

CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN RURAL AREAS

A CASE STUDY OF SIFNOS AND SYROS ISLANDS

Master Thesis in Cultural Economics & Entrepreneurship

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Abstract

Cultural and creative entrepreneurs have been seen as key agents of the development and revitalization of rural and remote areas. But what makes those individuals turn to areas like these? How do they achieve the revival of these places? What does essentially contribute to this revival? Many questions regarding the reasons why and the ways in which creative individuals implement entrepreneurship in rural areas remain utterly unaddressed. How do they deal with and apply their innovative ideas in these parts characterized by profound tradition and culture? How do they manage to merge their initiatives with the tradition and to be successful in achieving the involvement of the local community? This study focuses on innovative cultural entrepreneurial initiatives that contribute to the social, economic, cultural, environmental and educational development of Sifnos and Syros, two of the Cyclades most famous islands in Greece. It aims to examine why creative entrepreneurs take the decision to turn to these remote parts of Greece and how they manage to gain the appreciation and the involvement of a traditional community by initiating contemporary cultural events and projects. Furthermore, it seeks to scrutinize how those actions can coexist and be combined with the tradition and create beautiful outcomes inspired by the place.

A wide literature has attempted to explain how cultural entrepreneurship and creative initiatives are meaningful for the development of rural and remote areas in the economic, environmental, social, educational and cultural domains. We address the issue through the lens of cultural entrepreneurship. One of the most predominant definitions of entrepreneurship entails the grasping of an opportunity with the precondition to creating an innovation, something novel; which is by entrepreneurs who have the willingness to make something new. Therefore, we recognize the need to investigate the reactions and the behavior of the locals who have a deep respect and love for their tradition, which could stand in contrast with the contemporary cultural entrepreneurial venturing.

By conducting interviews with cultural entrepreneurs in Sifnos and Syros islands in Greece, this qualitative study aims to investigate why cultural entrepreneurs chose Sifnos and Syros to implement their cultural innovative vision and; how they implement cultural entrepreneurship, accounting for the strong traditions and potential resistance by the local community. By doing so, we seek to answer the question; how cultural entrepreneurs contribute to the development of the rural region, in cultural, social and economic terms.

KEY WORDS: cultural entrepreneurs, revitalization, local community, contemporary art, tradition, rural areas.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to investigate the implications of cultural entrepreneurship in the provincial area of Sifnos and Syros islands, and what motivates cultural entrepreneurs to establish their creative entrepreneurial activity in the rural environment of the Cycladic Islands. The focus will be on the incentives of starting their initiatives and how they contribute to the local development of each particular island, in terms of economic, social and cultural impacts. In this section the rationale for undertaking this research, as well as, the structure of this thesis will be presented.

1.1. Rationale for undertaking the research

Until several years ago, rural areas in Greece (including the Cycladic Islands) faced a marginalization due to the limited access to health, education, jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities, thus resulting in the Cyclades finding themselves in vulnerable position, which prevented them from experiencing significant development. Hence, one way to address this problem is by means of rural entrepreneurship. Wortman (1990) defines rural entrepreneurship as the creation of a new organization that introduces new products, serves or creates a completely new market or uses a new advanced technology in the area of the countryside. When the level of entrepreneurship and innovation is high then a significant boost can be given to local development Rural areas are not separate from the rest of the country; in fact they belong to it and also influence its economic and social development. More specifically, sustainable rural entrepreneurship can provide a strategy for empowering and creating capacity in rural areas in order to change the current pattern of life to an optimal human pattern, reducing the gap between urban and rural which creates economic, social, environmental and institutional inequalities. The development of entrepreneurship in rural areas, reflected in the economic initiatives growth, is not only desirable, but; from the perspective of the interests of inhabitants, also essential (Michalewska-Pawlak, 2012).

Commentators such as Keller (2000) suggest that small rural communities will need to “create” a new future – embracing change and adopting new forms of innovation – if they are to survive or prosper (Dunphy, 2009).

There is an intense need for sustainable development and cultural entrepreneurship in the province. Creativity and cultural development could bring innumerable advantages, as well as, fundamental and positive outcomes in social and economic aspects in Cycladic Islands and in rural areas in general. The creative industries are “one of the most rapidly growing sectors of the world economy” (UNDP & UNESCO, 2013, p.24). They are essential drivers of innovation, economic growth, cultural diversity, social inclusion, and human development.

Moreover, nowadays, the phenomenon of decentralization, brought about by economic crises and the high cost of living in big cities, is very intense. As Freire-Gibb & Nielsen (2014) state, while rural areas tend to offer a lower demand for products and services, entrepreneurs may feel compensated by lower living costs in general or a more tranquil lifestyle, which may be preferred (Freire-Gibb & Nielsen, 2014). In Greece, for instance, more and more young people are turning to remote areas to find a job or start a novel entrepreneurial venture. Thus, we can observe an increase in the entrepreneurial activities in Greek rural areas. In Cycladic Islands, we can distinguish a lot of people who opted to leave behind their lives in big cities behind and decided to settle in a small island and start from zero with the hope of meeting better life and work conditions. The same could be observed with cultural entrepreneurs. Many influences have increased the prevalence of contemporary artists working in the rural area: technological and communication advancements, population growth, the rise of art education in universities, lower living expenses in rural areas, and a change in the way people define themselves as artists (Ivey & Tepper, 2006).

Considering all of the above, cultural entrepreneurship could be defined as an essential tool that could bring sustainable development in rural areas. Rural cultural entrepreneurship could function as a helping hand for the revitalization of rural areas in Greece.

This thesis will focus on the role of cultural entrepreneurship and creativity, and, particularly on how they have become involved in the development and revitalization of Sifnos and Syros, two islands located in the Cycladic provincial area in Greece. The central objective of this study is to investigate the positive implications of the cultural entrepreneurial ventures as a means of bringing positive economic, social and cultural impacts in the local community of the remote islands. Furthermore, the decision of cultural entrepreneurs to implement their cultural innovative vision, as well as, their incentives to leave the urban environment and base their cultural career in the rural area of the Greek islands, will be examined. In addition, we will investigate how those cultural entrepreneurs realize their cultural visions given that those areas have specific peculiarities. Furthermore, there is a strong tradition in both islands and the locals maybe have resistance in accepting the contemporary cultural entrepreneurship. In other words, the critical success factors of this procedure will be distinguished.

The motive underlying the choice of this subject stems from my personal experiences in Cycladic Islands and the deep love and interest that I have towards this area. More specifically, my father is from Sifnos, which accounts for my special relationship with this island. I feel that I have a notable connection with this place but also with its tradition, atmosphere and the feeling of calmness and relaxation which it provides. With this mindset, it understandable why witnessing cultural

entrepreneurial activities taking place in this particular area is of importance to me. I am not only referring to activities related to the tradition and history of Sifnos but also to new cultural initiatives and ideas which will have a positive impact on to this remote place.

From my personal experience, having lived for an extensive period in this region, I realized that it is necessary and crucial to see cultural development happening in the rural areas of Greece. Nowadays, I noticed that more and more islands are trying to implement cultural projects and bring art into their everyday life. Regarding this, more and more entrepreneurs with creative orientation, display an increasing interest in applying their ideas to rural islands in Greece. Cultural initiatives could contribute to the economic growth of Sifnos and Syros islands, as well as, to the bliss of the inhabitants by providing a more quality life filled with novel artistic and cultural experiences. I would like to examine how such a prospect could affect the lives of the inhabitants and how they perceive innovative cultural entrepreneurship in general. Furthermore, in the future I would like to find a way to apply the knowledge that I have gained from cultural economics and entrepreneurship to the Cycladic area. I aim to engage in deeper research on this subject because I would like to contribute to the cultural development of Cycladic Islands in this way ensure that these sites are not excluded and kept remote from art and culture, as art and culture are integral elements of human nature.

Overall, the purpose of this study is to provide answers to the following research questions:

- “What are the implications of cultural entrepreneurship in rural areas?”
- “What leads to cultural entrepreneurship in rural areas?”

1.2. Structure of the thesis

This thesis explores the implications of cultural entrepreneurship in rural areas on the basis of existing literature and interviews. In order to investigate, why cultural entrepreneurs opt to leave the urban entrepreneurial life with the purpose of implementing their cultural objectives in rural areas where they meet specific peculiarities and contribute to the economic and socio-cultural development of the region, the most relevant theories have been selected.

In chapter two, the literature review will be presented. In this section, several theories have been selected and analyzed, corresponding to the research topic and aiming to make it as clear as possible. The selected conceptual framework will analyze the definition of entrepreneurship, as well as, the concept of cultural and rural entrepreneurship and their major role in the local development.

The local development of a rural area will be displayed through art and creativity. Furthermore, the term of cultural tourism, as well as, its contribution to economic growth will be discussed. Cultural initiatives in rural areas will be analyzed in greater depth from an artistic perspective. Finally, the cultural policy in the province will be briefly examined, as one of the vital determinants for the evolution of creativity in such a region.

Chapter three will present the methodology used for this specific research. It consists of the aim of this research, the methodological approach and an insight into how and why this specific sample was selected and analyzed.

Chapter four will display the findings of this study in connection with the theory examined in the previous chapter.

A discussion for a further interpretation of the findings, as well as, the connections between them will be proposed in the fifth chapter. This section seeks to address the research questions and the sub questions of this study, thus clarifying, how cultural entrepreneurship revitalizes the rural community.

Lastly, chapter six will present the most important conclusions of this qualitative research along with some important limitations and recommendations for further research.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I have always been amused by the perception that rural and small communities have a different kind of art than metro or suburban communities. ... The arts flourish in rural and small towns in every form because of committed artists and arts activists who live there. ... In rural communities, people come together to present art for people they know and to support artists they know. ... The arts are a part of the fiber of small towns because they are part of the tradition of the community. ... (Janet Brown, 2002)¹

¹ Janet Brown is an Australian writer. She grew up in Melbourne's western suburbs and lives in the hinterland of the Victorian Surf coast with her husband. Her short stories play, and short film have won prizes in Australia, the UK and Canada. Her writing has been published since the early 1990s and she has a Master of Arts in Creative Writing (Victoria University) a Bachelor of Science Education (Melbourne University) and a Graduate Diploma in Reading Education (Victoria State College). Her work has been published in major newspapers and national magazines, as well as in books and literary journals in Australia and America.

2.1. Definition of Entrepreneurship

First and foremost, it is fundamental to understand the concept of entrepreneurship. Several researchers have attempted to define the concept of entrepreneurship. According to Marshall, who is the first to try this, entrepreneurship is related to the organization of the three factors of the production process: capital, land and human resources (Welsch, 2003). According to Cunningham and Lischeron (1991), entrepreneurship refers to a set of activities (e.g. establishment, organization, administration, operation) of an enterprise, making thus real an initiative that can lead to profit (financial earnings). Therefore, entrepreneurship consists of a comprehensive and dynamic process where an individual (entrepreneurs) recognize one (or more) opportunity that can bring them profit. Hence, entrepreneurship is defined in the context of the combination of factors of production, as well as, with the aim of making profit.

Schumpeter in 1934, describes entrepreneurship as the implementation of new combinations of production factors. He describes the entrepreneur as the expression of the mechanism of change and economic growth and entrepreneurship as the creation of new ideas and combinations. Schumpeter has given a more coherent form to the concept of entrepreneurship. He has been mainly centered on the approach of economic growth, arguing that economic development in an economic system and particularly in enterprises could be achieved by people who apply entrepreneurship.

As stated by Drucker (1985), entrepreneurship can be defined as a systematic innovation which is constituted as the purposeful and organized search for change as well as the systematic analysis of the opportunities that may be presented as a result of this change for economic and social innovation.

Frese and Gielnik (2014), define entrepreneurship as the identification and exploitation of business opportunities within the individual opportunity nexus. Entrepreneurship is important for the creation of jobs, the economic and societal advancement of nations and innovation. Low and MacMillan (1988) highlight certain common aspects of entrepreneurship: carrying out new combinations; predicting the future; working hard and smarter than the competitor; initiating, maintaining, and developing profit-oriented business; being driven by the perception of opportunity rather than resources currently controlled; and the creation of new organizations. Further, Low and MacMillan (1988), suggest an overall and common purpose of entrepreneurship as the 'creation of new enterprises.'

As Schlesinger et al. (2012) mention, the point is that successful entrepreneurs "think different." They translate that thinking into immediate action, often eschewing or ignoring analysis. Rather than predict the future, they try to create it (Schlesinger et al., 2012).

2.2. Entrepreneurship in Creative Industries and the profile of the cultural entrepreneur

Cultural entrepreneurship is incorporated and is being implemented within the cultural industries. The term of cultural entrepreneurship is crucial to this research as we study cultural entrepreneurship in the province. To understand this concept, as well as, the term of the cultural entrepreneur, the nature of the creative industries must first be analyzed. Creative industries could be defined in various ways. However, the core of the term remains the same: creative industries are identified by the input of creative individuals (Chaston & Sadler-Smith, 2012). Creative industries are characterized by creativity, skills, and passion for activities and ventures related to artistic content. Cultural industries, as part of the creative industry, combine the creation, the production, and the commercialization of creative content, which is intangible and cultural in nature (Innerhofer et al., 2018).

The cultural industries are referred to the productive sectors which form a part of the general framework of the economic and the industrial analysis and cover the field of culture, spectacle, and art.² They have been characterized by intense and rapid growth; as a result, they became a self-contained economic sector that includes a variety of activities. The creative industries are “one of the most rapidly growing sectors of the world economy” (UNDP & UNESCO, 2013, p.24). They are essential drivers of innovation, economic growth, cultural diversity, social inclusion, and human development.

Creative industries are characterized as a dynamic and developing component of the economy of cities and countries as it has been at the forefront of international and European development strategies in recent years. This phenomenon happens because, through the creation of value, the creative industry is the basic element of the system of the economy of society while, also, it encourages the emergence of new ideas and technologies by contributing to the development of the society in all levels. Creativity has a major role in innovation processes; it has become one of the key elements in the regeneration of organizations and businesses and, consequently, it has been a passport to regional performance and advantage. As Howkins (2001) and Florida (2002) mention, the focus on the creativity has led to the highlight of the importance of cultural industries as a lever of economic growth.

² Just 15 years ago, the term "cultural and creative economies or industries" was totally unknown to economists, sociologists, statisticians and cultural managers. The British example, dating back to the mid-1990s, introduced the term to describe, locate, depict and measure this area of British economy. Relevant terms are "creative economy", "creative society", "creative class", "creative workers". See, British Council (2010).

The cultural industries are considered to be a subcategory of the creative economy which, as defined by UNESCO, is the industry that combines the creation, the production and the commercialization of the intangible work and cultural nature, the object of which is usually protected by copyright rules and can take the form of goods or services. It is worth noting that this kind of commercialization is not always the absolute degeneration of the cultural affirmation; inversely, in many cases industrial and digital goods are produced with positive qualities for culture and art crafts, giving birth to economic diversity and economic benefits not only to urban centers but also in rural areas.

The creative industry is referred as a productive process of knowledge and talent that is totally dependent on individual creativity and skills of the human resources and particularly of creative people, with a significant potential for growth but also for the creation of jobs through the production and exploitation of intellectual work (DCMS, 1998). The so-called cultural and creative industries, including cinema, theater, music, television, visual arts, and performing arts, are often at the center of social and economic life, both locally and globally. Many of these industries not only serve to produce artistic work of varied forms through the creative work of artists but at the same time employ workers on many levels. Except for art-related jobs, the creative industries have a big need for technical or administrative staff. They contribute to wealth and the creation of jobs through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property (DCMS, 2001).

During the 1980s, several types of researches showed that creative industries provided spillover effects for the economy, attracting high-quality workforce and businesses, spurring creativity and innovation and they could generate high employment and economic growth. The growing interest in cultural industries and their impact on the economy contributed to introducing a new concept of economic growth and development (Innerhofer et al., 2018).

