objective difficulties that small production and manufacturing realities have to deal with today. This is something that was bothering me personally, and as my professor has always used to say, if something bothers you it is because it's important. And it might be important also for others. Therefore I thought about my Italy and all the incredible heritage of craftsmen and craft skills we have and we are getting to lose. I met in my past some cases that led me to reflect upon this issue, the conditions and problems that create a limit for craftsmanship today and make difficult for it to survive.

I wondered: how could it be possible? How could it be that we don't mind about losing something so precious, a richness for our economy and a powerful resource and potential for the future?

Thus I decided to dedicate my master thesis to investigate my questions and look for a viable solution to this issue.

This thesis develops with a non-typical approach as an experimental research that builds up and takes shape during the process. It starts from a questioning and investigation around the concept of craftsmanship, its meaning and authenticity for then moving on to gather interesting insights from real cases and life experiences.

After a first approach through the literature, I analysed successful cases and stories with a critical approach to find relevant insights. In many passages of the process I was also inspired by events of my personal experience, that I used to frame a new scheme of reference to look at my issue.

I found that craftsmanship is about the "how", the specific way of doing something in a certain way. It is, in the end, about realising one's own values through an activity. This led me to investigate how it is possible to valorise craftsmanship, where valorisation means specifically to realise the values behind that activity. This consideration connects to a reflection on the theme of education and how education can help in creating the premises and best conditions for a valorisation of craftsmanship, both as a manufacturing activity and a

broader concept of making a job in a certain way. At this point the research met my personal and professional experience and I introduced in the thesis a disquisition on how communicating at the outside a professional's values enables people to attract the resources and contribution required to realise their projects.

The result of this long process of research is a new way to look at craftsmanship. It is not only something dealing with a manufacturing activity, but a way broader concept that can be applied to an any kind of activity and deals with the realisation of one's values behind that activity. Adopting a value based approach to look at the issue, this thesis becomes an address to the entire job market and world. It is about bringing back an idea of craftsmanship into our economy and working life in general, and make it the strength and starting point of a new way of making and marketing a job, where values and economy are synthesised in a renovated and innovative way.

KEYWORDS: craftsmanship, value, valorisation, education, contribution, entrepreneurship, economy.

0. Preface

Everything changes when your questions change. That happened when one day I really started to ask myself: **why**? Suddenly I connected the dots and I realised something new.

I've always admired what comes from the mind and the hands of artists. I just knew that there is so much Beauty in some things (objects, musics, images), but I really couldn't understand what of those things was moving me so deeply.

What I want to talk about is the Beauty that lies in the mastery of certain people, that I would call artisans. It's not just an aesthetic beauty, but something deeper, that you though can touch with your hands in the product that results from a process, realised to work of art, with passion and love by a person, whose only purpose is the one of making that work and make it at its best. Therein lies the Beauty of craftsmanship. It's like a piece of music made by a Bernstein: craftsmen are people who love what they do, and this love shines through in the product of their work, simply. And there you can find that Beauty.

I wish that people could catch this Beauty and be able to understand and valorise¹ it, as it should be.

This thesis was born from the meeting with Giuseppina and Edoardo some time ago. They inspired a reflection in me, that I decided to turn into my master thesis many years later. This thesis became an exploration of the concept of craftsmanship, a conceptual exploration that meets with my experience of life and work and became a project of life.

The conclusion is accompanied by a statement of intent of what I want to achieve as a professional in the future, to try to give space back and make my own contribution to valorise craftsmanship in my own country.

0.1 The importance of questioning

Everything starts from a question that you ask yourself: why do I care so much about this thing? What is this thing really about? Is there a real problem, in the end? Which is this problem? What should be done to solve this problem? And how can I contribute to this process?

¹ When I talk about valorisation I don't talk in financial terms about giving money to support an activity, but rather the implementation of important values related to that activity. See also Klammer: "Valorisation is the making real of values" (2015, p. 74).

I probably started my thesis in the opposite direction of my fellow classmates. Even with its long tradition and the high skill that made Italy recognised for its craftsmanship all over the world in the past, in the last few years I developed the idea that also in Italy there are problems when it comes to talking about the survival of a certain type of work, i.e. handmade and “traditional” works, in the modern economic context. I started wondering: is it just my impression? I might be wrongly convinced by my limited knowledge about the topic and the real functioning of the industry. Is it just an exaggeration of a situation that I met in my (little) experience? Or is it true? How are these people facing the changes of time and the market?

So I started by meeting people and talking to them, to understand whether the problems that I was perceiving was real or not. In the past months I met different players from the craft and textile world, and asked them what their perception about the Made in Italy and the handmade (textile) production is nowadays. Someone indeed might think that Italy is one of those countries where a strong “craft culture” (Klamer, 2012) still exists, as a Country with a long history and deep appreciation and valorisation of craftsmanship. However, as an Italian, I often had the impression that this is only partially true.

The confrontation with these people actually confirmed my hypothesis. They raised some issues that are not indifferent. *Even though the quality of a product is still praised and appreciated, the tendency is to prefer big names. Also those people who can afford a luxury item are often not willing to do so if they don't find a label on the item itself.*

So my question is: why? And **is it possible for craftsmanship to survive today? And how?**

1. Introduction

1.1 The topic

1.1.1 The authenticity of craftsmanship

I believe that craftsmanship is an art. I come from a country with a long tradition of artisanal production, on which it has built part of our identity. Italy has become famous for the tradition and quality of its products, and it's now recognised all over the world for its Made in Italy, apparently the third most famous brand in the world after Coca-Cola and Visa (www.cinellicolombini.it). But despite that, what can we say about the "Made in Italy"? We often discover that what we call "Made in Italy", it is not really so. Products originally made in India or China are then resold under the Italian brand, but they cannot be defined as such, they are not authentic, in this sense. On the other hand, there are activities and personalities, within the Italian landscape, that have consciously chosen to keep a certain profile and a certain authenticity in their work, often taking counter choices and going against the normal rationale of the market. These people can be looked at as craftsmen, whose work is related to specific timeframes and procedures which, if changed, would alter and deprive the work of its same nature.

In today's world, oriented toward efficiency and competitiveness, some activities are struggling to survive. Now, on one side, some have been able to create a name for themselves, and build a solid customer base that is not common to everyone. Others simply have chosen the path of industrialisation, and even though their products might remain of excellent quality, the authenticity of the traditional product from which they had started has been lost. But why is it so important to preserve this? Kevin Kelly (2008) states: "When copies are super abundant, they become worthless. When copies are super abundant, stuff which can not be copied becomes scarce and valuable. When copies are free, you need to sell things which can not be copied." He studies the network economy, and defines eight intangibles that cannot be copied. One of those is, indeed, authenticity. It is this authenticity that can still represent our strength, and that we must not allow ourselves to lose.

1.1.2 Craftsmanship is about the how, the process - On the authenticity of craftsmanship

Craftsmanship is about specific times and procedures, it's about the *how* craft people do something, more than what they do (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). It's about doing a highly

skilled work that requires thousands of hours of practice to be mastered and become almost automatic, natural (Sennett, 2008, Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), in a way that enables the craftsman to experience the flow of creative process in a state enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). When a craftsman finds himself in this state of mind, nothing is more important than the process itself. Sennett (2008) also argues that craftsmanship is “the special human condition of being *engaged*” (p. 20), in an activity of creation where hand and head, skill and science are going together. It's about the quality, and the mastery of a technique applied through a process what makes the authentic of craftsmanship, that the fragmentation of our lives makes much rarer.

What is particularly interesting in Sennett's discussion, is that craftsmanship implies being involved practically, but not (necessarily) instrumentally (p. 20), so that there might not be a specific purpose for a craftsman in doing something. We can then look at craftsmanship as a *praxis* (Klamer, 2015), so as the art of doing something in a certain way, of doing well, when a practice is interiorised and acquires meaning in itself. As *praxis*, craftsmanship contains in the process the meaning and value of itself. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) calls it “autotelic” (p. 113).

1.1.3 Praxis and the Market

Often people who do things for *praxis* decide to remain out of the market, seeing in money and in all the other “secondary” aspects, in this sense, just something instrumental, not necessary, at times almost harmful. But there are also individuals who have managed to reconcile their *praxis* with the market, without that changing their vision and without the “god money” tainting their relationship with the intangible they found in their activities.

What I wanted to understand originally was how and when it is possible for this to happen, how is it possible that the instrument (money, time and others) that normally threaten the life of the craft, could instead be transformed in the opportunity to enable it to survive. How to protect something that has a value.

But this value is not only in economic terms, nor even only in terms of heritage. Now I know that this value goes much further, and finally I realised what it is about: it's a matter of **culture**, and supporting a *way of doing* - things, a work, a job - *that can be the prelude of a future society and a new economy*. In a context of speediness, pressure towards the efficiency, goal-oriented activities, craftsmanship stands like the dialectical seed of a different socio-economic environment. *We can learn from the craftsmen the importance and significance of the **process** and the enjoyment of the same, in opposition to the result*. That's

why it is so necessary to keep the *praxis* in these activities, so to maintain their authenticity and value.

So how is it possible to valorise craftsmanship? A craft culture (Klamer, 2012) is what is needed. Craftsmanship indeed not only requires a procedure, but also an environment whereas to be recognised and appreciated.

In the tendency to focus on productivity, one loses the attention on the aspects that make the value of craft. Focusing on productivity, we think about products as the goods through which the supply satisfies the demand, and the moment of exchange in the market as the moment in which these supply and demand find a solution. In a craft culture, shifting the focus on the process, people are aware that the moment of exchange of a product within a market is just **one** of the different moments of life of an object². Here it is understood the idea that the person and the object are bound together. We can argue then that when a craftsman sells the product of his “heads³” he’s somehow also selling a part of himself. This is what makes the difference and has to be valorised. The precious connection between the man and the work of his hands has indeed an inestimable and unique value, losing the one we will not only lose a tradition, but something more. What the famous musician Bernstein argues, and Sennett sustains as well, is that when you yield to compromise and give up the quality of your work as a craftsman, you yourself lose a part of your nature.

“When we downgrade dedication we do so at our peril”

Sennett, 2008

1.2 The thesis

So pulling the strings, what do I want to research and why is this so relevant?

1.2.1 Research Question(s)

² The anthropologist Appadurai describes in his book “The social life of things” the system of gifts exchange in New Guinea, the *kula*. What is interesting, more than the example *per se*, is the idea that a material object gains a specific meaning and value according to its history, that it’s, not least, related to the people that get possession of the same, in a relationship where the person and the object have a reciprocal role in determining the value and prestige.

³ We’re here referring to the idea by Sennett (2008) of “the intimate connection between hand and head” (p. 9) in the character of the craftsman, that points out the mental component involved in the process of creative production.

My research is an exploration through the concept of craftsmanship, its value, what characterises it, what meaning does it have today, which opportunities can it have and give in the future, how to deal with the progress without losing that authenticity and the *quid* that makes traditional craftsmanship still so important today?

The purpose with my research is to investigate the condition of craftsmen in Italy, to understand their perspective and identify their main criticality within today's market. Once I have done so, the main goal I want to reach is a viable solution for them. So briefly, the main questions that are moving this work are:

Is it possible for craftsmanship realities to survive today? And how can this happen?

1.2.2 Relevance of the research

By discussing around the topic and shedding light on this issue, this thesis wants to offer a new sight and diverse perspective on craftsmanship, as an activity within the market context as much as a “way of doing” a job in a specific way. The ultimate goal of this is to induce a reflection on the meaning and importance of craftsmanship, to increase sensibility and inspire, stimulate people to take action and do something to make a change in the current situation. By providing relevant examples and suggestions which can be concretely applied, I hope indeed to see in the next future something happening within the market, and people adopting a different approach. This is the contribution that I want to provide: taking my action in the realisation of those values I so strongly believe in, and with my thesis acting upon this awareness.

After decades of capitalism and the standardisation brought by the industrial model⁴, we collapsed into the utilitarian way of thinking. The ultimate result of this tendency is a crowding-out effect on values, having as a consequence the de-valuation of the value itself. There's a need for a change in mentality. A reflection on craftsmanship can have a meaning in this sense.

“Per raccontare la natura umana, molti si sono serviti di idee molto semplici, tradizionali, chiamate anche archetipi. Può darsi che il telaio primitivo sia anch'esso un archetipo [...]. Ai nostri giorni, un attrezzo (o, se vogliamo, un

⁴ With the term “industrial” we refer to the story of the enterprise, typical of the second industrial revolution. This enterprise is characterised by economies of scale and the standardisation of the labour / product. Stefano Micelli in his book explains the differences between the terms industrial, managerial and artisanal, underlying how the linguistic misunderstandings and confusion between the different terms have lead to a series of rather relevant consequences (for further details, you can read “Fare è Innovare, 2016, p.65)

*archetipo) come il telaio potrebbe orientarci nel nostro mondo, che è ancora tutto pieno di fili [...]”
Luciano Ghersi*

1.2.3 Thesis construction

My thesis started as an **explorative research**. My necessity was at first to frame my concept. What is craftsmanship about? Why is it so relevant?

At the beginning of a process like this one, you are surrounded a storm of inputs (Leski, 2015) and you have to find the way to put them all together and elaborate something out of them. You have thousands of questions, but in the end you have to come up with a few to concentrate on. At the beginning, it was confusing and I really had moments in which I thought I was going nowhere. But then, somehow, you connect the dots and you're able to find your direction.

I already mentioned Giuseppina and Edoardo, owners of Accornero Cashmere. This thesis was inspired some years ago by me meeting this small craft reality with a huge history, a little weaving company held together by a couple of elderly people who have been producing - spin, weave and dye - handmade cashmere textiles for about 30 years. This activity is in a small village on the hills, not far from my hometown, in a place almost forgotten by God. You enter and you can see machinery and tools from the Seventeenth Century, huge shelves filled with beautiful coloured scarves, plaids and carpets... And they're just there waiting for the outside world to discover them! After years of working for big name brands like Loro Piana and Hermès, they became “too expensive” for the Italian market. It's Pier Luigi Loro Piana in person - heir of the eponymous global giant of cashmere based in Val Sesia, Piedmont, whom I met in June 2016 at a charity event - who told me that “a handmade production is not sustainable anymore in Italy,” that “it's not competitive enough to sustain a local (Italian) production.”

I took the story of Giuseppina and Edoardo to heart, and for years I kept on wondering why such a reality seems destined to disappear. The master thesis looked to me like the perfect occasion to go back to my questions and try to go deeper into the issue and understand it.

As my reflection began from the textile field, my exploration started within the same sector, so in the past year I've been meeting, observing and talking to craft people and entrepreneurs in the field, to understand their point of view, see differences and points in common between smaller and bigger realities, and depict a general framework of their current situation within

the market. Gathering from the theory and my personal experience, I then elaborated my path and the result of my exploration is the production you're reading now.

Going on through the concept of craftsmanship, its value and fundamentals, the thesis observes what is happening in Italy and elsewhere in the world around the theme of craftsmanship. It looks at some cases and from them tries to extract the main and most relevant insights to then get to a conclusion about the original questions.

A little note to the reader before you start reading: you won't find my thesis a traditional one. I took the big question mark that I was having with myself and worked on it, trying to find out what was relevant in "my" idea that could be relevant also for others. I know I might run the risk of being criticised for lack of scientific evidence - this is not the reproducible interpretation of reproducible facts and figures. Still I'm sure this can be as relevant as a canonic scientific research, because it aims at giving a new framework of interpretation for facts and topics as those we're going to talk about.

2. Conceptual Framework

My thesis was born as an explorative research to look into the craftsmanship field and to get a better understanding of today's market problems. Taking notions and inspiration from literature and working on the discussions made in class during my academic year, I elaborated my personal theory about what craftsmanship is really about, which is its value and why it would be so important to preserve it. By meeting and talking to craft people and entrepreneurs going around for my researches, I then tried to answer to the first big question...

... Is it possible for these (craftsmanship, handmade productions) realities to survive?

2.1 Changing perspective

Let's take a cashmere coat. To produce a coat for a woman you need up to 4 metres of fabric (plus the internal lining plus the thread and all the other parts). To produce a metre of fabric you need on average **X** metres of thread. After purchasing the prime material you then need to make the fabric. Producing it with a mechanical loom, you take an average of **X** hours for 1 metre of fabric. Very different is the situation if you make it with a hand loom. For a metre of textile you need from three to six hours of working, with a consequent increase of costs. A greater difference is also related to the following part of the process: cutting, sewing, finishing the coat, etc. A further question is related to the place of production: Italy vs other countries in the world where the labor is sometimes much cheaper. And our considerations can go way further.

So let's say we are a company in Italy and we want to produce cashmere coats. After a brief evaluation we would not have any doubt about what to do: we would export the production and make it mechanically. From the economic point of view, this is the most reasonable thing to do - it's definitely much more convenient in terms of costs and yield, while it is simply not competitive enough to set our production differently, i.e. manual and local. On the other, our customers would probably not be that happy to see prices increasing that much.

However we are in this case just taking into consideration the "value" of money. What about the rest? Is there another way to look at the issue?

2.2 Standard VS Cultural Economics

Adopting a standard economic perspective, we should look at the question with a rational and instrumentalist approach. In this scenario, consumers are utility maximisers, and the market the place where demand and supply meet. On one side there are people who want to buy some goods and are willing to pay a certain price for them, on the other there are producers who offer those goods and services in return for a payment. In line with this, market exchange takes place as both suppliers and customers have incentive to do that: the former want to maximise their profit, the latter want to get the highest utility depending on their income and preferences.

According to Rushtone (1999), the neoclassical rational approach is based on what he defines “methodological individualism”. According to this idea, the system is rational in a way which means “not the opposite of rational, but rather a system independent of the culture, traditions and personalities of the individuals” (p. 140). The cultural economic approach takes the distance from this perspective starting to include other elements in the discussion about a good’s value. This approach can be dated back to the 1966, when the famous Baumol and Bowen first talked about the cost disease in the performing arts. They noticed indeed that artistic labor benefits less than non-artistic labor of advancements in technology. However they still go on producing art, even when little or no economic return is expected. This is a situation of anomaly which cannot be explained by the standard economy without taking into consideration further aspects. Including psychology in his studies, Bruno Frey talks about the “endowment effect” (Frey, 2003) to explain those anomalies in consumers and sellers’ behaviour, which happen for instance when the owner of a painting is not willing to sell his/her artwork anymore, due to the sentimental value related to it.

To cite my personal experience, a few years ago I quit my first master program. I did it because I wasn’t feeling in the right place (specifically, the “right” place for me) where the “right” answer to every question was always “business” and “profit”. It’s a big error to believe that profit and money are an end in themselves, instead of means to reach a goal, and confusing the two can turn out to be not only unproductive, but dangerous and harmful too. Also Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (350 BC) admonishes to distinguish between means and ends, in a dialectics which is extremely current today and can be perfectly declined in our context, bringing us to question ourselves. Our end can’t be the money: even when you strive

for money, you probably want/need money for something else. So what do you need money for?

However, I also feel lucky because in my past I met people, scholars but also entrepreneurs who I met personally or I have read about, who inspired me with their actions and words, people who've been able to understand how a CEO sometimes must take decisions that are not in accordance with profit, but rather with an identity of history, tradition, ethics, meanings of various kind; people who stated how sometimes you also have to go against the rules of the market, if you want to remain authentic to yourself and your identity as a professional or company⁵. These people highlight as there are other factors which sometimes come into play and need to be taken into account: differently from what stated by Rushtone (1999), there are elements - values - which influences an individual's choices when it comes to "do the right thing" *for you* (Klamer, 2015).

"I had incredible offers to sell my company to big groups. But I never accepted them. These companies are forced by investors to dole out huge profits at the cost of quality. That's what happened to my competitors and they lost their mission."

Stefano Ricci

So coming back to our cashmere company, if we look at the issue only from the "standard" economics perspective, we should probably conclude that no future is going to be for the traditional craftsmanship and the handmade, not even for the local production in a country like Italy is, with its circumstantial conditions. This because it is simply not competitive, and if you hand-make you face structural limits that you cannot overcome. You can't increase productivity and reduce costs, and so generate a higher profit in this way, nor can you react quickly to the market and unforeseen situations, because of the time constraints related to the specific way of producing. However adopting a value based approach, things might be different.

⁵ I remember an episode of few years ago from *Le Italie della Moda*, a program from *Sky Arte*. In this episode they interviewed the Ricci family from the florentine luxury brand Stefano Ricci. Started as a tie manufacturing in the '70s, Stefano Ricci turned into a luxury lifestyle brand. However the idea of Ricci is that quality is an essential factor of which you can't make exception (<http://skygo.sky.it/ondemand/canali/sky-arte/le-italie-della-moda/23565.shtml>). Ricci's belief is that everything made by hand resonates with an energy that can't be found in technology-aided productions. "Something made with so much passion and care cannot be put on sale. It's like discounting passion." (<http://fashiongear.fibre2fashion.com/brand-story/stefanor Ricci/>).

2.3 The Value Based Approach

During this year of master, I got to know the cultural economics perspective. **Cultural economics**, which we already mentioned above, integrates for the first time the standard economics with other social branches, looking at the economic outcome in relation to culture in its wider meaning and the relevance it has in influencing economic affairs. Moving from cultural economics, the **Value Based Approach**, questions a number of values and looks at things, starting from the same economy and economic affairs as the realisation of these values. Under the same perspective, and so under the perspective of the values that are questioned, also craftsmanship can be seen.

2.4 The value of craftsmanship

At the light of this new perspective, we can now question which can be the value of craftsmanship.

As anticipated in the conceptual framework, craftsmanship has to be considered in much a broader sense than not the simple manual labor related to certain fields of activity. Deducing from Sennett (2008), a craftsman is a person involved in what he/she does, in a way that makes the process more important than the outcome itself. Craftsmanship is about doing a thing for the only purpose of doing *that* thing and doing it well, so it is about auto realisation and doing what you love the most.

When a person develops a skill at a master level, the activity becomes automatic, or “autotelic,” as Csikszentmihalyi says (1996). In this process the person can avoid to think about the procedures while doing something, and just follow the creative flow.

When you master a skill so well, you do not have to think about procedures and technical aspects anymore. You can just let yourself get involved in a process of creation where the hand and the head are connected to each other through the heart. Therein lies the crux of the matter: Sennett (2008) argues that craftsmanship is the condition of engagement in a process of creation where hand and head, skill and science are going together. In this state of mind, the craftsman plays with his/her art, experiments, so creates new things. This means being free from the task.

Always Sennett, at page 6, cites his professor, Hannah Arendt, who elaborates the distinction between *Animal laborans* and *Homo faber*. The first is the human being absorbed in his task and fixated in the question “How?”, while the second is the “superior” creature, a man who

lives a higher way of life, in which the focus on production is substituted by a reflection and a constant questioning on the “whys”. When a man is free from the task, the scope of an activity is no longer the result-outcome of his work, but the work in itself and the way that same work is done, which tends to excellence. It is a constant shifting from the *what-how* to the *why*. Indeed, basing on Sennet’s dissertation on *Homo faber* and *Animal laborans*, the craftsman, the good craftsman, is the one constantly engaged in a dialogue between the concrete practice that his work involves and the thinking. Here is the the meaning of the connection between head and hand which characterises the craftsman.

However, another point of reflection might be added. A sentence, composed by Louis Netzer (1948) and then misattributed to Saint Francis of Assisi, cites:

“He who works with his hands is a laborer.

He who works with his hands and his head is a craftsman.

He who works with his hands and his head and his heart is an artist.”

The concept of craftsmanship can be then expanded to an activity based on a tight connection between the head and the hand, but which passes also through the heart. A craftsman - and this also in Sennet’s vision - is a person who loves what he does, and on this love relies the dedication he puts into his work, and what makes it meaning and acquiring value in itself. This is a condition of full engagement, but also of love and passion for what you do. I guess this is the essence of craftsmanship. Now, imagine the meaning of doing and then realising something you deeply love. This is probably what it means to realise your-self. So *craftsmanship is about **auto realisation** and creating a life of higher quality.*

What changes then? Here it’s clear that the value to take into consideration is no longer the profit, but rather the quality of life, economic affairs just a way to achieve it. One can easily understand the big shift in perspective, where now economics, finance, money are seen as mere instruments to reach a different goal, not the goal itself.

Still, what can the solution be? Even if we agree now on **the value of craftsmanship** and have adopted a value based approach, we live in the market of today, and we have to survive in it. How? This passes through the **(re)habilitation of craftsmanship within the social sphere** (Klamer, 2015) **and the implementation of a “craft culture”** (Klamer, 2012). This new widespread culture would not only save the craft work from extinction, but my further argumentation is that it can also have other positive consequences, in a virtuous circle that from a work of quality and synergy originates spontaneously also money.

The value of craftsmanship therefore is originally untied from remuneration. As that value goes far beyond the market sphere, in order for craftsmanship to be valorised (again, remember, in the sense of realising its value), it is necessary to look beyond the market, into the socio-cultural sphere. Here we retrieve the 5 spheres model by Klamer (2015).

