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**Volume 6, Issue 2, 2019**

Edited by *Francesco Adamo*, Emeritus Professor,  
*Università del Piemonte Orientale*



**GEOPROGRESS EDITIONS**

**NOVARA**

### ***GeoProgress Journal***

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## Table of contents

Editorial Note.....7

### ARTICLES

1. Tourism and progress of peripheral spaces  
*Francesco Adamo*.....11
2. Destination “Matera 2019”: Promoting tourism in the Basilicata region  
as a whole  
*Angela Pepe, Annalisa Percoco*.....31
3. Tourism transition: the Lucan Dolomites model  
*Marcella De Filippo*.....47
4. “A crooked, open, modest city” - Intercultural Tourism as a tool to grasp  
urban super-diversity and build social cohesion  
*Francesco Vietti*.....61
5. Is the Street Art a driver for tourist valorisation of marginal urban  
contexts?  
*Giorgia Iovino*.....79



## EDITORIAL NOTE

This Issue includes some of the papers discussed at the Italian Meeting “Giornate del turismo” (Naples, October 21-22, 2019), proposed by the Authors to this Journal for publication and approved after submission to two referees. The meeting was focused on “Tourism in the progress of peripheries” and the articles here published deal with various topics and problems of peripheries, the role and characters of tourism, at global, regional and urban scale.

The first contribution, an introductory manuscript I wrote, firstly defines and distinguishes the geographical “peripheries”, then discusses the characters and effects of the development of tourism, mainly in the countries of the South. These are seen as peripheries of the world, where international flows have grown greatly even in years of depression of the world economy. It also gives some critical reflections on the role of tourism both in poor countries and in peripheral regions and regional peripheries in developed nations. In conclusion, for the progress of tourism and local economy, that is for promoting a sustainable and competitive development, it stresses the need of a systemic and participatory planning.

The second and third contributions deal with two case-study on Basilicata, one of the peripheral regions of Italy and Europe. They provide an overview of various initiatives and report the growing ferment to promote local progress.

Angela Pepe and Annalisa Percoco discuss the big event “European Capital of Culture” and consider the case of Matera 2019, viewed as an opportunity to relaunch the image and attractiveness of the town (known for its “Sassi”, two neighbourhoods formed by buildings and architectures carved into the rock) but also as a chance to promote the whole regional territory.

Marcella De Filippo discusses the case of a peripheral area within a peripheral region, one of the least-favoured lands because of its morphological situation, which began its resilience process from poverty with the opening of a tourist attraction (“Flight of Angel”, a cable between two peaks of the Lucanian Dolomites). This case shows the importance of participatory initiatives for promoting sustainable development.

Two other contributions relate to problems, initiatives and potential resources in the peripheries of two different cities, Turin and Naples.

The work on Turin, by Francesco Vietti, is focused on the complex connection between tourism, migration and heritage. It offers an ethnographic account and a critical discussion about the Migrantour, an international project that has been developing an innovative urban tourism involving migrants as intercultural companions for walking tours.

The work on Naples, by Giorgia Iovino, investigates the role that street art practices can play, in degraded complex suburban realities, as identity markers and instruments for territorial enhancement. The intent is to understand to what extent these unconventional artistic practices are able to favor the planning of alternative tourist routes.

Francesco Adamo  
*Editor in Chief*





*ARTICLES*



## TOURISM AND PROGRESS OF PERIPHERAL SPACES

Francesco Adamo\*

### *Abstract*

After having defined and distinguished the geographical “peripheries”, this article discusses the characters and effects of the development of tourism in the countries of the South, seen as peripheries of the world, where international flows have grown greatly even in years of depression of the world economy. It rejects the thesis of those who explicitly or implicitly contrast, in a Manichean way, conventional mass tourism, considering it unsustainable, to new or better alternative tourisms (ecotourism, CBT, pro-poor tourism, etc.), considering them uncritically sustainable. In addition, it warns against the dangers of failure of local development proposals that rely too much, if not exclusively, on tourism and even more those that suppose that it is realized without careful planning. Finally, it emphasized the need for a systemic and participatory approach to development planning, capable of integrating the various activities and subjects of the destination, through their collaboration. In particular, for the progress of tourism in the peripheries, as well as in the centers themselves, collaboration must be implemented also between centers and peripheries.

*Keywords:* tourism, development and underdevelopment, centers and peripheries, conventional tourism, alternative tourisms

### **1. Tourism and “Peripheries”**

Periphery, as it is known, has a strictly spatial meaning: it is intended as an area opposite to a center. As such it is a less accessible space: this connotation entails different social relationships with respect to those characteristics of the centers and has multiple minor (as well as different) integrations in the world geosystem of capitalism. At the same time, this connotation is not to be confused with the few areas of the world which can be considered truly “marginal” as they are little or not integrated and generally have much less accessibility than peripheral devices - which largely explains their lack of integration. The geographical diversity between the center and the periphery does not necessarily lead to an economic disparity - in terms of income levels and even less in terms of well-being.