Relatively recent studies have shown that a sector of the economy, which has developed unprecedentedly in recent years and provides a variety of new jobs and business opportunities, by contributing dynamically to the creation of self-employment and hence to the potential for wealth growth, is the one of Arts in Creative Industries (Bridgstock, 2011; Ball et al., 2010; Brown, 2007). Creative industries are a viable labor market sector and, as a vital factor in “knowledge economy” and “creative economy” (Brown, 2007). According to Brown (2007), in the field of creative industries, the most frequent types of employment are freelancing and self-employment. With the possibility of high levels of self-employment, the need was recognized to enhancing and promoting potential creative entrepreneurship. Specifically, cultural entrepreneurs should be equipped with appropriate entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes so that in the future they can promote and

successfully develop their own commercial and socio-cultural businesses or become innovative in the broader sectors of creative industries.

The attempt to define the term of “cultural entrepreneur” is a difficult task. Aggestam (2007) argues that art entrepreneurs should be considered as diversely creative, commercial exploiters of artistic knowledge who possess individual skills, competence, commitment and creativity-based mindsets (Aggestam, 2007). About four decades ago they represented an emerging social group (Fussell, 1983), the "creative class" which is a social class that operates within the Creative Economy (Florida, 2005). The members of this "creative class" share the same creative ethos which appreciates creativity, individuality, diversity and value. In short, they are people who add economic value through creativity (UNCTAD, 2010). According to Aggestam (2007), they create with unique and sometimes unexpected ways, and they have a harmonized set of skills that make creativity and performance of expression possible. Creative entrepreneurs have the power to influence the lives of others and their core values are individuality, meritocracy, diversity and transparency (UNCTAD, 2010).

Klamer (2011), speaking of the virtues of the good cultural entrepreneur, states that, in order to justify the cultural entrepreneur as a distinct character, we must take into account the peculiarities of the world of arts and culture, which indicate that the cultural entrepreneur has a particular sensitivity to artistic products and processes and not only to the commercial particularity (Van de Ploeg, 1999). He/she lives for the art itself and the creative process and this is a moral feature of his/her business behavior (Klamer, 2011), where profit is the means to realize his cultural values. The economy should be his/her tool and not his/her mission. The one-sided focus on the financial transaction of arts and culture creates suspicion and doubt and the cultural entrepreneur who sees culture as a means to gain profit, he is becoming suspicious. He is rather a businessman rather than an entrepreneur. This trend does not make him a bad character but rather unsuitable for the role of the cultural entrepreneur (Klamer, 2011).

In this respect, there is a similarity between social and cultural entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurship does not have as a primary goal the generation of profit. Social entrepreneurs are generally driven first by mission and thereafter by monetary gains. Wealth is just a means to an end for social entrepreneurs (Klamer, 2011). On the opposite facet, “Cultural entrepreneurs are cultural because they are about the cultural. Being targeted on the [cultural] content, being about the art itself and the creative process is a moral attribute of the cultural entrepreneur. The economics has to be an instrument for them to realize cultural values [...]” (Klamer 2011: 152). Halberstadt (2016), argues that a cultural entrepreneur sometimes could be a social entrepreneur also. According to Varbanova (2013), entrepreneurship in arts and culture is an economic as well as socio-cultural activity, based on

innovation, exploitation of opportunities and risk-taking behavior (Birnkraut, 2018). It is a visionary, strategic, innovative and social activity (Varbanova, 2013).

As the real challenge for the cultural entrepreneur is to contribute to the common good that art represents, the target-market and the satisfaction of its needs should be a tool and no more than that. A cultural asset or an artistic process has cultural value because it is common property, in a sense, as it needs to converse (cultural diffusion). Therefore, cultural entrepreneurship must be associated not only with commercial skills but also with the sensitivity to the artistic process and the power of persuasion, to induce a prospective cultural entrepreneur to develop the appropriate conversation with his target-market, in order to form the product together (Klamer, 2011).

For the realization of cultural values, very important is the funding of the cultural entrepreneurial processes. Thus, cultural entrepreneurs need to enter the market to secure financial resources (Van de Ploeg, 1999). The market helps them to appreciate the customer, the way they make money, with prudence and temperance. However, it is doubtful whether market values are conducive to the dissemination of cultural values, as the former can overshadow the latter (Frey, 1997). However, the ability to obtain the right funding in the right way is one of the characteristics of the good cultural entrepreneur.

Consequently, a good cultural entrepreneur should be alert of opportunities (Kirzner, 1979). They take risks and they are trying to exploit cultural opportunities in order to create cultural value. They start cultural entrepreneurial ventures by following their passion and commitment to artistic content. Besides, they are persuasive in the sense that can convince good artists to work with them, bring about interest in the art, get people involved (Klamer, 2011).

Finally, there is a general agreement that art, culture and the creative industries are key factors for development and growth (Pechlaner et al. 2009). All these considered, cultural entrepreneurship could bring innumerable social-cultural and economic advantages by generating wealth, creating jobs and innovational developments, and raising competitiveness. From the perspective of regional development, the importance of cultural entrepreneurship for the economic success of a location, destination, or region and their influence on the quality of life are not questioned (Pechlaner & Innerhofer, 2018). Florida (2004) describes diversity, creativity, and innovation as basic drivers of regional and national growth. He showed that places with a high concentration of creative class membership tend to rank highly as centers of innovation and high-tech industry. There is no denying that cultural entrepreneurship can contribute to a great extent in the development of a region and bring innumerable social, cultural and economic benefits. The concept of cultural entrepreneurship is a discrete part of the research, as we are interested in examining how cultural

entrepreneurship could contribute to the development and revitalization of remote islands in social, cultural and economic terms.

2.3. Definition of Rural Entrepreneurship

While the literature on creative entrepreneurship in rural areas is limited still, rural entrepreneurship has received attention. The identification of rural entrepreneurship and its critical success factors is a difficult task. This is mainly due to a series of issues that are related to the diversified elements and the influences of the countryside as a business environment. Hoy (1983) argues that the public image of a rural entrepreneur is that of someone who is independent, risky, optimistic, working hard, confident, setting specific goals and applying innovations. Hoy (1983) also mentions that in rural areas entrepreneurship is contributing to creating new job opportunities through the establishment of new business units. Wortman (1990) defines rural entrepreneurship as the creation of a new organization that introduces new products serves or creates a completely new market or uses new advanced technology in the area of the countryside. This definition combines elements of innovation and creativity that are expected to have an impact on the wider community where a business is taking place.

The rural area offers an innovative and enterprising environment in which entrepreneurs can either prosper and grow or face very serious difficulties. When the level of entrepreneurship and innovation is high then a significant boost can be given to local development. Countryside features are considered to be the main drivers not only of opportunities for local entrepreneurship and innovation but also of the weaknesses in the business process. The countryside and the business process form a dense, complex and dynamic network of mutual influences. According to Camagni (1995), the term innovative environment, could be used to describe the areas that have an environment that contributes to innovation and characterized them as having a developed local entrepreneurship (Camagni, 1995).

Entrepreneurship plays a major role in the development of a rural region. Entrepreneurship in rural areas could be considered in some way as an important strategy for the accomplishment of a rural development. Rural entrepreneurship can be regarded as an attempt to create the management for risk-taking appropriate to opportunity, as well as to mobilize human, material and financial resources in order to fulfill the project of development in rural areas (Saxena, 2012).

Even if scholars would argue that the process of entrepreneurship in country locations is the same as in urban centers, however, there are various challenges and opportunities that rural regions are called to face in order to establish successful entrepreneurial activities (Stathopoulou et al, 2004).

Specifically, in those regions, there are some constraints, situations and opportunities which an entrepreneur could meet, and try to overcome or embrace in order to achieve his entrepreneurial goal. As far as the disadvantages of implementing entrepreneurial initiatives in rural areas are concerned, we can distinguish the following:

For example, the **first** one could be the fact that in a rural area there is common to notice a low level of skilled labor, low level of education as well as formal skills is the matter of fact.

Second, a lack of knowledge of information technology is common in rural areas as well (Imedashvili et al., 2013). The latter could be considered as a serious obstacle in entrepreneurial activity.

A **third** disadvantage of remote areas could be the difficulty to reach and imply high transportation cost. Rural areas are not a prime target for the development and creation of a new business idea, due to the low degree of competition and attractiveness. They are disadvantaged in some ways compared to the urban areas; there is a huge difference in the economic performance between these regions (Smallbone & Welter, 2008). There is no denying that adequate infrastructure is highly desirable and helpful to rural entrepreneurs (Stathopoulou et al., 2004).

The **fourth** one is considered to be the fact that low population density limits the local demand; it makes rural businesses difficult to achieve economies of scale. However, as a result of the part-time residence, for example, tourism, there is still an increasing number of people in those areas (Imedashvili et al., 2013).

The **fifth** drawback has to do with the geographical location of a rural area as it could stand as an obstacle in the development of entrepreneurial activity. For instance, the long distance from a populated city center could lead to the difficulty of finding enough customers, suppliers, supporters, institutions as well as equipment and necessary amenities.

And finally, the **sixth** downside could be the access to finance because of the types of enterprises that investors find to be tiny and not as profitable as big ones. Most rural entrepreneurs do not get external funds due to the absence of credit in the market and tangible security. Government does not provide proper infrastructural facilities.

There are advantages to entrepreneurship in rural areas as well:

First, accessible rural areas are rather advantageous for businesses (Keeble & Tyler, 1995). Related to geographical location is the abundance of rural natural resources that could create new business opportunities.

Second, the happy and convenient working conditions that a provincial area can offer, could be stand as a great incentive to start a business. It is known that rural areas, which possess remarkable

amenities, may cause entrepreneurs to start businesses there, even though it may not be a rational option from an economical point of view (Johnson & Rasker, 1995).

Third, in a provincial area where the population is smaller, it is easier to co-operate and support the action of others. Therefore, this facilitates the development of new business operations. Young (2010) states that local networks are crucial to development of rural firms. These networks can together reach larger markets, increase resilience, and offer to every member the ability to take more risks (Imedashvili et al., 2013).

Fourth, local culture is something that can boost rural entrepreneurship. Rural entrepreneurs can benefit from using unique local characteristics to differentiate and market their products/services (Imedashvili et al., 2013).

Fifth, rural areas have a strong cultural component and they are rich in cultural resources (as tradition), as a result to force passion-driven entrepreneurs to go there.

In sum, there seems to be a general agreement on the importance of entrepreneurship (Smallbone & Welter, 2008; Saxena, 2012). There seems to be a general agreement on the importance of locating businesses in rural areas; the interest of having firms locate in a specific area is a pervasive consideration in economic development (Imedashvili et al., 2013). Rural entrepreneurship is an important key for the development of a remote area as a mean of eliminating rural poverty and rural-urban imbalance, and resolving deep rooted economic problems in low income communities and depressed regions in rural areas (Dabson, 2001); and job creation, raising local income, adding to local wealth, and connecting the communities to global economy (Henderson, 2002).

Then of course there are some downsides which struggle the harmonious implementation of rural entrepreneurship. Today still in many countries, rural entrepreneurship is limited, because entrepreneurs are facing difficulties to access the necessary resources and the financial services, as well as, because the nature of the local markets is limited in terms of size and supply in general. The main barrier of entrepreneurship development in rural areas is miss adapting the revitalization programs to the specific cultural conditions (Winogrodzka, 2005). The system of values, mentality, attitudes and behavior of the villages' inhabitants should be examined in order to implement effective policies to promote entrepreneurship in these areas (Michalewska-Pawlak, 2012). Hence, for an entrepreneur then, it is a choice. He/she must put the benefits next to the costs.

In sum, while the literature has mainly focused on rural entrepreneurship, it is important to consider rural entrepreneurship in relation to cultural activities, because the aim of this study is to examine why cultural entrepreneurs decide to execute their cultural activities in rural areas, and how they contribute to the local development by implementing rural entrepreneurship related to arts and culture.

2.4. Local Development in rural areas

Entrepreneurship is beneficial in terms of local development. There is no doubt that new businesses are important for national and regional economic development (Stathopoulou et al., 2004). In regional development, entrepreneurship is the most fundamental feature. Local development can be seen as a process of economic growth and structural change that leads to an improvement in the level of living of the local population (Coffey & Polese, 1985). Overall, regional development is known as a dynamic method (Fischer & Nijkamp, 2009); it refers to the provision and assurance of equal opportunities as well as sustainable economic and social well-being of people in places that are generally less developed. Regional development studies are traditionally dominated by economic concerns such as growth, income and job creation (Pike et al., 2007; Armstrong & Taylor, 2000). However, “growth must be distinguished from development: growth means to get bigger, development means to get better” (Pike et al., 2007, p. 1254; cf. Daly, 1987). Thus, besides growth, regional development is also about social change and transformation (Berglund & Johansson, 2007). Hence, at least two dimensions can be distinguished here. Initially, the economic one, where the local entrepreneurs use their capacity to organize local productive factors at satisfactory levels of productivity in order to compete in the markets. Secondly, the other dimension is the socio-cultural in which the values and the local institutions are the basis of the development process (Barquero, 1991).

Local economies can adapt to transformational processes of a national or international nature. Their adaption is determined by the political, economic and cultural identity, as it has been historically formulated, and the spatial peculiarities and their differentiations must be considered in analyzes and strategies of a policy (Barquero, 1991). The integrated local development is an organic process in which, besides the natural resources and the capital, institutions, organizations, actors of society, local actors, local initiative, local businesses, entrepreneurship and human search in the fields of culture, play an important role. In order to achieve development, all the endogenous workforce of the region must be mobilized (Bitsani, 2004). Specifically, according to Bitsani (2004), the two vital factors that can make a decisive contribution to the promotion of cultural development are the institution of local self-government and the participation of the public. There is a need for support and help from local authorities, but also important is the participation of the people in order the necessary development to be achieved and to bring positive social, economic and cultural results.

To continue, from a local development perspective, entrepreneurship in the rural holds substantial potential advantages, in particular, the ventures that seek and ultimately realize firm growth. (Korsgaard et al., 2015). Rural entrepreneurship development has been gaining wider

popularity as a mean of eliminating rural poverty and rural-urban imbalance, and resolving deep rooted economic problems in low income communities and depressed regions in rural areas (Dabson, 2001); and job creation, raising local income, adding to local wealth, and connecting the communities to the global economy (Henderson, 2002). Stathopoulou et al. (2004) refer to Hoy (1983), to describe a rural entrepreneur as someone who is “independent, risk-taking, achievement-oriented, self-confident, optimistic, hardworking and innovative” stressing more on the creation of new employment in rural areas through generating new ventures.

Commentators such as Keller (2000) suggest that small rural communities will need to “create” a new future – embracing change and adopting new forms of innovation – if they are to survive or prosper (Dunphy, 2009). Surveys (Cruickshank, 2018; Dowling, 1997; Evans & Foord, 2008) focus on the development of rural or provincial areas, which spatially occupy a large part of most states while exploring the possibility of adopting practices based on the creative economy.

In the past, rural areas have been characterized by isolation and economies based on natural resources, homogeneity and a strong sense of local identity. The above are no longer present in modern western societies rather than in a small percentage. Developed technological instruments, the internet, and the means of transport and of course the continuing mobility of people after globalization create links with the urban and the “foreign” or even “hostile” environment.

Thus, while almost a century before rural residents moved to industrialized urban centers, a portion of modern civilians in the western societies abandoned them in search of a better quality of life (Florida & Tinagli, 2004). Characteristics of the peripheral regions that attract its members are low rents, friendly environment and cultural networks. However, the lack of appropriate structures and policies creates uncertainty as to whether such environments can retain creative potential (Roberts & Townsend, 2016). Other challenges facing the region are marginalization, lack of youth work, fear of negative influence or use of cultural resources, and inefficient or ineffective governance (Verdini, 2016).