2.5 Looking into other spheres

In economics we are normally used to think in two single dimensions: the one of Market and the one of Government. When you enter a business school (this at least is what happened to me), they teach you the concepts of supply and demand in classical economics, and how they interact in the context of the market. Secondly, they explain how sometimes the mechanisms that are implemented in the market might not work (the so called “failure of the market”), and so how the government intervenes to solve the problem by providing public goods, in contraposition to the private ones of the market realm.

However, rethinking under the perspective of the value based approach, we need to acquire, produce and exchange goods to make our values real. But we also have to take into consideration that these values are also of a different kind. If we think about values like friendship or brotherhood, they don’t have a price and they cannot be “created” nor “exchanged” on the market, neither can they be in the governmental sphere. This two-dimensional picture is then incomplete and needs to be integrated with more dimensions.

My professor and economist Arjo Klamer has theorised a model which considers the existence of five spheres instead of just two. Besides the market and government - or governmental - ones, he defines the existence of three additional spheres: the social sphere, the cultural sphere and finally the *oikos*, so the familiar dimension of the home⁶.

If on one side the measures are the efficiency of the market and effectiveness of government’s interventions, for other kind of goods, as anticipated, there are other aspects to take into consideration. We don’t have to look far away to understand as for everything an everyman want to do, it has to start from the social context the person is set into.

Parents and relatives, but more in general all the people who are close to someone and shares with that someone a strong, deep personal and emotional relationship are those who first have to give support, in terms of financing, love, encouragement and maybe gifts. This is the

⁶ For further details see Klamer, *Doing the Right Thing*, 2015, chapter 9, p.134.

dimension of the *oikos*. I'd say that the social dimension already starts in here, where an individual is not alone but it has to interact and rely on others in order to realise something.

Anyway, everybody at a point will go out of their *oikoi* and enter the world. It's here indeed, in the social sphere, that they meet other people and interact with others, who will talk and give feedback on their work and actions. It's in here as well that they build relationships and persuade people to contribute in what they do in various ways. Starting from considerations about the arts and artists' work, Klammer concludes then that, to do justice to their work, at least another dimension, the social one, is required. This is the place where people socialise and converse (we will come back to the conversation topic later on in this chapter). "In this sphere they get others interested and involved, they persuade or seduce others to contribute with their time, emotion and intellect, and maybe even money (in the form of gifts)⁷. For that purpose they develop networks and have various relationships with others, some of which are professional, others more intimate." (Klammer, 2015, p. 139).

In other words, within the social sphere you build relationships, create a conversation and so a shared system of reference from which originates an impact on culture (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). It's in this context that people might become willing also to contribute - in various ways and manners - to the realisation (and valorisation!) of something.

That's why our discussion about valorisation of craftsmanship has to begin here, within the social sphere, where a conversation about craftsmanship has to start and then be codified in the culture, to ultimately give birth to what we can define a "craft culture" (Klammer, 2013).

2.6 A conversation about craftsmanship

When talking about cultural goods, Klammer (2009) points out as their value is defined as a discursive issue. In the value based approach, people are not oriented to maximise their utility, rather they want to realise their values. So instead of investing in economic capital to acquire goods on the market, people invest "cultural capital"⁸ (Throsby, 1999) to share those

⁷ Here it's recalled the idea of willingness to contribute, of which we will discuss later on in the thesis.

⁸ In 1999 David Throsby dedicates a paper to discuss the relevance in economics of cultural capital, defined as "an asset embodying cultural value" (p. 3). The concept, originally derived from sociology, is added to the three forms of capital - physical, human and natural capital - economics usually distinguishes between, and is considered for the possible implications in economic analysis it can have.

goods among their **social networks**⁹, creating a “conversation” (Klamer, 2009). Obviously, to have a conversation a social context is required.

When making the conversation, the context matters: different people in different circles can share a system of reference, codes and values that allow them to interact understanding one another. A person who is outside of this context can be automatically cut off the process. This is also why it’s important to identify the sphere where to look at and act in, because for each one there will be different terms, values, codes, in one word systems of reference (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

Putting it differently, culture is what gives meaning to our values. At the same time, values originate and are settled in a cultural context with systems of reference that must be shared too, when more people talk the same language. Culture, indeed, is what gives meaning to shared lives (Klamer, 2015, p. 21). In Csikszentmihalyi’s dissertation about creativity, he states about culture that: a culture defines who we are and what are our values, provides us with context of meanings, a sense of belonging, sometimes also inspiration.

Culture is then a shared practice, something that happens among people in a collective context. Moving further, culture matters but it’s the **conversation** that makes it meaningful. Conversation is a shared practice too, a “commons,” as Klamer calls it (2015, p. 25). In it people share - codes, terms and systems of reference, derived from the culture - exchange - opinions, ideas - and build - new codes, ideas, projects, innovations.

Given the value of craftsmanship we discussed above, it results evident that its valorisation has to happen first within the social sphere. It’s here that you build relationships and establish conversations. Furthermore, as we already mentioned, cultural goods are conversational goods, so they gain significance as far as people talk about them, in a shared context where structures and codes enable to value a speech. Only by creating at first a system of reference

⁹ I won’t discuss further the topic of networks and social networks in this thesis – this would be too long, I might write another paper only on the role of networks in relation to the craft work. However the concept of network is strictly related to the one of conversation and the consequences of spreading this conversation inside and across a network. With a specific reference to the issue of craftsmanship, a quick consideration by Stefano Micelli, who we will meet and talk about later in this thesis: craftsmen need to be part of (social) networks, and be put in contact with the right people and professions that complement and can cooperate with them effectively. Also the idea of cooperation through cooperative - this topic will be specifically discussed later on - is somehow related to the idea of a net-working.

and activating a conversation about craftsmanship it is possible to create a craft culture - so the mentality of working in a certain way and with a certain aim - and make people **willing to share and contribute**.

It is necessary to transfer the right mentality about craftsmanship and adopt the right approach for it to be valorised.

2.7 The role of education

In line with our discussion, there's the need to create the conditions for a craft culture to raise and implement. It is necessary to transfer the right mentality and attitude towards craftsmanship for it to be valorised. In a way, there's the need for some sort of "education". The role of education is then to set the premises for a conversation, put the bases that act on the structure of culture and influence it. Only in this way changes can take place: we might quote the Hungarian sociologist Csikszentmihalyi (1996), who talks about innovation as the outcome of creative processes that influence the culture and change the patterns of thought and general reference.

In today's culture, we've been oriented towards the capitalistic model, which has made people and firms going in the direction of individualism and competition for a long time. This tendency is clearly in contrast with what we said about craftsmanship, which requires a shared context and willingness to contribute to better express itself. Within this context, we have learned to interpret and value things only (or mainly) in terms of exchange value, i.e. the price we pay an item or a service on the market. But behind the price other intangible and unexpressed values exist. We might sometimes just ignore it.

According to Klamer's theory, exchange value or price has an instrumental function, as it tells people what they have to correspond monetarily to purchase a good or service, a means to realise their relevant values. "It tells the spenders what they have to give up in other goods (or values) and it tells the receivers what goods (or values) they can acquire" (2015, p. 70). Moreover, the price functions as a signal, indicating people's willingness to pay for a certain item (...). However it is not a truthful value, as it does not tell anything about the other values at stake, i.e. personal, social, societal and transcendental values¹⁰, so it is exactly the same for the values of craftsmanship.

¹⁰ For further details see Klamer, *Doing the Right Thing*, 2015, chapter 7.

2.8 Behind the price of a craft item

I visited Simone Bodo in his showroom in April 2016. After I met the reality of Accornero Cashmere, I was curious to see how another small enterprise in the same field and not far physically from each other was working - the two realities are indeed pretty different, even just in their set-up and structure¹¹. Simone is the heir of a cashmere clothing producer in the area of Vercelli (Piedmont), that he recently transformed into a structured reality named Alessandrosimoni.

I was interviewing Simone and we were discussing the price of a cashmere scarf. A couple next to us - who I discovered later is the owner of a famous luxury boutique in the centre of Turin - joined our talk while I was asking the difference in price between a scarf produced with a mechanical loom and a handmade one. My intention was to compare it with the prices established by other producers like Accornero on one side, and bigger brands like Loro Piana, Hermès and the like on the other. They expressed their point of view and what they told me was clear: as buyers, and people who constantly interface with the final customer, they know their clientele well. For this reason, they said, they would never buy handmade pieces from Simone! Although beautiful and clearly of higher quality, their clients would not appreciate those items to the point of paying between four and six hundred euros for a scarf just because it is handmade:

“It wouldn’t make any sense for us to buy even two or three pieces like this - said Alessandro while handling a beautiful handmade scarf in his hands - We are well known in Turin, and our clients would certainly have the economic availability to purchase them. However only a couple of stores in Turin could sell scarves like this one. [...] people (in Italy) on average do not care so much about quality, they mainly care about the brand.”

Honestly I was not that surprised by the answer he gave me. I was somehow expecting that. However I wondered again: why is this happening? Why one - a craftsman - should go out of Italy to get appreciation (as you can see from the testimony of all the craft people I interviewed, who are mainly addressing a foreign audience)?

In this case the high price of the item is of course reflecting the work behind it, as a handmade scarf can cost more than twice than one produced mechanically, but apparently people’s willingness to pay is not coherent with the actual value that those kind of products have - even just for the time and labor needed to create them. People would better pay a “lower” quality but branded product. I guess this means that some of those values are not

¹¹ For a better overview, look at the Appendix.

understood properly, for sure in Italy. Some sort of “education” is required to show those hidden values.

3. How to educate people about the value of craftsmanship

I have always believed that education is something that happens only in part within a school's classrooms, much more in the real life, where people act and interact together. Of course a part of the educational process takes place within educational institutions, like schools and workshops, where notions and a first practical approach begin. In this sense it is crucial that institutions begin to challenge and take steps to improve the current situation and implement the system. However there are many other ways to convey something to the outside world and so somehow also "educate" the receivers of a message: concrete actions are often what produces the most effective results, giving evidence that to influence the culture, you have to act upon it.

For this reason, also in the (more or less) traditional craft industry, there are successful stories that have been able to reinvent and find their own success by telling their public what it could not know. The Seguso glassmakers in Venice and Bertosalotti with its Youtube channel (Micelli, 2016. Read further to know more about the two example) are two exemplary cases of what I mean when I talk about letting themselves known to the world in an innovative way, to "educate" the ignorants (in the literally sense of people who ignore something) on what their value is.

This same approach, somehow, is the same which, although starting from different premises, also involves the examples of those craftsmen who have made use of new technologies to convey their message and expand the scope of their impact. And it is, again, the same philosophy that is found at the base of its innovative marketing system like the one of Asentiv (I'll talk about it later).

So other than those people who, whether in the public or the private sector, have taken action to solve the issue of education in connection to the craft field, there are also entrepreneurs and professionals (always in the craft field, but not only if one looks at craftsmanship on a broader level) who have found the way to educate their public/clients about what they do and the significance it has. It's about bringing attention to other aspects, which inevitably involve, also in entrepreneurship, different communicative and marketing assumptions).

Before we continue the discussion on communicative methods, we reiterate the concept that even in the craft world, many of today's successful cases are not from people who have distorted the tradition or have exceeded it, but from people who have been able to treasure

that tradition and carry it to the present days, by adapting it in an innovative way to new contexts or by telling it with new words and new forms. And the world (or at least part of it) has been able to accept those messages strongly.

3.1 Craftsmanship and education

As already said, craftsmanship in Italy is part of a history of tradition. Still for a long time this kind of activity has been neglected. Young people have refused to become weavers, or woodworkers or farmers,... I'd dare to say that they probably have not even taken into account the possibility of choosing a path like that, or they have looked at it as the last chance, the humblest job nobody would like to do today. On the other hand, most of the people don't even believe they could make a life out of it.

In his recent book "Fare è innovare," Stefano Micelli, professor of economics at Ca' Foscari University in Venice, dedicates some pages to illustrate the character of the new craftsman of today, the so-called "maker" (2016, pagg. 21-22). The maker is the emblem of a craftsmanship which does not look nostalgically to the days gone by, but rather a craftsman who stands out for his cultural and social characteristics, and a *way of doing* which should be typical of a new way of organising and operating the business.¹²

Although it might appear as a contradiction, in Italy this new "culture of doing" has struggled more to impose itself, as we used to look at craftsmanship, this incredible heritage we have, not as a resource but as a cumbersome legacy of the past, the latent sign of our reluctance towards industrial modernity ("ingombrante retaggio del passato, il segno latente della nostra renitenza alla modernità industriale," Micelli, 2016, p. 21). It might be that we have taken this craft culture of doing for granted for too long, or because we are part of a system that does

¹² From the book "Makers: The New Industrial Revolution" (2013) by Anderson. Here he talks about Dale Daugherty, founder in 2005 of the magazine "Make", and the makers movement. Maker culture emphasises learning-by-doing and shared learning motivated by an idea of self-fulfilment. Maker culture explores novel applications of technologies and the intersection of traditionally separate domains and ways of working. It is also seen as a reaction to the devaluation of physical exploration and the disconnection with the physical world. On the contrary, it is seen to contribute to a more participatory approach to the work, also mediated through networked technologies.

The makers of Daugherty are actually people who use - he says "play with" - new technologies and experiment things, to the point of creating sometimes new industries. According to Dale's same words makers are people who love doing what they do and sometimes don't even know why they do that things. He talks about the sense of pride that characterises things made by us and the world around us: we made it and so we are connected to it that way (Daugherty, 2011). This recalls our previous discussion about the craftsman, his creative process and his role in society, even though here the focus is on the use of new technologies and people who deal with that... Once again, it is about the way of doing!

not reward initiative and for a long time has promoted the idea that the more talented you are, the more you are destined to become professors or hold prestigious positions in big companies... Owned by others, of course! While those who choose to become entrepreneurs and opt for the “path less travelled by wagon” (Callimachus *Aetia* III century BC) are crazy...

However - and luckily - in the last few years this trend has slowly started to change. A number of institutions, public and private ones, are taking action trying to create opportunities for the craftsmanship to be (re)discovered and better appreciated, make people aware of the cause and promote, especially among the younger ones, craftsmanship as the future of our nation, when in a moment of difficulty in every industry and with an increasing unemployment rate, this sector is the one looking for new applicants and apprentices.

These actions are helping to get knowledge and a new perspective about craftsmanship and the traditional, manual jobs, highlighting in many ways the noteworthy value that they have. People like Micelli dedicate books and articles to this topics, because craftsmanship has a value not only in numeric and economic terms¹³ but also from the cultural and identity point of view. He talks about the craft as the future for a country like Italy is - his main publication is entitled indeed “Futuro Artigiano”, i.e. “Craft Future” (2011). In these books he highlights the craft work as an important figure of the Italian culture and economy, and the manufacture as one of the vital sectors of our economy. The problem is that we have been following an idea that only the scientific and abstract knowledge is valid to create economic value, so we have been losing our interest and appreciation for the manual work. This terrible mistake in the mindset has progressively kept the manual work away from the schools, and the scientific and academic realm. This gap has created subsequently not few issues.

I participated in March 2016, when I was still in Rotterdam, at a conference about the future of fashion (from the cycle of conferences “What’s next?”). During the evening one of the speakers illustrated a recent initiative promoted by the fashion design school of Willem de Kooning, the Art school of Rotterdam. The program foresees a curricular period during which the students from the fashion design department are sent to work with local craftsmen

¹³ A research promoted by Fondazione Make in Italy and developed by Fondazione Nord Est and Prometeia analyses the data related to what we usually refer to as Made in Italy, with the only exception of the agribusiness. According to the research, this sector includes more than 260 thousand firms which employ about 2,6 million people and produce business for approximately 570 billion euros (Fondazione Nord Est & Prometeia, 2015, p. 28)!

at their workshops. They can choose a specialisation among a number of options offered to them, like the fur, latex and silk manufacturing.

This project aims at creating a bridge between the school and the job market and making designers aware of the meaning of working on materials. One of the biggest problems in the fashion industry indeed is that designers coming out of fashion schools pay attention only to the aesthetic and creative side of their designs, without considering the effective possibility to make them real and how, at which costs, and so on. Moreover, the initiative wants to try to boost the local manufacturing and craftsmanship, as Dutch people are starting to see it as a treasure for them and their local and national economy.

I was really bothered while listening to these things! I thought: how can we Italians be so stupid not to do the same? Sometimes I'm too hard on my people(?) As I said, luckily several initiatives are taking place also in Italy, but here we are far from having the condition to best promote this new culture of making and make this thing real. Vladi Finotto dedicates a volume to educational models within the technical field, comparing Italy with other countries in the world. From this analysis he elaborates some "lessons" for the Italian system to learn in order to revive the fortune of local crafts (2015). There is still a lot, at a public level, that needs to be put in place, to actually move something. The Italian system is still too tied to an idea of technique as mere execution of a knowledge learned in the classroom, and an overly notional and standardised teaching, little oriented to the learning-by-doing and the personal inclinations and passions of the individual.

On the other side, in the private sphere, things are moving significantly in favour of the technical and professional education. One of the main cases is the one of Brunello Cucinelli, fashion designer, entrepreneur and philanthropist, founder of the homonymous company, who founded the School of Solomeo, whose aim is to "start a regenerative process" in which the noble values of craftsmanship can be born again, and young people find the context for learning and regaining trust in the future (<http://www.brunellocucinelli.com/en/school>).

"... restituire la propria nobiltà ai mestieri, e riconoscere il giusto compenso relativamente alla qualità di questo speciale tipo di lavoro; questo infatti è il tragitto lungo il quale la Scuola di Solomeo intende invertire tale tendenza e avviare un processo ricostitutivo virtuoso: in pratica una sorta di neo-rinascimento dei valori nobili dei mestieri, che restituisca ai giovani la fiducia nel futuro."

“... to restore craftsmanship’s nobility and pay appropriate wages for this specialised type of work. This is, in fact, the long-term goal of the Solomeo School: to reverse this tendency and start a regenerative process – a sort of neo-renaissance of the noble values of craftsmanship – while giving young people trust in the future once more.”

Other relevant initiatives, for the promotion of a craft culture, are taken by the Cologni Foundation (Fondazione Cologni), which from 1995 finances trainees in qualified sectors of the artistic Italian craftsmanship and Made in Italy, and took care of the relaunch of some craft schools of particular prestige in our country. Franco Cologni himself, founder and president of the Foundation, and former number one of Cartier and Richemont, perceives a gap at the level of craft culture and the perception and recognition of the value of craftsmanship. His idea is that a lack exists in that constant contact between school and the job world which is essential for the young people to get to know and fall in love with the more traditional crafts.

“Bisogna dare la possibilità ai ragazzi di riscoprire i mestieri più tradizionali sin dai primi anni; solo conoscendoli e “provandoli” potranno innamorarsene. Per amare bisogna conoscere, e per troppi anni i mestieri d’arte sono rimasti nell’ombra.”

There is intelligence in the “doing”, and a deep concept related to the idea of craftsmanship as a “way of doing” which should not be forgotten. As in Micelli’s thesis, not only the craft can be an important resource for an innovation that might lead our economy to a new rise. But the stakes are much higher: loaded with the significance and the values we discussed about in the previous chapters, **craftsmanship as a specific way of doing can become the resource for a re-valorisation of the economy which goes far beyond the economy - in terms of economic transactions - a valorisation in both economical and cultural terms.** In Micelli’s view the “know-how” is indeed at the base for innovation. And this is a strong point, and a relevant argumentation for those who sustain craftsmanship and try to valorise it today.

At the same conference in Rotterdam, at the Het Nieuwe Instituut, one of the speakers was a young Dutch entrepreneur, Annemieke Koster. Living in Enschede, once a famous place for the textile production, she developed a passion for the art of weaving and decided to work to

re-create the textile district around her town. I was struck by some words she said; like that we can't innovate without knowing our tradition. I reflected a lot about the meaning of what she said. The biggest problems of today comes from a way of proceeding without using a critical approach and knowing in depth the meaning - so also the roots - of what we are doing.

After the conference I went to Annemieke and asked her to deeper discuss about her activity in Enschede and her ideas of craftsmanship and tradition. We remained in contact and in August 2016 she came to visit me in Piedmont. We visited the Accornero Cashmere. While we were there Edoardo told us something: "The progress without consciousness is dangerous, really dangerous, because it pushes people to buy and consume without thinking about the meaning of what they do."

Behind the science and experimentation there's a tradition and a know-how which sometimes we don't think about, but that is fundamental for the creation of the new. Changing perspective, and starting to see craftsmanship as a resource will become a powerful accelerator for *innovation*.

"The progress without the consciousness is dangerous, really dangerous, because it pushes people to buy and consume without thinking about the meaning of what they do."

Edoardo Accornero

3.2 Craftsmanship and innovation

What do we mean when saying that tradition has to be taken and innovated? What is innovation really?

Innovation can take on different forms, and not all have the same meaning. I reflected for a long time upon this issue and wondered how this can meet up with craftsmanship, which is so essentially connected with the process, through which something is created, and the manual part of it.

While discussing with my professors about this issue, when I first proposed to research the topic, my research workshop supervisor tried to lead me in the direction of researching upon the new technologies. True, this is a viable way to let the craftsmanship survive. Many craftsmen have adopted today the use of 3D printers, laser cuts and similar tools into their

laboratories. This way has enabled them to be innovative and be different, to keep pace with the times and respond to new market needs, maybe. But something inside of me was and is still screeching every time I hear that this is the only viable future for the crafts: this is no longer traditional craftsmanship, this is rather a *new* craftsmanship. Which is good, of course it is... Be careful, I'm totally far from being a conservative who refuses progress! Still something inside of me kept saying to persist in my quest. And so I went on with my research.

In "Fare e innovare" (2016), Micelli dedicates an entire chapter to discuss how the craft work and the digital culture can live and prosper together. The architect Gioacchino Acampora has invested a lot in the last years into the digital manufacturing to relaunch the Milanese mechanic workshop Castagna. Thanks to the new technology he's been able to develop creative solutions during the personalisation phase of his cars, for instance using instruments to help the designer to cut, model and create some parts of his motorcars. In this way the total costs for the realisation are kept at an acceptable price, without - and this is the relevant aspect of this issue - taking nothing away from the craft, but expanding his potential (2016, pagg. 39-42)! However, I wonder if this can happen also in a field like the textile one. Designing a textile, dyeing it, weaving it, then maybe making a cloth out of it, is something slightly different, where the hand of a craftsman is way harder to "help" with a mechanical tool. From statistics on the level of digitisation within the Italian production system, elaborated from Fondazione Make in Italy, it results indeed that the fashion system is the less digitised, with a percentage of 10.6, more than the half of every other sector (2015). So, in a case like this, how can we innovate while keeping the tradition alive, the process intact, so the authenticity of that way of doing which gives meaning and value to it?

I shared my thoughts with Alessandra Curreli. Alessandra, an old friend of mine - she was actually my animator at the summer camp when I was a child - is now a stylist and cloth maker in Sardinia. After studying fashion with the original idea of going to America and working for a big brand, she decided to go back to Cagliari, her hometown, and work on her personal creations from there. In love with her country, she realised that she wanted to do something for it and from within it.

"Why should I look out (of Italy) for a knowledge which is already here?"

Alessandra Curreli

Her thesis - “Tessere il cambiamento”, i.e. “weaving the change” - at the faculty of Culture and Techniques of Fashion, at My Alma Mater University of Bologna, is centred on the experiences of some people in Sardinia, who took a local tradition and brought it to a new phase of life. These craftsmen recovered the ancient way of sewing, making and dyeing textiles and applied them to new fields or materials, enriching that tradition with a new symbolic meaning. Here innovation becomes rather a change in the use, let’s say, a change also in the message, connected to the handicraft work and final product, which is conveyed to the outside. Once, manufacturing was needed for the practical purpose of living - people had to make tools for their work in the fields and to cook their food, to make clothes to cover their bodies - now those men and women are recovering it because that tradition represents their past, their story, and they strongly want to tell it to the world. For this reason they want to go back to Sardinia, and be able to tell this story¹⁴.

The level of innovation here is subtler and deeper than just the application of new technological tools, as in other fields. This means translating a tradition into a new and innovative context, which meets the needs of modernity and can face its “problems”. The craftsman is indeed he who can synthesise in his creative process problem solving and problem finding (Sennett, 2008). An interesting perspective is offered here by Richard Florida (2002) who, at the beginning of the past decade, proposed to reflect on the class of “creatives” as stimulus for the new post-industrial economy. In Florida’s argumentation, creatives are those who explore new context and situations, where solutions are not the simple technical resolution to problems which were consolidated *a priori*. On the other hand creativity lies not so much in solving problems, but rather in “inventing” new ones - as we were saying about the constant relationship between problem solving and problem finding (Sennett, 2008) - and in looking at the old ones with new eyes, promoting different viewpoints.

Coming back to Curreli’s thesis, the power of these craftsmen and their artisanal-and-entrepreneurial projects is on the **value level** - the love for their territory and the willingness to make it prosper, the willingness to recover their local traditions, and so on and so forth. People like Caterina Quartana or Antonello Tedde (they are the two subjects of Alessandra’s research thesis we mentioned above) did not change the tradition *per se*. But rather they have found a new way of taking that tradition and talking about it, transmitting it. They did not change the process - that still remains the same. **Here innovation is not in the system, so in**

¹⁴ To read more about the storied of Caterina Quartana and Antonello Tedde, look at the Appendix.

the way of doing, but in the way the value of their work is conveyed, in the use of a technique, in the message, in the way things are put together and told. This is different from introducing a machine into the process and substituting part of the man's work with it. That would mean - where the handmade is such an essential aspect of it - to lose the significance of what the craftsman does, and distort it. Leski (2015) states about the creative process that creativity does not come from something you invent/create out of nothing, but from stimuli which are around you and that you put together in a new way. Innovation, in the end, lies in this.