When there is no disparity or this is not relevant - even if the economic behaviors are different - and in essence the territorial order corresponds to the model of the central places<sup>1</sup> which is based on the balanced development theory, there is generally the

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<sup>1</sup> In this regard, see the excellent collection of the main contributions edited by Peter Scholler (1972).

presence of urban regions that are capitalistically backward. In most urban regions, either where the development of industrial capitalism took place, or even just for the concentration of political, administrative or service activities, there is also a spatial concentration of wealth and an evident geographical-economic disparity, consistently with the center-periphery models of unbalanced development theorists (Keynesians or reformists and neo-Marxists)<sup>2</sup>.

Disparity is so frequent that the periphery has assumed, in a broad sense, the social meaning of an area of limited economic progress, if not poor, often an area of social degradation and malaise, and, in a known development theory, of dependent social space. In this social, metaphorical meaning, we can find peripheral areas - but not marginal ones since they are however produced by the same dominant social system - in well-accessible spaces and even in the centers of the main metropolitan cities.

On the subject of peripheries, the scientific and political question, however, is to understand how to avoid that the spatial periphery, with its inevitable less accessibility than the centers of geosystems, becomes an area of too low well-being and even malaise, and how to guarantee progress and the overcoming of these conditions. In this regard peripheries must be distinguished geographically, considering the territorial articulation of the world geosystem and the levels of political decision and action, in:

- a) world peripheries, represented by the countries of the South of the world, less developed capitalistically or even underdeveloped which still clearly maintain subordination relationships (or even only the resulting structural characteristics) with respect to the world centers, represented by the countries of the North of the world, today extended beyond the OECD with the full integration of Russia and China into the system;
- b) national peripheries or peripheral regions, represented by the less advanced or even subordinate regions of the countries of the same North of the world, such as the regions of Southern Italy;
- c) regional peripheries, peripheral areas within the central regions of capitalist development, such as rural areas covered by European Community policy and the “internal areas” of recent Italian politics;
- d) urban peripheries, meaning all areas outside the central area (or “center”) of urban agglomerations - which normally includes the main business center together with the historical center of the city and the semi-central residential districts well equipped with residential services, with high accessibility and well integrated with each other -. They can still be densely built-up and populated areas, but generally well connected only with the central area. By including in them, in addition to the typical suburbs and satellite centers, all the peri-urban settlements within a one-hour radius, the urban peripheries can extend over a very large space, and can generally be characterized by less well-being, even if not always perceived, and in several cases by severe degradation in many respects. These areas are not necessarily those furthest from the center, but are even inside the center: that is, being spatially central and socially peripheral.

To try to understand tourism in peripheral destinations, whether it is a tool of local progress, that is of sustainable development, it is still to premise explicitly which

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<sup>2</sup> As far as the theories of regional development and the structure models of urban regions and therefore of center-periphery relations are concerned, there is a well-known geographic and economic bibliography, for which I limit myself to referring to Adamo, 1983 and 2017.

tourism concept should be preferred - beyond the acceptance of the definition of tourist by the World Tourism Organization for obvious practical-statistical reasons - and keep in mind the complexity of the tourism production system (as shown in fig. 1).

Tourism intended as a movement of people and a production system based on the desire to make new experiences - a concept that seems to regain strength after decades of mass tourism, limited to a rapid consumption of natural and cultural resources, which however continues to be pre-eminent - by its nature it favors peripheral spaces (Christaller, 1964), different from the central-urban spaces where most tourists reside, reachable and enjoyable slowly. Peripheral destinations, due to the growing process of urbanization related to tourism development, tend to become similar to mass tourism destinations. The destinations of the traveler who intends to discover and get to know the area - and recreate their physical and intellectual strengths in natural and cultural environments - must be accessible, however peripheral. The growth in the number of tourists - with the growth in accessibility, connected to the growth of tourism and more generally of the local economy - makes the destination a destination for mass tourism. This is not necessarily consumerist: it can also be sustainable tourism, but only to the extent that the offer is planned and the demand selected to allow to enjoy local resources and continue to have satisfying experiences and / or recreate.