According to Bell & Jayne (2010), creative industries have had a catalytic role in the regeneration of rural areas, highlighting a new aesthetic, and attractive rural tourism. In addition, rural branding, as a special case of place branding, seems to be gaining ground.

The role of culture in the sustainable development of the region seems to be of paramount importance. Culture is linked to local development of needs and priorities, as the development of local comparative advantages is a precondition for economic and social survival. As it is mentioned before, an important factor for the achievement of the development is the mobilization of the region’s endogenous potential, which aims to exploit the productive, social and political structure of the local community for the benefit of the development, the utilization of the labor market, the natural

resources, the traditions and the cultural heritage (Bitsani, 2004). Preserving traditions in these areas implies the obvious cultural element that gives a particular identity to each of them. Creative management and promotion can lead to a competitive advantage in the cultural market of tourism. Consequently, cultural activities such as festivals create an image that is composed of the impressions and experiences of the participants and which essentially reflects and strengthens the identity of the place. Finally, all this activity creates new jobs in new professional fields that seek and promote innovative ideas, cultivate creativity, and presuppose the existence of an organizational culture.

Artists and arts organizations have always added vitality and character to communities; however, as already acknowledged, the arts now play an increasingly important role in community regeneration and revitalization (Skippington, 2016). Emphasizing in the cultural oriented model of development, culture is considered to be "everything that gives meaning, value and purpose" to life and has a dual role as it is a primary goal and a growth tool (Paschalidis & Champouri-Iwannidou, 2002).

The cultural dimension at the local level is a necessary precondition for development as it contributes to a great extent to the promotion of culture through participatory process and information. Also, it contributes to the integration into the community through cultural awareness processes. The existence of culture aims to revive the spiritual level of a community by organizing artistic and educational events, creating cultural spaces and through spiritual expression. Culture is necessary also in public entertainment and in the best use of free time, by promoting the participation of working groups in creating an attractive environment for both residents and visitors (Grefe et al., 2005). The cultural sector and cultural entrepreneurship could also help by establishing the necessary conditions for creating jobs and goods, by improving the level of the workforce, resulting in qualitative and quantitative productivity, critical thinking, creativity and innovation, but also boosting the growth of other sectors of economic activity and attracting new investments in the region.

Cultural activity is about the planned change at the local level, aiming at the qualitative upgrading of the inhabitants' lives and the existing cultural phenomenon of the area. We can conduct then, that cultural entrepreneurship could be considered an important tool for the revitalization and the local development of a region in general, as well as, a rural region which has the need of being developed and follow the changes of modern life. The arts have transformative power in any geographical context and can be enacted to serve as a vehicle for building rural resilience and adaptability, making individuals and communities better able to contend inequities and overcome challenges (McHenry, 2011; National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, 2013). Within socially and culturally driven community development, the arts can impact individual and community well-being, increase confidence and morale and create opportunities for expression (Borrup & McNulty, 2006;

Goldbard & Adams, 2006; McHenry, 2009, 2011; Sauter, 2014). McHenry (2011) conveys the importance of keeping spirits high, particularly during difficult times.

Cultural entrepreneurship brings people together. It connects people and it gives space for interaction and communication within a community. It provides vital “opportunities for social interaction and networking, which are essential for the health and wellbeing of rural and remote residents” (McHenry, 2011, p. 245). This social interaction contributes to the establishment of a stronger sense of community by sharing experiences, collaborating and exchanging ideas and perceptions. Rural places are especially notable for closeness of community and depth of relationships, and this environment can potentially benefit artists whose activities can become a part of the social fabric of that community (Sauter, 2014).

To conclude, we could highlight that in this section it becomes clear that entrepreneurship in the province and specifically entrepreneurship related to culture and art can bring positive results and contribute to the development of local community. This development is about the economic, social and cultural benefits that a cultural action can bring to far-reaching places. Cultural provincial entrepreneurship is a lever for the revival of local society. This unit is very important for our research as it answers the question of how cultural entrepreneurship contributes to the revitalization of the community of the provincial sites of Syros and Sifnos.

2.5. Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism is one of the most emerging types of tourism and attracts a large group of people who are interested in cultural, artistic and recreational experiences (Van Aalst & Van Melik, 2012). Cultural tourism is often based on visual arts, cultural events, visits to museums and archaeological sites, and participation in various festivals. In the 1980s and 1990s, tourism became the world's fastest-growing industry and the most important factor in creating jobs. A central feature of this rapid growth in tourism is its ever-closer connection to the consumption of cultural products and services of all kinds. This is a development that reflects not a transitory fashion but some broad-scale socio-economic and cultural trends that mark postmodern society (Paschalidis & Champouri-Iwannidou, 2002).

Cultural tourism is a basic form of alternative tourism with a long-lasting presence in European customs and growing awareness in broad social societies (Paschalidis & Champouri-Iwannidou, 2002). The search for a more specialized experience involves attending special events, visiting specific museums and galleries, participating in a religious or cultural event, visiting cultural venues (Throsby, 2010).

Cultural tourism has been outlined as the movement of individuals into cultural attractions far away from their usual place of residence with the intention of collection new information and experiences in order to meet their cultural needs (Bachleitner & Zins, 1999; Shamsuddoha et al., 2011). Cultural tourism is a type of tourism of special interest, based on seeking and participating in aesthetic, spiritual, emotional and psychological experiences. Stebbins (1996) states that cultural tourism is different from "recreational tourism", in which tourists use a particular geographical area to express or realize an interest or hobby. Cultural tourism is not a hobby.

Cultural tourism consists of interdependent activities and plays an important role in the development of the tourism industry, including the rehabilitation and recovery of certain areas and cities (Valeriu & Iştoc, 2007). Cultural tourism is not only the basis for the booming of tourism in cities but also a tool for promoting tourism in rural and peripheral areas. It is the type of tourism that is developing rapidly to date (Bachleitner & Zins, 1999). Many studies have shown that culture and tourism are becoming resources for socio-economic development in regional communities. According to Jarábková & Hamada (2012), rural tourism is "an instrument to improve the quality of places (municipalities) as well as to attract creative class and creative industries to rural municipalities" (p. 5). The cultural development of the countryside can use the natural and human resources of a region, community and family relationships, heritage and lifestyle (MacDonald & Jolliffe, 2003). The attraction of tourists is the most visible contribution of culture to local development. Attracting high-level tourists as cultural tourists is consistent with Lury's view that tourism itself is a moving culture (Pavlogeorgatos & Konstantoglou, 2005). Culture is also valued for the jobs that it offers, the cultural products have an important place in the international trade, cultural industries are blooming, while products that combine the cultural aspect with the utilitarian aspect are recognized as sources of added value and are ranked in the creative industries (Grefe et al., 2005). It also stimulates investments (e.g. food, accommodation, entertainment) and when they belong to local investors, profit remains in the region and helps to further invest. Cultural tourism can contribute to local economic revitalization and prosperity by contributing to the creation of new employment opportunities (Besculides et al, 2002; Smith, 2004), increasing national income through intensive use of available labor (Valeriu & Iştoc , 2007) and encourages the opening of small and medium - sized enterprises (Burns & Sancho, 2003; Taylor, 2001).

Cultural tourism can offer many benefits to the inhabitants. Firstly, it raises the educational level of the population. Increasing access to culture becomes an active educational tool and broadens the information of residents. Also, it contributes to the debate on the environment, which is related to the theme of antiquities and intangible heritage, as opposed to the destruction of traditional tourism. Furthermore, it develops multi-level international and local networks that can take the full

range of cultural, economic and political exchanges and relationships. It accelerates the aesthetic design of the space resulting in a more beautiful area with a positive effect on the disposal of locals who are active and productive in the process. The urban populations and local population participation play an important role in achieving higher added value (Valeriu & Iştoc, 2007). Also, cultural tourism provides the opportunity to create a need for tourists to acquire products suitable for promoting the alternative lifestyle (Boniface, 1998).

Thus, the right planning and management of cultural tourism could lead to positive socio-economic implications and the preservation and protection of cultural resources (Valeriu & Iştoc, 2007). Residents see tourism as a means to help them learn, share and maintain their culture, and so tourism provides them with an incentive to care for and preserve their cultural heritage. This is an alternative strategy for them (Besculides et al., 2002, Sdrali & Chazapi, 2007).

Cultural destinations are also cultural events - festivals, shows, exhibitions, etc. The destinations that have distinguished in the Cyclades region for their cultural activities are mainly Andros, Syros, Tinos, Santorini, while almost all islands are taking care of cultural events. As a means of attracting tourists, events taking place in the high season simply enhance the local tourist product, while those taking place in other periods (low season and off season) can serve to attract tourists as they become known or advertised.

Research into cultural tourism is limited still. More research is needed to understand the cultural tourism in peripheral regions, particularly in fields such as the development of attractions, encouraging entrepreneurship, informing markets, providing quality services and preserving attractiveness (MacDonald & Jolliffe, 2003).

2.6. Cultural initiatives in rural areas: state of the art

While the presence of artists in urban areas is still large, increasingly more and more people take the decision to leave big cities and turn to remote areas with the incentive of implementing their cultural visions.

Indeed, contemporary cultural initiatives and modern artists are mostly active in large urban areas, where the network, the infrastructure, the opportunities, the funding and the audience proximity are not a barrier to the development and implementation of their projects. According to a study by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), "eighty-eight percent of performing arts organizations and art museums reside in areas with relatively large populations and pools of specialized workers needed to stage performances and exhibit art" (Iyengar, 2010, p. 11). Thus there is a side effect of an over-accumulation of modern art in the major urban centers and the absence of the latter from remote rural areas.

It is imaginable that, artists who decide to operate in the province have a lot of challenges to overcome, concerning the infrastructure, the networking, the equipment, the recognition and the existence of a more limited community with less exposure to artistic activities. A case study on Darwin, Australia, emphasizes the struggle for artists to keep contact with valuable gatekeepers and opportunities, stay in touch with trends, and maintain market visibility (McHenry, 2009). The artists, therefore, face pressure to move to large urban areas in order to find better opportunities. Artists might be attracted to locations with vibrant artistic scenes (Drake, 2003) or the availability of spaces and organizations necessary for supporting creativity (Markusen et al., 2006).

Despite what has been mentioned before, in recent years the phenomenon of the decentralization of the artistic class is becoming more and more noticeable. Increasingly more artists leave the large urban centers and turn to the province to start and implement their artistic initiatives. Many influences have increased the prevalence of contemporary artists working in rural: technological and communication advancements, population growth, the rise of arts education in universities (Ivey & Tepper, 2006). Artists, by taking action in rural areas, could build strong relationships as the population and the competition is less severe than it is in urban centers. The arts were utilized as a means for encouraging and enabling civic participation, as well as providing opportunities for social interaction and networking, which are essential for the health and wellbeing of rural and remote residents (McHenry, 2011). Artists build relationships of trust, which are necessary to keep them unshakable at the passing of time. Rural places are especially renowned for the closeness of community and depth of relationships, and this environment can potentially benefit artists whose activities can become a part of the social fabric of that community (Sauter, 2014).

In addition, sometimes artists, by moving far from the large urban centers, change their artistic horizons and destinations. According to Hunter (2014), there are several reasons that encourage contemporary artists to turn to rural spaces and evolve new art practices influenced by the frameworks of this area. Those reasons include the presence and development of the land art movement which contributes to a new understanding of the rural as a complex sphere (social, political and cultural), the communication and interaction with people from rural areas as a new means of interplay and exchange views, as well as the influence of (urban) socially engaged art and critical art practice which has encouraged a new interest and critical insights about rural social, environmental, and economic policy (Hunter, 2014, p. 74). In many cases, artists try to adapt their vision to the specific geographical context and try with the noblest possible way to take advantage of the opportunities that the place offers to them. They try to harmonize with this and show their contemporary artistic initiatives adapted to the particularities of the new place.

For the identification of nature, the extent and the depth of an entrepreneur's relationship with the rural local community and region, we could use the concept of 'embeddedness'. Embeddedness refers to how a cultural entrepreneur in the province is being incorporated into the new location and how he/she develops strong relationships with the community and the rural area. Generally, embeddedness is considered as a local, informally organized interaction among agents which generally promotes endogenous development (Fløysand & Sjøholt, 2007).

Granovetter (1985) has claimed that several desired social and economic outcomes are achieved through embeddedness, based on the interaction between social, economic, physical and environmental conditions. He states that good social relationships play a major role for the achievement of economic and entrepreneurial purposes. For cultural entrepreneurs and contemporary artists in rural areas to benefit from the advantages of embeddedness, they should have in their mind the concept of the latter in order to ensure that they will implement successfully their cultural initiatives. However, creating embeddedness is not always an easy task. New entrepreneurs have to face the heavy dependency of rural inhabitants on primary group relationships and close personal ties (Frazier & Niehm, 2004). Furthermore, in rural areas, it exists often a very defensive localism (Winter, 2003) in terms of accepting the new. Therefore, it is important that the local community is engaged in new enterprises (Roberts & Hall, 2001).

For the successful implementation of creative entrepreneurial activities in rural areas, the collaboration of locals with the new cultural entrepreneurs is a key factor. Some sources provide analysis of creative clusters as effective generators for creative activity in rural place (Borrup & McNulty, 2006; Drake, 2003; Harvey et al., 2012). In addition, several sources stress the close relationships of people with their place as important to the development of successful creative endeavors in rural areas (Drake, 2003; Harvey et al., 2012). Conciliation and collaboration are important factors in achieving successful cultural projects in the province as it brings residents and young entrepreneurs closer together and this association leads to the discovery of new cultural paths.

It can be expected that a great number of contemporary artists or people going to the province to start a new cultural initiative have a great willingness to come up and discover new things and new artistic paths in a new community with different kind of people. It is important to have in their mind that the place has a certain artistic culture with which they must co-exist. It is imaginable that many artists embrace the features and the aesthetics of the provincial place and adapt them to their creativity. Contemporary art practice can explore what "rural" means in the twenty-first century, embracing tradition without being traditional (Sauter, 2014). Contemporary art is often characterized by its adaptability, flexibility and focus on the present. The versatility, ambiguity, and timeliness that

characterizes this practice enable artists to explore the complexities of contemporary rural context in a way that is holistic and multidimensional (Ray, 2016).

Therefore, it is quite important for new cultural entrepreneurs and contemporary art artists to build close relationships with both the rural place and the locals. Residents need to embrace new actions and participate in order to achieve as much as possible the development of the site. The new cultural players in this game must embrace the peculiarities of the site and adapt their actions accordingly.

In this section, we show that artists are increasingly more tuning to rural areas, instead of remaining in the cities. There, they face several challenges, as shown in the literature. Next to challenges, critical success factors have been shown, including embeddedness and collaboration between artists and locals. Hence, we conclude that in order to prosper and achieve their cultural goals, cultural entrepreneurs build strong relationships with the local community, try to respect and get influenced from the special characteristics of the region, as well as, embedded their vision and perception in the alternative environment of the province.

2.7. Cultural Policy

Culture can influence local and regional development in a variety of ways. A monument can be a symbol of recognition of a city, an entire region within a city can concentrate its cultural activity, a set of cultural enterprises can contribute to economic growth, and a part of the population can be involved in the creation products and services. Therefore, where any of the above conditions apply, culture contributes to creating an attractive environment for city visitors (Grefe et al., 2005).

Research on culture-led development ways has primarily examined regeneration of urban and metropolitan areas and to a lesser degree rural places and small cities (Bell & Jayne, 2010; Lorentzen & Van Heur, 2012; Miles, 2006). Culture-led strategies have been given less attention in rural policy research, although cultural heritage, tourism, cultural industries, and creativity are now evolving as development strategies even in rural areas (Bell & Jayne, 2010). Not only is the rural challenged by economic transformation, population loss, and a disparity from urban “centers,” but there is a tendency by the government to overlook the rural in policy and to underestimate the importance of the arts in rural development, especially in non-metro areas (McHenry, 2009; Bell & Jayne, 2010). At the same time, however, what emerges is measurement problems between the cultural life of the capital and the poverty of cultural life in the province, because art in cities seems to be the benchmark. An image that does not correspond to the reality, as far as the infrastructure and activities that predominantly exist in the capital are measured. Thus, the cultural life of the province is measured to the capital and, based on this measure, it seems to lag behind.