And there is more: to recall the discussion previously started, these people have found the way to send a loud, clear message to the outside world, in this way also "educating" somehow their audience to what their *why* is!

I found some points in common with the discussion made by Micelli, who tries to understand the reasons behind the wealth of some firms in Italy, the ones he refers to as "pocket" multinationals¹⁵ of Made in Italy. He points out the significant shift that has happened in the luxury sector, from the concept of fashion to the one of heritage. Many brands have started building their marketing strategies around the idea of artisanship, relaunching the crafts knowledge behind quality work. Bottega Veneta, for instance, is one of the main examples of an international high-end clothing brand which in the last fifteen years has built its managerial model around this manufacturing culture and its creative capacity. Recognising the root of its competitive advantage has allowed the management to build around that know-how an organisational model able to grow and prosper (as in Micelli, 2016, pp. 65-66).

Of course, this is just one among many other names. After Louis Vuitton promoted the first marketing campaign around the craftsman, many other brands have proposed one by one the theme. So today you can easily go inside a Gucci store and see pictures and videos of the craft people intent on creating their items. Similarly, in Dolce & Gabbana's windows you can find images of celebrities and dressmakers at work (Micelli, 2011, p. 46). They all show how that single piece which then you can buy for thousands of euros in their store was created by the wise hands of someone. They created an entire marketing strategy based on the "how it's

¹⁵ From the definition given by Treccani encyclopaedia, "pocket multinationals" (multinazionali tascabili) are the typical firms of the fourth capitalism. They combine the flexibility of production of small enterprises to the projection on an international scale of large multinational companies. While remaining within the traditional specialisation of Made in Italy (mechanics, fashion, textiles), these companies have been able to gain the competitive advantage positions in niche areas thanks to their ability to meet the needs of demand with an offer profiled on preferences of individual consumers, as well as the reputation for high quality that their products have on international markets (Quarto Capitalismo, 2013).

been created”. And people pay for that because - coming back to Micelli’s theory - **moving to the heritage idea, fashion houses first focus their attention on what deals with the cultural content and symbolic legacy of a product** (as in Catania, 2012).

Recently, for instance, Loro Piana, the global giant of cashmere, has created a media campaign around the excellence and extreme care of their fibres, the most precious in the world, which are indeed researched and treated with the maximum experience and technical ability (see for example the website <https://www.loropiana.com/it/il-nostro-mondo-Loro-Piana/product-origin>). Pier Luigi Loro Piana, together with the photographer Bruna Rotunno, travelled around the world to document visually the stories behind their items of excellence. The results of this experience is a collection of stunning images which show the animals from which the fibres are obtained in their natural environments, and so the people who live in symbiosis with them. The local natives of those areas of the world sometimes are the only ones who still preserves the technical knowledge to work those materials (think about the lotus flower in Birmania), literally embodying the tradition of manufacturing of the fabrics. Loro Piana has built its status as the highest-end luxury brand for cashmere and fine fibres on this.

This shift produces also other consequences on the systems of communication. Micelli goes on with some considerations about the brand image and marketing. It is not true that investing in communication is sufficient to ensure the success of a company. **Telling the “making” changes also the way of advertising**, since the value of a product is based on quality, on the culture of process, on the passion that could gave birth to that product (p. 70).

I will try to go back for a second to be clearer: every case of success, from Loro Piana with its big marketing campaigns, Gucci with its videos in the stores, Caterina Quartana and the other craft-entrepreneurs from Sardinia, are all people and characters who **created their image around a content**. Of course they’ve been able to keep pace with the times, but they kept the tradition as a treasure, as something essential and unavoidable, also - perhaps especially - when it comes to moving ahead. Smaller entrepreneurial realities, like in the cases of Antonello and Caterina, probably explain better what I mean. Here innovation has to deal with a traditional way of doing, but put into a new context, sometimes associated with new technologies, often and most importantly associated with **a new message**. Antonello Tedde recovers an old tradition and transfers it into the fashion realm of today in the form of an “eco-conscious” line of fashion bags (see <http://www.antonellotedde.co.uk>). Moreover he applies the same old technique to the use of new materials, like paper and recycled plastic, so

making a line of fashionable but also ecological and sustainable bags out of it. But what he, and so Caterina, and others too - I might cite a number of names and brands - have different, is that they have **a message and strong ideals behind their brands**, which they convey in what they do.

4. *Share economy and contribution*

We mentioned previously the Hungarian sociologist Csikszentmihalyi and his work on creativity. His main contribution is to look at creativity as a systemic phenomenon, that occurs in the intersection between a person's mind and a context, made of other people and an environment where things happen. Creativity can be observed in the interrelation of three parts: a domain, nested in the culture; the field; the individual person. Here a field of experts who recognise and legitimise the novel contribution is needed (1996, from p. 27). Creativity then occurs in an environment of **co-creation**.

The greatest difference of the "Systems Model" (p. 27) is that creativity does not depend only on the individual creativity, but also on other external aspects (named the domain and the field of recognition and diffusion). This has implications also in the practical enhancing of creativity: in order to boost creativity, it's important to be involved in the process, encouraging, evaluating and selecting the works that might be attributed the title of creative and innovative.

In this passage we will then talk about **sharing** and **contribution**. Creative things - so craftsmanship too, as a form of creativity in this sense - happen in a shared context and with the contribution of all the parts involved in the process of realisation and valorisation. The already mentioned Stefano Micelli talks about the "subjective participation" of the craftsman: the value and "beauty", as he calls it, of handcrafted products is that they do not arise in a context of standardisation, they are not the result of standardised processes, rather they stem from the participation of the craftsman himself to the quality of the final product. Craftsmanship would not thus be that bound to the manual processing, but rather to - again - the way of working that the craftsman has, a work of subjective **participation** and **contribution** (2016, p. 70).

Anyway this is not sufficient. For ages, and probably today more than ever, the new artisans participate in communities¹⁶ - both physical and virtual - of passions and interests, and share what they learn (2016, p. 37). His *Homo faber* - "(Hu)man as maker" (June 2009, p. 7) - is more than a simple maker. He's a man who "makes" within a social context that values participation: the *Homo faber* learns from experience, and in this process he (needs to)

¹⁶ The theme of **community** is taken from John Seely Brown (1991) and is somehow related also to the idea of network and net-working we discussed above.

confront constantly with the addressees of his work and his equals. This has to deal on one side with the process of learning and apprenticeship, but also of making and valorising what is made.

It follows that there is need for a shared environment where the sharing must be in the process too, involving the person who creates something and those around him/her as well. Here we enter in the perspective of **contribution or co-creation** between the parts, as it must happen on the creative process level. In other words, this means that **within a market context, contribution is not realised by the simple action of purchasing something, so paying for a finished work** - also because it would be contrary to what we have said so far about money (see chapter 1) and the purpose of the craft work, which is disconnected to the money end! Using the standard economy terms, **supply and demand are both involved in the process, in a way that, at the maximum extent, production and consumption are not clearly distinguished the one from the other.**

I got this idea when I first participated at a Sofar Sound evening. Sofar is a global community of musicians and music lovers that every month organise musical events in many cities around the world, inviting emergent groups and artists and people, on the other side, who “dare” to be invited. The people who participates to the concerts, does not pay a ticket, but contributes in different ways, first of all by creating the atmosphere and the proper environment for the artists to perform. Also those who organise the events are not paid: they’re volunteers who want to do something because they believe in the project. Without all these people and their contribution at various levels and in various ways, the artists would haven’t a stage where to perform, an audience for which to play, an occasion, maybe, to emerge. This contribution is essential for them to realise their values as musicians. Then of course those who are willing to have the possibility to offer something (money) to sustain their favourite musical project.

I guess this is the essence of contribution and co-creation: in order to valorise something you need to be part of a shared, creative environment. In here you start not by selling or buying, but by *contributing*, without or before - conceptually and temporarily - a monetary transaction. The more creative the thing, the more you have to participate. And this is something totally far from the standard economy model!

A craftsman then needs to find the proper way to involve people in his process, create the proper “system” - so the domain and the field, to cite back Csikszentmihalyi (1996). The domain indeed contributes to hinder the creative production. A place where knowledge is

better structured, central and accessible, is where innovations (creative productions, craftsmanship) are going to happen (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, pp. 38-39).

Creation, contribution and education, somehow, are all related the one to the other. I hope these following examples will help to explain my concept.

Seguso is an historic glassmaker in Venice. It opened in 1397 and from 39 generations now Seguso family has created beautiful blown glass manufactures according to the typical Venetian tradition. Recently, Gianluca Seguso, heir of the family empire, decided to launch an innovative and subversive program, called Seguso Experience. This is a program of visits to the kiln in Murano, that offers the tourists also the possibility to have dinner where the master glass blowers are working on their creations (as in Micelli, 2016, p. 69).

The story of Gianluca Seguso and the Seguso Experience shows that today makes sense, and it's indeed necessary and rightful, making the consumer part of the creative process. Once, keeping the art of glass blowing secret had reasons of strategic and commercial nature - it was indeed a monopoly Venice used to hold the primacy of. Currently this supremacy no longer exists, and indeed many of the tourists and people who come in Murano not even understand the real value of glass blowing art. Because they don't know it! Gianluca Seguso, with his initiative, opened a window of opportunity making it possible for visitors to understand the real beauty and the real meaning of his glass creations.

Again for the craft, in order to still find space and be enhanced today, it is necessary to spread a new culture and for people to see, observe, know what is behind the finished object. In Seguso's laboratories they found a way to involve the people in their activity and create for them those points of reference to comprehend, appreciate and so finally value their work. I.e. they created a domain and a field.

Not far from Venice, in Costabissara (Vicenza), Dario Loison is the heir of another big family business. This time though, they don't make blown glass but *panettone*, the typical sweet of Italian Christmas Holidays. However Dario Loison is convinced that *panettone* can be much more of a simple Italian tradition: he dreams of his product as the main ingredient of the best international dishes and recipes, both sweet and savoury. That's why he started some time ago an Internet blog with an evocative title: insolitopanettone.com - "unusual panettone." When you enter the page you can find the receipts from some of the best chefs, friends of Dario Loison, who've been proposed to reinvent the *panettone*, creating innovative recipes starting from his ingredient (Micelli, 2016, p. 83). Again, these experimentations are

not just exaggerations without a meaning, exercises in style, but a new, different, innovative way of re-interpret the original tradition, contaminating it with new tastes, ideas and also, if we want, messages. Moreover, this project results from a **community** of people - experts, professionals, scholars and passionate people - who promotes their ideas within a context of shared meanings. And there is more: those who participate in this Internet community are not bound to Loison or his company by any contract; they're just **willing to contribute** in a project of which they share the values. This is another great example of contribution, creation of a community and "education" within and through the same community, where that is also the potential recipient/addressee of Loison's product (to get an idea, look at the website www.insolitopanettone.com).

I found a similitude with the character of Massimo Bottura, who first disrupts the traditional Italian cuisine, revisiting it in a modern, innovative key. Someone sees it as the desecration of the traditional cuisine, of its *authenticity*. Then after some time, and thanks to the positive reviews of some critics, people started to change their mind. They have been "educated" to this new way of seeing the tradition, and now Bottura is one of the most famous and appreciated chefs in Italy (from the episode of *Chef's Table*, Gelb, 2015). Nevertheless at first they were not able to understand the meaning of that kitchen, so different - conceptually and in value terms - from the one they had always been used to think of. Innovation is in the concept, in the way to decline something derived from tradition. In this also Loison has been particularly capable, making use the new means of communication to his advantage to gather around himself and his project personalities and influences that have shared his concept, and so enabled him to realise it. In this lies valorisation, in the end.

5. Back to the market sphere: what can be done?

As I stated at the beginning of this work, my intention is to look at the cases of success into the craft field in order to catch some insights and possibly suggest one or more viable solutions.

In consideration of what we argued in the previous chapters my idea was to look at craft realities of success with the specific objective to find out how to put people together and make them collaborate to trigger a virtuous that naturally allows to go against market trends and grow at the expense of the crisis, work in spite of outdated work, keep prices as they already are without the need to increase them.

5.1 Exploring solutions - About cooperatives

I remember our first written production for the course of Cultural Organisations. As I'm passionate about theatre, I wrote about a French theatre company I studied about during my bachelor. That organisation really impressed me for the way the people inside of it work and the amazing productions they take on stage, for the power they have in communicating their messages through their art and the incredible ability they have had to build approval and appreciation through the public and the other institutions in France as well as in many other parts of the world. My professor was really satisfied about my production, and talked about my work in class, because of an idea I suggested in it. Le Théâtre du Soleil was indeed built during the '60s on the artistic vision of Ariane Mnouchkine and a group of her students at the theatre school. Their philosophy and viewpoint on the arts reflect in the same structure they gave to their theatre: the one of cooperative.

Within the Théâtre du Soleil there is indeed equality and a sense of involvement of all the parts of the organisation. Within this structure all the people work and live together in a sense of community and equality where everyone has the same rights and duties and equally participates in the process of creation. This reflects also externally. The Théâtre du Soleil is particularly appreciated in France among the public and also the institutions. All the public school theater and French professors know what they are doing in the theatre, they are invited to discuss with them and are the first to know the next piece (Teatro Valle Occupato, 2013).

Even though apparently this example might appear to detach from the main topic or this thesis (in reality we might open a discussion on their acting activity and show as it can be looked at as an extraordinary example of craftsmanship, even though not traditionally intended), **the Théâtre du Soleil is explicative of what shared economy and willingness to contribute are, and how they work also in the market context.**

The Théâtre du Soleil is peculiar for the kind of plays which are taken on the stage. On the basis of Vilar, Brecht and Artaud's ideas and works, the aim of the Théâtre du Soleil is to retrieve the vital relation with the public, *create a contact with the audience in a lived experience and address it in a critical reflection on the contemporaneity*. They gather Grotowski's idea that theatre exists there where the relationship between the actor and the public is. The public is indeed one of the most important actors on the scene at Théâtre du Soleil, where people's emotion and involvement is part of the same production. People are moved, touched, involved in the same emotions and feelings of the people and the stories taken on the stage. There is no separation, also physically, between the theatrical scene, the stage, and the space dedicated to the public. In some of their representations the stage is an oval section surrounded by the bleachers on which the public is sit, so that also physically the two spaces are not clearly separated but part of a same thing (**shared culture**).

Each representation starts from a collective work. Ariane Mnouchkine appears as the proponent of the topic, then all the *ensemble* works for the invention and staging of the episodes collectively. But it's not only on the stage that this contribution happens. All the actors are equally involved in the everyday activities which are necessary for the common living. They cook, clean, answer to the phone calls at the booking office and take care of the register, and possibly according to their personal inclination. The point is that every single person is necessary and responsible for the success of a representation, taking actively part to the realisation in each single step and moment (**willingness to contribute**).

What is even more interesting and enables us to really understand the meaning of contribution to the culture is, however, what regards the public. As already mentioned, one of the pillars of the Théâtre is the creation of a vital contact with their audience, and that's what they've been able to do. In an interview for the blog Valle, Jean-Jacques Lemêtre, who for over thirty years realises the musics for the productions, the artist says as the theatre doesn't need to be subsidised since it's able to earn enough from the sales revenue:

"We can decide to have a few external funding because every night we fill the theatre. Over the years we have made a profound work of construction of the public" (9 July 2013).

The point here is that people do not only go to the theatre to see an every play. Contribution indeed does not only passes through purchase, but requires a contribution of another kind, a contribution which involves the different parts in the same process of creation (cfr. p. 31).

So after seeing clearly the point with this example, how can we now translate this into the realm of craftsmanship? How does shared culture and willingness to contribute can be realised in craftsmanship too? It can be difficult, considering the diversity in comparison to a cultural good like the theatrical one. On one side there's an experience good¹⁷, on the other something physical (if we consider the final product), created by the hands of a person, which has also a practical usage... How can someone contribute in its realisation if not working for the concrete realisation of the same, or buying it and so sustaining the activity of the craftsman?

According to my professor the solution should be in the organisational form of the cooperative. This is according to him the best way to contribute to an activity in a shared context, moving transversally into the social and cultural sphere while still remaining within the market one. I said: okay, I got his point. I ascertained myself that this form of organisation implies in itself that people participates in the activity, as everybody inside the organisation is equally responsible and **owner** of the organisation. It makes perfectly sense. So I wanted to go more in depth into the argument and see what kind of opinion I could develop about. I started then my researches on cooperatives, to better understand those characteristics which where interesting so much my professor. It is not my interest here to go in depth into the story and functioning of the cooperative system. Nevertheless I considered necessary to illustrate the main aspects of the legal and organisational form of the cooperative and see how this meets or distances itself from the value based approach model.

5.1.1 What a Cooperative is

¹⁷ In the paper *Information and consumer behavior* (1970), Phillip Nelson defines for the first time the concept of experience good in contraposition to search goods. An experience good is commonly defined as a product or service where the characteristics of the same, i.e. quality or price, cannot be observed in advance. These characteristics can only be ascertained after consumption.

According to the definition given by Confcooperative, a cooperative is an autonomous association of individuals who voluntarily join in to meet their economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through the creation of a jointly owned and democratically controlled society¹⁸.

A cooperative is then an association of people, who come together to achieve and satisfy a common need. Therefore it is made in the company of others with whom one shares a need or a goal. In other words, a cooperative is created with a mutualistic purpose and without speculative ends. This means that even though economic and financial aspects are still relevant, like in any other business, the peculiarity of coops is that they also touch preponderantly the social and cultural spheres. This social function of cooperatives is also recognised by the Article 45 of the Italian Constitution¹⁹.

It is regulated by 7 principles, which represents the necessary and essential requirements without which a cooperative society can't be defined. These are based on the recognised values of cooperation and represent their realisation. They are:

- I. free and voluntary membership
- II. democratic control by members
- III. economic participation of members
- IV. autonomy and independence
- V. education, training and information
- VI. cooperation between cooperatives
- VII. commitment to the community

(http://www.unicoop.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=44&Itemid=275)

5.1.2 Objectives and Purpose of Cooperatives - Advantages

As already mentioned, the concept of mutuality represents the main characteristic of a cooperative enterprise, so the objective of this peculiar form of association is to satisfy the common need of the people who come together. If in a capital company the ultimate goal is the realisation of earnings for the allocation of capital profits, cooperatives provide goods, services or job opportunities for their members at more advantageous terms than they would

¹⁸ “Una cooperativa è un’associazione autonoma di individui che si uniscono volontariamente per soddisfare i propri bisogni economici, sociali e culturali e le proprie aspirazioni attraverso la creazione di una società di proprietà comune e democraticamente controllata”

(http://www.unicoop.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=45&Itemid=274).

¹⁹ “La Repubblica riconosce la funzione sociale della cooperazione a carattere di mutualità e senza fini di speculazione privata. La legge ne promuove e favorisce l'incremento con i mezzi più idonei e ne assicura, con gli opportuni controlli, il carattere e le finalità”.

get from the market. By virtue of the natural environment of the corporate form of the cooperative, they also receive advantages in terms of fiscal and financial incentives. These vary accordingly to the sector in which the coop operates. Concretely these advantages are mainly in terms of higher salaries, lower prices of purchasing, reduction of the enterprise costs of management and initial capital investment (http://www.unicoop.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=27&Itemid=291).

For what concerns craftsmanship, the most of enterprises assumes the form of *cooperatives of production and work*. Members of this type of cooperative are employers and employees at the same time, in a way which recalls the example of Théâtre du Soleil we discussed above. The peculiar element of production and labor is represented by the particular nature that characterises the mutual exchange between the members and the cooperative, focused in the activity of labor that the members do within the cooperative. Here the members take advantage of more favourable working conditions than those available on the market, both in qualitative and economic terms

(http://www.unicoop.it/index.php?option=com_content&id=41&Itemid=277).

5.1.3 Results and Data in Italy

“Le imprese cooperative nel mondo contano circa un miliardo di soci, in Italia 12 milioni di soci e 1 milione e 200 mila di addetti, realizzano un fatturato pari a circa l'8% del Pil”

“Sempre Meno Cooperative” di Luca Toschi

“E l'Italia ha numeri tra i più ragguardevoli: 40.000 imprese cooperative, 12 miliardi di soci, un fatturato di 140 miliardi di euro che impatta sul PIL per poco meno del 10%”

“La Storia delle Cooperative in Italia”

According to the data and studies conducted by experts in the sector, from the Nineteenth Century until today, the cooperative movement has represented a crucial element in the Italian economic system after World War II, in contraposition to the capitalistic utilitarianism that was not considering enough the social necessities of workers (Menzani, 2015).

According to Menzani, one of the most relevant aspects of coops is the link between enterprise competitiveness of cooperatives and their extraordinary ability to innovate in time, thanks to the control exercised by the shareholders on how social capital is run. In reality, this is more difficult today because cooperatives are getting bigger to reduce the risk of enterprise. Worldwide coops have around a billion partners, and Italy has among the most remarkable numbers: 40 thousand enterprises, 12 million members, 1.2 million employees and a revenue of 140 billion euros, approximately the 8% of GDP (Toschi, 2016).

5.1.4 Problems and Limits

“Oggi il panorama cooperativo italiano è caratterizzato dalle fusioni e dalla lotta alle cooperative spurie, ovverosia quelle imprese che si camuffano da cooperative solo per godere del particolare regime fiscale che al movimento cooperativo viene riconosciuto.”

“La Storia delle Cooperative in Italia”

Today the Italian cooperative landscape is characterised by mergers and the fight against spurious cooperatives, namely those companies that disguise themselves as cooperatives only to enjoy the special tax status that the cooperative movement has.

From the studies of the young researcher of Economic History and Business History Tito Menzani, who dedicates a book to the cooperative culture and movement from the Nineteenth Century until today, he found that the biggest issue in the cooperative system in the last decades has been the progressive weakening of cooperative values within the cooperatives themselves. Explanatory of this is, for example, the progressive weakening of the participation of shareholders at the company's co-operative governance. This fact has paid an increasing ignorance on the part of new generations of what they are and why, despite everything, they represent a significant chapter for the future-oriented economy (Menzani, 2015, as cited in Toschi, 2016).

5.1.5 Points in common and differences with the VBA

If we look at the principles cooperatives are based on, we can easily find a common line with what we discussed in this thesis until now, when thinking about craftsmanship and the

cornerstones it is based on. From an analysis of the main cooperative principles, these are the main elements we found out to characterise the management of a cooperative enterprise:

- centrality of the person, as people are always at the base of every relation and economic transaction;
- common goals, which are shared by the people who join the cooperative;
- social dimension and the orientation to the community (it is about organising the question, responding to the needs of the community);
- a number of values (cooperation, transparency, justice, etc.), which are at the base of a coop activity;
- with the “cooperative promotion” the cooperative contributes to market development by improving existing businesses and creating new ones.

Associative spirit, solidarity, internal democracy and especially the centrality of man and enhancement of its work and its needs are, therefore, the values that still guide the cooperative movement: a cooperative is a company that in addition of having to compete on the market, seeks to realise some important values of solidarity and mutual aid. For these reasons this model is **in theory perfectly aligned with the idea we developed above of craftsmanship as the realisation of the person and the idea of an activity for its own sake**, for the sake of making that specific thing well. The individual and its needs are at the center, together with its value system which transposes in the work and it's shared by other individuals around, who are part of the same system and work for the realisation of a common goal.

I decided after to discuss about it with the people I met during my researches. I remembered that during my very first interview with Edoardo and Giuseppina from Accornero Cashmere, Edoardo told me about the story of their little company and mentioned the cooperative. Apparently they were born like and used to be a cooperative until some years ago, in 2007, when they decided to change from that organisational form to the one of s.a.s. I asked then Edoardo to give me some more details and his opinion about that. He was quite strong and firm in his position, saying that a cooperative is not convenient for a small reality like their one, that it might work, but only for bigger realities, as from both the fiscal and organisational point of view this is not optimal.

On the other hand we also have to recognise that in the same context of the same Country, there are cooperatives which work in the textile, fashion-related field which are also totally successful. The question is then: *is this success due to their structure as a cooperative or to something which overlooks the organisational form?*

5.2 Researching into fashion cooperatives

I decided to research into the Italian landscape whether I could find an interesting case of cooperative in the textile manufacturing field to look at for a better understanding of the topic.

A beautiful story is the one of the Cooperative Group GOEL, with its 12 social coops. Among them, there's Cangiari, an ethical fashion brand that not only has the jurisdictional form of cooperative, but has also points of reference that I found interesting in comparison to our discussion on the meaning of craftsmanship and the role of social entrepreneurship.