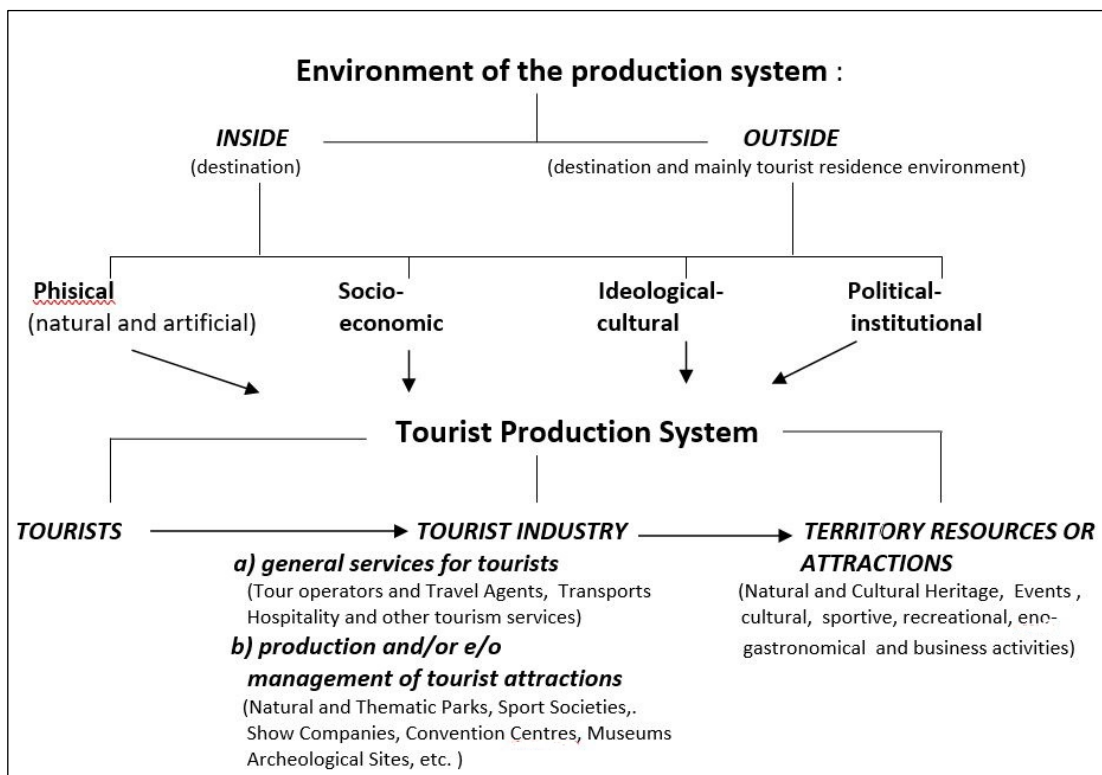


Figure 1: Subjects, resources and conditions of tourist production.

Recently, international bodies, governments of nations and regions, as well as NGOs, have given so much importance to tourism - and particularly to various tourisms, considered alternative and sustainable compared to conventional mass tourism - that it has been indicated in development and progress policies as the main growth tool, specifically in peripheral countries and in general in all peripheral areas.

This paper proposes some reflections in this regard, limited to the peripheral countries and also to the peripheral regions of developed nations, such as the South of Italy, where the development of tourism as well as other activities encounter difficulties similar to those of underdeveloped countries and in some respects even more serious, such as the inability to count, unlike sovereign states, on their own monetary and fiscal policies that favor economic growth. In particular, the reflections concern both the economic and social importance attributed to tourism in local development studies and policies, and the assessments of its economic, ecological and cultural sustainability. They question: 1) whether tourism is the best tool for development, 2) whether the forms of tourism proposed by various parties for these countries and regions, considered alternatives to conventional mass tourism, are sustainable per se and in any case more sustainable than conventional mass tourism.

## 2. The enormous growth of international arrivals in the peripheries of the world.

Tourism is one of the few growing production systems, practically all over the world, and which has continued to grow even in recent periods of economic recession. International arrivals estimated at just 25.3 million worldwide in 1950, rising to 165.8 million in 1970 and 540.6 in 1995 - the year from which a new, more reliable, series of data is available - have reached figures of 1,326 million in 2017 (UNWTO, 2018).