The cultural activity and the cultural industries, in general, contribute to a great extent to the social, cultural and economic development of a region. There is a need to investigate these issues also in a rural context, not in terms of volume and variety but as the relations between places, people and creativity that are characteristic of the rural context (Bell & Jayne, 2010). Part of the literature focuses on the prevailing conditions and impacts of creative or cultural industries in rural areas as an alternative local industrial strategy (Gibson, 2010). Barrett points to a “policy window” that has begun to open due to government interest in rural issues, but “it remains to be seen as to whether or not this policy window is open for rural arts and culture specifically” (Barrett, 2013, p. 27). Some authors argue that it is essential that policy makers acknowledge the significant value of the rural, identify the challenges facing individually unique regions, and adapt specific and cautious agendas for conscientious development, rather than transplanting urbanized theories and policies (Bell & Jayne, 2010; Harvey et al., 2012). The development of cultural initiatives in rural areas demands a specific and well-structured cultural policy adapted to the peculiarities of the place and the people.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter relevant theoretical concepts and definitions related to cultural entrepreneurship in rural areas, and how the latter can boost the economic, social and cultural development of the local community, have been discussed, to integrate the existing literature in this research. As Bryman (2016) claims, the aim of the literature review is to establish what is already known about the topic and to frame the review in such a way that it can act as a background and justification for an investigation.

The aim of this chapter is to explain the methodological approach undertaken to examine how cultural entrepreneurship can contribute to the revitalization of rural areas, and more specifically of Sifnos and Syros island in Greece, as well as, why cultural entrepreneurs took the decision to operate in these islands. Furthermore, it seeks to investigate how innovative cultural entrepreneurial initiatives can be embraced by and coexist with a traditional community. This chapter will present the aim of this research. Afterward, the sample which was selected, and the method used for data collection and analysis will be clarified. Finally, it will discuss the limitations that occurred during this research.

3.2. Aim of the research

The purpose of this study is to investigate the following research questions:

- “What are the implications of cultural entrepreneurship in rural areas?”
- “What leads to cultural entrepreneurship in rural areas?”

In order for these research questions to be answered, we will address questions such as:

- “How does cultural entrepreneurship revitalize rural areas and more specifically Sifnos and Syros islands in Greece?”
- “In what way is the revival of these sites achieved?”
- “How does cultural entrepreneurship contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of the local communities of Syros and Sifnos?”
- “How does cultural entrepreneurship enhance cultural tourism?”
- “How do the contemporary cultural initiatives coexist with the tradition and the cultural heritage of the islands?”
- “How do the local residents react towards the cultural entrepreneurial initiatives? Do they embrace them?”

A research design should be in accordance with the objectives of the research (Bryman, 2012). Since the purpose of this research is to examine the impact of cultural entrepreneurs’ actions in Sifnos and Syros and how those actions can revitalize the places and coexist with the existing cultural background, a qualitative research with an inductive approach that focuses on the subjective interpretation of the situation was used. Due to the fact that an inductive approach was used, which by Bryman (2012) involves gathering data in order to establish a theory, there is no hypothesis developed in terms of the expected findings.

The decision of using a qualitative analysis allowed for inductive reasoning and gave the chance to the interviewees from Sifnos and Syros to express their opinions which help us to gradually understand why they decided to operate in those areas, how they revitalize the local community through their actions and how they deal with the locals and achieve their involvement. A quantitative approach could have been useful as well. A larger sample from the locals’ perspective, for example, would have been more reliable since it would have allowed examining how they perceive the innovative cultural ventures and which are the social, economic and cultural impacts on them.

The interviews were not designed to generate representative results in the statistical sense, but rather to enhance the understanding of how cultural entrepreneurs can achieve economic, cultural and social development in the provincial areas of Sifnos and Syros. The research design represents a cross-sectional case study design, which means that the data was gathered at one point of the time –March and April – and concerns the case of Sifnos and Syros.

3.3. Research Methods

After the purpose of the investigation and the research questions were set, the data collection was made by taking personal interviews from a specially selected population, ie cultural entrepreneurs operating in rural areas of Sifnos and Syros and seeking to implement their cultural initiatives in those places, contributing thus to the revitalization of the place. Apart from the process of interviews, the researcher's personal observation of the residents and entrepreneurs in the rural areas provided an important input in the research and analysis.

Kumar (2005) views the interview as the most suitable approach for studying complex and sensitive areas as the interviewer has the opportunity to prepare a participant before asking sensitive questions and to explain complex ones to them in person. Semi-structured interviews were selected to carry out this research study. In the semi-structured interview, the interviewer starts from an original subject, but then to some degree, he/she is guided by the respondent answers. The interviewer also has some freedom to probe and explore additional questions in response to what are seen as significant replies (Bryman, 2004). It includes close-ended questions (like structured) but also open questions for a fuller understanding of the answers. There are no preset queries, the clarifying questions or the series of questions can be changed. It is a more flexible form of interview and allows someone to deepen more in the subject. Semi-structured interviews permit scope for individuals to answer questions more on their own terms than the standardized interview permits, yet still provides a good structure for comparability over that of the focused interview (May, 1997).

A total of nine face-to-face and telephone, semi-structured interviews - each one of approximately 50-80 minutes duration - was conducted, 6 of which were held from cultural entrepreneurs operating in Syros island in Greece and 3 in Sifnos island. The data have been collected between March 2019 and May 2019. All interviews were in Greek and were recorded and then transcribed and translated in English.

The interview schedule was structured into three main sections. The first one has to do with a brief presentation of the interviewee's profile and background, as well as, their cultural entrepreneurial activity in the specific places. The second section contains questions about the decision of the entrepreneurs to start working in those areas, what kind of difficulties and changes

they usually face, and which entities support them. The last part has to do with the impacts of their activities, how do the locals react, and how can their actions revitalize the area.

3.4 Data Sampling

Sampling refers to the method used by researchers to select a given number of people from a population in order to include in a study (Lagoumintzis, 2015). In other words, sampling involves the strategy for selecting the sample of research used for practical reasons, as it is usually not feasible to collect data from all individuals in a population. The term "population" refers here to all the cases that may be interesting for the researchers, as people or groups, organizations, countries, or even situations, events, periods or socio-cultural processes, etc. (Marshall, 1996; Robson, 2007). In general, sampling is an important part of the research design as the sample selection affects both the quality of the data and the findings of the survey.

Sampling in qualitative research is primarily aimed at identifying what Patton (2002: 230) calls information-rich cases, cases that are offered for in-depth study and from which, someone can learn a lot about issues of central importance for research. In choosing the sample of participants a purposive sampling method was used in this study. In purposive sampling, the investigator actively and deliberately selects the sample whose members will best serve the purposes and the questions of his inquiry. This form of sampling is essentially strategic and necessitates an attempt to establish a good correspondence between research questions and sampling (Bryman, 2004).

In this research, there is a focus on cultural entrepreneurship in rural areas and especially in Sifnos and Syros which are two islands in the Cyclades, far from the capital city of Athens. As far as the selection of these islands is concerned, we have firstly to mention that the Cyclades is a cluster of islands in Greece, famous for their beauty, their beautiful beaches, and the important and deep tradition of music, food and dance, the importance of their history and the attractiveness of tourism for all the aforementioned. Now more specifically the choice of the two particular islands, Sifnos and Syros, is based on the intense cultural activity which they present over the last few years as they attract more and more cultural entrepreneurs and artists. Syros, on the one side, is the capital of the Cyclades. Hermoupolis is the center of the Syros and has been very developed in the last years. The island has a university, so some young people offer another air and perspective on the island. In general, Syros constitutes the core of culture in the Cyclades and the public authorities support the art to a great extent.

On the other side, Sifnos is an island that has grown up in recent years. Not with the rhythms and the size that Syros is developing, but at the same time cultural activity is something that is undoubtedly developing. Finally, Sifnos is an island that has a deep tradition of music, pottery, food

and dance, as well as, culture and art is an integral part of the lives of the residents. It is interesting to study two islands with so much cultural motility and on the other hand with some differences between them as one is more developed and more favored.

For the purposes of this study, our sample consists of 9 cultural entrepreneurs who aim to develop innovative cultural activities in the provincial area of Sifnos and Syros. Among them, we could distinguish organizers, founders, and curators of festivals, as well as, independent artists who seek to build their artistic career in those areas.

Within this study, I define cultural entrepreneurship as the implementation of innovative and contemporary cultural ventures. According to Varbanova (2013), "Entrepreneurship in arts and culture is an economic as well as socio-cultural activity, based on innovation, exploitation of opportunities and risk-taking behavior (Birnkraut, 2018). It is a visionary, strategic, innovative and social activity" (Varbanova 2013). Cultural entrepreneurs are agents of changes and subsequently agents of cultural innovation creation (Toghraee et al., 2017). So, one thing that was taken into account when the sample was selected, was the predisposition for the creation of contemporary cultural initiatives. Also, the population of cultural entrepreneurs on the islands is not very large. Within this population, the sample was composed considering as much variety possible. Hence, the sample includes artists who have lived in a large city and have taken the decision to move to the province and specifically to Sifnos and Syros to start something new. In addition, it includes people who have a relationship with the islands and decide to operate in the cultural field in those places.

3.5. Data Analysis

Once the data was transcribed, it was then coded, analyzed, interpreted and verified through an open coding process and thematic analysis (Lagoumintzis, 2015). The process of transcribing contributes to the familiarization with the research material and consists of five stages (Lagoumintzis, 2015). After creating a first representation regarding the data as to what the participants say or do, the investigator records his initial ideas before starting the second step of the analysis that involves coding.

The second step of the analysis involves the production of initial codes by examining the series in order. Here, there is a conceptual statement of each text identification - a code. This code briefly expresses the meaning given by the researcher to that particular section of the data. Since an excerpt can contain many different meanings, one or more codes can be assigned to the same excerpt of text. Some codes can be combined (codes with similar features or meanings) and consolidated to a higher level (before configuring themes) by creating upper-level categories or codes. The process of coding is an important part of the analysis (Miles et al., 1994), as linked units of interest are linked, and data

is organized into meaningful groups (always related to the research question). More generally, the codes summarize the basic units of meaning, but they are not the same as the themes, which are a higher level of analysis (Guest et al., 2012).

In this study, the coding process was conducted through a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software program, Atlas.ti. This coding program is believed to “enhance credibility building by making the research processes more transparent and replicable” (Hwang, 2008). Atlas.ti contributes to making the coding process easier, faster and less exhausting as all the data can be organized in one explanatory part.

At the next stage, the analysis focuses on the search for possible themes or sub-themes which emerged through the coding process. In this stage, the researcher combines different codes to look for possible themes or motifs that arise through the data. Some initial codes can form major themes, while other sub-themes. Themes combine groups of codes or categories and have a greater degree of interpretation than the more descriptive codes or categories (Langdrige, 2009).

The fourth stage begins when a set of potential or candidate themes has begun and includes a review of themes, as some may not meet the criteria to be included. Some themes may overlap so they need to merge into one and others may need to separate into separate themes. Here, it is worth considering the two main criteria proposed by Patton (1990) for examining thematic categories: internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity. In particular, the data within the themes should be consonant meaningfully with each other, while they should clear and recognizable segregations between themes.

The final stage involved data verification, this process involves a process of checking the validity of understanding by rechecking the transcripts and codes, thus allowing the researcher to verify or modify hypotheses already arrived at previously (Sarantakos, 1998).

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter the main themes and the findings which were revealed from the interview process and ensuing data analysis will be presented. In addition, the findings will be analyzed in order to explore the link between findings and the theory. First and foremost, the profile of the interviewed cultural entrepreneurs of Sifnos and Syros is presented. The main findings that emerged following data analysis as a result of cultural entrepreneurship in Sifnos and Syros were: the emergence of cultural entrepreneurs in rural areas, the funding, the economic impact, the combination of culture with

holidays, the accessibility, the socializing, the community involvement, the coexistence of contemporary art and tradition, as well as, the education. All of the themes are interconnected. From analyzing the data, it emerged that the cultural entrepreneurship can indeed contribute to the revitalization of the rural communities of Syros and Sifnos, by enhancing the economic, social and cultural development.

4.2 Participants

- The first participant is Ariadni Psychogiopoulou who is a member of Akropoditi Dance-theater and the artistic administrator of Akropoditi Dance Festival. She is from Athens and she studied at the National School of Dance in Athens, and when she graduated, she had a proposal to go to Syros and work in the Akropoditi dance school and the festival. The school operates all year round, and the festival is held during the summer and the core of its activities are the dance workshops from distinguished dancers, as well as, several performances.
- The second participant is Jacob Moe who is half Greek and half American. He has been visiting Syros for many years and when he graduated from the university, he decided to start the Syros International Festival. The festival focuses on film programming but also in close dialogue with the place of Syros, so this kind of relationship between sights and cinema, inspired by the island. The main themes are film screenings and some different forms of media and performances.
- The third participant is Vassilis C. Karamitsanis from Athens, the president and the co-founder together with Maria Anastopoulou, of Animasyros Festival in Syros. He deals with the corporate management and the strategy for the development of the festival. His real profession is the law but in his free time he decided to organize Animasyros festival. The festival is an annual animation festival in Syros which offers unique animation screenings and workshops. We talk for one of the biggest animation festivals in Greece which has a lot of collaboration with similar international festivals.
- The fourth participant is Filia Milidaki from Athens, who is the curator and the founder of Eye's Walk Festival in Syros. Her professional background is psychology with many years of specialization in market research and marketing. Eye's Walk Festival was born through a documentary festival which was presented in Syros. The festival is something very innovative because it is a story in the public space, dedicate to the unique cultural architectural heritage of a region, of an archaeological site with video installation art, modern technologies and performance. So, the Eye's Walk Festival has

been experimenting with the public space for six years now and has as its center the video installation art and the performance, as well as, the virtual reality and the documentary reality applications.

- The fifth participant is Evangelia Gouva from Athens who is a student in the Department of Product & Systems Design Engineering, as well as, the organizer and the economic assistant of the Stray Art Festival in Syros. The festival is organized mainly from Syros university students. Stray Art Festival is essentially a five-day festival dedicated to street arts with the core the music, the graffiti, the performance and, the food. It is a festival with a content from the foreign to Greek, from the modern to traditional.
- The sixth participant is Yiannis Danelis from Athens who is an independent artist mainly in Syros Island. He first studied computer science, then he studied painting, art theory in European Civilization and Art Theater. Now he is doing a master's degree in industrial design. He started slowly selling his artworks through internet platforms and afterward, he turned and started to operate in Greek islands. During winter he gives art lessons to local people.
- The seventh participant is Alberto Bourdeth who is an independent artist in Sifnos Island. After he finished school, he spent some time in Berlin, preparing himself for entering the University of Fine Arts which he never did. Instead, he simply attended courses without being an actual student there. When he came back to Greece, he registered at the German University in Athens. Afterward, he decided to go to Sifnos, a place he loves and start his artistic career there. He is focusing mainly on landscape and site-specific art, so that's why the place plays an important role for him.
- The eighth participant is Maria Nadali born and raised in Sifnos Island. She is the ex-director of the Cultural Association in Sifnos. Maria Nadali was in the municipality of Sifnos and she started in 2006 to be a member of the Cultural Association of Sifnos. In 2006 was elected president of the association and she completed her term in December of 2018 because she will participate in the local elections for being the president of the island. When she was running the Cultural Association, she aimed to keep the cultural status of the island high by organizing traditional and contemporary cultural events. In addition to organizing events, she was responsible for supporting and approving other events organized by other cultural entrepreneurs. Also, the Cultural Association is organizing one of the most famous traditional festivals of Sifnos which has to do with traditional Cycladic music, dance, and food.