5.2.1 Cangiari

Cangiari is a fashion brand born quite recently in the Calabrian land of Locride. They produce high luxury items for women with the traditional techniques and machineries of a time, which have been recovered by a group of women in the hinterland of Calabria, Italy. This fashion brand in only few years has been able to raise and get appreciation among the high-end fashion system, to attract the resources they were needing to develop their project, and now they're parading at the main fashion weeks and showcase their clothes on Vogue in collaboration with some of the most famous designers of today. After having spend a lot of my time reflecting on other cases like the one of Accornero, I asked myself: *what is the difference between two realities like Accornero and Cangiari?* Undoubtedly they share many points in common concerning the systems and ways of producing. Anyhow what emerges is a totally different outcome in terms of results.

As just said, Cangiari is an ethical and sustainable brand, 100% handmade, that recovered the old tradition of the loom according to the traditional Calabrian craft manufacturing.

The territory of Locride, where the company is settled, is a place where precariousness and subjection are a "precise project of which you make systematic maintenance" (Social Change School, 2015). These are the considerations from which it was born, some years ago, the idea to build a system that could free people from this subjection, by offering concrete alternatives

to mafia. During the Nineties some associations and young people joined around the figure of the Bishop Monsignor Bregantini, a man with a strong experience about cooperatives, who has restored confidence and impulse to these civil society initiatives to give back awareness and dignity to the population (Social Change School, 2015).

From this experience in 2009 the social cooperative GOEL was born. The name is also significant: it comes from the Old Testament and means “redeemer”. It is a group of social cooperatives which gathers under the same name a group of 12 activities in different fields. Cangiarì is part of Made in GOEL, the production chain which deals with clothing-textile and craftsmanship more in general and aims at involving for profit firms and single individuals in a work dedicated to the textile and clothing world (for further details look at the interview in the Appendix).

Being part of the cooperative, enabled people inside Cangiarì to build a strong network of weavers and people who work in the production chain, which today involves between 40 and 50 people for the realisation of the collections of this high-end ethical fashion brand. For this, they took inspiration from some models in Germany, French and UK, while in Italy they are apparently the only brand of high-end fashion who’s working in this way, using biological materials and an ethical and sustainable way of producing (Social Change School, 2015).

It is not of my interest here to deepen excessively the experience of Cangiarì or the way they work inside the company, but I found pertinent with respect to the question asked above the viewpoint of the President of the cooperative, Vincenzo Linarello: they started from the **valorisation of their territory and its resources**. Being part of the cooperative then, enables them to take advantage of the network of partners, and especially to be stronger and have a greater social impact.

A question spontaneously came to my mind: *what do the reasons of their success really are? What do they think this is due to?*

5.2.2 The interview - What they say about cooperatives

I have read many interviews to Cangiarì about their experience and projects, and I could find the words of Vincenzo Linarello, President of GOEL and CEO of Cangiarì, some of the most inspiring and aligned with my viewpoint on economy... They have strong ideals and a passionate spirit which move their actions, and these transpire from their words.

However what interests us in this passage is what they state about their company and its peculiar form of organisation. So this is the aspect on which I focused on more at the

beginning of my research on Cangiari. Still at a certain point I better realised the relevance of values and the influence they have on a company's culture and the messages the same company conveys at the outside, which are based on the same values just mentioned above.

A passage in an interview by Debora Mirabelli and Alessio Muccini (2015) is specifically dedicated to the regulatory limits which realities like the one of Cangiari suffer in Italy. The answer by Linarello is that, in the end, the social dimension of cooperative is of course a distinctive trait of their project, something without which they probably would have not reach their success. Still it is not *the* solution: according to what Manuela Sfondrini, president of Cangiari states about their keys of success: "only cooperative without values would have not been enough" (for further information read the interview in the Appendix). Only a combination of all the elements enabled them to get where they are today.

Even though I have found a lot of materials from Cangiari's press review, I really wanted to have a direct contact with them and get my own interview. I worked for months to finally be able to talk to the president of Cangiari, Manuela Sfondrini, at the beginning of May 2017. I felt the need to talk to her to determine once for all if my thesis on cooperatives and values and the idea I developed by investigating their specific case was real or not.

I can't say I'm totally satisfied with my interview with Manuela. I had a limited amount of time and I couldn't deepen all the aspects I wanted (compare the draft questions with the actual interview). I was probably not even able to ask questions in the best way. I often received more "technical" answers and insights (for example about the biological nature of their fibres) on which my interest was rather relative. The content of the answers was also very "standard" and similar to what I could find on newspapers articles and online interviews about the experience of Cangiari.

Undoubtedly this is a complex and multifaceted case on which - if one had known before - I could have focused on an entire thesis! I wanted to deepen many aspects and ask more specific questions about factors and elements that go beyond the Cangiari's single experience, and involve, in a broader perspective, the whole GOEL's reality, its message and the values it brings on their territory and "in the world". But that did not happen, so I take the data collected from the news sources and the chat with Cangiari's President Manuela Sfondrini for good.

The sensation I had while talking to Manuela, is that their perception of their distinctive traits and strengths are clear only up to a certain point. There is still much potential unexpressed in terms of communication of their distinctive trait. When I asked about the way they communicate their value to their clients Manuela told me about the need to improve their web marketing campaign. My question was meant to be more on the content of what they say than the channels they use, but it might be that I didn't express clearly enough.

I wanted to better know how the people and companies they worked with came closer and decided to work with them. Manuela's answer was that Cangiarì represented (and still represent, after all) a fairly unique case on the national panorama, and therefore interesting to deepen in terms of professional, cultural and human experience. I personally was not totally convinced by the answer: a fashion designer doesn't decide to put his/her name on a collection without being paid solely because of the elements identified as their strengths. What I mean is that undoubtedly the elements taken into account (the organic origin of the product and the recovery of a tradition) make the difference. But nowadays they no longer represent an *exclusive* distinctive trait, especially if we compare with an international landscape. The point is that evidently the fashion designer believes in what he/she is doing and in the project to which he/she is landing his/her fame.

When I tried to figure out how they communicate their strengths, I received a more technical answer, it was discussed more about tools than content, which was instead what I really wanted to focus on. In reality, after spending months analysing articles, websites, Facebook pages and whatever talks about Cangiarì, it turns out that what they tell about Cangiarì is way stronger than what they show when you expressly ask what makes them distinctive. Their connection with the territory, their story, their social ideals emerge with force and perhaps, at this point, they unknowingly arrive so much stronger than all their guarantee certificates, organic textiles and so on.

5.3 Conclusions - is it cooperative which works in the end?

Once again, in the face of these considerations, I'm thinking it's not about being profit or non-profit, having disabled people in the staff *by virtue of* being a social cooperative or not what makes the difference; but the ideals behind, which still have also an influence on the choice of a legal-organisational form or another in their turn.

Simon Sinek (2009) explains that people did not follow the great leaders for what they were; they did it for *themselves*, because they reflected in the words, gestures, and ideals brought

about by that leader they chose to support. So my conclusion is that cooperative is a catalyst of the willingness to contribute and the sharing of the values at the base of a project. But it is not *the* solution. What really makes the difference is not the organisational or jurisdictional form in itself, but the values at the base, and how these values are expressed and elaborated into a clear message and a strong culture shared by the people around us.

These people involved in Cangiari have started a silent battle from the within of the current context they were not liking. They didn't refuse and detached from that. They rather took part in it to change it from the inside! Taking action, they have been able to do create around them a strong culture which is shared by all those involved. Their beliefs and ideals are, in the end, what made and still makes people follow them so strongly. I bet that the organic textiles and their organisational structure without a message of social inclusion, social identity, redemption of their territory and people from the mafia, would be totally useless.

“The progress without the consciousness is dangerous, really dangerous, because it pushes people to buy and consume without thinking about the meaning of what they do.”

Edoardo Accornero

6. Second Preface

At a certain point, my question became much broader than what I expected at the beginning. I realised what craftsmanship can really mean, and that made me reflect upon the significance of making craftsmanship (as a concept) live in our economy and in the everyday lives of people.

After the initial explorative phase, that have led me to expand the discourse and the sphere of investigation. and to conceive craftsmanship as something wider. In articular my personal life experience led me, after I came back from the Netherlands, to get closer to the entrepreneurial reality I was in contact with before I left one year earlier. I found myself in what Micelli says about how marketing a product or a business changes when you change the way of telling and your reference patterns, and I've got the concept of selling a product based on value.

A process ensued that conducted me to where I am today and to what I do. I started looking at the process from a partially different perspective, and this led me to think that a solution also to the difficulties encountered today by craftsmen can be to work knowing about their value and from within their own business to find the outlets and the right channels to spread and make people get your message in a way that become attractive for the right resources for you.

I also got another important insight from Shumpeter. In his theory better known as Mark I, he talks about the unternehmergeist, meaning entrepreneur-spirit. He states that innovation and changes of a nation come from these wild spirits that are the entrepreneurs, who are the ones who make things working in the economy of a country. "The doing of new things or doing things that are already being done in a new way" stem from the efforts of entrepreneurs (Shumpeter, 1947). So if we look at the cases discussed above of those craftsman, we can truly look at them as entrepreneurs who are making something big that might change their own world.

Changing a system from within in this way, by taking part in it and acting differently, can represent the prelude to a new value-based culture where craftsmanship and the entrepreneurship (in the sense of entrepreneurial mindset) can find a synthesis in a renewed approach to the work.

6.1 A new marketing systems based on values

Culture matters, but it's the conversation what makes it meaningful. Klamer (2015) talks about conversation as "commons" (p. 25), i.e. a shared practice. Needless to say that to have a conversation, you need to establish a form of exchange of your opinions, ideas, thoughts about something with someone else, and to understand each other you need to "speak the same language", and so share the same codes, systems of reference...

Culture and conversation are indeed tight by a two-sided relationship where a conversation has a meaning only within a cultural context, and the same cultural context can be influenced and "innovated" by the outcome of a conversation (from the dissertation on creativity and innovation by Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). According to Leski (2015), culture develop automatically as a process in its making. This also means that while people do, they also create the new culture.

These considerations lead me to believe that working on projects and activities oriented towards education and the market as well can be a way to start influencing from the inside (see what I said about Cangiari) a system and the culture. *Here I started to reflect upon the role of entrepreneurship and those initiatives which have an impact on society and the community they're based in. If one waits for external conditions to be proper, the moment will never come. If one takes action with the idea of having an impact on the surrounding world, then also the external conditions will slightly start to be different.*

Within a shared context, where people somehow share a system of reference and a language, your values, which are relational concepts too (Klamer?), will be shared also by others. People with your same values will be "attracted" by you and what you do, they will be more sensitive to your cause. So everybody will work on their own for the achievement and realisation of them, and will also be willing to contribute to one another's project.

Here I reconnect with what stated by Micelli (2011) about the way marketing an activity changes with a change of perspective and focus like that. Since I'm back in Italy after the end of my master classes, I've been working with a training company in the marketing field named Asentiv. What we expressed just above is pretty similar to what also Asentiv does with its trainees, with the idea of getting a new awareness and learning how to express the entrepreneur's values and ideals (expressed in terms of company's vision, goals and purposes, and the like) to the benefit of his work. This is the base to build a referral team and

make people follow you for the ideals they share with you. People who trust you and have something in common with you are willing to help you realising your goals and vision.

The role of culture and education - a reflection from my own experience

Diary, July 2016

*During this past month, when I was home, I started again following the activity of BNI®. I'm happy thinking that probably from September on I will work actively with them and I will have the opportunity to go to Lisbon in October to get the certification as a trainer for Asentiv, the organisation which works in parallel with BNI® and deals with **strategic relational marketing**. This means creating strong, deep personal relationships which are also strategic for your business, to develop it.*

*In this context what I would really like to do is to become a coach, who is the person that, like a good teacher and **educator**, does not transmit you tons of notions, but helps you and **guides you** along a path where you finally get to the knowledge of **what your willingness and your values really are**, what drives and moves you in you business and in your life. **Differently said, you realise what your values are and, basing on them, you understand better what is “your right thing” to do, and you learn how to realise it thanks to the others, in a collective context where people share a culture, which is the culture of collaboration, cooperation, sharing, which is fundamental in this process for it to work.***

*I find noticeable points in common with the value based approach to economics, I'd rather say they are kind of coincident, with the same concepts but expressed with different words. In brackets, this is also why I would like to become a coach: I realised the **importance of the educator and of culture**, and the necessity to create a **shared culture** into which the most of the people find themselves, to create the conversation about a some-thing, and so finally to let the change happening (I mean a positive change towards a new approach, what we aspire to).*

*Also, during this process of getting awareness of yourself, I have often seen people realising what they truly love to do, and sometimes they completely change their lives and jobs, even though they're not that young anymore and in spite they are maybe heading a company with tens of employees... That's incredible! But here, I believe, something happens which is very close to the idea of working as doing something you really love, just because in order to **realise yourself** you have to do that specific thing as it is that thing, nothing else, in a way **to realise your own “craftsmanship”**.*

Back to the sharing thing, this system of deep, personal, strategic relationships works because people who connect one another share something which deals with their values, so people are “hooked” because they have a life scope which has something deep in common with the one of the other. When you talk about the cooperative as a model of success for craftsmanship to be realised - I’m now also thinking to cases of cooperatives like the one in Calabria, which works so well and successfully - we think indeed about a model where different actors - here they’re firms, in the other case it’s about single persons - find a common point and a shared goal which drives the intentions and actions of all those involved, in a way which leads naturally, spontaneously to create synergies and collaborations, and again in a context where people share a common language and a system of reference.

*So in the end, I think, **it’s not really the jurisdictional form what makes the difference** - and indeed some craftsmen too are contesting the form of cooperative and took the distance from it - but rather it is the culture. **It’s all about the culture** in the end. And this is a great revelation because, Asentiv or not Asentiv, it means that what only, really can lead to a change has to be created within the culture, a shared culture (we can say maybe a craft culture starting from the schools), and within the companies in the way the work is done. The two things then will nurture another, and this is also what I wrote at the beginning of this thesis: **we can start from the private sector, within the companies themselves, to change the widespread culture and generate positive effects and a virtuous circle which will create positive externalities also outside the companies.***

6.2 The project

It’s funny how somehow different things of your life get together and seem to merge. Developing an idea of craftsmanship as a way of approaching the work and a system made of certain specific features, my reflection met at a point my personal experience.

For some years now, I’ve been following the activities of BNI®, the largest organisation of referrals exchange in the world. I wrote my bachelor thesis on BNI® and the results this kind of structured net-working and referral marketing system has produced in the past years for the people affiliated to the organisation in the area of Turin.

The principles and philosophy of BNI® have guided me through the years and influenced my way to look at the job market and the work. BNI® vision is synthesised in the statement “Changing the way the world does business”. This thanks to a structured program of referrals

exchange based on solid and long-lasting relationships with other people²⁰. BNI® is rooted on the territory but leverages a global network (Local Business - Global Network is one of BNI®'s slogan) that gives access to the people who belonging to the organisation to a range of resources and contacts they could benefit from in their working. The philosophy behind BNI® and its system is the Givers Gain, in a nutshell a way of working that aims at replacing the paradigm of competition on the market with the one of collaboration. Making collaborative economy means creating a context where there is space for everyone. It is not about redistributing wealth but creating new one. The idea is to create an economic dimension where the proximity of different individuals and professionals - some of them would be considered as competitors outside! - united by the same mentality, gives rise to new job opportunities for everyone. Thus it is not about doing more but doing better but doing what is better for us, finding everyone the business that best suits us. It is again about quality of life and doing what one loves the most! And you do that a context where your work could be better appreciated and recognised because you find the right people for you and your business, who share your same mentality.

This is all the more true for us in Piedmont today, after we started to work synergically with Asentiv about a couple of years ago. Asentiv is the worldwide training, consulting and coaching organisation, partner with BNI® - as it was born from the same philosophy and people - which deals with *relational strategic marketing*. With this expression it is meant a way to market a company, an activity, a profession, basing on a new and different approach: the person who's behind the company and his/her values are at the centre of a system of relationships, and into this system they learn and implement a way to communicate their distinctive trait/feature to develop their businesses thanks to these relationships, in a way enables to attract the resources and the targeted clients one needs and specifically wants. This does not mean to "commodify" relationships, but rather to work in a healthier environment (it's about the quality of life!) where the people you work and grow your business projects with are also those with whom you have the pleasure and mutual willingness to stay and collaborate. In Asentiv you have the chance to meet people who recognise the value of what you do and have the willingness to participate and contribute in your realisation.

²⁰ BNI®'s mission statement is "to help members increase their business through a structured, positive, and professional referral marketing program that enables them to develop long-term, meaningful relationships with quality business professionals" (<https://www.bni.com/about>).

Even though I perceived immediately the power of the thing, having seen the effects on our franchisees' approach and motivation to their project, I couldn't really understand it until I got to experience it on my own skin, when I came back from the Netherlands in April 2016. It was then, after I attended the "basic" course offered by the organisation, that a lightbulb turned on in my mind and I was able to perceive a strong similarity between the concepts on which I was reflecting on my thesis and what was happening to me in my personal and professional life. I found in Asentiv the same way of interpreting **the work as the realisation of some very personal and deep values** one carries inside - what in jargon is defined within the organisation as the ECC, or emotionally charged connection, i.e. the *why* you do certain things in life and you do them in a certain specific way. It's once you understand what it is the emotional connection that links you to what you do and how you do that specific thing in your profession - and in your life more in general - that you can move further to create your referral marketing plan, and build your long lasting personal relationships with a strategic orientation to grow your business.

In the book on organisational culture (2011) by Cameron & Quinn, the two authors state organisational culture is the only thing which really matters in order to create a competitive advantage and make the difference for an enterprise. They refer to the "company values", the "personal beliefs" and the "vision" to describe what a company success really deals with (2011, p. 26). These affect the actual performance and the long term effectiveness of the company, and create a distinctive culture that enables the firm to be perceived, both internally and externally, and so ultimately to gain legitimacy and support.

Here I found points in common with Asentiv and the way it works, the type of culture which is taught and what it tries to do with professionals and entrepreneurs who attend the program. The further step made by Asentiv as a training organisation is to start from the elements mentioned by Cameron and Quinn - so the values, the personal beliefs, vision and objectives and so on - and from them to create a structured system to make a marketing strategy based on relations and thanks to them grow your business. But there's more: the real goal of Asentiv is not just to "train" people, but rather to create "communities of like-minded entrepreneurs"²¹.

²¹ From the mission of the organisation which claim: "By providing dynamic business consulting, compassionate coaching and unique relationship marketing strategies, Asentiv creates communities of like-minded entrepreneurs, generating amazing business and a spectacular life!" (<https://asentiv.com/our-story/>).

Crucial is the role of the Asentiv community to create the culture that, brought back into companies, families, political and cultural institutions, is able to change the paradigms of doing (the work) and the way the world looks at entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship looks at the world²².

Similarly, why some time ago was it made the choice of BNI® and Asentiv together and why are they together so powerful? Because if Asentiv is the culture, BNI® is the tool to put that culture into practice and bring it effectively in our daily working life. We believe that starting from the inside of the market sphere we can influence the culture and this new culture will have a positive cascade influence on the entire system.

Even though the model is relatively young, there are already statistics which demonstrate the quality of the project. From the study conducted in 2015 on Referral Institute (Asentiv is a brand of a wider company, Referral Institute indeed) clients in BNI®, it emerged an increase in referrals received of 49.09% and closed business by over 119.58%²³! These impressive figures clearly demonstrate evidence of the results that the methodical application of this different approach to the job can bring. Unfortunately, the lack of further or more detailed statistics (for example on the type of customer) and the relatively young life of the organisation do not allow to support the thesis with too solid empirical evidences. However, this is an element which reinforces the argument that a value based approach to the company/profession has indeed positive results, and on these my thesis and my entrepreneurial project are based on.

²² “Come Community Asentiv Piemonte Sud creiamo, viviamo ed ispiriamo una cultura relazionale olistica che porta l’imprenditore a realizzare se stesso e la propria azienda come specchio di sé, superando i limiti sociali, personali e convenzionali verso la pienezza della vita, dove il lavoro è una forma di espressione del sé”

(<https://www.facebook.com/asentivpiemonte/photos/a.909500995776151.1073741828.909479662444951/1473132412746337/?type=3&theater>).

²³ The study was done in 8 Asentiv/Referral Institute regions. The sample size was 245 Asentiv clients who were at the time of the study also BNI® members. Only clients who had completed at least the Certified Networker Program, the “basic” course offered by Asentiv were included. Their performance in BNI® with regards to giving referrals, receiving referrals, thank you for closed business and sponsoring BNI® members was compared to the average BNI® member in their region. A weighted average was then calculated to get the totals for each area (source: Mike Macedonio, co-founder of Asentiv).

I returned at the beginning of October 2016 from a week in Lisbon for the Asentiv training certification. I had the privilege to meet the organisation's founders and some of the people who are currently getting the greatest results in the world with their activity as Asentiv trainers. It's been a week full of inspiration, from which a lot of ideas arose. I myself figured out, reflecting on my values and my ideal target market as a trainer, what they are the people with whom I'd like to get in touch and I thought about what I could do with them. From this I derived my idea of linking the Asentiv training approach and principles and create connections with local bodies on the territory. We want to be a strong and recognised presence, our goal is to create an impact on people's lives and the economy. We preach the culture of relations and cooperation, so we first must act accordingly, by creating collaborative relationships on the territory and act jointly to be stronger.

So, back to my project, the program can move in two directions: on one side education through the schools, on the other "education" through the businesses.

6.2.1 Education and Schools

The culture transmitted in Asentiv, as well as in BNI®, and so also other institutions like those ones, can have a strong impact within the society on a far more widespread level than just the people inside the training programs. Enlightened entrepreneurs who will come out of the training back to their society will give their own contribution, with their actions, inside as well as outside their companies. They will dedicate their time, resources and energies to give back to their community what they managed to get in various ways, for a common shared good. This starting from the school, for example.

From BNI® another project has been created in the past, named Business Voices. It is a movement of restitution to the territory, for which entrepreneurs and professionals who got something by BNI® as a collaborative system give back to their community. In particular this project is targeted to children and schools, for specific willingness of the foundation's founder, "**reaching** in and **helping** out where schools have needed extra funding for specific projects

not provided for by school districts or state funding” (<http://bnifoundation.org/business-voices-tm/>).

Within this macro-project, it can be collocated a program of orientation and education from professionals and entrepreneurs, who devote their time to the education and guidance of children, create bridge-projects to link the school and the job market, to route the pupils on their way with orientation programs, and help them understand and develop their own talents and dreams.

The strong ideal behind is to transfer to the youngest generation a new mentality of collaboration, participation to their social community and ethic, “educating” pupils to a new approach to the job market and the work, that is very close to the idea of craftsmanship as we intended it (bringing craftsmanship into the job market and restore the values of craftsmanship as an essential aspect for an any job).

As Asentiv trainer then, I’m working with my partners and in autumn 2017 we will have the chance to start a collaboration with some high-schools and Alumni associations from a couple of universities in Milan to present our project and the philosophy at the base of the relational marketing system of Asentiv. This, as well as the experience with children in schools and local entrepreneurs, it’s an initiative I truly believe in and I strongly wanted. As what I’m doing as a professional it’s not just transferring a content behind payment of a parcel, the interest in telling my experience and our philosophy to young people is not to have new “clients” but inspire in them something that will hopefully lead them to work on themselves and their believes, to create stronger and aware adults in their future. I feel my personal and social duty to inspire young people at the beginning of their path as adults, and transfer to them the idea that they can be what they want to be and have not to be afraid of expressing what they believe in. In the end, they are also the future of all of us.

6.2.2 Education and Professionals

Apart from this sort of initiatives, which have already started in Piedmont and are going to be implemented²⁴, my personal project as a trainer for Asentiv would be to create partnerships -

²⁴ In our Region, for instance, our BNI® chapters have already adopted a number of schools. Some of them have been provided with scholastic materials which were missing, other benefited of various

in a collaborative perspective and following exactly the method which is taught in the classrooms to the people - with category associations and institutions on the territory, as well as foundations which are already operating in the field for the craft training and support. Among these institutions, connected to the craft world, there are for example Confartigianato and other foundations, like Fondazione Cologni (we already mentioned it previously) and Symbola²⁵. The idea would be to combine to the technical and professional training in a specific field with a marketing program oriented to get a more entrepreneurial attitude. This would enable the craftsman to create a system around himself where he's not alone anymore and not obliged to work inside his business doing everything required to carry it on.

Here we link the ideals behind cooperatives with a "star system" where the entrepreneur (in this case the craftsman-entrepreneur) is at the centre and surrounds himself with the right relationships who share the basic values and objectives and are willing to contribute to the achievement of his project. This is somehow similar to what happens in a cooperative, where the culture and shared goals lead people to contribute in a collaborative perspective to achieve the desired result.

But there is more: bringing an entrepreneurial mindset into the craftsmanship activity might enable craftsmanship really to survive on times. I met some time ago a young guy, Alessio. He's a lute maker but his idea about his job's possibilities are quite small and limited and lacks of a bit of entrepreneurial mindset. He wants to become an excellence in his industry and create guitars for the best musicians and collectors, but he is stuck on some ideas like the one of working totally alone. The fact is that an activity like his one won't be sustainable in the long term, given the limits in production on one side and the cost system on the other. Now, I don't want to stay longer on this story, but Alessio's example is explanatory of what it means being maybe the best craftsman in the world but lacking of an entrepreneurial mindset.

services provided by professionals and companies of the BNI® regional network, like the soundproofing of a school canteen and a program of medical check-up from postural physiotherapists.