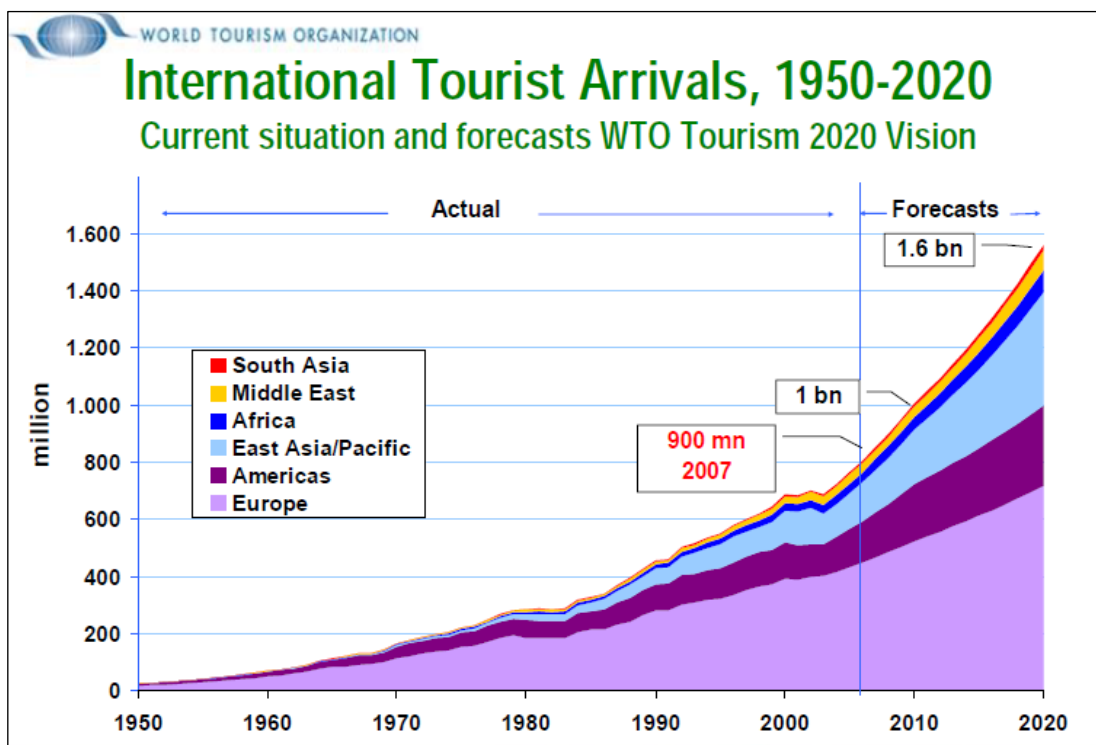


Figure 2: Growth of international tourism flows by macro-regions.  
Source: UNWTO (2018).

The countries of the South<sup>3</sup> of the world which in 1950 included just over 10% of international arrivals and in 1990 had just exceeded the 20% quota (only Europe and North America received 76.8% of that year), in 2015 they reached 46% and then slightly decreased, while their growth rate still remains high (+ 5.3% on average from 2015 to 2017, against a world rate of 5.5%).

Revenues generated by international tourism still amounted to 270 billion in 1990, reached 975.5 billion in 2010 and as much as 1,340 billion in 2017. The comparison between the countries of the North of the world and those of the South is significant in this regard. Although among them, some presents a self-centered development model, not different from that of developed or northern countries, they still show a lower per capita income and tourism is either lagging behind or retaining the features of extroversion, typical of tourist services and other activities in the underdeveloped world. The enormous growth in international tourism revenues is determined in the last period only by these countries, from the south, and not by the traditional, highly touristic countries of the North. In these countries (adding the data from Europe, North America, North-East Asia, Australia and New Zealand) for simplicity, revenues in this period have even decreased slightly: from 749.6 billion in 2010 to 733.5 billion in 2017), despite a growth in arrivals (from 707 million to 980.6 million). In the South of the world, the revenues of international tourism are certainly still lower than those of the North, but in this period they have grown by 380.6 billion (from 226 billion to 606 billion). The contribution of tourism to the growth of the economy of the South is considerable, despite the fact that the outgoing flows from the South - from the countries emerging from underdevelopment or from centrally planned economies - have favored traditional northern tourist countries.

Overall, the trend of tourist flows in recent years, despite economic recessions, is an expression of both the importance that consumers attach to travel and holidays, and the tendency towards saturation of tourist areas in the North of the world, but especially of the growing research by part of Northern tourists of new experiences and of the tourist offer in southern destinations connected above all to the globalization of investments in infrastructures and services (Daye, 2006; Dwyer, 2015).

Tourism, once essentially excluded from the southern countries of the world, is already today in a large part of them among the first export bases and in at least a third of them, especially in small countries, is indeed the main one. Due to its evident economic importance, although in various cases it seems more apparent than real, tourism has been elevated by many Governments to an instrument of fundamental, strategic, if not exclusive, development, also driven by international organizations.

In particular, after the affirmation of the need for “sustainable” development, following the publication of the report of the UNWCED (1987), Commission chaired by the Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, and the Earth Summit of Rio de Janeiro (1991), it has often been argued uncritically that tourism would be a more sustainable production system than others, as well as more easily achievable.

Referring to the advantages of tourism with respect to other industries (Honey and Gilpin, 2009) - although in my opinion only potential - “The United Nations has

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<sup>3</sup> We include in this group the countries still underdeveloped euphemistically called “Developing economies” and the “Economies in transition” of the Country classification of the United Nations.