- The ninth participant is Valia Dimitrakopoulou who is the founder and organizer of the Sifnos International Short Film Festival. She is from Athens but currently she is living in Paris. Her background is related to journalism. Afterward, she did one master in Culture and one in Digital Communication and Project Management and now she is working in Paris as an event manager. During summer she organizes, with her two colleagues, the Sifnos International Short Film Festival. The festival has to do with the screening of short movies with social content, in open spaces in Sifnos islands, promoting thus the beauty and the unique places of the island.

4.3. The emergence of cultural entrepreneurs in rural areas

It is important to restate that when we talk about the concept of entrepreneurship, we refer to innovative ideas and actions carried out by entrepreneurs' initiatives. In line with this, cultural entrepreneurs develop and implement innovative ventures, which have as a core the arts and culture, providing thus economic and socio-cultural impacts. As Varbanova (2013) states, entrepreneurship in arts and culture is an economic as well as socio-cultural activity, based on innovation, exploitation of opportunities and risk-taking behavior (Birnkraut, 2018). It is a visionary, strategic, innovative and social activity (Varbanova 2013).

The cultural industry today is linked to the economic restructuring of regions, the competition between them, the organized efforts to develop a place, the establishment of a strong branding, the social cohesion among citizens and the improvement of their cultural level. Cultural initiatives play a central role in these efforts, with strategies often focusing on special events, festivals, cultural neighborhoods, museums, theaters, music etc. Florida's (2002; cited in Scott, 2006: 11) theory on the creative class is based on the idea that once the creative class has been attracted to a place then 'its innate entrepreneurial and cultural energies will automatically be activated in the construction of a vibrant local economy'.

In the modern times, as stated in prior literature, more and more cultural entrepreneurs turn to the province to carry out their creative ideas. Thus, while almost a century before rural residents moved to industrialized urban centers, a portion of modern civilians in the western societies abandoned them in search of a better quality of life (Florida & Tinagli, 2004; Florida, 2012). Among them, is the creative class. Characteristics of the peripheral regions that attract its members are low rents, friendly environment and cultural networks.

In the research conducted in the Cycladic Islands, and particularly in Sifnos and Syros, many entrepreneurs mentioned the inspiration offered by these islands. They feel it as a source of creation and a lever that helps them unfold their ideas, based on the peculiarity of this particular place.

However, in order to apply their objectives, it is necessary to have an appropriate attitude towards the place and create strong relationships with the community. As Stathopoulou et al. (2004) argues, the process of entrepreneurship in rural areas faces many challenges as well as opportunities in order to establish successful entrepreneurial activities. So in this section, we will delve deeper into factors (e.g. inspiration, building relationships) that lead cultural entrepreneurs to visit such areas, as well as, some critical success factors (e.g. building relationships, appropriate attitudes).

4.3.1. Source of inspiration

In Sifnos and Syros, independent artists and festival organizers have developed a profound relationship with the place. It is considered a great source of inspiration for them. For example, Yiannis Danelis, an independent artist from Syros, and Ariadni Psychogiopoulou, the artistic administrator of the Akropoditi Dance Festival in Syros, mention that it is highly intriguing for them to be active in an isolated place, far from the urban culture. Both of them appreciate being close to the nature. Moreover, Alberto Bourdeth as an independent artist working in Sifnos, finds the engagement with the landscape and site-specific art very attractive. His artworks are inspired and molded by the features of the island and they are harmonized and integrated into the environment and the natural landscape.

According to Hunter (2014), several factors affect contemporary artists to turn to rural spaces and evolve new art practices influenced by the environment of this area. The appearance and development of the land art movement is one of them, which contributes to a new understanding of the rural as a complex sphere (social, political and cultural), the communication and interaction with people from rural areas as a new means of interplay and exchange views, as well as, the influence of (urban) socially engaged art and critical art practice which has encouraged a new interest and critical insights about rural social, environmental, and economic policy (Hunter, 2014).

Many artists are inspired by these islands and use them as inspiring sources for the creation of something creative. The tradition and the character of the island enhance the cultural creation by the cultural entrepreneur and appear quite frequently as a content of his/her own contemporary work. Actually, the artists try to adapt their vision to the specific geographical context. They try with the noblest possible way to take advantage of the opportunities that the place offers them. Artists try to be harmonized in the place and show their contemporary artistic initiatives adapted to the particularities of the new place.

“Initially, I can say that on the side of this is the incredible beauty that has the island and the incredible cultural heritage that is almost untouched.... So it's a great opportunity I think... The islands are a great opportunity for this wealth that they have to feed the festivals and be fed from them ... I

think we are very lucky to get started here. The place itself and the authenticity of this place, are for me the keys, the focal points for the Eye's walk Festival." (Filia Milidaki)

4.3.2. Building Relationships

The development of stable and long-term relationships is a key component for the successful implementation of an entrepreneurial action. Hence, it could be a critical success factor for the implementation of contemporary cultural initiatives. In addition, in our case, many people claim that a reason to leave from a big city and turn to Sifnos or Syros is the relationship that people build, which in these places are deeper and more honest. Concerning this, strong relationships could be considered as a factor of deciding to start an entrepreneurial activity in rural area. People in rural areas built relationships of trust, which are necessary to keep them unshakable at the passing of time. According to Sauter (2014), rural places are especially notable for closeness of community and depth of relationships, and this environment can potentially benefit artists whose activities can become a part of the social fabric of that community. This happens because the place and the population are smaller compared to those that you meet in a big chaotic city. In Cycladic Islands, one can easily approach and get to know people. The distances in the province are smaller and everyone is familiar with each other. This helps in forming acquaintances, building social networks and developing relationships of trust. In a large urban area, these examples rarely happen.

In addition, a second reason that makes the interviewees come up with the decision to go to these islands, is the fact that they don't meet the same competition that they would otherwise meet in a big city. Different people, different ideas and different ways of creativity establish a very healthy environment that everyone can be part of, without feeling the need of surpassing or overmastering the others. Relationships are deep and real and responsible for the creation of a balanced environment in which one helps the other. The social relationships are favorable to the entrepreneurship practice, because the working conditions are more humane, with less severe competition. The development of such relationships is a great stimulus for people to be active in such places. These relationships offer serenity and balance. Thus, it is safe to argue that the social relationships can affect the business of cultural entrepreneurship. These networks offer proximity to larger markets, increase resilience, and offer to every member the ability to take more risks (Imedashvili et al., 2013). Relationships are also considered a necessary prerequisite for the embracement and acceptance of the new entrepreneurial waves by residents.

“The small scale helps us to make all this multipara metric thing easier. The distances are smaller, the relations of the people closer. We know the municipality and the regional staff. This could not happen in a big city where there are dozens of festivals and have a close contact with the municipality of Athens or with the Attica regional governor.” (Vassilis C. Karamitsanis)

To sum, cultural entrepreneurs, by building strong and trusting relationships with the local society, are able to achieve significant social, cultural and economic results. Consequently, that contributes to the revival of the community. As Granovetter (1985) claims, often desired social and economic outcomes are achieved through embeddedness, based on the interaction between social, economic, physical and environmental conditions. He explains that good social relationships play a major role in the achievement of economic and entrepreneurial purposes.

4.3.3. Appropriate attitudes

The cultural entrepreneurs that turned to the Cycladic Islands to fulfill their artistic desires, were called upon to treat, as mentioned before, a society with a great historical, cultural and religious tradition. With this in mind, they must very carefully organize their steps and approach the society in a correct and premeditated way. It is not easy to go and establish directly and effectively a cultural initiative in these places. Rural areas, along with Sifnos and Syros, have special and different characteristics which cannot be easily overcome. Every cultural entrepreneur who seeks to establish his cultural activity in those islands, finds it necessary to consider these particularities and adapt. As Winogrodzka (2005) outlines, the main barrier to entrepreneurship development in rural areas is the maladaptation of the revitalization programs to the specific cultural conditions. In order to implement effective policies to promote entrepreneurship in these areas, the values, mentality, attitudes and behavior of the villages' inhabitants should be considered (Michalewska-Pawlak, 2012).

To achieve the acceptance and participation of the community, cultural entrepreneurs, have to take small steps that will lead to the successful implementation of their cultural projects. As the organizer of the Eye's Walk Festival states that the islands are like oysters which you have to open every time, every year with a lot of patience and with the same perseverance and the same action the following year. Furthermore, as Evangelia Gouva testifies that the first year they had to prove that they are not elephants and that their action will not aim to destroy the beauty of the island.

It is important to highlight that; all interviewees mentioned the difficulty that everyone faces when one seeks to implement his/her vision when it comes to a profound traditional society. Hence, a social framework with constructive dialogue, proper communication and good relations is needed,

so that cultural entrepreneurs can harmonize and succeed in their goals, which are directly connected with the revitalization of the Cycladic islands.

4.4. Accessibility

The Cyclades don't have the same cultural infrastructure that one can meet in the large cities of the rest of Greece. As Smallbone & Welter (2008) state, that rural areas are disadvantaged in some ways compared to the urban areas. Conditions in the province are difficult and can hinder the successful development and application of cultural initiatives. The lack of appropriate infrastructure and policies creates uncertainty as to whether such environments can retain creative potential (Roberts & Townsend, 2016). In general, the people, living in Syros and Sifnos have the issue that cultural things are not happening in the rural areas and you must always go to the capital in order to get in touch with arts and culture etc.

“The province is not only to have the advantages of a few people and of the quality of life but also not to lack cultural activities. So, our first thought is that there is no need for us to leave, it can come, or we can bring something here. So, there is an accessibility for ourselves and despite what I said before, an accessibility for those who are interested in the piece of art.” (Ariadni Psychogiopoulou)

The people who live in the provincial area of the Cyclades were forced to travel to large cities in order to meet the cultural scene. Several Greek cultural entrepreneurs understand this lack of cultural action and try to cover it by starting to work artistically on the islands. They try to offer to the inhabitants of the islands things which they could not experience before. The return of these people from the city to the province is increasingly pronounced and is the reason why more and more activities with cultural content flock to the islands of the Cyclades.

“I noticed there are things that are missing in Sifnos and the festival responded to a need for a more cultural action. The films that we showed open something else, something new. That's why I believe that is important to have cultural activities in rural areas. Because in province there are some things that do not exist.” (Valia Dimitrakopoulou)

In Sifnos and Syros, the increase in accessibility to the art has contributed to the cultural development of the region, to the revival of the cultural heritage through successful cultural activities, as well as, to the emergence of new actions aimed at helping provincial regions to meet the demands of the modern world and to familiarize the inhabitants with the new and the innovative.

4.5. Funding

In general, a basic parameter for the successful implementation of cultural initiatives either in the province or in the major urban centers is the funding and the support from various private and public bodies. Funding of cultural entrepreneurial processes is a very important component for the realization of the cultural values. Thus, cultural entrepreneurs need to enter the market to secure financial resources (Van de Ploeg, 1999).

In Greece, and especially in the recent years during the period of the economic crisis, the area of culture is not fostered and is not supported as much as it should be. And this is even more pronounced in areas that are not large urban centers. As Bell & Jayne (2010) claim, culture-led strategies has been less focused in rural policy research, although cultural heritage, tourism, cultural industries, and creativity are now evolving as development strategies even in rural areas. Cultural entrepreneurship is flourishing in rural areas, but the government and the big entities don't give the support that is demanded. There is no meritocracy regarding funding. There is a tendency for the government to overlook the rural in policy and underestimate the importance of the arts, especially in non-metro areas (McHenry, 2009). According to Bell & Jayne (2010), rural places are neglected in cultural policy.

Our study of the two islands, Sifnos and Syros, is supporting the above notion. Festivals and more specifically smaller ones are organized by people who enter this society for the first time, but do not receive the funding they deserve, at least to a satisfactory level. What we understand is that bigger and more famous festivals, probably sometimes with a more traditional content, could be supported and promoted at a higher degree by the authorities. Therefore, we could say that there is no meritocracy in this area in terms of funding and financial support.

“Unfortunately, we are not given the alliances, the funding and the partnerships we achieve... This festival is a very important social entrepreneurial event. They do not see it as an event that will bring prosperity to the whole of society. Economic or entrepreneurial. Many times, they think it is something that is parallel to life but that's not true. We're 100% into life.” (Filia Milidaki)

The lack of sufficient funding, in Cycladic Islands, leads to the inability to recruit staff. This entails the increase in volunteer work. Therefore, we can say that job opportunities do not grow to a large extent and the economy of the region is quite stagnant. Lack of funding and minimal support from public and private entities can greatly influence the content and the quality of the festival and this, in turn, will not bring about the best and most desirable consequences for the local community.

For example, festival organizers in Sifnos and Syros, cope with the problem of not having the necessary capital in order to promote good quality of performances, films, artists, and acclaimed people for seminars. Therefore, due to the inadequate funding, the quality of the cultural capital is influenced in a bad way and sometimes the entrepreneurs cannot achieve the maximum possible goals for the revitalization of the local society through education, cultivation, socialization and economic prosperity.

A change needs to be done, for the cultural entrepreneurs, to be able to accomplish their cultural visions and induce a local development. Thus, it is essential that policy makers acknowledge the significant value of the rural, identify the challenges that individually unique regions face, and adapt specific and cautious agendas for conscientious development, rather than transplant urbanized theories and policies (Bell & Jayne, 2010; Harvey et al., 2012).

4.6. Community Involvement

Cultural entrepreneurs with their decision to turn to the islands of Cyclades to develop their cultural vision, they expect to see what social, cultural and economic effect their venture will bring to the particular society. In order to ensure the successful implementation of the action and all the positive effects which they seek to achieve, it is necessary to conciliate and integrate the inhabitants within it. This will be achieved by the acceptance and the embracement of these actions from the residents, as well as, with a proportional participation and involvement. For the successful implementation of creative entrepreneurial activities in rural areas, the collaboration of locals with the new cultural entrepreneurs is a key factor. Some sources provide analysis of creative clusters as effective generators for creative activity in rural place (Borrup & McNulty, 2006; Drake, 2003; Harvey et al., 2012). As Roberts (2002) claimed, it is important that local community is engaged in new enterprises in order to be ensured the successful implementation of the entrepreneurial ventures.

The cultural entrepreneurs seek to bring upon cultural development in the local communities of the islands. In other words, their goal is to revitalize culturally the provincial areas of Sifnos and Syros. In this attempt, the achievement of local's participation is undoubtedly a success factor. According to Bitsani (2004), a vital factor that can make a decisive contribution to the promotion of cultural development is the participation of the public. As the organizer of the Stray Art Festival in Syros explains, "If you do not have the support of the local community and the social and cultural impact on them, you will not be able to achieve any revival. You have to keep this support stable all the years. Obviously with our actions which are more related to contemporary art, we will attract other audience, but the primary goal is to keep it up for the resident".

For a successful revitalization of the local community, residents have to embrace the cultural events as it is something of their own. Commentators such as Keller (2000) suggest that small rural communities will need to “create” a new future – embracing change and adopting new forms of innovation – if they are to survive or prosper (Dunphy, 2009).

This research focuses on initiatives that have come from cultural entrepreneurs who are active in more contemporary artistic ventures and not from local cultural groups that may have as their primary purpose the promotion of tradition. Having this in our minds, we can understand that there is a sensitivity and a particular position on how the inhabitants will understand and embrace a cultural action based on something new.

As Winter (2003) states, often in rural areas, a very defensive localism in terms of accepting the new exists. This is because in remote areas, far from large urban region, contemporary art is not very widespread yet. In the case of Sifnos Island, Alberto Bourdeth, as an independent artist in one of his artistic creations, faced several criticisms and many different rumors were emerged. This is not happening because the residents are biased, but it is happening because they can hardly react to something that they cannot understand and have not come back into contact with.