²⁵ Symbola was born in 2005 to promote soft economy, a quality-oriented development model in which traditions and territories marry innovation, research, culture and design. It holds together competitiveness, enhancement of human capital and respect for the environment, productivity and social cohesion. This model of development is already alive in an important part of the country, in the Italy "which makes Italy" and that also for this is indicative of the way to emerge from the crisis and affirms in the world (<http://www.symbola.net/html/pages/fondazione>).

If he remains on his ideas without opening on other possibilities he will surely remain crushed by the system at one point.

Bringing the entrepreneurial mindset into the craftsman's shop and for example specialising on some specific passages of the process, delegating some parts of the work - not necessarily the manual ones, but moments of the process that still are essential and necessary for the realisation and marketing of his work - the craftsman has the possibility to save time and resources on things which are not what he's specifically interested about, and dedicate himself on what most satisfies him. This will also enable to create a system to maintain a completely Italian production and manufacturing but with a structure behind that enables to support the development and growth of the company. It doesn't mean that you have to give up your dream of creating your guitars by yourself, but rather creating around yourself the structure that enables you to work better and get more from you company. It's about "thinking bigger" about what you're used to do.

6.2.3 Effects

The two projects will help craftsmanship in two ways: on one side craftsmanship in terms of artisanal activities and manufacture - people will start since the tender age to know and appreciate the craft activities. The idea is that more and more people will get interested into the thing and eventually decide to dedicate to this kind of activities. Appreciation and recognition, desire to work in the field surely will lead in the future to the adoption of measures to please the requests of "the market", both from the customers and the suppliers side; on the other side there's the transmission of the craft culture and the idea of craftsmanship as a "way of doing", of loving what one actually does in life, a job that is indeed a job but not necessarily in instrumental terms (here we recall the idea of Sennett, 2008, and the idea of loving what one actually does in life, a job that is indeed a job but not necessarily in instrumental terms). Teaching people to choose a path and develop a profession basing on their own values and passions, on what characterises them personally, so consequently also professionally, the work will get "easier and softer". It's about believing

that your passion can become your job and that you can earn a life out of it, it's about about bringing back the job into our life and life into our job.

The idea, as mentioned before, is to complement the technical training with a program of entrepreneurial and somehow also “personal” development. This would be a way to bring together the people who have a dream and do not know how realise it, with the empowering environment that allows them to learn the “how”. On a broader level, especially considering a context like that of Confartigianato, which includes firms and activities from the more diverse backgrounds²⁶, this may be the system that will give back thrust and vitality to the local economy, in a market environment which is highly competitive and that often puts the strain on the lives of small businesses that lack the monetary resources to grow. It is to offer them a viable alternative, in the idea that **valorising and activity is about realising some shared values, not giving money!**

The aim is to influence the macroeconomy starting from the creation of microeconomies and the valorisation of local businesses. We believe that through these projects and activities on the territory and in collaboration with local institutions we can have an impact and make the difference (actually, we are already having a strong impact on some places).

Our economy is characterised by the exaltation of the distinctive trait which is something related not to the industry but the specific way a person does something and the why behind. This leads to excellence in a particular area, and leaves room for specialisation and so collaboration among people and different professions (specialisations) as well. It's what I was meaning when I was discussing the case of the lutist boy and the idea of bringing the **entrepreneurial mindset** into the craftsman's shop. This means in a case like that you can for example specialise on some specific passages of the process and delegate some other parts of the work - not necessarily the manual ones, but moments of the process that still are essential and necessary for the realisation and marketing of his work. In this way the craftsman has the possibility to save time and resources on things which are not what he's specifically interested

²⁶ This is due to linguistic and legislative mistakes in the past, for which with artisanal activity in Italy it is meant a small enterprise with less than 8 employees, without any specific relationship with the type of activity that is carried out.

about, and dedicate himself on what most satisfies him. This will also enable to create a system to maintain a completely Italian production and manufacturing but with a structure behind that enables to support the development and growth of the company. It doesn't mean that you have to give up your dream of creating your guitars by yourself, but rather creating around yourself the structure that enables you to work better and get more from you company. It's about "thinking bigger" about what you're already used to do.

7. Additional thought – On the intangible cultural heritage

I focused until now on the entrepreneurial side. However it is difficult to believe that only acting on one sphere things can easily change. Here we will further discuss about the character of **intangible cultural heritage** that craftsmanship has in a country like ours.

It is indeed hard to sustain the willingness to participate and to pay to sustain craftsmanship, and there is indeed a lack of support, socially and from the market sphere (see Klamer and the 5 spheres model, 2015). However we could still think that there is a **public value** (in a way I already talk about the public value of craftsmanship earlier in the thesis. Cfr. chapter 1), so it is **important for the quality of life and Italian society** to keep alive a mature craft practice and this is why it is important to have some sort of public support.

According to the definition given by UNESCO, intangible cultural heritage is the set of things - they can be rituals, songs, events, traditions and the like - which have or might have some sort of economic value (we discussed about the topic previously, talking about Micelli's considerations on the economic relevance of craftsmanship in Italy) and that give rise to a certain emotion and a sense of belonging to something within us. It is that same sense of belonging and affection that in John Ruskin emerges as "reflection of the aspirations of a society" by virtue of which it prevents the demolition of the historic palaces of Venice for the construction of new ones.

In "The Stones of Venice" (1851) John Ruskin celebrates not only Venetian and Gothic architecture, but also the struggle of making something unique, the freedom of expression in contraposition to the polish of Renaissance. But the core of this work is its constant assertion of **the value of architecture in reflecting a society's aspirations**. This affirms the strong public and intangible value of people who feel a sense of identity with these buildings.

So how this connects with our question about craftsmanship?

UNESCO gives a number of attributes which characterise intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2011). One of the essential criteria to determine the character of intangible cultural heritage is the recognition by the people - communities, groups of people or individuals - who create, spread and transmit that heritage to the future generations (UNESCO, 2011, p. 5). The point is that, without that recognition within the social sphere (Klamer, 2015), nobody can define previously whether something is or it is not intangible

cultural heritage. This is all the more true since many manifestations and expressions of intangible cultural heritage are under the threat of time and forgetfulness or lack of perception of their value.

UNESCO argues wisely: “For intangible to be kept alive, it must remain relevant to a culture and be regularly practised and learned within communities and between generations” (UNESCO, 2011, p.6).

Thus if people would recognise in these values, then there would be public support for it.

In front of a perceived need for the safeguard of intangible cultural heritage, the Government would intervene with some sort of public support to face the market inefficiency.

In countries like Japan, they deal with craftsmanship as intangible cultural heritage and the best craftsmen are considered to be national living treasure of the country (Klamer, 2012). Traditional craftsmanship is indeed one of the five domains in which intangible cultural heritage is manifested according to the UNESCO’s 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. According to the Convention, an Intergovernmental Committee of 24 people elected among the State Parties makes decisions about which intangible heritage should be inscribed on the lists of the Convention, after a formal nomination by each Single Party, and it also decides about providing financial assistance and safeguard to the same.

However, when talking about traditional craftsmanship, this is a broad domain which focuses on skills and practices and the knowledge involved in craftsmanship, with the idea that “safeguarding attempts should instead concentrate on encouraging artisans to continue to produce craft and to pass their skills and knowledge onto others, particularly within their own communities.” (<https://ich.unesco.org/en/traditional-craftsmanship-00057> par. 1). “The goal of safeguarding, as with other forms of intangible cultural heritage, is to ensure that the knowledge and skills associated with traditional artisanry are passed on to future generations so that crafts can continue to be produced within their communities, providing livelihoods to their makers and reflecting creativity” (<https://ich.unesco.org/en/traditional-craftsmanship-00057> par. 5). Yes, but how? and through which activities?

The domain of traditional craftsmanship is too wide and not focused enough on the protection of specific skills and practices. Moreover this remains probably the most intangible of all the forms of intangible cultural heritage, and it is, as well as the others and maybe even more, subjected to globalisation and mass production challenges and - here we recall what argued a while ago - changes in cultural tastes and surrounding social conditions.

The problem here is that this sense of belonging is lacking or it is not sufficiently strong and widespread among people in our country. Otherwise that sort of public support would happen, while today craft workshops and activities shut down and move to other countries where apparently they would be better appreciated. Thus, lacking the cultural backbone that would give the public a reason to move that support that craftsmanship would require nowadays, there is a lack in the perception of a real public need, and therefore a lack in the actual support.

In the end, the problem is on the cultural level, as there is the need for a stronger and constant cultural substrate of recognition and appreciation for the subject, i.e. traditional craftsmanship and the value it has, over time. Only in this way the public would have the incentive to actively intervene. This sense of belonging, like in the Stones of Venice of Ruskin, is missing today, and it's on this that we have to work to recreate those premises and that strong sense of recognition and belonging with the thing.

So, given that the issue is, again, the culture, how to create this culture?

We go back to talking about the need to "educate" about the value of craftsmanship and of a craft culture. Working from the school to create sensitivity to the subject, many things would already be different, young people would grow up with a different mentality that would guide them towards and through their future. Similarly, why do I talk about BNI® and advocate so much the entrepreneurial spirit that might change the fate of the game? Because starting my professional path with BNI® and then Asentiv I found that way of looking at the work typical of craftsmanship, a way of looking at the job which reasons in terms of values and quality of life, as we discussed earlier in the thesis. And what is being done in these contexts? There are concrete actions that have an effect on the market, through the business world, on society through actions directed at the community and the world of education, and consequently an impact on culture, which is actually giving life to a change of mentality and a culture of the doing.

Recalling the five spheres model (Klamer, 2015), culture embraces all the other spheres and influence the way people belonging to them think and act consequently, from the market, to the government and the social context. Taking actions in only one of the spheres would not be enough, but a joint action among them would work better in this sense. If actions taken in M and S can have an influence in C then C can create a change in S as well - given that, at that point, G intervention would probably have a mere subsidiary role.

Thus in this thesis we want especially to address this entrepreneurial spirit that can have a strong impact on the cultural substrate of its country.

7. Conclusions - Reconnecting the dots

When I started this thesis I did not probably know where I was going to end up. I started from something that was bothering me, and I realised after a while that behind what makes you angry there's what really matters to you.

I worked on the concept and meaning of craftsmanship, asking myself how it is possible to valorise traditional craftsmanship in Italy. Here with valorisation I do not talk in financial terms, to give money to support an activity, but rather I talk about the implementation of important values related to an activity. I wanted to understand if and how it is possible for the more traditional craftsmen to survive in the market of today.

I started reading and going around Piedmont to visit companies and talk to people, and slowly I started developing my concept. I discuss about craftsmanship more as a peculiar way of doing than not a specific job or occupation, something which deals more with the "HOW" than the "what". In other words, in this thesis I moved from an idea of craftsmanship as an activity to an idea of craftsmanship as a concept, a "way of doing at your best the thing you love the most to realise your own values".

Moving on with the researches I realised that those craftsmen who have been able to preserve the tradition, and at the same time to keep pace with the times, are normally people who recovered a tradition and innovated it, not in the process or the way they do things, but giving to that tradition a (new) value and meaning. Most of all they are all people who were able to convey their messages strongly and communicate them in a way that enable them to attract the resources (both in monetary and most of all in human terms) they needed to carry on their artisanal and entrepreneurial projects, against all the limits imposed by the external environment.

It was probably at this point that I found this perfectly fitting with the theory expressed by the value based approach to economy that I have learned at school during my master year, and on the other side I met a reality that is trying to bring a similar approach directly within the businesses and the entrepreneurial world. This is something that goes way further the borders

of a single enterprise or small craft activity. It's something that embraces a culture in its entirety with the willingness to inspire a new awareness in people's mind.

In this sense, my thesis draws from the different experiences I have had during the last year to give some meaning to a question I made to myself in the past. I moved from one issue to the other starting from a reflection upon values and the value based approach, and with the willingness to present an insight.

This is undoubtedly not an ordinary thesis, I am perfectly aware of this and the risk that it may lead to. Scientific research is considered to be valuable as it is replicable. However it is not just about being endlessly replicable. Scientific research has also to be therapeutic and edifying (Rorty, 1979, as in Klamer, 2010).

To recall the reflection made by my professor, Arjo Klamer, and what he inspired in me since the very first day of school, when I asked myself those questions and I proposed the topic for my thesis research, I was looking for my right thing to do. I was bothered by something that was relevant to me; in this sense the research was supposed to be therapeutic for me, first of all, and so for my country and "my" people immediately after. Then, by consulting texts and talking to people, discovering cases and working on my projects, I created a perspective on "my" issue and the economy that makes some sense, and might have sense also to other people.

When you question yourself about something, there is a feeling inside of you that pushes you to find out whether your concepts work or not. Here is the edifying part - you put together your concepts and try to find if there is a link between them. By expressing your links and the connections you find out, other people can eventually use them, and so then you make them valuable also for others - in other words, using valuable sources and referring to the texts I made my thoughts and reflections valuable for all the possible stakeholders of this work.

In the end, who are my stakeholders, the people this thesis might be addressed to? Of course it is a preach to myself, but it cannot be just that, and it is not indeed. I'm trying to talk to many more people for a different overview on things, from policy makers and cultural

economists to entrepreneurs and those involved in the scientific world. I think this work could become a further contribution to sustain the theory of a value-based economy. Also, I hope to instil a reflection in policy makers' minds and those who run the monolithic bureaucracy that represents such a strong limit for many small business and entrepreneurs in our Italy, to pay greater attention to certain issues and act to facilitate the process that we are trying to put in place. Most of all, it wants to be an appeal to the conscience of people and those who have a project and an ideal to realise. It is a preach for all those entrepreneurial minds who believe in a new paradigm of doing business and the possibility of making something concrete to change things and make their voices heard through their actions.

Finally, my real desire is that this story could be an inspiration for the people to take courage of their actions and their thoughts, to align themselves, and find the way to realise their own values and ideals, remaining authentic to themselves... After all, that's what I've decided to dedicate my future to, starting from my thesis and my job now.

The point is to make people think upon the *why* of things, trigger a reflection on aspects that are perhaps neglected in most cases. As Rorty argues (1979), truth is beyond the objective and subjective, rather has to do with what "we" want to say about a particular topic.

This theme is dear to my professor, when he talks about research in therapeutic and edifying terms. It is edifying because you offer a new perspective on things that gives people schemes through which interpret and take action in the world differently from before.

Adopting a value based approach you enter your speech, you get and talk from "inside the elephant" (Klamer, 2010, p. 12), because in order to give an answer to what the right thing to do is, you need to discover first what the right thing to do is for you. And just by getting down in the discourse and looking at it with your eyes you can give the right answer.

We do not want to discredit the explanatory and predictive role of scientific research, but what is needed today is perhaps something different, which is based on who we are and what really counts for us. Therefore we reconnect to the idea of a therapeutic and edifying role of the scientific research, that gives meaning to the world in relation to who we are.

Once again I dwell on my process of creation of this work, and then of my concept and my project... Scientists may worry that this is not replicable, and I confirm; it will not be replicable a thesis like this. Or at least not as it has been done today. There is an important human component in it, and yet essential to give value to the research itself. It's true it makes it interpretative of a phenomenon or a question, but because of this, I am sure, otherwise significant, for my stakeholders and people in scientific field as well.

It's a matter of relevance and being meaningful. It is ultimately the role of interpretive research - to give meaning and offer a frame of reference to a thought. And it is from this same thought that data and numbers gain significance accordingly, not vice versa, to the point that some scholars have questioned the actual distinction between different scientific methods (Calder and Tybout, 1989).

I thank those who allowed me to experiment and thus give voice to my thoughts and what matters to me, and had confidence that it could be useful and inspire others. It's been an experiment, a research project that has evolved over time and that potentially could still go on forever... But at some point you have to give a limit to yourself, and rather go to a more concrete action. And this is what has to be done for me today.

I am doing my thing right.

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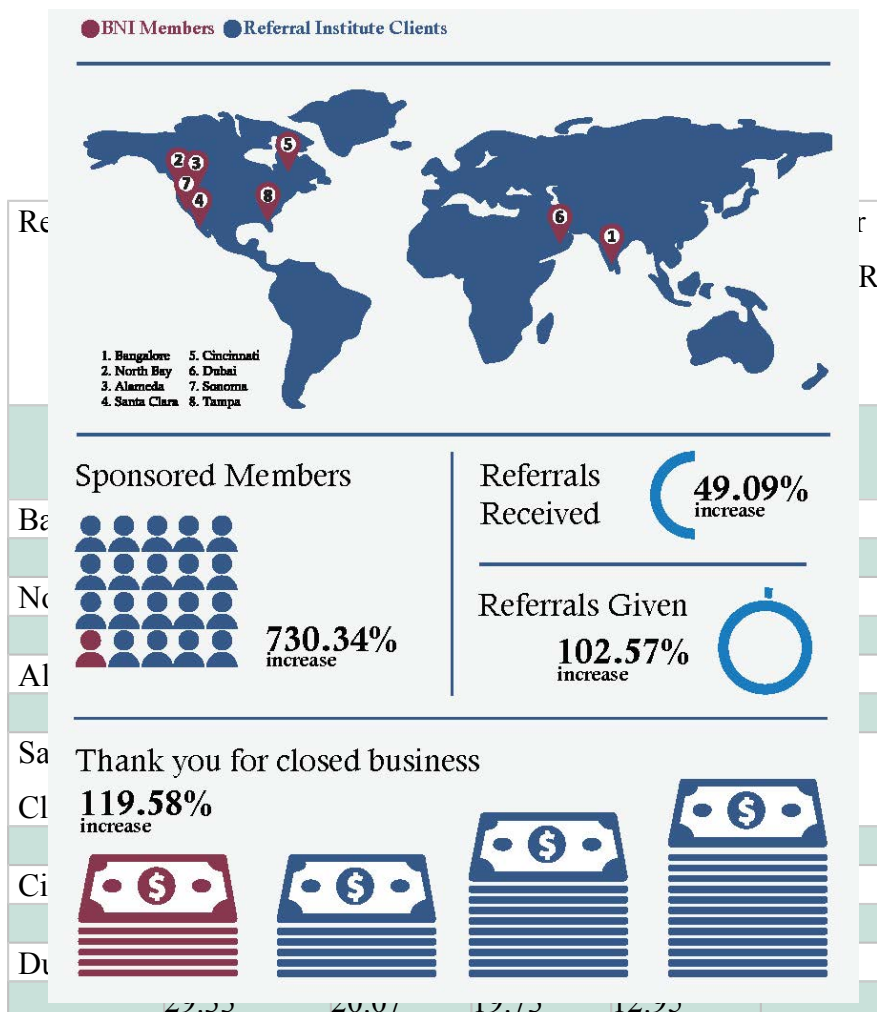
Appendix

Data on Referral Institute

Performances -

Study on the Referral Institute clients' performances in BNI®

The study was done in 8 Asentiv/Referral Institute regions. Our sample size was 245 Asentiv clients who were at the time of the study a BNI® member. Only clients who had completed at least Certified Networker were included. Their performance in BNI® with regards to giving referrals, receiving referrals, thank you for closed business and sponsoring BNI® members was compared to the average BNI® member in their region. We then did a weighted average to get our totals for each area (Macedonio, n.d.).



Sonoma	1204.49%	171.15%	121.15%	60.68%	63
	337.26	44.01	31.15	15.6	
Tampa	Incomplete	65.03%	171.37%	104.43%	20
		5.31	14.00	8.53	
Total	730.34%	119.58%	102.57%	49.09%	245

ACCORNERO CASHMERE

Una storia d'amore e follia

Dal diario dei miei incontri con Edoardo
e Giuseppina Accornero

La Accornero Cashmere nasce oltre 30 anni fa in un piccolo paese del Piemonte, dal sogno di recuperare gli antichi mestieri della tradizione.

Da oltre 30 anni producono tessuti e si occupano di tessitura a mano e tintura delle loro stoffe in lana cashmere e seta.

Acquisiscono i primi rudimenti scolastici tramite un corso elargito dalla regione Piemonte, ma acquisiscono la maestria, che ha garantito loro riconoscimenti e titoli d'eccellenza artigiana quali Slow Fashion e Piemonte Eccellenza Artigiana, grazie ad anni di lavoro dedito e appassionato.



Visita alla Accornero Cashmere, 25/04/2016

E' la seconda volta che Giuseppina ed Edoardo ci ospitano nella loro azienda. Arrivando da fuori non vedi che un capannone di lamé, fuori un cortile mal curato con vecchi macchinari arrugginiti, che ormai fungono da portafiori, e qualche gatto che gironzola e si infila tra i piedi degli ospiti. Ci aprono le porte del capannone, invitandoci ad entrare. Ci offrono un caffè nel retrobottega. "Questo è il "caffè lento". E' un caffè biologico". Si scusano per la confusione nei loro locali. Ci sono stoffe ovunque, e pile di sciarpe multicolore di tutte le forme e le fantasie. Mentre beviamo il nostro "caffè lento" accompagnato da biscottoni di farina integrale, parliamo di alimentazione e salute... Giuseppina ha dei problemi di salute da diverso tempo, e questo l'ha portata ad interessarsi all'importanza della dieta a scopo di benessere.

Cominciamo a girare per il laboratorio. X, la signora che collabora con loro, è al bancone a cucire le etichette su una serie di pashmine misto seta e cashmere blu, che verranno presto inviate all'azienda che le ha commissionate. Giuseppina comincia a mostrarci alcuni degli ultimo prodotti. Vediamo una serie di coperte dai colori pastello. Ci spiega di come il cashmere dopo essere stato tessuto debba essere lavato secondo procedimenti successivi per garantire una consistenza più morbida al prodotto. ci spiega di come spesso durante i processi di lavaggio la lana si ritiri: "Vedete? Questa è più corta di quella prima, perché ha subito più

lavaggi della precedente. Ma per assurdo, essendo di dimensioni inferiori, dobbiamo applicare dei prezzi più bassi, anche se ci richiede una lavorazione maggiore."

Ci porta in giro per il laboratorio, aprendo sciarpe, coperte, tappeti di ogni sorta, mostrandoci con autentica passione il frutto di tanti anni di lavoro e



apprendimento. Ad un certo punto da uno scaffale, Edoardo sfilava un grosso rotolo di tessuto. Si tratta di lana cashmere intrecciata con pezzi di pellicce di diversi animali, un pezzo meraviglioso. Ci spiega come ogni singolo brandello di tessuto venga intessuto a mano, con l'estrema difficoltà e precisione che quel tipo di lavorazione richiede: "Bisogna fare attenzione a cucire sempre nella giusta direzione del pelo, altrimenti vedresti la differenza tra un pezzo e l'altro."



Iniziamo con le nostre domande. Ci raccontano ancora una volta di come l'azienda sia nata ormai tre decenni fa per recuperare un antico mestiere della tradizione. "Certe persone non capiscono quanto lavoro ci sia dietro ad una sciarpa come le nostre. Ma la tessitura è una conoscenza che serve a soddisfare un bisogno primario dell'uomo. Nell'esercizio della sopravvivenza, è fondamentale sapersi cucire un abito, una coperta... Ormai lo diamo per scontato. Pensiamo al cibo. Ma dopo quello l'uomo ha bisogno di coprirsi."

La Accornero Cashmere - che peraltro in origine non si chiamava così - nasce nel 2007 dalla trasformazione della cooperativa originale in un'azienda vera e propria (la forma della cooperativa non garantiva, a detta di Edoardo, la professionalità richiesta da un'azienda che oltre al sapere artigiano richiede anche un certo grado di competenza manageriale). Comincia con la lavorazione di tessuti naturali, dal cotone alla canapa alla seta ecc., ma comprende presto che la sola lavorazione dei tessuti non poteva costituire il vero valore aggiunto. Ecco che cominciano ad occuparsi anche della tintura dei tessuti, attività di cui diventano specialisti, e con la quale riescono a farsi una clientela del calibro di Loro Piana, La Grugnesco, Stefanel, Zegna, e altri, per i quali producono come terzi.



Si tratta però di un "discorso di poesia", poi "bisogna fare i numeri", come ci dice Edoardo. E' così che dalla tintura e tessitura di fibre "belle ma povere" cominciano le richieste di tessuti pregiati.

Da qui comincia un lungo percorso che ancora oggi accompagna la Accornero, in affiancamento a stilisti, grandi aziende, show room e negozi. Questi rappresentano il grosso della loro clientela, accanto ad una piccola parte di vendita diretta, almeno in origine poco spinta.

Qual'è il loro valore aggiunto? Un know-how che ancora in pochi posseggono, e la possibilità di preparare l'orditura in loco. Non comprano i filati, quelli sono sempre stati forniti direttamente da chi commissionava la produzione. In questo modo riducono le spese ed evitano di fare magazzino. L'orditura in casa consente poi di controllare tutta la parte di progettazione del capo, e di aggiustarla preventivamente senza bisogno di realizzare tanti campioncini e sprecare tempo e denaro.