See: [http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/wesp\\_current/2014wesp\\_country\\_classification.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/wesp_current/2014wesp_country_classification.pdf).

For the “North” of the world, we assume the set of Developed economies.

identified in the development of tourism one of the methods that the poorest countries can use to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). For the first objective - reducing poverty - the merits of tourism are evident. It can provide employment and income to communities that, in some cases, lack valid alternatives of means of employment..”, “Tourism can also contribute to the second MDG, that of promoting gender equality..” and “..make an important contribution to the promotion of sustainable development (natural and cultural), another of the millennium development goals... Finally, since tourism by definition involves the transfer of people, cultures, and ideas, it is in the ideal position to promote an effective global partnership, the eighth MDG..”. Consequently, in addition to pursuing development goals, some have seen tourism as a tool for building and sustaining peace. Like other studies, now numerous, the aforementioned report by Martha Honey and Raymond Gilpin for the United States Institute of Peace underlines in conclusion that “if tourism can be a force for good.. Much depends on how the system is planned it is managed by”; in this regard, however, like other studies, it unfortunately gives us only a few political recommendations.

Numerous writings on development in the world peripheries emphasize the neocolonial or dependent character of services connected with conventional mass tourism<sup>4</sup>. However, it should be noted that this character is neither different, nor more accentuated in tourism services, compared to other industries promoted in whole or in part with foreign investments and entrusted to the management of foreign companies. Like other activities, tourist services reflect the conditions specific to “underdevelopment” (Adamo, 1980, 2006 and 2017). On an economic level, the problems that are attributed to tourism are perhaps more evident but it is to be shown that they are greater. A certain “leakage”, deriving from external supplies of goods and services that the country is unable to provide, is also known in manufacturing production systems and comparative analyzes are not available to claim that it is greater for the tourism businesses. Nor do the possibilities offered in the South of the world to export or conceal profits seem greater for tourism companies.

As for workers’ incomes, it seems true as well as evident that the humiliating scourge of the “tip”, in addition to low wages, is still widespread in the South while it has almost disappeared in many Northern destinations. However, in the southern world the incomes of the workforce engaged in tourist services are certainly not lower than in other sectors, where starvation wages often still exist; on the contrary, in many cases the opposite could be said<sup>5</sup>.

“Scandal”, rather, generates tourism when, as was evident in Cuba a few years ago, the income of a taxi driver or a waiter - and of anyone who provides a service activity for tourists and accepts a dollar tip - exceed that of a surgeon, a researcher or even a company manager or local public body.

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Canestrini Duccio, *Which tourism after or tsunami*, from [www.homoturistics.com](http://www.homoturistics.com), 2005 - cit. from Berutti and Devecchio (2009) - who would make dependency a peculiar feature of tourism activities in the South of the world.

<sup>5</sup> The available data seem to highlight that in the southern countries, except in the “emerging” or industrialized ones, the hospitality and tourism services sectors generally offer wages higher than or at least equal to those of the other sectors. Just compare for example: [kellyservices.co.th/thailand-salary-guide](http://kellyservices.co.th/thailand-salary-guide); and also, for Thailand, [www.paylab.com](http://www.paylab.com); [www.ceicdata.com](http://www.ceicdata.com)> Kenya; [r4kenia.com/employers/salary-survey](http://r4kenia.com/employers/salary-survey); for Brazil, emerging country, [salario.com.br / tabela-salarial /](http://salario.com.br/tabela-salarial/); in addition to general sources such as <http://www.ilo.org>> [Global Wage Report 2016/17](http://www.ilo.org/global/wage-report-2016-17), ILO and [data.oecd.org/earnwage/average-wages.htm](http://data.oecd.org/earnwage/average-wages.htm).



Scandal, discontent and social conflict then generates tourism in the destinations of poor countries where for a night in a resort the tourist spends the equivalent of a month's wages of a permanently employed local worker and therefore relatively well-heeled compared to the mass of unemployed or underemployed in the country, as is still the case today almost everywhere in the southern world.

Evidently, scandal generates, in particular, the manifestations of excessive luxury and above all of waste by the tourist and the reception facilities, especially in the poorest countries. We can therefore understand, as a corollary of tourism growth, the growth in the South of the world of drug use, prostitution and crime. Among many negative effects, a positive indicator of liveliness and social development, we can consider micro-crime, which is the aspect most immediately perceived by travelers, and which is particularly acute in some destinations, especially in Latin America, where the level of hunger has been exceeded and young people have become aware of social inequities and react as they can, even badly.