“I can understand this reaction if you're in a place that is strongly religious and traditional. And there is no, you know, no subtitle. Explaining what exactly this is”. In the same situation was found the organizer of the Sifestival, when the priest came to warn her not to show anything offensive. To a small extent, we can say that there is a reasonably foreseeable bias because the residents meet something unfamiliar.”(Alberto Bourdeth)

However, the results of the research in the two Cycladic islands showed that the residents of these sites show a positive attitude towards new initiatives that take place in their place. This positive position can be expressed simply by embracing, but also by taking part in these actions, either as a public, or as an additional help for the implementation of the project.

Several artists and festival organizers in Sifnos and Syros commented that most of the residents at the beginning were quite skeptical and sometimes more reluctant towards new cultural activities, but when they saw them performing successfully, they became more open and more willing to accept the new. Once they see the impact it is easier to be persuaded. Firstly, there must be participation and then the critique. Sometimes residents they do not embrace contemporary things because they think that a show cannot give them laugh sometimes or there is a prejudice that they will not understand or that they will not like it. But sometimes it also depends on the content. As an independent artist from Sifnos mentioned, If you show a painting which depicts something that they can see, something visible, something that they can comprehend then there will be a different

reaction from showing them, for example, a sculpture that consists of a wet cloth and a bottle of beer or something which for some people might be very intriguing and interesting but for some other very external and foreign.

As mentioned before, in both Sifnos and Syros, at the beginning of an innovative creative action, the residents were more cautious. Slowly, the attitude of the residents (sometime completely unexpectedly) became very cordial. Residents are very supportive and surprisingly open. In Syros, as the founder of Animasyros said, the inhabitants of this particular island are the opposite, they are not prejudiced at all. It seems to them provocative not to explore and get to know new things and they are very open to contemporary and innovative actions.

“A provincial society is more fanatical, more open to experimentation.... They are very willing to embrace it and it is very impressive to be on a small island and to say that you can see something that it is more common to see in Paris, in Berlin, in Amsterdam in very large European cities.” (Filia Milidaki)

Finally, as far as concerns the participation of the locals by volunteers, what it is extracted from the research is that they don't directly participate as volunteers in new cultural initiatives. However, they can participate directly by giving their place. This has the effect of feeling that they contribute to the creation of a work and feel like artists that a part of creation and execution come from them. This is also the reason why several festivals are trying to add engagement activities in the content of their action. And we are not just talking about seminars and educational workshops, but also how the community can create its own narratives. As for example in the Syros International Film Festival and the Eye's Walk Festival in Syros.

4.7. A combination of culture with holidays

Cultural entrepreneurship and the implementation of cultural initiatives on the Cycladic Islands can contribute greatly to the combination of holidays with a cultural experience. People are increasingly eager to add art and culture to their holiday itinerary, rather than only mainstream activities. As a result, a sharp turn from mass tourism to other forms of alternative tourism such as the cultural one is being observed. Cultural tourism is one of the fast-growing types of tourism and attracts a large percentage of people who are interested in cultural, artistic and recreational experiences (Van Aalst & Van Melik, 2011).

“I think that in recent years there has been a greater inclination in cultural tourism. So, I think, this is the reason why many festivals are organized. The combination of holidays with festivals, generally with the culture, creates another experiential experience and increases the quality of the island... It helps to show the island everywhere. It helps to get to know another aspect of an island. We must understand that tourism must now be experiential, must be cultural...Through culture there is a repetition of traffic. ” (Evangelia Gouva)

Combining culture with holidays, is a type of tourism of special interest, based on seeking and participating in aesthetic, spiritual, emotional, and psychological experiences. Cultural tourism stems from the motivation of people to seek new experiences and to acquire knowledge associated with the material and spiritual culture of an area - respectively a tourist destination.

“It's not the kind of tourism where someone comes on a cruise and then spends four hours and buys the souvenirs and then gets back on the boat and it goes to the next island. It's like a... It's a much more engaged type of appreciation. ” (Jacob Moe)

Admittedly, for some people, during their holidays are not just about the consumption of goods and services, like food, drinks and luxury hotels. They are looking for places that promote cultural activities and they try to make the most of them. By choosing to visit a destination that promotes and delivers artistic creativity, they discover new experiences and broaden their horizons. They have the chance to choose something different, a unique experience. Stebbins (1996) states that cultural tourism is different from "recreational tourism", in which tourists use a particular geographical area to express or realize an interest or hobby. Cultural tourism is not a hobby.

Cultural tourism on Cycladic Islands, offers opportunities for many cultural experiences, exploring the natural, artistic and spiritual heritage of an area, as well as, experiencing more contemporary and up-to-date creations. It also includes participation in activities such as attending artistic events (e.g., musical concerts, theater performances, dance festivals) visiting exhibitions, as well as, in more immersive ones, such as cultural seminars. As Throsby (2010) claims, the search for a more specialized experience involves attending special events, visiting specific museums and galleries, participating in a religious or cultural event, visiting cultural venues.

According to the interviewees, on both Sifnos and Syros, most festivals and artists, apart from their cultural exhibitions and performances, also organize seminars and workshops to increase the interaction of the visitor / participant with the cultural activity. They offer a deeper immersion in the cultural venture. This could bring about significant social and cultural impact. It contributes to the

cultural education and the socialization of the audience through cultural activities. As the artistic director of the Akropoditi Dance Festival in Syros mentioned, the advantage of being on an island and doing the festival during summer, automatically becomes important for the people as it combines holidays with seminars and performances.

This can increase the attractiveness of the destination for a specific audience, interested in this type of activities, thus transforming the nature of tourism for this area to a much more engaged type of appreciation. Sifnos and Syros are islands with vibrant cultural scenes and have a long tradition in organizing festivals and activities to promote their history and customs. Therefore, it is expected that the rise of cultural tourism in the Cycladic Islands will have a considerable positive impact on these islands' levels of tourism.

Increasing tourism by leveraging culture brings about notable economic benefits. In particular, the local economy is strengthened due to the increased and intense operation of the local businesses. In addition, such initiatives give birth to new enterprises which in turn, create new job opportunities. All these considered, cultural tourism contributes to the revitalization of the provinces of Sifnos and Syros. Cultural tourism can contribute to local economic revitalization and prosperity by contributing to the creation of new employment opportunities (Besculides et al, 2002; Smith, 2004), increasing national income through intensive use of available labor (Valeriu & Iştoc , 2007) and encourages the opening of small and medium - sized enterprises (Burns & Sancho, 2003; Taylor, 2001).

The interviews with the cultural entrepreneurs in Sifnos and Syros outline that cultural tourism in the Cycladic Islands could attract people with a good level of perception and love for culture.

“The other benefit is that will you will specify the people that come to the island. People who will come to the island they will come because of this.... Because of this action because they want to support and experience arts. This will be a specific type of person who wants to see this. It won't be the part of tourists which want to experience sport or nightlife tourism. It will be the tourists who comes to see the art. So, this will also add to the character of the island.” (Alberto Bourdeth)

Art and culture definitely specify the type of tourists that will visit the island, and this will raise the quality of the tourism. As Gouva said, the Stray Art Festival in Syros, attracts a more quality audience, which will not only focus on the typical summer vacation. They are seeking for more productive experience related to creativity, thus achieving the realization of their cultural values.

Besides the attraction of a quality audience and tourists, there is also a great wave of distinctive artists who come to the islands to find their place in the artistic activities. Akropoditi Dance Festival in Syros, through artistic residency, hosts artists with great experience and high-quality dance

history. Hence, the participants have the opportunity within the dance workshops to get in touch with people who have a good reputation in the dance field, as well as, to increase their cultural and educational capital through a qualitative conciliation.

It is therefore assumed that the attraction of a quality public through cultural tourism, as well as, the involvement of distinguished artists in the island's cultural processes, can increase the prestige and give a good brand name and a quality identity on the island. The socialization of residents with this kind of people could have beneficial impact on the social capital of the local community, thus enhancing the attempt of revitalization of the Cycladic Islands province. The attraction of tourists is the most visible contribution of culture to local development. Attracting high-level tourists as cultural tourists is consistent with Lury's view that tourism itself is a moving culture (Pavlogeorgatos, 2005).

4.8. Economy

Cycladic Islands are considered to be among the most important tourist destinations in Greece and their economy is largely based on the attractiveness of tourism. This is an outcome of cultural entrepreneurship in those areas. The development and the execution of cultural events have a positive impact on the island's economy and offer positive economic impacts, as they enhance the cultural tourism and people's interest to visit the island due to their willingness to experience creative activities.

As Howkins (2001) and Florida (2002) argue, creativity has led to a tendency that highlights the importance of the so-called creative industries as the engine of economic growth. Cultural entrepreneurship contributes to the economic development of the provincial regions of Sifnos and Syros by increasing the consumption of local products, supporting local businesses and increasing the need for new businesses and as a result creating new job opportunities. The creative industries provide spillover effects for the economy, attracting high-quality workforce and businesses, spurring creativity and innovation and generating high employment and economic growth. The impact of cultural industries on the economy contributed on the introduction of a new concept of economic growth and development (Innerhofer et al., 2018).

4.8.1. Local Economy

All the organizers of the festivals in both two islands point out that their cultural activity leads to the arrival of new people in order to see the festival and work for the festival itself. Concerning this, we can conclude that the islands are pulsing during the performance of these cultural activities. The accommodations are filled with visitors, the restaurants work at a faster pace and the island's services

are largely benefiting from the wave of visitors that floods the island. Local businesses are able to increase their profits and promote their local products at full blast. Furthermore, most of the cultural entrepreneurs in Sifnos and Syros, have local businesses as sponsors. Concerning this, the festivals provide valuable help to the promotion and the advertisement of the islands, not only locally but also globally, as we are speaking about festivals which have also relationships and collaborations with other parties, outside of the place where they are active.

Rural entrepreneurship in Syros and Sifnos islands paves the way for economic growth through the consumption and the promotion of the local economy. As Dabson (2001) explains, rural entrepreneurship is an important key for the elimination of rural poverty and rural-urban imbalance. It could act as a means of resolving deep rooted economic problems in low income communities and depressed regions in rural areas. It raises the local income and connects the community to global economy (Henderson, 2002).

In addition, local culture is something that can boost rural entrepreneurship. Rural entrepreneurs can benefit from using unique local characteristics to differentiate and market their products/services (Imedashvili et al., 2013). As Filia Milidaki mentions during the interview, in the context of the Eye's walk festival they asked some restaurants to create a special menu for festival artists and present the gastronomy of the island as a sort of ambassador. So, on the one side the festival promotes the local culture and products, but on the other side by exploiting the local wealth, it attracts good artists and audience.

The island's economy is growing, and profits are increasing due to the cultural events and the audience that they attract. So, the economic impact is positive and helps the revival of the society and the establishment of a life full of prosperity.

“From sponsors we have mainly the local sponsors, with which we closely cooperate in terms of the hospitality of the artists, in terms of transportation and food. We also support local producers...They followed the festival at the press conference that we made at the Ministry of Culture and we gave to the journalists the chance to try it, so this piece is a piece that we strongly support it, plus that we support initiatives from restaurants in Hermoupolis to create a special menu for festival artists and present the gastronomy of the island.” (Filia Milidaki)

4.8.2. Job opportunities

Our research on Sifnos and Syros, suggests that an intense cultural scene in those areas, apart from the tourism that attracts, giving thus benefits to the existing enterprises, also leads to the creation of additional new businesses that aim to meet the needs of the public. Culture is valued for

the jobs that offers and the cultural products have an important place in the international trade. Cultural industries are blooming, while products that combine the cultural aspect with the utilitarian aspect are recognized as sources of added value and are ranked in the creative industries (Grefte et al., 2005). It also stimulates local investments (in food development, accommodation, entertainment) and as a result profit remains in the region and helps to further invest. There is a growing need for human workforce and for employment. Hence, we could perceive that rural cultural entrepreneurship plays a major role in the creation of new jobs. As Hoy (1983) mentions, rural entrepreneurship is generally contributing on creating new job opportunities, through the establishment of new business units.

Besides tourism, cultural entrepreneurial initiatives in rural areas attract a large part of the world that, by looking at these actions, is interested in activating and starting a new entrepreneurial idea in this area. As Jacob Moe testified: "And then you have people coming with that mindset to sort of appreciate Syros and then we've actually seen people coming and loving Syros and wanting to move there and start doing something there".

According to Brown (2007), creative industries are seen as a viable labor market sector, as a vital factor in "knowledge economy" and "creative economy". The attraction of new cultural entrepreneurs contributes to the economic development of the region, as well as to the artistic, educational and social development. Entrepreneurs come up with new ideas and proposals in order to implement their ventures on a small island by contributing dynamically to the creation of self-employment. Hence, to the potential wealth growth, the arts are an important part of the economy, which has developed unprecedentedly in recent years and provides a variety of new jobs and business opportunities (Bridgstock, 2011; 14 Ball et al., 2010; Brown, 2007). Therefore, the attraction of cultural entrepreneurs in Sifnos and Syros islands contributes to economic growth, as new job opportunities enable people to find jobs in the fields of art and tourism.

4.9. Socializing

Cultural entrepreneurship in rural areas has an outstanding social impact to the residents. It brings them together. People meet in places where art plays a leading role and they exchange views, discuss and socialize. In essence, the implementation of cultural activities in rural areas can be seen as a space or way of socializing and helps bring people closer, to make and do things together. Culture is also necessary in public entertainment and in the best use of free time, by promoting the participation of working groups in creating an attractive environment for both residents and visitors (Grefte et al., 2005). A lot of interviews state that a cultural event could be considered a social event. Cultural activities bring people together, contribute to the interaction between them and to the

exchange of experiences and views around global topics and issues. For example, exhibiting an artwork or showing a film from the Eye's walk festival, the Stray Art festival or from Syros International Festival, in an old building or in any public space in Syros where the residents move, live and work, affects the social life of the place in a cathartic and catalytic way.

“I think everybody believes that the island appreciates any kind of event that invites people to become more social. Whether they like the content or not. They will appreciate it. It's for happening. Because if you do an art exhibition or a cultural festival or anything like this, it is a social event. So, any social event which is added to the steadiness of the island, can grow into something beautiful and bring people closer.” (Alberto Bourdeth)

A provincial area such as the islands of Cyclades will greatly appreciate the organization and the performance of any cultural activity that contributes to social prosperity through socialization. Several interviewees from Syros and Sifnos mentioned the state of inertia and stability in the islands during the winter, emphasizing the cover of this void through artistic activity both during the summer and winter. Those places need more than any other, the diversity and variety of culture as a major means of socialization, achievement of social balance and discovering of new realities.

As stated by the ex-director of the Cultural Association in Sifnos, people in remote islands need to do something in order to stay active because otherwise they will be depressed. Through culture a person can psychologically stimulate, emotionally cultivated and matured. It provides vital “opportunities for social interaction and networking, which are essential for the health and wellbeing of rural and remote residents” (McHenry, 2011). This social interaction contributes to the establishment of a stronger sense of community by sharing experiences, collaborating and exchanging ideas and perceptions.

Cultural engagement and participation are a delightful touch in the life of people living in the Greek islands. Cultural events enable people go out of their houses, become active, meet new people and engage in new experiences. The conclusion is therefore, that cultural activity by cultural entrepreneurs in the rural area of Cyclades can greatly contribute to the social impact of each individual, and consequently leading to the enhancement of the social development in the whole community.

4.10. The coexistence of contemporary art and tradition

In the case of the Cyclades islands, and in particular in the research carried out in Sifnos and Syros, the cultural entrepreneurs turned to these regions in order to develop and start their

contemporary artistic activities. It is known that each place has its own tradition. The Cycladic Islands have a deep tradition of music, dance, pottery and food. Consequently, people with a contemporary artistic vision are called upon to adapt to this tradition and the local community in turn to accept and embrace, as we mentioned before, the innovative culture.