Purtroppo nel corso degli anni la Accornero si trova a dover affrontare le sfide di un mercato sempre più competitivo dove la qualità scende di livello. La “drammaticità” dell’economia italiana provoca un calo delle vendite. Accornero si sgancia progressivamente dai gradi nomi per cui un tempo lavorava (Loro Piana, Zegna, Hermès, per farne alcuni). E’ l’“avidità” che secondo Giuseppina ha penalizzato l’artigianato tradizionale e le piccole-medie imprese del loro calibro, più in generale. “Oggi la produzione è stata orientizzata. Si produce all’estero e a più basso costo, ma a scapito della qualità, che noi non abbiamo mai tradito.”

“E’ necessaria una cultura per capire e apprezzare questo tipo di produzione.”

Intavoliamo dunque il discorso della valorizzazione: come operare per salvaguardare l’esistenza di un lavoro artigianale come quello di Accornero? La risposta di Giusy è che due siano le strade: da una parte un’attività sul piano del “fare”: 1-2 persone che si dedichino alla commercializzazione e alla produzione in modo strategico, e chiaramente molto denaro da investire, soprattutto nella costruzione dell’immagine; dall’altra... La creazione di una “cultura” dell’artigianato.

Dopo aver lungamente discusso con il mio professore la questione legata al mondo della cooperativa, memore peraltro dell’accenno alla forma cooperativa originariamente assunta dalla Accornero, decido di interpellare Edoardo per chiedergli un approfondimento sulle motivazioni che hanno spinto lui e Giuseppina a cambiare direzione.

Discuto inoltre con Edoardo della possibilità di elaborare un modello/proposta imprenditoriale, da applicare ad una realtà artigianale come quella di Accornero, che possa trovare concreta realizzazione.

Dalla risposta di Edoardo - email del 09/05/2016:

“Per quanto riguarda il nostro assetto societario pre-2007, quando eravamo una Cooperativa, si trattava di una situazione voluta ed imposta dalla realtà di cui allora facevamo parte.

Personalmente ritengo che il concetto attuale di cooperativa in Italia sia indicato solo per le grandi realtà, le quali sono fondamentalmente legate ad un partito politico (PD) o alla Chiesa. Per le piccole realtà artigianali come la nostra, una Cooperativa non è assolutamente conveniente, sia dal punto di vista organizzativo che fiscale, mentre una soluzione migliore sarebbe il passaggio dalla forma di Società in Accomandita Semplice a quella di Società a Responsabilità Limitata.”

“Sarebbe anche interessante pensare ad una Start-Up, ed a questo proposito indagare nell’ambito del Kick-Start e del Crow Funding, qualora ci fossero dei giovani disponibili a farsi carico, economicamente e manageralmente di una realtà artigianale di Eccellenza (Slow-Fashion), anche se in temporanea crisi di liquidità. Essi dovrebbero considerare il grande bagaglio di valore aggiunto di esperienza e di tecnica che noi siamo disposti a trasmettere.”

Visita alla Accornero Cashmere, 11/08/2016

Oggi sono tornata in visita alla Accornero Cashmere con Annemieke.

Ogni volta che esco da quel capannone mi si stringe il cuore a vedere quanta meraviglia stiamo lentamente perdendo giorno dopo giorno. Ma oggi, per la prima volta, forse nel vedere Edoardo da solo, senza Giuseppina, mi sono sentita davvero sull'orlo del pianto. Ho percepito forse che questa piccola, meravigliosa realtà sta davvero per scomparire, e quel che è peggio è che tanti nemmeno se ne renderanno conto. Ma nessuno potrà più raccontare la storia di quei mille modi di filare il tessuto, nessuno sperimenterà più i mille modi in cui tingere il tessuto, e con la Accornero se ne andranno la conoscenza e la bellezza che essa rappresenta.

Oggi più che mai ho pensato: non possiamo lasciare che questo accada. Dobbiamo fare qualcosa. Ecco che mi sono ritrovata più che mai a comprendere quanto è importante che la gente capisca... Annemieke, mentre camminavamo per la strada, una volta uscite, mi ha fatto una domanda. Oggi ha scoperto la *vicuna*, un piccolo e delicatissimo camelide che popola le alture delle Ande, da cui si ricava una rarissima e pregiatissima lana che in pochi potrebbero permettersi. Mi ha chiesto: "Pensi che i consumatori capiscano il valore di quella lana? Voglio dire, esiste davvero un mercato per quel tipo di prodotto?" Io non penso che in molto possano apprezzarla, così come non penso che in tanti potrebbero permettersela. Ma quel che davvero mi preoccupa è pensare che la maggior parte delle persone nemmeno sa che esiste! Questo non dovrebbe succedere, la gente dovrebbe sapere. Sapere che nel mondo esistono queste cose meravigliose, come la lana di *vicuna*, come il telaio manuale, conoscerle, avere modo di apprezzarle quand'anche non potranno mai, per ovvie ragioni, permettersela. Come è possibile che adesso, che questa donna è malata e suo marito anziano e stanco non ci sia nessuno che voglia imparare questo mestiere e portarlo avanti?

Sono uscita da lì e ho pianto. Ho pianto nel pensare a quello che stiamo perdendo. La gente deve sapere.

Ecco, quei due vecchietti sono esattamente la quintessenza dell'artigiano, quello che Sennet e Csiksgentmihalyi raccontano nei loro scritti, quello che sfida se stesso per andare sempre oltre, per fare quello che ancora non c'è. L'ho visto oggi in quelle sciarpe e quei capi, dove uno non era mai uguale all'altro, dove la sapienza tecnica era affiancata alla perenne sperimentazione di qualcosa di nuovo, per arrivare laddove ancora non si è arrivati. Si deve essere un po' folli, Edoardo lo dice sempre, folli e anche un po' folli d'amore per quello che stai facendo. Solo così puoi creare la bellezza che quei due sono riusciti a creare.

Mi rendo conto del problema che la successione rappresenta. Quell'amore e quella tecnica che loro hanno non potranno mai avere lo stesso sapore messi nelle mani di qualcun altro. Quand'anche qualcuno ci fosse che ama altrettanto quel mestiere, se di mestiere vogliamo parlare, quand'anche quel qualcuno che riesce a sviluppare la stessa tecnica, il risultato sarà sempre diverso. Che pure va bene, almeno continuerebbe ad esserci qualcosa. Oggi forse non ci sono nemmeno le persone che lo vorrebbero fare. Annemieke mi raccontava di quanto difficile è portare avanti un'azienda simile, anche se sei giovane, ma da solo. Le energie e il tempo che richiede la manifattura di un tessuto sono enormi, non puoi pensare di andare avanti da solo. E lo comprendo. Io stessa ho avuto dei momenti in cui, presa dall'impeto, mi sono detta: potrei imparare a tessere, potrei farlo io! Sì ma come puoi davvero avere un significato se sei da solo? Come puoi lasciare un'impronta forte e parlare al mondo, se non puoi permetterti di abbandonare il tuo laboratorio perché altrimenti la produzione non va vanati?

Ecco che ritorna l'idea della cultura, del contesto culturale e della condivisione, che sono gli elementi essenziali per far sì che questi gesti abbiano un significato. Contrariamente, sarebbe sempre un eterno ritorno dell'uguale²⁷: dopo Edoardo e Giuseppina, dopo Annemieke, di nuovo, chi, che cosa?

Ecco perché sento che devo *almeno* raccontare queste cose. La gente deve sapere, deve capire. E quello che potremmo fare, intanto, è raccontare loro una storia che ancora non conoscono, una storia di follia e d'amore, nella speranza che anche il cuore di chi oggi ancora non sa si infiammi e bruci dello stesso fuoco di passione.

Circa una settimana dopo la nostra ultima visita, Giuseppina è venuta a mancare, in data 24/08/2016.

Oggi Edoardo continua a portare avanti l'azienda in cui per oltre 30 anni ha lavorato insieme alla moglie, pur con la stanchezza e le difficoltà che la perdita di lei hanno comportato.

In ricordo alla straordinaria donna che fu Giuseppina e in ringraziamento alla riflessione che hanno ispirato in me tanti anni fa, il mio augurio è che il mondo non si dimentichi mai di loro.

²⁷ Da Nietzsche, *Così parlò Zarathustra*.

Intervista con Simone Bodo
Owner of Alessandrosimoni
Palazzolo V.se, 26/04/2016

Dalla pagina Facebook e sito Web:

“ALESSANDROSIMONI si fa interprete, con l’eleganza senza tempo delle sue creazioni in cashmere e fibre preziose, di un nuovo concetto di lusso, il vero lusso di chi non ha bisogno di ostentare, ma crede nel bello e vuole concedersi il privilegio di indossare un’emozione.

ALESSANDROSIMONI dedica la propria conoscenza e arte del “saper fare bene” a quel pubblico, sempre più numeroso, che richiede un prodotto d’eccellenza esclusivo e personalizzato. Non realizza collezioni tradizionali, ma capi unici, curati in ogni dettaglio, realizzati artigianalmente con materiali preziosi, perché crede da sempre nel valore dell’unicità, del lusso senza tempo e dell’alta qualità.

Un capo ALESSANDROSIMONI, rigorosamente made in Italy, è espressione del miglior “saper fare” italiano, che affonda le sue radici nella cultura e nella grande tradizione artigiana del nostro Paese”

(https://www.facebook.com/pg/ALESSANDROSIMONI-203846759659012/about/?ref=page_internal)

Nasce nel 1954 come laboratorio artigianale, punto di riferimento sul territorio. Negli anni ’70 viene costruito lo stabilimento da cui prende vita ciò che è oggi l’azienda di Palazzolo Vercellese (Vercelli, Piemonte). La AS come è oggi però è stata concepita negli anni 2000 e messa sul mercato nel 2005.*

Amore per il cliente, la qualità e la tradizione sono ciò che spinge il loro operato, mantenendo al contempo una forte attenzione all’innovazione e alla nuova tecnologia disponibile sul mercato (http://www.alessandrosimoni.it/new_storia.html).

Cominciamo l’intervista con Simone...

Q. Qual’è il vostro rapporto con la tecnologia?

A. Nel nostro stabilimento utilizziamo una tecnologia di ultima generazione, proveniente dal Giappone (Shima Seiki), per software dedicati principalmente all’abbigliamento. Da studio del prodotto (progettazione) a realizzazione del tessuto, dove c’è stato utilizzo più spinto grazie ai recenti sviluppi. Realizziamo una progettazione virtuale e inviamo successivamente la simulazione al cliente, che così, anche se lontano nello spazio, ha la possibilità di vedere e valutare il prodotto.

Impianti tecnologici consentono di realizzare strutture sempre più complesse, mantenendo sempre una certa attenzione al rapporto qualità-prezzo.

Q. Parlatemi dei vostri capi e di come vengono realizzati.

A. I prodotti Alessandrosimoni hanno un'ampia fascia di prezzo, che parte dai 280-300 euro a molto di più, in accordo al capo e alle fibre utilizzate.

Utilizziamo principalmente cashmere e fibre essenziali, a patto che siano di estrema qualità. Le nostre materie prime devono essere garantite Made in Italy, così da poter applicare al prodotto finale il marchio e la garanzia di un prodotto che è Made in Italy sin dalle prime fasi di lavorazione. Altri puntano a sfruttare il mercato nell'immediato e non si curano di questa garanzia per il cliente. Alessandrosimoni invece è abbastanza giovane*, nasce in un momento abbastanza difficile dal punto di vista commerciale, per motivi legati anche alle circostanze politiche e di crisi internazionale. Dobbiamo essere conosciuti per un prodotto che non abbia nessun tipo di dubbio, prodotto certo, certificato, senza problemi, né di immagine né di materiale.

Acquistiamo il filo e lo trasformiamo in prodotto finito, il tutto all'interno dei nostri stabilimenti. Indubbiamente il controllo di tutte le fasi richiede un grande impegno, economico e di presenza e controllo (considera che siamo un'impresa a conduzione familiare). Tutto ciò risulta sostenibile dal momento che ci rivolgiamo ad un pubblico che richiede elevata qualità, sia a livello di ricerca stilistica sia a livello di materiali, per cui il nostro cliente è disposto a pagare per avere dei contenuti.

La maglieria è il nostro core business, ma produciamo tutto l'abbigliamento esclusa la pelletteria. Annualmente produciamo tra i 10 e i 16 mila capi. Tutte le fasi di lavorazione sono interne, per la parte della confezione sono quasi tutte manuali. La grande rivoluzione è stata per la produzione e realizzazione dei tessuti, la parte sartoriale rimane quasi totalmente manuale. Questo è importante perché ci permette di fare un prodotto esclusivo e totalmente fatto in Italia, 100% Made in Italy, appoggiandoci alle nostre maestranze che si tramandano l'esperienza. Oggi come oggi sono capacità che si tramandano da una persona all'altra, quindi facciamo formazione all'interno dell'azienda, dove inseriamo persone giovani che abbiano voglia di cimentarsi e imparare un mestiere. Il rinnovo avviene attraverso questi processi. E' abbastanza difficile trovare persone che vogliano essere formate in questo modo. E' un percorso abbastanza duro, che richiede all'incirca un paio d'anni.

Q. Sul vostro sito web avete una sezione dedicata al territorio. Spiegami che tipo di legame avete con il vostro territorio.

A. Siamo legati a filo diretto a quel che succede nella nostra terra. Per ispirarci e trovare il filo conduttore partiamo dalla natura. Il territorio è caratterizzato dalla presenza delle risaie. La risaia è un micro-ambiente particolare, che sviluppa un sacco di trasformazioni interessanti, perché passiamo da una stagione invernale, dove il territorio dorme, alla primavera, dove l'acqua trasforma il nostro territorio ad un "mare a quadretti", perché si allagano le risaie e tutto sembra un mare. I colori diventano vivi, il colore dell'erba è un verde pieno, ci sono i tulipani col rosso... Se potessimo fare una foto dall'alto potremmo vedere queste metamorfosi. Abbiamo cercato di capire come poter legare la nostra attività con quella che caratterizza il nostro territorio, cioè la coltivazione del riso. L'elemento comune che lega entrambi i mestieri è l'acqua, che ci serve per fare il trattamento sui nostri tessuti, e abbiamo bisogno di una qualità dell'acqua buona, e la stessa acqua è utilizzata per la

produzione del riso. Siamo vicini alle montagne biellesi, e l'acqua che si scioglie garantisce una qualità dell'acqua e quindi dei tessuti molto buona.

Abbiamo una partnership con un produttore locale, Cascine Bellaria, con cui sviluppiamo una serie di prodotti che per caratteristiche qualitative e cromatiche si adattano alla nostra produzione tessile, e che insieme possiamo proporre ad un mercato globale, che è molto attento e curioso di potersi avvicinare ad un Made in Italy che non è solo moda ma anche alimentare. La nostra è una collaborazione di unione dei prodotti: se facciamo una fiera negli Stati Uniti portiamo il nostro tessile di qualità insieme al riso. Si tratta quindi di una collaborazione in termini di comunicazione.

Essendo una PMI comunichiamo con i nostri clienti in modo molto diretto. Il nostro business si sviluppa intorno alle fiere di settore, e poi ultimamente usiamo molto i social network che ci permettono di aggiornare giorno dopo giorno il nostro cliente di quello che sta succedendo e di come si trasformano le nostre collezioni. Puntiamo molto sul territorio e la qualità, per cui per noi il Made in Italy oppure il Made in Piemonte, o anche il Made in Vercelli è al centro della nostra comunicazione.

Q. Cosa mi dici, in proposito, del lavoro in rete?

A. Per tramandare la tradizione, quello che vorremmo fare e stiamo cercando di fare è, attraverso una comunicazione efficace ma anche attraverso un'esperienza diretta, cercare di far vivere al nostro cliente un'esperienza diretta, fargli conoscere i nostri processi, le persone con cui lavoriamo, farlo stare con noi.

Sempre di più ci stiamo sviluppando per collaborazioni (degustazioni, partnership con B&B per servizio pernottamento, ecc.), lavorando in rete e in connessione con altre attività locali. Questo è quello che pensiamo possa fare la differenza in una zona come questa, non delle mega strutture e delle grandi aziende ma delle aziende medio-piccole che però possono avere per il cliente un'attenzione più elevata.

Q. Fate ancora produzione manuale dei tessuti?

A. Oltre al brand c'è l'etichetta dell'handmade. Non facciamo solo telaio ma diversi tipi di lavorazione manuale. Abbiamo due-tre persone che si alternano per fare queste cose, in base al tipo di lavorazione.

Di queste cose facciamo produzione NQ, perché, come d'altronde tutti i nostri prodotti, sono fatti su richiesta. Infatti non facciamo invenduto. Diventano praticamente pezzi unici, potrebbero essere l'1-2% della produzione

I prezzi normalmente sono più del doppio rispetto ad una lavorazione a telaio meccanico. Una sciarpa fatta a mano (cfr. con Accornero Cashmere), ad esempio, viene venduta al buyer intorno ai 190-200 euro, in negozio tra i 400 e i 600 euro.

Mentre io e Simone stiamo conversando di prezzi e sciarpe fatte a mano, Alessandro ? si inserisce nella nostra conversazione.

Buyer e proprietario della boutique Nuances di Torino, ci dà conferme sui prezzi di vendita. Interviene con alcune osservazioni di rilevanza:

“No, non avrebbe alcun senso per noi acquistare neanche 2 o 3 pezzi come questo - *spiega maneggiando una bellissima sciarpa fatta a mano a telaio* - non le venderemmo mai ai nostri clienti. Anche se siamo molto conosciuti in Torino, e la nostra clientela avrebbe sicuramente la disponibilità economica per acquistarla, in Torino sono due o tre negozi potrebbero riuscire a venderle. Vedi, o ti arrivano in negozio il russo o il giapponese di turno, portati da te dal conoscitore esperto che sa dove andare a trovare l’oggetto di grande qualità, o la gente mediamente non si interessa tanto alla qualità quanto piuttosto al marchio. Invece se ti arrivano quei personaggi - che poi non sono quelli delle nuove generazioni, ma ancora i “vecchi”, più attenti a certi tipi di cose - te ne acquistano anche 3 o 4 per volta.”

Q. Che futuro avrà il fatto a mano?

A. Io credo che il fatto a mano acquisirà sempre più valore. Ovviamente non si potrà mai arrivare ad avere delle percentuali importanti rispetto al prodotto industriale, è limitato di suo, ma forse è anche questa la cosa giusta.

La mia esperienza parte dalle persone che vogliono riscoprirsi e fare qualcosa di concreto e tangibile, riscoprire quali sono i mestieri che ci hanno fatto conoscere in tutto il mondo. Questo parte proprio dalla cultura di base. E poi perché i clienti stessi arrivano ad un punto di saturazione dato dai brand famosi, e vogliono distinguersi con qualcosa di esclusivo, che in quanto esclusivo deve essere fatto a mano, in esemplari limitati o pezzi unici. Anche qui, in un contesto di un’azienda che lavora, quindi ci sono strumenti di controllo, i capi vengono esaminati nel dettaglio prima di essere spediti, un capo non sarà mai identico all’altro. Anche se fatto con dei macchinari elettronici, se dopo c’è tutta una parte di lavorazione fatta a mano, i.e. le cuciture, un capo non sarà mai uguale all’altro. E ancor di più questa cosa si esalta quando si parla di un lavoro fatto a mano partendo dal tessuto.

Q. Chiaramente questi prodotti hanno un valore e un corrispettivo prezzo molto elevato, ed è giusto che sia così. Quindi è normale che ci saranno persone che non potranno magari mai permettersi una sciarpa come questa, quand’anche la volessero acquistare. Cosa si può fare per creare quell’apprezzamento per cui, anche se uno non può comprare quel prodotto, comunque sa che esiste e vi attribuisce il giusto valore?

A. Noi italiani, a livello di nazione, siamo molto poco bravi a fare rete. Quindi sono tutte storie come le nostre, che partono con un’energia personale da parte di chi ha vissuto e sta sviluppando l’esperienza, ma che purtroppo avrebbero bisogno di essere invece seguite anche a livello nazionale da quegli enti preposti a far sviluppo economico, perché poi di questo si tratta. Di conseguenza ci sarebbe da fare un enorme lavoro di comunicazione del valore del prodotto italiano, e anche sotto un punto di vista della conoscenza dei mestieri, andrebbero

aperte già da subito delle scuole o dei corsi, che possono essere anche intesi non necessariamente come corsi di specializzazione a livello professionale, ma anche come corsi post laurea, perché manca quella parte di conoscenza. Per cui anche chi abbia fatto tutto un percorso di studi, anche intenso, ma non abbia avuto modo di fare esperienza pratica, abbia la possibilità di entrare in contatto con la realtà della propria caratteristica nazionale, che è quella del tessile di qualità, ma anche della cucina e di altri settori... Bisognerebbe fare questo tipo di esperienza pratica.



Q. In che modo?

A. Attraverso scuole di avvicinamento ai mestieri antichi o meno antichi, ma che sicuramente fanno parte della nostra cultura, e che sicuramente possono essere fatte in collaborazione con le aziende che ancora ci sono in Italia e che lavorano sul territorio.

Q. Il lavoro in rete potrebbe essere una svolta, o comunque giocare un qualche ruolo in questo?

A. Con lavoro in rete intendo dire fare gioco di squadra tra quelli che sono i settori trainanti. Ovviamente se questa cosa fosse in qualche modo aiutata, sarebbe un grande passo in avanti. Si parla quasi subito di denaro, perché per sviluppare questo tipo di progetti serve sicuramente una parte importante di finanziamento. Interventi da parte dello stato sarebbero fondamentali per valorizzare tutte le attività artistiche legate ad un settore. Qualora lo stato non lo voglia o non lo possa fare, allora ovviamente dovrebbero essere i singoli enti privati a consorzarsi e a far fronte a quello che è il problema. Ma non si può pensare che si vada avanti senza che si faccia questa cosa.

Con Cascine Bellaria (<http://cascinebellaria.it/shop/it/>) abbiamo avuto un'idea e ci siamo presentati insieme ad un mercato globale. In Italia abbiamo un modo di lavorare forse ancora un po' chiuso da questo punto di vista.

Q. Quali iniziative private potrebbero essere messe in campo per educare le nuove generazioni?

A. Come iniziativa nostra privata, l'azienda sta collaborando con diverse scuole, partendo dalle elementari fino ad arrivare alle università, per cercare di trasmettere le basi del lavoro di qualità fatto in Italia, andando poi chiaramente a strutturare il lavoro in base a chi ci rivolgiamo.

Siamo noi che siamo andati a proporci alle scuole. Ti faccio due esempi opposti: con le elementari facciamo venire le scuole a visitare l'azienda e poi una delle nostre persone si reca nelle scuole e propone alcune lezioni specifiche sulla tessitura, il lavoro fatto a mano, le varie dinamiche del campo. Già subito, dalla visita in azienda, si nota un grande interesse da parte dei bambini. Anche perché si parte dal raccontargli della preistoria, da dove nasce la tessitura, e così entrano subito in contatto con l'attività. A scuola poi gli si fa realizzare un piccolo telaio di cartone con cui possono cominciare a realizzare i primi bracciali e vestiti per orsacchiotti. La stessa cosa facciamo con le università, ovviamente in modo diverso, andando a spiegare come si svolge dal nostro punto di vista la comunicazione, gli investimenti necessari per sviluppare il marchio eccetera. in più focus sugli effetti dell'approccio su mercati globali per una PMI come la nostra, e come anche le tecnologie ci hanno permesso di sviluppare più facilmente questo tipo di business. Abbiamo collaborato con il campus Einaudi di Torino, facoltà di lingue (seminari professionalizzanti) e con le scuole limitrofe del nostro paese e del territorio, le medie della città di Crescentino. Ora è un annetto che il progetto è partito e ci stiamo pian piano aprendo a diverse esperienze.

Intervista informale con Alessandra Curreli
Fashion maker & designer per *Alessandra Curreli Made in Italy*
Cagliari, 05/09/2016

A seguito di una prima chiacchierata sulla tesi di Alessandra nell' Agosto 2016

Q. Ho letto la tua tesi “Tessere il Cambiamento.” Un titolo molto evocativo! Ti va di raccontarmi in breve di cosa tratta e di come è nata la tua idea?

A. L'idea è nata da un tirocinio, grazie al quale ho avuto modo di entrare a far parte di un'azienda di tessuti, al cui interno c'era una ragazza, ossia la figlia dei proprietari, che faceva tessitura. Lei si è laureata a Firenze e mi ha fatto conoscere non solo i tessuti ma tutto quello che viene a monte, cioè i filati e ciò che serve a creare i pezzi di tessuto, a partire dal telaio manuale. In Sardegna il telaio manuale è stato molto utilizzato in passato, però poi è venuto a perdersi, così come tutte le altre conoscenze manuali, piano piano sono andate perdendosi. Lei ha voluto recuperare questa tradizione innovandola, perché dal telaio tradizionale passa ad una tessitura completamente moderna.

Altri temi che ho toccato sono stati ad esempio quelli dell'Orange Fiber... min.4

E da lì ho cercato i punti di snodo del mio progetto e sono finita in un piccolo paese sardo dove si trova uno dei migliori tintori dell'isola, un ragazzo tra l'altro giovanissimo. Lui si è laureato a Cagliari ma poi si è spostato a Milano e Parigi. Da lì, avendo fatto tutti gli studi che riguardano l'innovazione, sempre legata alla tradizione, è tornato in Sardegna e si occupa di tintura di filati, sui tessuti oppure tintura in capo, ovviamente su tessuti naturali, che sono quelli che permettono la tintura naturale. Da lì ho fatto piccoli campioni di tessuto e sono poi passata alla tintura.