For some years many contributions have focused on various forms of tourism considered alternatives to conventional mass tourism, such as Eco-tourism, Green Tourism, Agritourism, Rural or Agro-Cultural Tourism and various other forms of open-air tourism, Social Tourism, Community Based Tourism (CBT), Pro Poor Tourism, Ethical Tourism, Religious, Experiential or, better, Active tourism. They are especially useful when they illustrate the methods of development and organization of the tourism systems of the destinations considered. Too often, however, the prevailing interest of scholars is to define the characteristics of one and more of these "alternative" tourism or to verify the correspondence of the cases analyzed to the model adopted, rather than highlighting the actions and tools chosen to respond to the problems of underdevelopment, poverty and environmental degradation, and assessing their effects.

Furthermore, studies that aim to assess the sustainability of tourism development projects often only investigate the perception of residents. But what is worse is that in many studies - as in the documents of national governments and international bodies themselves - unconventional forms of tourism are often considered sustainable in themselves, even responsible. However that may be, it is generally assumed that these forms are more sustainable than traditional mass tourism. However, these unconventional or alternative forms are identified some for the type of attraction, others for the form of management of the offer.

The ambivalence or ambiguity of the terms with which some species of tourism are designated, as is evident in the use of "ecotourism", creates a useless and unacceptable confusion: ecotourism - a term often extended in a broad sense to all forms alternative to traditional mass tourism - strictly speaking, it properly designates tourism which has nature and ecosystems as its main attraction; at the same time, however, it is used to designate a way of doing tourism that respects nature. The confusion is accentuated with the use of the term "greentourism", which often limits itself to specifically designating an industry that is based on service companies that adopt ecologically healthier behaviors and technologies.

The same is true of "Community Based Tourism" (CBT), that should be designated as a type of tourism in which the main attraction is the local community itself, where tourists can also stay; it can be an ethnic or experiential tourism in general, but it also designates a form of development and a mode of tourist production that provides for the "participation" of the community in development choices and activities. CBT,

which has become more fashionable and used more often as a model of development and management, is privileged in the proposals of “Pro Poor Tourism” (PPT), i.e. aimed at eliminating poverty and considered for this purpose the best form of tourism, even if in reality PPT projects include various types of tourism and every organizational form based on a certain “participation” of the community which may even be limited to some stakeholders.

The alternative forms of conventional mass tourism are therefore proposed as a solution to the problems of the development of the peripheries of the world, of the peripheral regions of the northern nations and also of “marginal” regions, that is, of territories not yet fully integrated into the world system of the capitalism. Together with the diffusion of these forms of tourism, tourism is often taken as a strategic, if not unique, tool for economic growth and the fight against poverty.

For this reason, hoping that future research will focus more on such forms and on tourism in general in the countries of the South, I intend to propose here still few reflections on the role of tourism in social development and its sustainability (economic, ecological, cultural) for the destinations concerned, questioning 1) whether tourism is the best tool for development, 2) whether the alternative forms proposed are sustainable and in any case more sustainable than conventional mass tourism.

In this regard, however, I would like, at the same time, to try to go beyond the many writings on the definition of the different types and forms of tourism, the various criteria for assessing and measuring their sustainability<sup>6</sup>; since (despite the continuous terminological newism, common in academia as in politics) the scientific debate on the subject does not seem to have progressed compared to the clarifications of Richard W. Butler (1999) of twenty years ago, which continue to be current. Consequently, I would limit myself to some reflections on the actual issues to be addressed: how to promote economic growth and the progress of the territories of the poor communities? With what types and forms of tourism would it be possible to contribute more to the various destinations, referring not only to the peripheries of the world but also to the regions and peripheral areas of developed countries?

### **3. Tourism: tool for sustainable local development?**

The many positive and negative effects on the social communities of the destinations of arrival of tourists are now illustrated in almost all the geography, economy and tourism management manuals<sup>7</sup>. They are reproduced in countless articles and in documents of governments and bodies that propose tourism-based development policies, enhancing their beneficial effects (mainly economic, such as income and employment, created by visitors’ expenses, and tax revenues for the Public Administration). However, the balances between benefits and costs are neither so numerous, nor clear enough to allow tourism to be used as a privileged tool for promoting local development.

Of course, tourism is undoubtedly to be promoted in various peripheral or marginal territories as integration of other economic bases and also as a marketing tool for local products. Promoting the protection of natural and above all cultural assets can also be

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<sup>6</sup> See in this regard UNWTO (2016).

<sup>7</sup> For example: Ioannides and Debbage (1998), Cosgrove (1972), Cazes (1992), Inskip (1991), Godfrey and Clarke (2000), Lozato-Giotart (2008 and 2009), Duhamel (2018), Innocenti (2007), Bagnoli (2014), Smith (2015), Page (2015).

useful, regardless of tourism, to the benefit of the quality of life of the residents and of the development based on any activity and especially on innovations.