Concerning the above, it is very intriguing to examine the relation between the avant-garde and tradition itself. More specifically, the way that those two concepts co-exist, influence one another and create something through a conciliation that is based on the significance of the geographical area. This in turn, can deeply support the cultural inheritance of the region.

“I do not think there is a dividing line between contemporary art and tradition.” (Filia Milidaki)

Contemporary artists or people going to the province to start a new cultural initiative have a great willingness to come up and discover new things and new artistic paths in a new community with different kinds of people. It is important to have in their mind that the place has a certain artistic culture with which they have to co-exist. Many artists embrace the features and the aesthetics of the provincial place and adapt them to their creativity. Contemporary art practice can explore what “rural” means in the twenty-first century, embracing tradition without being traditional. (Sauter, 2014).

In our research, the interviews on both two islands of Cyclades state that there is no contradiction between the two concepts. They are not two concepts that cannot coexist, as the founder of Animasyros festival outlined. Actually, it does not mean that people with the vision and predisposition to start something avant-garde and innovative, in a deeply traditional place like the Cycladic Islands, deny the cultural inheritance of this place. On the contrary, our findings demonstrate that they are trying, to harmonize and embrace the specificities of the place and to properly approach the inhabitants so that they can ensure their participation and achieve positive social impacts, as mentioned above. In order to achieve this, it is noted that they try to incorporate the tradition in their modern cultural activities.

“We also integrate traditions into our actions. It is done in a way that respects the diachronicity of civilization and can enhance the tradition of Syros. They are not two elements that can’t coexist. All the traditional festivals that exist could be the subject of our laboratory.”
(Vassilis Karamitsanis)

In addition, an outstanding way of reconciling modern art with tradition is the inclusion of the tradition indirectly to the content of the cultural action. For example, after the exploitation of the

natural locus, a remarkable strategy is the commission to local artists to be involved or the inclusion of the tradition to the artistic content and program. According to Bitsani (2004), an important factor for the achievement of the local development is the mobilization of the region's endogenous potential, which aims to exploit the productive, social and political structure of the local community for the benefit of the development, the utilization of the labor market, the natural resources, the tradition and the cultural heritage. As the founder of Syros International Festival claims, it is necessary to commission work to local artists and to people who are more involved in traditional ways of culture making, because it is dangerous to also create a binary and say whatever is contemporary is new and whatever is traditional is old and word preserving. Those two concepts are not opposite, they are in fact complementary and they can coexist.

What we can conclude from the research, is that cultural entrepreneurs in Sifnos and Syros are very interested in the tradition. For example, Eye's Walk Festival used once a traditional music instrument for the opening of the festival. Especially, they were trying to imply the tradition and bring it in the surface by developing and implementing their contemporary visions.

By doing so, they are able to revive the tradition of the island through modern actions and technologies. Specifically, many cultural entrepreneurs in the Cycladic Islands reported that they are using old and historic buildings and sites to highlight their projects. Through the exploitation of public space, they create a connection between the audience and the space leading to a great social impact as it re-connects the inhabitant with the public space. The resident is reconnected psychologically and physically. In Eye's Walk Festival in Syros, by passing through a historic building with a video installation, people will not forget this memory. It is about discovering; discovering the Cyclades islands and seeing them through different eyes.

"There's a lot of you know... a lot of people who tell us... people who grew up in the woods of Syros and see this for their whole lives... They will say that they have never been to that space before... That they have never thought about converting this parking lot into an open-air cinema, "therino cinema" or you know these kinds of things." (Jacob Moe)

In addition, several sources stress the close relationship of people and place as important to the development of successful creative endeavors in rural areas (Drake, 2003; Gibson, 2010, 2011; Harvey et al., 2012).

To continue, we conduct that the appropriation of public spaces could be a means of revitalizing the public space, the unique architectural heritage and the cultural heritage of the islands through the revival of old and historic buildings. In addition, the exploitation of the public spaces

contributes to the development of the residents' relationship with their region, offering thus a positive social impact in the community.

“This how we make the buildings speak for themselves with modern technology.” (Filia Milidaki)

“The inhabitants of Syros congratulate us every year on how we have shaped and highlighted the place. How the graffiti gave color to forgotten neighborhoods. Because we do not go to the very popular and crowded neighborhoods but we are addressing neighborhoods that are a bit neglected by cultural events. So we go to more distant areas, in places that we have never seen them used in such a way. They tell us that you have given beauty, light and colors to places.” (Evangelia Gouva)

Many of the festivals studied in the two islands use a number of frequently deserted and neglected sites and buildings of the island to project a film, a graffiti, a performance. This can be characterized as something very innovative, as through modern expression and art one can imply or even show the tradition of a place.

In general, from the research we could realize that there can be a harmonious relationship and conciliation between the contemporary and the traditional one and the creation of beautiful and innovative synergies through this process, which in turn revive the site and bring about positive social impacts. However, as these issues are somewhat sensitive, there may sometimes be misunderstandings. For example, the placement of a work of art at a public site on the island of Sifnos, near a monastery, born some reactions because there was a perception that it would offend the specific site. Even though some negative reactions are inevitable in a deeply traditional and religious place, generally the residents of those two Cyclades islands embrace and accept the modern element of a work of art, contributing to a balanced coexistence with the tradition.

Obviously there will be reactions in a place that is deeply traditional and religious, but in general terms the people from Cyclades islands, as it is mentioned before, embrace the modern and this acceptance contributes to its balanced coexistence with the tradition.

4.11. Education

Apart from the economic and the social impact of cultural entrepreneurship, the cultural activities in the islands of Sifnos and Syros have made a great deal of both cultural and educational impacts. In both regions, independent artists, festival organizers and cultural groups try to integrate

the educational part into their events, which is quite important. The education, besides the fact that is increasing the participation and the awareness of the action, also has a positive impact on the personal cultivation of each individual. People in provincial areas, such as the Cyclades, are not easily art educated because of the lower cultural infrastructure in comparison with the urban centers. The lower level of education is the matter of fact. Lack of knowledge of information technology is common in rural areas as well (Imedashvili et al., 2013). The turn of cultural entrepreneurs in these places helps, as is mentioned previously, in terms of accessibility not only concerning the cultural subject, but also the participation in it.

Hence, in Syros and Sifnos we could see a lot of workshops and seminars about dance, painting, filmmaking as well as, making animations and digital installations. As Vassilis C. Karamitsanis, the founder of Animasyros Festival, claims, he has seen people who have unexpectedly developed their artistic interest, have broadened their horizons and understood modern digital arts much better. By watching animations, people have indirectly become part of the world community.

“Because art is education and rural areas need more art than anything. It is socially necessary because through art people learn, activate and cooperate and you get another way to deal with things and cultivate the evolution of art... And this must be done in more isolated places.” (Maria Nadali)

In rural areas there is a great need for the cultivation and development of culture. People must be able to adapt to the evolution of the modern life. They should not be left behind in the field of cultural education, in relation to urban centers. All interviewees aim to cultivate and educate local communities so that the inhabitants broaden their horizons, get to know new things and enter to a more modern and global community. However, there has been a great learning experience for the cultural entrepreneurs too, in a way of being more active in different locations and escape from the wounded conditions of urban life. It is in fact a mutual process - they are not just educating people, they are also learning from them.

5. DISCUSSION

As stated in the previous section the interviews were separated into three main sections which have to do with; why the entrepreneurs decide to turn in Sifnos and Syros islands, how they implement their initiatives, and which are the economic and socio-cultural impacts on the local community. Through this categorization, we can reach some final conclusions and therefore answering the main thesis' research questions "What are the implications of cultural entrepreneurship in rural areas? and "What leads to cultural entrepreneurship in rural areas?" depends on establishing links between the theoretical concepts of this study and the findings of the empirical research. Hence, in this section, we will analyze the connections between the findings and how the latter connect with the theoretical points, thus offering the answer to the research questions.

To begin with, as it was mentioned earlier, the emergence of cultural entrepreneurs on the islands is largely based on the need for entrepreneurs to be inspired by nature. They see the province as a unique source of inspiration. In addition, the creation of strong and deep relations in small provincial areas favors the effective implementation of their ideas and contributes to their decision to move to such regions (See Figure). Rural places are especially noticeable for closeness of community and depth of relationships, and this environment can potentially benefit artists whose activities can become a part of the social industry of that community (Sauter, 2014). As Young (2010) claims, local networks are crucial to development of rural firms. These networks can together reach larger markets, increase resilience, and offer to every member the ability to take more risks (Imedashvili et al., 2013). In addition, it is important to add here that the small population of the province favors the creation of these relations, as it also reduces competition, which is observed in the large urban areas and can be an obstacle to the promotion of cultural entrepreneurship. Also, the increased cost of living in the city makes it difficult and discourages creation of new ventures (See Figure). Thus, entrepreneurs turn to the rural areas to seek better living conditions. As Ivey & Tepper (2016) argue, lower living expenses in rural areas, as well as, a change in the way people define themselves as artists, have increased the prevalence of contemporary artists working in the rural.

For cultural entrepreneurs to succeed in building long-lasting and powerful relations, as well as to achieve their harmonious adaptation and the embracement of the community, it is necessary to have an appropriate attitude and respect towards the place the wish to be active in. The system of values, mentality, attitudes and behavior of the villages' inhabitants should be understood so that cultural entrepreneurs can promote effectively their cultural entrepreneurial ventures in these areas. The appropriate attitude of cultural entrepreneurs towards the characteristics and the traditions of the local community contributes to a great extent to the formulation of the strong relationships and these two together constitute critical success factors in achieving cultural entrepreneurship in the

province. Subsequently, the emergence of cultural entrepreneurs in Sifnos and Syros, make art and culture more accessible, as it is known that in rural areas the cultural infrastructure lags behind in relation to the city. The accessibility to art and culture provided by the emergence of cultural entrepreneurs seeking to implement their innovative cultural ventures, contributes to creating positive economic, social and cultural impacts on the local society of Sifnos and Syros.

The main aim of this research is to investigate how the cultural activities taking place in Syros and Sifnos contribute to the revitalization of the site, in other words, to the development of the local community from an economic, social and cultural point of view. Through the interviews and the findings from this qualitative research, as well as the theory we have analyzed, we understand how and to what extent cultural entrepreneurship contributes to the achievement of local development.

Initially, cultural entrepreneurial activities render the Cycladic Islands as one of the most important tourist destinations in Greece with an economy which is largely based on the attractiveness of tourism. All the organizers of the festivals on both islands point out that their cultural activity leads to the arrival of new people. People who want to combine culture with holidays. Concerning this, cultural entrepreneurship enhances cultural tourism which is one of the most important factors for the development of Sifnos and Syros rural areas. Cultural tourism can contribute to local economic revitalization and prosperity by contributing to the creation of new employment opportunities (Besculides et al, 2002; Smith, 2004), increasing national income through intensive use of available labor (Valeriu & Iştoc , 2007) and encouraging the opening of small and medium - sized enterprises (Burns & Sancho, 2003; Taylor, 2001).

Furthermore, regarding the economic benefits, cultural entrepreneurship, in general, strengthens the local economy as mentioned, it increases the consumption of local products and services and strengthens the cultural tourism, which in turn is an important part of economic growth. This could be perceived as a success factor, because the islands get economic benefits by means of giving people reasons to come. One way of achieving this, is by connecting to tourism.

The creation of new jobs due to the emergence of cultural entrepreneurship in these places is also of great importance to economic development. People either from the local community or elsewhere in the world can find employment in these small places. This corroborates with the literature, where Dabson (2001) and Henderson (2002) state that the execution of entrepreneurial ideas in rural areas is an important key for the development of a remote area as a means of eliminating rural poverty and rural-urban imbalance, and resolving deep rooted economic problems in low income communities and depressed regions in rural areas, as well as, job creation, raising local income, adding to local wealth and connecting the communities to global economy.

Apart from the economic benefits, access to culture through the development of cultural entrepreneurship contributes to the achievement of social and cultural impacts. In other words, the local community receives education and broadens its horizons. In addition, the level of socialization is enhanced, as the organization of cultural activities is considered to be a social event in which people exchange views and experiences. As it is mentioned in the literature by McHenry (2011), it provides vital opportunities for interaction and networking, which are essential for the health and well-being of rural and remote residents. This social interaction contributes to the establishment of a stronger sense of community by sharing experiences, collaborating and exchanging ideas and perceptions.

Additionally, as we observed the revitalization of the history, the cultural heritage and the buildings play a major role in the success of the cultural initiatives which is actually the whole revitalization of the rural community, in terms of social, cultural and economic development. This revitalization in Sifnos and Syros was proved to be possible through contemporary cultural actions, and more specifically with the coexistence of the contemporary with the traditional. Most of the festivals organizers, stated that they use old archaeological spaces in order to promote something modern and as a result the festivals contribute to the connection of society with the tradition through another aspect that will create a unique experience, lead to the welfare of the residents, thus having outstanding cultural impacts. The socio-cultural impacts of cultural entrepreneurship redound in turn to the creation of good quality conditions for the attraction of more cultural entrepreneurs to the islands (See Figure).

All the positive results can only be achieved with the involvement of local society. This in turn requires the embracement and participation in new artistic creative actions. For the successful implementation of creative entrepreneurial activities in rural areas, the collaboration of locals with the new cultural entrepreneurs is a critical success factor. Creative clusters among the residents and the entrepreneurs could be effective generators for creative activity in rural area. Therefore, it is important that the local community including agricultural labor is engaged in new enterprises (Roberts, 2002). The mobilization of the region's endogenous potential, which aims to exploit the productive, social and political structure of the local community for the benefit of the development, the utilization of the labor market, the natural resources, the traditions and the cultural heritage (Bitsani, 2004), is a critical success factor for the cultural entrepreneurship in the province.

Having in mind that the emergence of the cultural entrepreneurs in Sifnos and Syros has to do with the implementation of innovative and contemporary cultural events, the entrepreneurs have to face the heavy dependency of rural inhabitants on primary group relationships and close personal ties (Frazier & Niehm, 2004). In rural areas, it exists often a very defensive localism (Winter, 2003) in terms of accepting the new. The discrimination of the residents against a new and pioneering cultural

initiative can be seen as a fail factor for the successful application of cultural entrepreneurship in rural areas. On the contrary, the embracement of the contemporary artistic ventures is undeniable a critical success factor in the whole entrepreneurial procedure. We conclude, thus, that the involvement of the community in accessible cultural events, developed by the innovative cultural entrepreneurs is a necessary condition for the smooth and successful achievement of socio-cultural and economic impacts.