E' stato interessante scoprire come in Sardegna molte persone conoscessero queste tradizioni ma le abbiano bypassate, non si siano soffermate più di tanto su di esse. Invece, e qui parte la seconda parte del mio progetto, da qui parte la mia idea di creare un prodotto che sia 100% naturale, quindi tessuti naturali e una tintura fatta all'80% naturale (...) e prodotto essenzialmente a mano da me o da chi lavora con me.



Q. Tu mi hai parlato molto di queste persone che hanno recuperato una tradizione sarda e ne hanno fatto la base di un'innovazione che hanno realizzato attraverso i loro progetti. In che cosa consiste l'innovazione di questi progetti e quale legame c'è di fatto con la tradizione? / Mi piacerebbe andare ad approfondire l'idea di innovazione che c'è

dietro questi progetti e quale legame c'è con la tradizione, cioè quanto importante è stata la tradizione nei loro progetti, quanto è importante la tradizione in questo, quale ruolo gioca nell'innovazione?

A. La tradizione ha un ruolo chiave. Se prendi Antonello Tedde, ad esempio, lui fa collezioni basate prima di tutto esclusivamente su trame sarde, tessute a telaio con motivi sardi, e in più c'è anche tutto l'*iter* del suo percorso, perché lui svolge tutto il suo percorso in Sardegna, per quanto lui abbia base a Londra. Per cui le materie prime vengono reperite in Sardegna e tessute da produttrici sarde, dopodiché i semilavorati vengono portati a Londra dove vengono assemblati. Inoltre è del tutto ecologico, utilizzando ad esempio cotone e lana rigenerata. Inoltre c'è l'innovazione del portare un prodotto sardo fuori dalla Sardegna, ad un pubblico principalmente americano e inglese. Caterina Quartana fa qualcosa di simile nel contesto dell'arredamento. Lei ha recuperato una vecchia tradizione sarda, che si chiama *piriones*, utilizzata anche da Antonello e la amplifica all'eccesso, creando una struttura tridimensionale. Lei utilizza anche dei tessuti e materiali in modo innovativo. Per esempio ha creato una linea di *pouf* con inserti in tessuto di sughero, che arriva sempre dalla Sardegna. Utilizzando tutti gli elementi di tessitura e le cose fatte a mano, lega ciò che è artigianale a ciò che è innovazione e a ciò che è tradizione.

Q. Loro hanno quindi ripreso una tecnica tradizionale e l'hanno applicata ad ambiti anche nuovi? Hanno un concetto dietro questa iniziativa? Sui loro siti può entrare nel vivo dei loro progetti e capire anche un po' come sono nati... Il successo di queste esperienze da cosa è dovuto, secondo quanto hai avuto modo di scoprire?

A. Innanzitutto dalla fascia a cui si è scelto di rivolgersi, cioè quella del lusso. queste cose non si possono fare se non nel settore lusso, perché tutte queste cose sono molto molto molto costose da realizzare. prima di tutto c'è un'idea, e tutto ciò che ha un'idea ha un valore maggiore, e per di più sono fatte a mano, e tranne nel caso di Antonello Tedde sono fatte a mano dalle stesse persone che ci mettono anche la faccia e il nome. Per di più utilizzando materie prime d'un certo tipo è chiaro che anche i prezzi salgano di rimando. La fascia del lusso poi è quella che consente di avere riscontri maggiori, perché chi ha i soldi è anche chi investe su un buon progetto di questo tipo. Il solo prodotto artigianale, fatto a mano, non è certo sufficiente. A Cagliari per esempio ce ne sono di persone che producono a mano, e i prezzi sono anche abbastanza competitivi. Anche nel mio caso, mi sono trovata a dover dare delle spiegazioni sui prezzi dei miei capi rispetto a persone che facevano un prodotto completamente diverso dal mio ma pur sempre fatto a mano. Vero è che se trovi la giusta fascia di mercato, poi il progetto decolla.

Secondo me un buon motivo per cui loro si son fatti notare è stato anche perché hanno cercato di dare importanza a ciò che prima veniva dimenticato: sono ragazzi giovani che riprendono quello che facevano i loro nonni e lo trasformano in qualcosa quasi di speciale. E in più lo fanno a mano, per cui ogni prodotto è pressoché unico, soprattutto quando utilizzi tessuti fatti a telaio o tinti naturalmente, quasi mai escono uguali e quindi quasi mai è lo stesso pezzo.

Q. Quindi si tratta anche un po' di aver saputo trasmettere il valore aggiunto di ciò che fanno. Queste persone hanno saputo raccontare bene la loro storia, giusto?

A. Precisamente.

Q. Nel mio lavoro rifletto anche sulla possibilità di sostituire il lavoro manuale con quello meccanico, con l'utilizzo di macchinari (...). In fondo è una possibilità che si discute spesso oggi, soprattutto in un contesto come quello italiano dove per ragioni di competitività ti dicono "il lavoro manuale sì ma fino a un certo punto, perché poi ci devi anche campare". E' davvero possibile in un contesto come quello tessile sostituire il lavoro manuale con quello meccanico?

A. Tutto dipende da dove tu vuoi arrivare. Io voglio che il prodotto sia naturale e non voglio che sia snaturato.

Quando fai un business plan per la tua azienda cerchi di capire quanto sarai in grado di produrre, quanti pezzi potrai fare a mano nel corso di una collezione (due all'anno), cercando quindi di soddisfare la richiesta mantenendo una produzione manuale. Chiaramente rivolgendoti ad una fascia di prezzo abbastanza alta, questo ti consente di mantenere una produzione manuale e non doverti rivolgere all'industria, mantenendo però una produzione che ti consente di mantenere la stabilità di una piccola media impresa che ha comunque un buon fatturato durante l'anno. Quando abbiamo fatto il business plan ci siamo messi proprio a capire se fosse possibile fare questo, e abbiamo visto che possibile è possibile!

Il problema è uno: che quando entri in un meccanismo industriale la produzione è più importante del prodotto stesso. Per cui capita che si decida di snaturare il prodotto in favore della produzione, pur di avere più soldi. Purtroppo lì dipende dall'azienda: se io dico "non voglio diventare Prada, però voglio avere la mia produzione e quella deve essere come dico io, non è che inizio con un progetto e dopo 5 anni il mio progetto cambia perché trovo strade più semplici, perché conviene andare a produrre in Cina piuttosto che in Italia, è ovvio. Purtroppo lì dipende molto da te. Il problema rimane sempre il soldo: se uno si fa prendere la mano poi è facile cambiare idea. Se prendi at però ha una produzione litigata molto molto costosa e lui va avanti così. Ora poi ho visto che alla linea di borse aggiungerà quella d'abbigliamento e di interior design. Quindi comunque anche partendo con le borse è riuscito a crescere.

Q. Al di là della fascia lusso, chi sono i clienti di questo tipo di aziende/artigiani?

A. Al momento ci sono alcuni mercati che sono più propensi ad un prodotto simile, però diciamo che siamo ancora in una fase di conoscenza. Ad esempio la Germania sta cominciando ad entrare nel vivo del prodotto naturale ed ecologico, da poco sono stati fatti 3 giorni di informazione con le aziende che trattano prodotti naturali. Ad esempio ho un'amica

che lavora in Bottega Verde e mi diceva che in Germania sono tutti ammaliati da questi prodotti naturali, più sicuri e privi di componenti chimici. Poi sono molto sensibili in California, già da tempo. Infatti la California è molto green, stanno molto attenti a quello che vestono, a quello che mangiano... Tanto è vero che molti di quelli che mi seguono su Instagram sono di LA. Anche in Italia adesso si sta cominciando a sentire questo cambiamento. Cerchi di mantenere il tuo prodotto così com'è e di campare su pochi prodotti. Però prima di fidarsi la gente deve conoscere.

Q. E come è possibile farsi conoscere?

A. Puoi partire dall'educare le persone che sono vicino a te. Nel mio negozio ho istruito la persona che vende i miei abiti su come è stato realizzato il mio capo, che storia ha... Un altro modo può essere banalmente il cartellino e tutto ciò che ruota attorno al packaging come "istruzione all'uso." In un caso come il mio scrivere da dove viene il capo, quale pianta è stata utilizzata per tingerlo, da quali mani è stato creato il tessuto, spiegare perché quel determinato capo è stato associato a quel particolare tessuto... Creare una specie di storia, insomma. Questo invoglia il consumatore ad acquistare un prodotto che è diverso da ogni altro, che non solo è naturale ma è praticamente unico, solamente tuo.

Tutto il resto viene da prima, per esempio attraverso l'utilizzo dei nuovi media, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter... Devi "bombardare," poi chi vuole si interessa spontaneamente. E' molto difficile, comunque è vero che senza i social media come strumento di diffusione non vai da nessuna parte.

Q. Già la scorsa volta mi parlavi dell'utilizzo di etsy.com, che i nuovi artigiani di oggi utilizzano molto, questo e tutti i nuovi portali. Anche perché mi dicevi, confermame lo, che il mercato tende ad essere anche per noi, molto più estero che non italiano per questo tipo di creazioni.

A. E' vero, vengo seguita principalmente da stranieri, è molto difficile avere un buon riscontro dagli italiani. Puoi avere molto riscontro in termini di "like" su Facebook e Instagram, ma poco riscontro poi dal punto di vista materiale, degli acquisti. E poi ho notato che fuori piace molto di più il prodotto fatto qua, in Italia.

Q. La scorsa volta mi avevi detto che ti sei un po' incuriosita che diverse persone dopo aver girato il mondo abbiano poi deciso di tornare in Sardegna. Anche un Antonello Tedde che pure vive a Londra ha comunque deciso di basare tutta la sua produzione in Sardegna. Mi racconti meglio questa cosa?

A. Parlo per me prima di tutto. Io ho basato tutti i miei studi sull'idea che volevo andare fuori, perché la Sardegna non aveva niente da offrirmi. Così sono stata prima a Milano due anni, dove ho studiato moda, poi una breve esperienza a Chicago, di tre mesi, poi sono

tornata in Italia e sono andata a Rimini, dove ho fatto un'esperienza di tre anni, e da lì, per cause di forza maggiore, sono dovuta rientrare in Sardegna. E' stato in quel momento che poi è partito tutto. Ho scelto di fare il tirocinio in Sardegna, da Caterina, e da lì ho capito che effettivamente quello che avevo imparato in questi anni di studio e in questi anni di vita fuori, mi avevano portata a vedere la Sardegna in modo diverso. Anche studiando ti rendi conto che se c'è qualcosa, qualsiasi cosa, anche microscopica che, dal tuo punto di vista, nel tuo piccolo, può aiutare lo sviluppo della tua terra, devi farlo! Noi sardi ci lamentiamo moltissimo della nostra terra, però poi quando abbiamo un progetto ci piace pensare di farlo qua, e svilupparlo qua per qua. Per cui quando ho deciso di porre le basi di questo progetto ho deciso di farlo qua, anche perché sarebbe stato impossibile farlo fuori. La produzione deve essere locale, sono tutte tecniche sarde, non potresti farle altrove.

La stessa cosa ha scelto di fare Antonello Tedde, anche lui è rimasto a vivere Londra, e ha fatto comunque prima le sue esperienze. Come me, anche lui è stato da Marra, e Marra stessa cosa: quando ha preso la direzione artistica di Kenzo ha detto "Io non mi sposto dalla Sardegna, se volete darmi la direzione artistica di Kenzo venite ad Alghero a vedere il mio laboratorio artistico, vedete come lavoro qui e poi decidete: se vi piace l'idea, io lavoro ad Alghero." Così all'epoca erano venuti qua a vedere come lavorava e come dirigeva tutta l'azienda Marra, e alla fine gli hanno dato la direzione artistica. Antonello Tedde ha lavorato con altri stilisti e ha deciso di rimanere a Londra (studiava anche lì). Però ha iniziato questo progetto molto affascinante e anche lui ha avuto il colpo di genio perché scegliendosi due mercati molto particolari, Hollivood e Londra, ha beccato il mercato giusto e dà da mangiare a molte aziende di qua. Caterina ha fatto lo stesso, è tornata a Cagliari e da lì ha avviato il suo grande progetto che è molto artistico, anche lei partendo come me praticamente dal niente e investendo molto sul passaparola, conoscenze. E' andata in Sardegna nel posto in cui si producono tappeti ed è partita per scherzo la produzione di un tappeto che è riuscita a vendere, e da lì poi è partita. Ha vinto concorsi, gira molto per il mondo eccetera, ma stabilmente lei sta qua.

Noi sardi abbiamo una terra che ci offre potenzialmente tanto, ma abbiamo un grosso problema che è quello dello spostamento, tutto ciò che viene fatto qua è difficile farlo uscire fuori dall'isola perché vostri triplicano. Quindi diciamo che abbiamo anche molto coraggio a fare una cosa del genere.

Bello questo legame con il territorio però! Penso che sia anche parte del successo delle vostre esperienze, o almeno questo è il riscontro che sto avendo io nelle mie, guardandomi intorno e incontrando imprenditori nell'ambito artigianale e tessile ma non solo. Un valore, un legame forte con qualcosa è quello che poi traspare e che forse va a catturare l'attenzione di qualcuno nella miriade di cose che si incontrano oggi.

Q. Ancora due domande: prima, parlando di Antonello Tedde, dicevi che fa produrre in Sardegna nonostante viva a Londra. In che modo funziona il suo business model?

A. Lui come designer dà l'input all'iter del suo prodotto. Le borse, ad esempio, hanno un tessuto fatto a telaio da tessitrici sarde. Le lane che sono utilizzate per farlo sono prese e tinte in Sardegna e poi tessute. Una volta che si hanno le pezze di tessuto, il montaggio della borsa

viene fatto “industrialmente” a Londra. Ma tutti i prodotti semilavorati, i processi intermedi della produzione e i vari pezzi vengono creati in Sardegna.

Q. Invece nel caso di Caterina Quartana mi parlavi del far network. Quale rilevanza pensi che abbia questo fattore nella realizzazione di un processo?

A. Assolutamente molto importante. Penso abbia un peso pari all’80% del successo del prodotto. Almeno per quel che riguarda la mia esperienza e ciò che ho visto lavorando con Caterina.

Suo marito è gallerista, e loro da poco hanno aperto una galleria a Cagliari, dove cercano di portare alla luce gli artisti di qua. Quando hanno inaugurato c’era un tappeto tridimensionale fatto da Caterina, bianco latte, bellissimo, delle opere di un artista graffittaro molto in voga qua che fa opere molto concettuali, una ragazza che danzava e un’altra che faceva opere sul momento, e molti altri. Loro cercano di portare avanti questo progetto, utilizzando l’arte in collaborazione con gli altri artisti. Questo perché se non ci aiutiamo noi difficilmente ci aiuta qualcun altro, poi c’è un lato molto divertente: quando lavori con un altro artista, soprattutto che fa qualcosa che si avvicina alla tua arte anche se sostanzialmente diversa da quella che fai tu, impari molto. Io non sapevo niente di tessuti, non sapevo come si tesseva, non avevo forse mai neanche visto un telaio, ad esempio. Mi sono appassionata, ho imparato a tessere, ho imparato molte cose. Anche dal punto di vista delle collezioni, lavorare nell’azienda di Caterina mi è servito per capire come strutturarle.

Una cosa divertentissima che abbiamo fatto io e Caterina per suo marito era un’installazione in un museo. Abbiamo preso delle reti di metallo e abbiamo realizzato una specie di punto croce enorme basato su un disegno di Caterina. Abbiamo fatto questi pannelli enormi che stavano su tutte le pareti facendo il punto croce con la lana. Ne siamo uscite devastate, avevamo le mani distrutte. Lavorare giorno e notte su un progetto così è molto impegnativo, ma il risultato è stato bellissimo: quando ti allontanavi e guardavi questa cosa fatta con queste lane tinte naturalmente di colori accesi - giallo, rosso e blu erano - e pensavi "cavolo lo hai fatto tu!" ti fa vedere come la collaborazione con altri artisti possa darti tanto.

Io per esempio oggi collaboro con un designer. Lui è un grafico e ha curato tutto ciò che riguarda il mio marchio, dal logo al packaging alla pubblicità. E’ un ragazzo giovane, della mia età, laureato allo IED. Ci siamo beccati grazie a conoscenze varie e insieme adesso lavoriamo al *nostro* progetto. Perché una volta che parli del *tuo* progetto e magari trovi qualcuno a cui piace, le collaborazioni vengono fuori.

Q. Ecco, in proposito, che cos’è che ti fa decidere di collaborare o meno con qualcuno, qual è secondo te l’”aggancio”? Com’è che le persone poi si scelgono, sulla base di cosa?

A. Sostanzialmente vai un po’ “a pelle.” Gli artisti hanno uno spiccato senso empatico, è vero, quindi quando incontro una persona riesco un po’ a capire se mi piace oppure no, e sostanzialmente si parte da questo. Quando poi scopri cosa fa l’altro, un po’ capisci se può “andare bene” rispetto a quello che stai facendo. L’amico che mi ha presentato il grafico mi

ha detto “guarda, lui è molto bravo, vedete se vi trovate,” e da subito lui mi ha proposto quelle tre cose che mi hanno fatto intuire che aveva già capito di cosa avevo bisogno. Questo mi dimostra che non è solo un bravo grafico ma anche una persona su cui posso contare per fare in modo che il mio progetto vada bene. difficilmente hai un grafico solo che lavori con te 24 ore su 24 al tuo progetto. Lui invece si è appassionato e lo ha voluto ampliare, aggiungendo quel qualcosa che mancava per quel che riguarda la grafica, dicendomi “io da te non voglio niente, voglio lavorare con te!” che è diverso.

Con Caterina è nata una bella collaborazione prima di tutto perché è una persona con cui si lavora molto bene, molto solare, che ha voglia di insegnare e che ti fa sentire molto a tuo agio, e poi perché come me anche lei era interessata al mantenimento della tradizione e allo stesso tempo all’innovazione. Sicuramente senza di lei il mio progetto non sarebbe nemmeno partito.



Q. Quindi in buona sostanza vi siete trovati a lavorare bene perché avete creduto in entrambi i casi l’uno nel progetto dell’altro.

A. Sì esatto, con le persone con cui collaboro sostanzialmente è questo che fa la differenza. Innanzitutto io ti presento il mio progetto, poi sento cosa hai da dire. Mi è capitato di incontrare un ragazzo, anche lui più o meno della mia età, che fa il fotografo per hobby. Lui mi ha detto “guarda, io ti curo l’immagine, ti faccio la pagina Facebook, Instagram, questo e l’altro... Ma voleva snaturare il mio progetto e renderlo altro. No! Un conto sarebbe anche dire “ti dò i miei abiti, tu mi fai le foto, ci facciamo pubblicità vicenda.” Un altro è voler cambiare il progetto per un tornaconto personale. Questo no, ma lo capisci subito facendoci una chiacchierata se l’altra persona è interessata ad aiutarti o solo a trarre qualcosa per se stessa. E poi secondo me conta molto davvero dove si vuole andare. Io quando ho iniziato pensavo di lavorare per grandi aziende di moda, poi ho pensato di fare la cool hunter per professione, oggi mi trovo qui. Se uno mi dice voglio lavorare per un’azienda, ok, ma dove vuoi arrivare? Vuoi lavorare per qualcun altro anche in futuro, o farti un’esperienza e poi aprirti qualcosa di tuo? Già da quello secondo me puoi capire se è una persona con cui puoi collaborare o che può lavorar per te, che è diverso.

Q. Nella mia tesi ho sviluppato l’idea che perché le cose funzionino e si crei quella collaborazione, partecipazione, sia tra le persone che realizzano il progetto sia poi in qualche modo con le persone che “ricevono” il tuo lavoro, nel tuo caso i tuoi acquirenti. Le persone si prendono sempre un po’ sul valore, e credo che l’esempio del tuo grafico sia significativo in questo senso! E penso che il lavoro di qui in avanti, per gli artigiani

ma non solo, si giocherà su questo piano, si tratta di portare la collaborazione su un livello diverso...

A. Assolutamente, la cosa che io ho visto è che rispetto alla generazione dei nostri genitori noi dobbiamo fare quel passettino in più. Prima era tutto molto standardizzato, ora noi dobbiamo tornare a quello che facevano i nostri nonni: trovare le collaborazioni, creare quella fitta rete di persone che vanno nella tua stessa direzione, fare meno però meglio... possiamo permettercelo, tra virgolette, e soprattutto chi fa arte deve fare questo, perché sino adesso vedere le aziende italiane andare in Cina ci sembra naturale, ma se pensiamo a come sono nate quelle aziende, come piccole realtà artigiane, dove davvero la gente si metteva il camice per andare a lavorare, ti fa capire che, insomma, è inutile che abbiamo 10mila avvocati se poi non c'è nessuno che va a lavorare la terra, così come è inutile che vogliamo le scarpe di Dior se poi non c'è nessuno che le fa! Però questo è ancora difficile. cioè è difficile il concetto, soprattutto sembra ancora difficile per un genitore sentirsi dire “non voglio fare l'università voglio imparare a fare un lavoro.”

Q. Penso anch'io, ma perché, come anche tu dicevi, siamo figli di una generazione che sia dal punto di vista del lavoro che della direzione in cui procedeva aveva dei riferimenti e delle prospettive ben diverse. Probabilmente siamo andati avanti per troppo tempo pensando che il sapere nozionistico è quello che ti dà il *quid*, quando poi non è necessariamente così. Posto poi che se anche vai a fare il calzolaio ma lo fai in un certo modo sei tutt'altro che uno “stolto.” Cioè il concetto è che non è



che perché non fai l'università sei di meno, anzi. C'è forse molta più intelligenza nel saper fare che non in un sapere nozionistico senza l'applicazione del pensiero critico.

A. Esatto, basta che in tutto quello che fai hai la pazienza di metterci la testa. Poi è anche vero che in una società come questa è proprio difficile scegliere di prendere quella strada, ma è anche difficile trovare le persone che ti insegnino un mestiere! Io sono stata fortunata. Sicuramente ho avuto molta costanza e anche se non ho sempre subito trovato le persone che mi hanno aiutato, ho puntato i piedi e ho detto “io questa cosa la faccio”. Però è vero anche che le persone che detengono ancora quei saperi fondamentali, che possono essere il ricamo, il cucito, il saper fare le scarpe, così come anche l'agricoltore, se non c'è nessuno che te le insegna è difficile che le impari. E questo è un problema, legato al fatto che i nostri nonni non hanno insegnato ai nostri genitori e fare queste cose, perché dovevano andare a fare dei lavori più prestigiosi, e pian piano questa conoscenza si sono perse. Ci sono adesso dei paesi in Sardegna che stanno organizzando delle micro-lezioni per insegnare ad esempio alle ragazze

a tessere o fare i vestiti sardi tradizionali. E ci sono magri tre nonne del paese che si sono messe a disposizione per insegnare a chi lo voglia.

Perché sono belli i nostri progetti? Perché è bello che ci siano persone giovani che si siano dette “io voglio fare altro, anche se costa fatica, anche se magari guadagnerò di meno”. Ma da sei mesi di cucito intensivo di abiti da cerimonia, io ne esco soddisfatta, e mi “rende” molto di più che non fare altro.

Q. Chi ha promosso quelle attività di cui mi parlavi?

A. Dietro ci sono i comuni per quanto riguarda l'organizzazione. Per le lezioni sui costumi tradizionali sardi però l'iniziativa è stata di due ragazze della mia età, che hanno detto “perché noi non abbiamo qualcuno che ci insegna a fare l'abito sardo?”. E così sono davvero andate a bussare porta a porta per cercare le persone, e poi all'associazione del comune per chiedere se si poteva fare questa cosa.

Io anche l'anno scorso al paese di mia mamma ho organizzato un workshop per il riciclo dei tessuti e ho fatto portare ai ragazzi dei vestiti usati. Ho portato la macchina da cucire e da lì, con quello che avevano a disposizione, abbiamo fatto qualcosa di nuovo. Una ragazza ha portato il vestito da sposa della mamma, un vecchio vestito in lino puro, particolarissimo ma bellissimo, molto *bohémien*. Lei mi ha detto che era troppo lungo, voleva fare una balza per riutilizzarlo. Così abbiamo tagliato, cucito, e questa ragazza è uscita dal workshop con il suo nuovo abito contentissima dicendo “mamma mamma guarda adesso posso mettere il tuo vecchio vestito per andare in giro!”. Lei felicissima, la mamma felicissima. C'era anche il fatto che erano tutti adolescenti che stavano imparando cos'è il riciclo, che non è poco, e da lì poi è stato un susseguirsi di cose.

E' chiaro, ci sono paesini che lo fanno e quelli a cui invece non ne importa niente. A Cagliari qualche mese fa hanno proposto un workshop sul telaio... Qualcosa si sta muovendo, la possibilità di fare delle cose c'è.

Q. Mi interessava capire: è qualcosa che arriva esclusivamente da privati o qualcosa che viene anche dalle istituzioni?

A. Per assurdo io ho incontrato realtà artigianali che hanno il sapere ma *non trovano a chi insegnare, non c'è nessuno a cui trasmettere questo sapere*. Nelle scuole, loro non trovano nessuno.