However, I believe it is wrong to promote tourism as the exclusive basis of the economy, although this often happens in individual centers, in many regions and also in the territories of small states, especially where seasonality is reduced. The local tourism industry - understood as an economic basis as it is that which depends on international flows - is an extroverted activity, by definition: particularly subject to international political and economic instability. In addition, a large part of the jobs created tend to be low paid, seasonal, part-time, have limited career prospects (except in some sectors), have inconvenient time schedules (especially in hospitality services). Furthermore, especially if this industry is promoted by foreign investments - as was generally the case in the South of the world and still happens in poor countries which thereby highlight their character as underdeveloped countries - it "often brings external skills to manage the structures, which further weaken the benefits for employment in the destination" (Godfrey and Clarke, 2000, p. 20).

Before embarking on tourism development projects, therefore, a careful evaluation, specifically for the territory under consideration, of the social costs and benefits - which certainly cannot be limited to the economic-financial account, as happens for the evaluation of private initiatives, but obviously also to ecological and cultural impacts - as well as a comparison with other possibilities for enhancing the territory. In short, it is necessary to include the tourism development project in the local development program - and, if it is not, in the context of trends - taking into account both the interactions with other local activities and, last but not least, that tourism activities, after an initial phase of development determined by the financing of the tourism project by some international body and by the support of some NGOs, must be able to continue.

The development of tourism to be successful and be "sustainable" - that is, according to the original definition of this concept (UNWCED, 1987) lasting and able to allow future generations of the destination to continue to draw equal, if not superior, benefits<sup>8</sup> - must be first of all coherent with the resources and environmental conditions (social and natural) of the territory. The types of tourism that can be carried out and the possible targets of visitors depend on the territorial resources that constitute actual and potential tourist attractions; while the choice of the forms of organization and management of tourist services that are most suitable for each destination, and therefore "best" for it, depends above all on the conditions of the social environment of the destination (entrepreneurial skills and other qualities of human resources, cultural characteristics, forms of government and governance models, etc.) as well as on the tourists themselves targeted by the destination.

Open-air tourism, in contact with nature, community tourism in the village with destination and stay in remote villages, in poor or less-developed countries, can undoubtedly constitute forms of sustainable tourism, but they are not per se and unlikely to be in all three aspects of sustainability: economic, ecological and cultural.

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<sup>8</sup> Taking the definition of the WCED, the World Tourism Organization also states that "development of sustainable tourism is a process which meets the needs of present tourists, and host communities whilst protecting and enhancing needs in the future". Moreover, "sustainable" would be "tourism which leads to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems". (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005, pp. 11-12).

On the other hand, even conventional seaside, mountain or cultural tourism, with a stay in traditional tourist accommodation facilities, such as small and medium-sized hotels or even large resorts, can be (and will have to be) no less sustainable. In fact, there are cases of success, in which the positive results outweigh the negative ones, both for destinations with extroverted development based on large companies (especially in the Caribbean, despite ecological and socio-cultural problems generated in some areas by rapid tourist growth), and also for destinations with forms of alternative tourism development, although many of these are due to recent projects for which it cannot yet be said with certainty that these are successes. The results of various community development projects in Asia are certainly positive for now, “including government poverty reduction programs (Masuleh, Iran ..), programs sponsored by NGOs and international donor agencies (as in the case of the dolphin, in Cambodia), development cases started by national parks (Kanas, China; Gorhi-Terelj National Park, Mongolia), by the village itself (Yubeng, China), also community tourism development programs started by external companies (Dai Folk Village, China) and by multiple forces (Klong Khwang, Thailand)” (WTO, 2009, p. 15). In Asia and particularly in the regions with the highest economic and socio-cultural level, development based on small and medium-sized tourism service companies and on the enhancement of natural, rural landscapes and artistic-architectural and ethnic heritage is undoubtedly positive (UNWTO and Huzhou City, 2017).

Even the cases of failure (Daye, 2006, pp. 478-480) - considering such cases in which the negative effects under some aspect (ecological or cultural or economic) are clearly superior to the positive ones - concern both destinations with exogenous development, characterized by large accommodation facilities, but even more so, endogenous development destinations promoted by many and various initiatives carried out by small local entrepreneurs (as is the case of the “homestay program” in Thailand, or of the tourism development of Ghana). Among the cases of development based on particularly negative small businesses are those that have given rise to a disordered and miserable urbanization, such as that which characterizes many tourist districts in the South of the world and especially in the main tourist countries of the North (e.g. many parts of the centers coasts of Italy, Portugal and Spain). In these cases, the negative impact, ecological, landscape related and in the long run economic, is lasting and consequently even more serious than in exogenously developed destinations where the much deprecated luxury “ghettos” created by large companies can gradually open up to the territory, especially where politics plays its necessary role, and encourage the formation of a supply chain of local suppliers and increasingly qualified personnel.