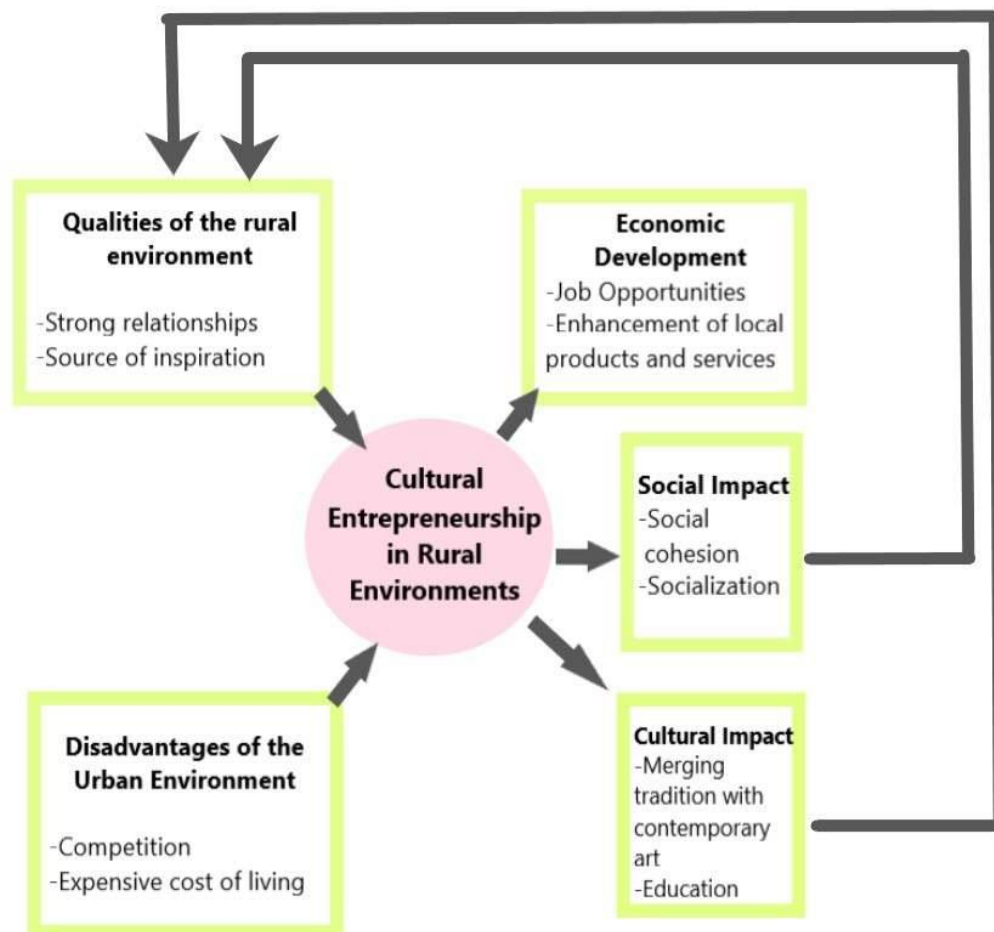


Figure: A causal model of the antecedents and outcomes of cultural entrepreneurship in rural areas.

To continue, another important conclusion which was extracted from this study concerning the cultural entrepreneurial initiatives in Sifnos and Syros, has to do with the decisive success factors that contribute to the successful achievement of cultural actions so that these in turn bring about the necessary development in the local society. The successful implementation of the contemporary

cultural initiatives in Sifnos and Syros is affected, as we said before, by the appropriate attitude of entrepreneurs which in turn contributes to the creation of strong and trustful relationships between entrepreneurs, local society, local actors and other entrepreneurs. We have also realized that the involvement of local society through the embracement and participation in the creative actions plays an important role because without this conciliation the cultural initiatives, as they are actually social initiatives, could not be considered successful. Another critical success factor that this research has found to play a major role in achieving cultural visions is the proper funding. For the realization of cultural values, also the funding of the cultural entrepreneurial processes is very important. Thus, cultural entrepreneurs need to enter the market to secure financial resources (Van de Ploeg, 1999). As mentioned in the results, these islands are not adequately funded in order to implement cultural activities, thereby affecting the successful implementation of the objectives, affecting the content but also the overall organization of the initiatives. According to Bell & Jayne (2010), rural places are often neglected in cultural policy.

To conclude, from the results obtained through the interviews of this qualitative research supported with theory, we can distinguish the critical success factors which can contribute to the achievement of the revival or the local development of Sifnos and Syros through creative entrepreneurship, in economic, cultural and social terms. Cultural entrepreneurial ventures on these islands can bring about considerable growth opportunities and open the way for further development in the future, hence, but not without the presence of favorable circumstances and the involvement of key stakeholders such as the community and policymakers.

6. CONCLUSION

This research aimed at exploring the contribution of cultural entrepreneurship in the revitalization of Sifnos and Syros islands in Greece. This revitalization refers to the economic, social and cultural positive impacts that the contemporary cultural entrepreneurial actions could bring about in the provincial area of these islands in Cyclades. We hope that this study encourages a better understanding of the incentives of cultural entrepreneurs to leave urban areas and turn to the provincial areas of Sifnos and Sifnos in order to implement their cultural visions and enrich the development of the local community. The findings chapter presented the results of the empirical research (based on nine, semi-structured interviews with creative entrepreneurs located in Sifnos and Syros) and identified why the entrepreneurs decide to turn to Sifnos and Syros islands, how they implement their initiatives, and which are the economic and socio-cultural impacts on the local community. This chapter will focus on answering to the thesis main research questions; “What are the implications of cultural entrepreneurship in rural areas? And “What leads to cultural entrepreneurship

in rural areas?”, as well as, the sub questions created from the two main research questions. A discussion on limitations and future research will follow as a way to conclude this study.

This explorative, qualitative study has clearly indicated the strong relationships and networks, as well as, the inspiration provided from the unique nature and history of Sifnos and Syros, as key determinants of leaving the urban entrepreneurial life and turning to rural areas in order to boost art and culture through entrepreneurship. Hence, cultural entrepreneurs make the decision to leave behind the strong competition and the increased cost of leaving encountered in urban areas and realize their cultural aspirations in a rural environment. By doing so, the research has shown that the creative entrepreneurs could be perceived as a lever to the development of local communities in Sifnos and Syros islands, by providing positive, social and cultural repercussions. For example, regarding the economic benefits, cultural entrepreneurship contributes to the flourishing of cultural tourism to flourish which attracts people who will consume local products and services and leads to the emerging of new job opportunities either related to tourism or to cultural industries in general. As regards the socio-cultural impacts cultural entrepreneurship in rural areas enriches the social cohesion, the exploration of new things, as well as the cultivation of the local community. A necessary element here, as we distinguished from this study is the coexistence of tradition and cultural heritage with the contemporary artistic initiatives. The harmonious conciliation between both cultures helps the release of all the positive elements of the contemporary creative entrepreneurial activity in the islands concerned, but also in the province in general. Furthermore, the same phenomenon can bring about revival in the history of the rural area itself, as indicated in the research; the exploitation of historical sites and buildings, reviving the historical environment, space and the cultural heritage of the islands.

The research findings of this study extended and enriched the theoretical notions in the literature that there are some critical success factor for cultural entrepreneurship to act freely and liberate its positive effects in the province. In more detail, from the interviews we realized that the appropriate attitude, as well as the formulation of strong relations are decisive factors for the success of a cultural initiative in Sifnos and Syros. Especially, our research assumes that the community involvement is a vital determinant for the release and the exploitation of the positive outcomes of cultural entrepreneurship in rural areas of Cyclades. Locals have to embrace the innovative cultural activities if they wish to experience an outstanding development in the society. They have to accept them as their own, as well as, collaborate with the entrepreneurs and offer additional help, thus facilitating the flourishing of cultural industries in their remote areas. Finally, our research suggests another critical success factor for cultural entrepreneurship in rural environment is the sufficient funding and financial support from private and public entities. Because of this situation, entrepreneurs

could not offer normal salaries, thus having to rely on volunteerism and not offering paid job opportunities. The insufficient financial resources could pose an obstacle in cultural entrepreneurial activity, as it could reduce the quality of the cultural content due to the lack of money to support it.

This study has highlighted the main incentives of cultural entrepreneurs to move to the rural islands of Sifnos and Syros, how they contribute to the community development by means of bringing about positive economic, cultural and social impacts and what are the determinants of achieving these repercussions in both Cycladic islands.

6.1. Limitations

In conducting this research, I encountered some limitations. It is quite difficult to predict the reliability and the repeatability of this research in advance. The sample of individuals or units used in qualitative surveys is often small, and even when it is not small, it involves, unavoidably, all kinds of discriminations. The absence of repeatability is inextricably linked to one of the most important advantages of qualitative research, its flexibility (Lagoumintzis, 2015). The duplication of research by another researcher to confirm results is quite difficult without stringently identifying the research process at all stages. The flexibility of the qualitative approach, therefore, has a very high price: different researchers who study qualitatively the same phenomenon in the same population may fail to draw the same conclusions. According to Bryman (2012), this is a difficult criterion to meet in a qualitative research, since it is impossible to replicate a social setting and the circumstances of a study.

In this specific research, an important limitation was that the intentional sample was covered only by cultural entrepreneurs who operate in two islands of Cyclades. Having this in mind, the findings of the study cannot be generalized for the whole area of the Cyclades, let alone to entrepreneurship in rural areas in general. However, the islands in the Cycladic cluster present several common characteristics, such as cultural, social, economic and demographic. Therefore, some of the key results can be said to be related to the whole region. Another limitation may be the imbalance between the numbers of interviewees from Syros in comparison with Sifnos. This is due to the more intense cultural activity in Syros. However, the process of the semi-constructed interviews gave innumerable advantages in the research process, as it allowed me to examine carefully and deeply the perception of the interviewees and extract information with an efficient and honest way.

Another limitation of this study is related to the personal prejudices which are always a risk in any type of research study. In particular, the bias has to do with the degree of the embracement and acceptance of the contemporary cultural initiatives by the local people in the Cyclades. Although it is difficult to overcome bias, an important effort has been made to develop a questionnaire and conduct interviews in a meritocratic way without trying to influence the participants with my prejudices.

Finally, we could say that quality data collection leaves more space for future interpretation concerning, for example, numeric data.

6.2. Recommendations for further research

This study brings forward several ideas for further research. The coexistence of tradition and contemporary art in rural areas could be investigated further. In particular, the literature about how cultural entrepreneurship with contemporary and innovative orientation can coexist with customs and traditions of a deep traditional place, such as a provincial island, is still limited. It would be interesting to explore how the modern can reconcile and harmonize with tradition, and the opposite. Does it affect the tradition negatively? Does contemporary art distract the tradition? How does one affect the other and what is created through this conciliation? Also, in the same context, it is of great importance to study the reaction of the inhabitants of rural regions to modern creative entrepreneurship. Through our research, we have shown that the inhabitants of Sifnos and Syros are not predisposed to the innovative and contemporary cultural paths. Does this apply to all the provincial areas that have a long tradition and not so up-to-date beliefs? How do local people perceive the contemporary entrepreneurial activity? And how this coexistence could be a means of ensuring the revitalization of the communities and the cultural heritages of rural areas. It would be very interesting these questions to be answered in the future.

Lastly, it could be advantageous to do research on the policy implications. What can policy do in order to foster cultural entrepreneurship in rural areas. As this study suggests cultural entrepreneurship redounds in the local development of a rural area by means of providing economic, social and cultural positive impacts. In this study, some critical success factors for the implementation of cultural initiatives were distinguished. One of them is the funding from local and private entities. It would be very interesting to have a more specific and far-reaching investigation into how the various actors can be an important aid in the growth of cultural entrepreneurship in the province. Which cultural policies must be established for the successful implementation of it? Why is the province being neglected on the subject of culture? What should be done to strengthen it? Who must contribute and how could the cultural industries in isolated regions be developed? If it has been shown that creative enterprises can bring such positive results to society as a whole, it is necessary to understand the need to support this by some people. It has to be considered how and why it is necessary to be achieved a serious orientation towards cultural entrepreneurship in rural areas.

To conclude, the themes rising out of this research, as well as the recommendations mentioned upfront can be of great help and enhance to a great extent the areas of Cultural Entrepreneurship and Cultural Sociology.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH A SINGLE RESPONDENT- TOPIC GUIDE

Section 1- Interviewee's profile, background and cultural entrepreneurial activity

1. Could you please briefly introduce yourself? (Career Background, Motives etc.)
2. Could you please tell me some things about the festival-you artistic career?
3. How and from whom was the initiative for the implementation of this cultural venture?

Section 2- Decision of moving to the islands, opportunities and challenges of the province, support

4. Which entities support this action?
5. How do you define cultural entrepreneurship in general and how in rural areas?
6. Why do you think it is important to implement cultural initiatives in rural-provincial areas?
7. Do you think that a Greek island like Syros/Sifnos is a suitable place to apply a cultural activity? What about your action?
8. What difficulties can someone face during the implementation and organization of a cultural activity in the province?
9. What are the opportunities?

Section 3- Impacts of cultural entrepreneurial activities in the province, residents' reactions

10. How do the inhabitants of Syros/Sifnos deal with this action? Is there any participation? Volunteering?
11. What kind of people consist the main audience of the activity? (Tourists, locals, students)
12. Do you think that residents are prejudiced against contemporary cultural initiatives?
13. Do you believe that new and contemporary art events have an impact on the sustainability of the tradition?
14. According to you, what is the impact of your cultural actions on the inhabitants? (Social, cultural, economic)
15. How do you define the social impact of cultural entrepreneurship in the province?
16. According to you, to what extent does art contribute to the revival of Syros/Sifnos provincial society?
17. What are the financial implications of your work?
18. What about the cultural impact?
19. How does your cultural entrepreneurial activity contribute to cultural tourism?
20. How does your entrepreneurial activity contribute to the education of the residents?
21. What are your plans for the future?

Appendix 2

CODING PROCESS EXAMPLE

Transcript 1

The screenshot shows the ATLAS.ti software interface. The main window displays a transcript from a document titled "D 8: Syros International Film Festival Interview". The transcript text is highlighted in orange, indicating it has been coded. The coding scheme on the right includes categories such as "Accessibility", "Education", "Source of Inspiration", and "Coexistence of contemporary...". The interface also shows a file explorer on the left with a tree view of documents and a toolbar at the top with various coding and analysis tools.

Transcript 2

The screenshot shows the ATLAS.ti software interface with a different transcript. The main window displays a transcript from a document titled "D 4: Eye's Walk Festival Interview". The transcript text is highlighted in orange. The coding scheme on the right includes categories such as "Coexistence of contemporary...", "Participation", "Education", and "Socializing". The interface also shows a file explorer on the left and a toolbar at the top.

Transcript 3

The screenshot displays the ATLAS.ti software interface. The main window shows a transcript titled "thesis_anna_pitti - ATLAS.ti - Trial Version". The transcript content includes:

support my giving equipment and spaces?

Alberto Bourdeth: I think as with many places, there are always issues of bureaucracy. And yes there will be problems but they have to be overcome. It's something that... When the first initial became... a Festival... [People didn't know the exhibits, the pieces of art had to be ensured. An this could cost. It could cost them and for an artist to bring his work to a place like Sifnos and eventually exhibit it somewhere outside, where it might be stolen or it might be damaged by the weather. It means extra cost which is sometimes, it frightens investors or people involved of the amount of money they have to pay. So there are certain details that people need to be informed about before they undertake such an endeavor. All gather I think it's all very reasonable if it is conveyed, if it is explained properly.] [6]

Anna: And what about the opportunities that someone can meet in this place? In comparison with Athens

Alberto Bourdeth: If i have to talk about benefits...One thing of course is Athens for example is a large city and has many things to show. So if we're talking about tourism Athens is working the year round. If we're talking about our smaller rural area that is mainly. Thought about as a place that you go to to either swim or have fun at night. This to the equation... And eventually also more profitable for the people who are working there. If you create an art festival that is happening... Let's say... If the arts festival was happening. In the month of May for example which is not a very active month for the island then suddenly you will enlarge the season the summer season off the island thus raising the income because people would need to rent rooms or go to hotels or eat in restaurants. So this is one benefit. [7] The other benefit is that will you will specify the people that come to the island. People who will come to they will come because of this... Because of this action because of the support of the arts. This will be a specific type of person who wants to see this. It won't be the party of tourists story for sport tourists it will be the tourists who comes to see the art. So this will also add to the character of the island.] These are two I think larger exampl[8]es of the impact...

Anna: What are the benefits for the artists and the cultural entrepreneurs?

Alberto Bourdeth: I think the benefits for an artist who works both in Sifnos or any place else are pretty similar to doing anything else he does anyway. In my opinion this is clearly my opinion. Somebody else might be more informed with different view on things but I'm quite cynical about this.

The right-hand side of the interface features a "Code Manager" panel with the following codes:

- Appropriate attitudes
- Job opportunities
- Local economy
- Combine holidays with cultura

The bottom status bar shows "ATLAS.ti" and a zoom level of "100%".