C'è mala informazione a riguardo. Quando mi stavo diplomando, l'orientamento universitario era economia, giurisprudenza, medicina, ingegneria... Non c'è nessuno che ti spiega che esiste anche altro, e a meno che tu sia un pazzo che ama follemente questo tipo di lavoro e si mette a cercare e ci arriva per vie traverse, se nessuno ti dice cosa c'è nel mondo, tu non sai che c'è la possibilità di imparare un lavoro in un'azienda, che magari fai tre anni di apprendistato ma poi hai anche un lavoro, perché il personale di quelle aziende sta morendo, non può neanche fare un ricambio.

Il problema dell'Italia è che conosci quei tre lavori e del resto non se ne sente parlare. La gente non si chiede nemmeno come mai in tavola ad esempio abbiamo determinate cose. Cioè non è che la lattuga si colga da sola, capisci? Io sono finita a fare un anno e mezzo di architettura prima di sbattere la testa e capire cosa e come lo volevo fare, perché ho impiegato un anno a trovare la mia strada, ma non sono tutti così fortunati come me. Poi è anche vero che ad un lavoro ti ci affezioni facendolo. Io odiavo cucire, avevo “paura” della macchina da cucire, però adesso mi piace. Poi magari non voglio fare propriamente la sarta, ma faccio anche quello.

LA COOPERTIVA E IL RUOLO DEI VALORI NELL'ESPERIENZA AZIENDALE

Intervista con Manuela Sfondrini

President of Cangiarì

Chiaverano, 15/05/2017

Traccia delle domande inviate prima dell'intervista:

Grazie per il tempo che ha acconsentito a dedicarmi per questa intervista. La informo anticipatamente che registrerò la nostra conversazione per poter annotare quanto ci diremo che verrà trascritto ed inserito nel mio elaborato finale.

Come anticipato ieri, la mia indagine verte sul discorso dell'artigianato e le difficoltà che oggi giorno lo mettono a dura prova. Tuttavia esistono casi di successo che hanno saputo far fronte ai tempi, e il vostro è indubbiamente uno di questi.

Ciò che mi interessa approfondire con lei è la vostra esperienza e percezione rispetto ai vostri fattori di successo. In particolare nella mia ricerca mi sono trovata a riflettere su alcune questioni legate alla cultura e al sistema valoriale aziendale e alle collaborazioni con altri soggetti.

Mi interessa approfondire la vostra esperienza di lavoro in rete e le collaborazioni di cui Cangiarì ha avuto modo di beneficiare in passato e beneficia ancora oggi e in parallelo la vostra esperienza come cooperativa sociale.

- Chi collabora oggi con il brand Cangiarì? Quali sono le figure che gravitano attorno al brand e alla realizzazione del prodotto?
- Avete partner istituzionali con cui collaborate in modo continuativo? Se sì, chi e che ruolo ricoprono nello svolgimento dell'attività in Cangiarì?
- Parliamo del lavoro in rete. La stessa cooperativa GOEL comprende attività di vario tipo che collaborano tra loro. Ma so che avete anche coinvolto nei vostri progetti altre attività e soggetti esterni alla realtà GOEL. **Che ruolo ricopre il lavoro in rete per voi?** In che modo gestite i rapporti con i vostri partner?
- In che modo siete riusciti a gestire la fase di start-up? So da fonti giornalistiche che avete ricevuto diverse prestazione pro-bono da parte di aziende terze. **Per quale ragione, a vostro parere, queste aziende/persone hanno deciso di lavorare con voi senza riceverne nulla (in termini economici) in cambio?**
- Quale forma giuridica ha Cangiarì?
- Quali sono gli obiettivi di GOEL?

- Quali sono i **vantaggi e gli svantaggi della forma cooperativa** che avete adottato? // La forma giuridico-organizzativa della cooperativa quali vantaggi/svantaggi comporta nella gestione e sviluppo di un'azienda come Cangiarì?

- La storia del Gruppo Cooperativo GOEL nasce con un forte credo e la volontà di valorizzare dei bisogni sociali ben definiti. **Quali sono i valori che guidano il gruppo GOEL e Cangiarì, e quale ruolo pensate che abbiano giocato questi nella realizzazione del vostro operato** fino ad ora?

- In buona sostanza, **a cosa credete che dipenda principalmente il vostro successo?** Può questo avere a che fare con la forma giuridico-organizzativa da voi scelta? O forse ha più a che vedere con il forte messaggio e i valori che hanno ispirato la creazione della cooperativa GOEL, che hanno saputo attrarre persone sensibili alle stesse?

- So inoltre che da qualche tempo è partito il progetto GOEL Consulting. Sono stata molto colpita dall'idea di "cambiare adottando un nuovo punto di vista"... in cui "l'etica diventa elemento costitutivo del prodotto e parte del processo di produzione stesso". Potremmo quindi dire che lo stesso prodotto è incarnazione di quel valore aggiunto, un valore di condivisione e partecipazione alla mission aziendale di GOEL? (mi piacerebbe eventualmente approfondire anche questo argomento con voi in un secondo momento)

Q. Grazie per il tempo che ha acconsentito a dedicarmi per questa intervista. La informo anticipatamente che registrerò la nostra conversazione per poter annotare quanto ci diremo che verrà trascritto ed inserito nel mio elaborato finale.

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Partirei dai vostri fattori di successo...

A. Per quanto riguarda Cangiarì, l'artigianalità, e quindi il recupero di una tradizione che si stava perdendo, è sicuramente un primo fattore determinante, perché caratterizza il marchio con un connotato che altri non hanno.

Inoltre per fare questo lavoro di recupero sono state coinvolte delle donne del territorio, indignate che questa tradizione si stesse perdendo giorno dopo giorno, a partire da un'epoca in cui nei paesini c'era un telaio in ogni casa ed era un'abitudine per le famiglie realizzare in casa i propri tessuti. Chiaramente parliamo di molti anni fa, ma questa era una tradizione molto sentita. La preparazione dell'orditura per il telaio avveniva nei vicoli, diventando anche un momento di convivialità, di ritrovo, accompagnato da danze e da canti... Insomma, era una tradizione che andava oltre la mera azione produttiva. Quindi è stato determinante il fatto che questa azione di recupero sia nata proprio dal territorio, da donne che, sì, volevano trovare uno sbocco lavorativo e un'opportunità di lavoro in questo progetto, ma che si erano anche domandate se non fosse possibile unire le due cose - cioè il lavoro con il non lasciare che si disperdesse questa tradizione.

Infine ancora la sinergia con una realtà produttiva e già presente sul territorio come GOEL, che porta sul territorio uno sviluppo puntato sulla valorizzazione sia delle competenze che delle risorse del territorio già esistenti, per metterle a sistema in un contesto incentrato sui valori di inclusione sociale e lotta all'emarginazione - la forma di cooperazione sociale, ovviamente non profit, che noi abbiamo scelto, inserisce nel lavoro persone svantaggiate e si occupa non solo di far quadrare i bilanci ma si fa anche carico dei problemi del territorio.

Unendo tutti questi fattori, un'attività come il recupero della tessitura diventa anche un percorso di sviluppo sociale ed economico, oltre che culturale.

A questo si aggiunge, rispetto al discorso del recupero della tradizione e dell'artigianato, se ci si vuole anche ricollegare a quello che dicevamo ieri, la riflessione che il valore di un prodotto oggi, il senso che un prodotto acquista non è dato soltanto dalla qualità e dal prezzo, ma c'è un contenuto in più, e cioè che il prodotto è stato fatto a mano, senza sfruttare il lavoro di nessuno, e in qualche modo porta con sé una storia che il cliente finale è disposto a pagare. Questo valore si può oggi sul mercato convertire anche in un valore economico.

Noi ci siamo resi conto, dalla nostra esperienza, che mentre **i negozi sono meno pronti a recepire questo messaggio perché sono ancora focalizzati su un concetto di mercato un po' vecchio, che dà valore al prodotto solo in termini di qualità-pezzo**, per cui la convenienza del prodotto e l'interesse per il prodotto sono dati solo da questi due elementi, oggi non è più così. **Il cliente finale è molto interessato a conoscere cosa acquista**, cosa c'è dentro il prodotto, chi l'ha fatto, come l'ha fatto, se è stata rispettata nella filiera della produzione la normativa sul lavoro, se i materiali di cui è fatto il prodotto sono o meno nocivi per l'ambiente...



E qui ci colleghiamo al secondo dei punti di forza di Cangiari, e cioè che è biologico, che usa tutti i materiali, le colorazioni, i filati biologici. Questo chiaramente dà ancora maggior valore, nel senso che rispetta l'ambiente, rispetta le persone e in qualche modo crea anche consapevolezza: a noi non interessa soltanto il prodotto, **ma attraverso il prodotto fare un'azione culturale e portare un messaggio di cambiamento.** Questo cambiamento passa anche attraverso questi valori, cioè il fatto di non utilizzare sostanze chimiche che danneggiano l'ambiente, che vengono assorbite dalla pelle e quindi creano pericolo per chi le indossa, il fatto di rispettare le normative sul lavoro... Abbiamo scelto per questa ragione la certificazione GOTS - global organic textile standard - una della più autorevoli certificazioni riconosciute a livello internazionale. Questa certifica non soltanto il prodotto ma anche il processo di produzione/lavorazione, andando a guardare tutta la filiera, dall'origine della fibra fino al prodotto finito in tutte le sue fasi con un sistema che permette di rintracciare i vari passaggi e determinare in modo inequivocabile se sono state rispettate tutte le procedure e normative, dallo smaltimento dei rifiuti delle acque, i contratti di lavoro, fino alla biologicità delle fibre. Questo è una garanzia per noi, ma anche per i nostri clienti che acquistano i nostri prodotti.



Q. Quindi oltre alle certificazioni di cui potete avvalervi in che modo comunicate i vostri valori e tratti distintivi ai clienti finali?

A. Ecco, su questa cosa c'è ancora da lavorare. Nell'etichetta, oltre che nelle forme di comunicazione che ci sono concesse, dai comunicati stampa alle varie comunicazioni pubbliche ufficiali, lo diciamo. Però su questa cosa ancora non abbiamo probabilmente spinto abbastanza, soprattutto sulla comunicazione web. Su questo stiamo facendo delle azioni di miglioramento. Quello che le ho raccontato è un aspetto che percepiamo come importante, per cui riteniamo che vada adeguatamente trasferito. Attualmente viene comunicato sulle etichette dei prodotti e tramite le comunicazioni ufficiali.



Q. Ok grazie. vorrei ancora chiederle una cosa in merito al discorso: al di là della parte legata alla clientela, so che Cangiari ha sviluppato tutta una serie di collaborazioni...

A. Interrompo solo un attimo per fare una precisazione: Cangiari è il marchio, la cooperativa sociale che gestisce Cangiari è Made in GOEL, e si occupa della filiera produttiva del gruppo

GOEL. Questo per farle capire meglio anche la struttura. GOEL è il gruppo, all'interno del gruppo ogni realtà di filiera comprende altre cooperative sociali o persone fisiche interessate allo specifico settore di riferimento. Per cui abbiamo GOEL bio, che si occupa del settore agroalimentare, abbiamo Made in GOEL che si occupa del tessile-abbigliamento e artigianato in genere, e poi c'è il Consorzio GOEL che invece si occupa sia del turismo responsabile che di tutta la parte di assistenza e servizi sociali-sanitari.

Aggiungo ancora una parte rispetto a ciò che dà valore e caratterizza l'azienda, cosa ha in più rispetto agli altri. **Le due caratteristiche di cui ho parlato prima, artigianalità e la biologicità, caratterizzano il prodotto, ma sicuramente il fatto che sia una realtà partecipata** e non un'azienda "classica", in cui c'è un imprenditore che mette il capitale e dei dipendenti, il fatto quindi che si sia scelta la forma della cooperazione sociale, **fa diventare quello che facciamo orizzontale**: ogni tessitrice è socia, così come altre lavoratrici, dalla stilista a chi collabora con noi a vario titolo. Questo processo partecipativo diventa un valore in più anche rispetto al prodotto finito e finale, perché è frutto di un lavoro comune, non soltanto di fornitore di servizio o prestatore di lavoro ma è di qualcuno che ha un **interesse che va oltre l'economico**: chi partecipa ai processi produttivi è anche socio, si siede in assemblea, alza la mano e vota. Inoltre, il fatto di essere non profit fa sì che tutto ciò che viene prodotto viene anche reinvestito per creare opportunità di lavoro per gli altri. Non c'è nessuno che intasca gli utili, e anche questo in qualche modo fa sì che Cangiarì sia un caso molto particolare rispetto alle realtà con cui siamo tradizionalmente abituati a confrontarci.

Q. Mi permetto di farle una domanda in merito a queste sue ultime osservazioni e alla natura non profit di Cangiarì: crede che potrebbero esserci anche degli svantaggi rispetto alla forma della cooperativa sociale? Che questa possa in parte costituire un limite?

A. Sicuramente sì. Noi ci troviamo a competere con dei marchi di moda che hanno investitori che possono mettere capitale e investire anche in azioni di marketing, pubblicità, azioni commerciali che in questo tipo di settore purtroppo sono anche determinanti rispetto al risultato. Con la cooperativa sociale diventa difficile proporci a degli investitori, perché un investitore ovviamente vuole anche un ritorno economico, cosa che nelle cooperative sociali non è possibile. Ovviamente questo rappresenta un limite allo sviluppo, però ci si fa carico di questa fatica, costruendo un pezzo per volta quello che viene.

Q. In che modo fate fronte a questi limiti, per esempio?

A. Semplicemente è un vincolo allo sviluppo. Se ci fossero degli investimenti maggiori, anche per andare all'estero o fare delle azioni pubblicitarie, chiaramente anche i riscontri commerciali immagino sarebbero molto superiori.

Il limite è che questi investimenti non ci sono e quindi non si fanno, semplicemente! Il resto lo si costruisce un pezzo per volta, con molta fatica. Riveste un potenziale molto alto che

purtroppo rimane per ora in buona parte inesperto per questo motivo.

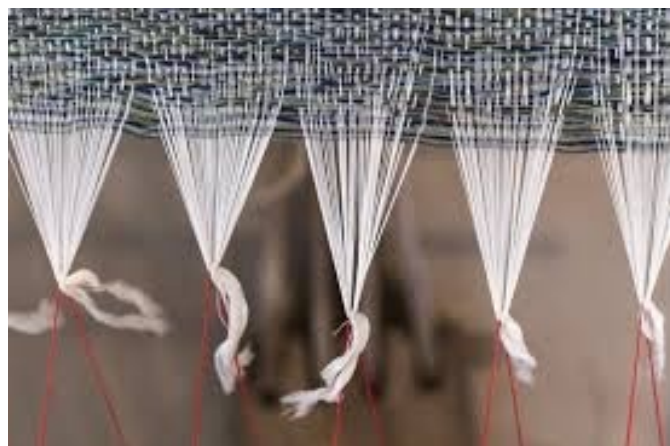
Q. Ci sono altri fattori che riconoscete come pro e/o contro rispetto alla forma di cooperativa assunta?

A. L'inserimento lavorativo di persone svantaggiate, che apparentemente per chi sta fuori potrebbe sembrare un limite, in realtà non lo è. Riusciamo ad inserire persone svantaggiate a lavoro rendendole produttive e dando sia a loro che a noi molte soddisfazioni, riuscendo a valorizzare questo aspetto. Questo non lo vedo come un limite, sicuramente è una fatica in più, però non credo che sia penalizzante dal punto di vista produttivo. Rispetto ad altri aspetti direi di no, se non quanto le dicevo prima.



Q. Al di là dei soggetti che fanno parte della vostra filiera, ho letto qua e là che sin dalla fase di startup GOEL ha avuto la possibilità di vantaggiare di prestazioni pro bono da parte di alcune organizzazioni, e che anche successivamente avete avuto modo di collaborare con personaggi, stilisti di calibro internazionale e non solo, che hanno deciso di appoggiare la vostra causa, di fatto - mi corregga se sbaglio - senza un reale guadagno in termini economici.

A. Dipende, ci sono stati diversi casi. Sono in tanti ad aver collaborato con noi a titolo diverso, alcuni completamente pro bono. Ad esempio abbiamo avuto Accenture che ci ha fornito il piano commerciale di sviluppo a livello internazionale in modo completamente gratuito. Ci sono state altre collaborazioni, anche con stilisti che si sono resi disponibili a non richiedere quei cachet a cui normalmente sono abituati, pur non lavorando per noi del tutto gratuitamente: avendo ricevuto il rimborso di tutte le spese vive oltre a qualcosina per giustificare gli spostamenti e le spese derivanti dallo svolgimento di questa collaborazione, non ci hanno rimesso nulla. In altri casi abbiamo fatto una via di mezzo, delle collaborazioni



“light” dove siamo arrivati fin dove si poteva arrivare, e loro si sono accontentati di questo perché dall'altra parte c'era un ritorno non soltanto economico ma anche un'esperienza che poteva rappresentare per loro un arricchimento culturale, ma anche umano e di vita, che evidentemente è stato sufficiente a compensare l'aspetto economico.

Q. Ecco, mi interessa molto soprattutto questo aspetto: che cos'è che secondo lei ha fatto percepire questa possibilità di vivere un'esperienza arricchente, o che ha fatto sì che queste persone o organizzazioni volessero collaborare proprio con voi?

A. I punti di forza del brand e del progetto che caratterizzano il percorso che stiamo facendo costituiscono di fatto un'esperienza molto particolare, che per alcuni è interessante approfondire, sia dal punto di vista professionale - in quanto può rappresentare un interessante caso di studio e approfondimento di alcuni aspetti come la tessitura a mano, lo sviluppo di prodotti nuovi, il fatto di lavorare in gruppo, quindi in una cooperativa dove



ognuno fa la sua parte e il prodotto è risultato di un lavoro fatto da tutti, dove tutti decidono e nessuno è il capo... Ci sono diversi aspetti, anche il fatto di approfondire il tema del biologico, del rispetto per l'ambiente. Sono tutti connotati che rendono Cangiari un'esperienza interessante, e per chi lavora nel settore con passione ed è attento ad alcuni aspetti può essere un valore

che funge da contropartita rispetto ad un compenso economico. Stessa cosa per enti, fondazioni e organizzazioni, per cui c'è il discorso di supportare un caso come il nostro che porta dei valori che vanno oltre quelli meramente produttivi. —> *non sono pienamente soddisfatta della risposta, voglio approfondire la domanda... Vorrei che venisse fuori la percezione del proprio tratto distintivo rispetto a casi similari!*

Q. Le faccio un'ulteriore domanda, un po' provocatoria: è vero che oggi la vostra è ormai una realtà piuttosto conosciuta e affermata, e certamente parte già nel 2009 con delle idee, una modalità di lavorare e portare avanti un progetto abbastanza singolari. Però non siete l'unica realtà che utilizza ancora i telai fatti a mano, che vuole impattare nell'ambito sociale e che vuole promuovere dei valori quali il recupero di una tradizione, la riattivazione dell'economia locale e via dicendo. E quindi: perché proprio voi, cosa vi contraddistingue da tutti gli altri? —> *vorrei che venisse fuori la percezione del proprio tratto distintivo rispetto a casi similari!*

A. Abbiamo fatto uno studio, una ricerca di mercato prima di iniziare. Almeno in Italia prima che nascesse Cangiari non c'era ancora una realtà che riunisse tutti questi elementi insieme, che riuscisse cioè a portare avanti un discorso sociale e allo stesso tempo posizionasse il prodotto nella fascia alta di mercato... Questo cosa significa? Che se i tessuti sono artigianali e sono fatti a mano, un metro di tessuto fatto a mano richiede dalle 3 alle 6 ore di lavoro. Pagando sindacalmente questo lavoro il costo del tessuto **per forza di cose deve essere**

collocato in una fascia alta, altrimenti il mercato non riconosce quel prezzo e tutta la filiera di lavoro non ha la possibilità di riconoscere la giusta retribuzione a chi ci lavora. Nell'abbigliamento italiano c'è stata un'impennata nella fascia dell'eco luxury dal 2012 in poi, ma noi siamo nati nel 2009. **Il punto di forza iniziale è stato questo: il fatto che non ci fosse un prodotto di fascia alta che fosse sia ecologico sia sociale.**

Noi eravamo un po' sconcertati dal fatto di non avere competitors all'inizio. Alcune caratteristiche non si trovavano in nessun marchio di moda di fascia alta. Anche se ora i clienti finali sono molto più attenti anche a questi aspetti e quindi molti marchi si sono dati da fare a rispondere a questa richiesta di mercato.

Q. Che però per l'appunto è stata una risposta, da parte di questi marchi, ad una richiesta di mercato...

A. Sì ecco, questa è un po' la tendenza delle aziende profit, che rispondono a delle logiche di mercato. Essendo noi una non profit e quindi motivati anche da altro, **volevamo un prodotto che veicolasse anche "altro" e che non fosse un prodotto fine a se stesso.** Questo è un ragionamento abbastanza inusuale per un'azienda profit che risponde a logiche di mercato, e non c'è un obiettivo progettuale a monte.

Q. Le chiedo ancora questo: in buona sostanza se dovesse definire la ragione primaria che vi ha condotti al successo, pensa che sia legato alla forma organizzativa che avete assunto o agli ideali che hanno spinto alla creazione di questo progetto?

A. Io credo che sia un mix delle due cose. Nessuno di questi fattori da solo avrebbe determinato lo stesso successo di Cangiarì. E' la combinazione di queste due cose, perché anche da parte di chi ci ha seguito e supportato e ha dato riscontro positivo, il valore è stato dato da tutte queste componenti. Recuperare solo una tradizione sarebbe stato sì positivo ma non sufficiente, così come il solo inserimento di disabili e l'essere una cooperativa sociale è sì molto bello, ma non credo costituisca di per sé un fattore di successo. Stesso discorso vale ancora per il biologico; mentre tutti e tre i fattori insieme hanno dato probabilmente un senso l'uno all'altro, e soltanto combinati hanno dato i risultati che abbiamo avuto.

Rispetto a quello che dicevamo ieri, che il mercato si sta evolvendo, consumare di meno ma consumare meglio, tutto quello che è legato anche al discorso dell'artigianato, noi aderiamo da alcuni anni alla Fashion Revolution, una manifestazione a livello internazionale che contesta il sistema moda per come è tradizionalmente concepito e per le conseguenze che questo provoca. Può essere eventualmente anche interessante approfondire rispetto ai contenuti e ai tempi del lavoro e del valore che c'è dietro un capo d'abbigliamento. La Fashion Revolution sta approfondendo per l'appunto tutti questi elementi, facendo anche un lavoro di promozione culturale con percorsi educativi, diffusione di materiali nelle scuole e via dicendo, per far capire che se compriamo una maglietta a 5 euro bisogna però porsi la domanda: chi è che ci sta perdendo in questa transazione? Qualcuno è stato sfruttato per

consentirmi di comprare a così basso prezzo, io stesso indosserò qualcosa che probabilmente è stato realizzato con dei materiali che mi intossicheranno e inquineranno l'ambiente...

Se ognuno facesse un ragionamento di consapevolezza quando acquista un capo d'abbigliamento - e non solo - a poco a poco si potrebbe fare un lavoro di cambiamento culturale che ci potrebbe portare a valorizzare di più l'artigianato, il lavoro lento e alcune cose che oggi si stanno perdendo.

Dalla chiacchierata al telefono della sera prima... Discorso sulla consapevolezza dei consumatori...

A. Siamo stati educati al consumismo sfrenato, non ci rendiamo conto che ogni giorno vengono prodotti circa 14 capi di abbigliamento per ciascuno di noi al mondo, cosa che non è assolutamente necessaria: probabilmente quei capi non arriveranno mai nemmeno nei nostri armadi. Però se qualcuno li produce è perché evidentemente ci sono delle condizioni di mercato che dettano queste esigenze, e noi ci troviamo invischiati in questo sistema di cui tutti - le persone, l'ambiente... - ne paghiamo le conseguenze. Almeno finché non entreremo nella logica che bisogna consumare di meno e consumare meglio, magari potendoci permettere un solo capo d'abbigliamento l'anno, ma magari prodotto a mano e biologico.

Q. Una cosa che mi ha colpito molto è che siete comunque riusciti a portare dalla vostra diverse personalità che hanno contribuito alla vostra attività a vario titolo. Questa cosa che trovo non del tutto usuale mi piacerebbe approfondirla. La vostra percezione rispetto ai vostri fattori di successo.... *(si prosegue con l'intervista del giorno dopo)*

La mia teoria è che la forma della cooperativa sociale sia un catalizzatore delle condizioni che favoriscono la willingness to contribute e la condivisione dei valori alla base di un progetto (non entreresti a far parte della cooperativa se i tuoi interessi fossero primariamente altri, i.e. il denaro). Ciò nonostante non è LA soluzione, e Asentiv e il marketing relazionale strategico ne sono una riprova. Perché altrimenti persone che non fanno parte della tua azienda e non percepiscono (necessariamente) un guadagno economico dovrebbero aiutarti a sviluppare il tuo progetto?