No less negative is the ecological impact of ecotourism when it, as usually happens if the destination becomes renowned, turns into mass tourism. Ethnographic tourism would definitely be discouraged - when it is not limited to enhancing and thus preserving local artistic traditions, transforming them into cultural attractions and therefore a foundation of cultural tourism, as is evident in Indonesia and other Asian countries. Strongly negative on a social and cultural level and often without adequate compensation on an economic level, it is keeping some communities, in Africa or in the Amazon, in their traditional customs only to satisfy the taste for the exotic, on the one hand deceiving the tourist, on the other humiliating the natives or even making them beggars.

Sustainability, in tourism as in other activities, is not, nor can it be limited, to niche initiatives or happy islands: it must be a continuous concern and fundamental objective for any activity. From an ecological and landscape point of view, it is a necessity for tourist destinations, aimed at perpetuating its attractiveness, the more important the higher the stage of the destination in the life cycle of its tourist development (Butler, 1980).

Sustainable tourism and significant for the necessary economic growth of low-income countries and the progress of their communities, can only be achieved in various forms and with various tools, depending on the level of economic development of the country, the cultural characteristics of the community and natural conditions. It is in relation to local conditions and tourist demand that we evaluate what tourism can be with the least possible negative, ecological and cultural impact, and with the greatest "possible" impact on the economic level.

In order to alleviate poverty and at the same time guarantee satisfactory, if not better, ecological conditions for future generations of tourist destinations in poor countries, especially tropical ones, sought after by tourists from rich countries (or in the "North" of the world or "central" in the world capitalist development), it can however be said, all things considered, that the construction of large tourist resorts, often criminalized in studies on the impact of tourism in poor countries (or in the "South" of the world or "peripheral"), may be more important economically and more ecologically and culturally sustainable than carrying out a community tourism project in a village, whose demand is limited and whose offer can only be limited to some cases. Furthermore, to accommodate a growing mass of tourists, this polarized and often exogenous tourism development model, founded on large hotels, companies that often become the "engines" of the local economy, is more sustainable, at least ecologically and landscape-oriented, than the spontaneous development model, endogenous, founded on a growing number of small accommodation facilities of improvised local entrepreneurs. This statement, which is evident from the landscape and ecological point of view in the most renowned tourist resorts of the Pacific, Indian Ocean, Caribbean and the Brazilian Northeast, is now also valid in many cases from an economic point of view, since the development of local suppliers and a significant integration with local production and even a growing number of local entrepreneurs and managers of large accommodation facilities and other tourist services have already been achieved.

In the southern countries that have still remained underdeveloped - as they have maintained the character of dependent, extroverted economies, inherited from colonial domination - and also in the peripheral regions of the northern countries - also lacking in savings and financial capacity in general but above all of entrepreneurial skills, with low levels of education and lack of professional experience in the field of tourist services - the most appropriate development model that a government can accept, if not incentivize, to promote the arrival of tourists, if the territory has a significant supply of attractions for which there is a high demand, can be based in the first place on investments by external companies, of the countries of departure of tourists, to whom to entrust the management of hospitality services, if not the construction of the structures and the necessary infrastructure. This has happened in Indonesia, Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries where international incoming has grown the most in the past twenty years.

Well-known are the criticisms of this model of development based above all on large multinational tourism companies (hotels, but also transport, vertically integrated), in the studies on the “enclaves” created in southeast Asia and in the other main seaside destinations in the countries of the South of the world and in peripheral regions also in the North, already highlighted in the tourism study manuals since the early 1970s. However, in the starting conditions of the process that model seems inevitable: guaranteeing an increasingly positive fallout of those investments that start tourism development, which can be achieved by promoting the transition to an increasingly endogenous model, is a question that essentially concerns political direction and territorial development: first of all the promotion of actions that favor the training of qualified local staff, the birth and growth of local suppliers of goods and services, according to the quality required by tourists, and a social environment that favors a growing mutual interaction and enrichment between tourists and residents. The history of tourism in various Latin American countries, such as Brazil and Mexico, and in most of southern and south-eastern Asia, highlights that the growth of the tourist offer and the incomes deriving from tourism presupposes a certain threshold of economic development of the country.

The attractions that motivate the tourist to move from home to the tourist destination, as well as the structure and hospitality models offered by it, can be the most varied. To ensure maximum sustainability, in relation to local and market conditions, what is needed in all cases is careful planning of local development, in which tourism is assumed to be among the main economic bases<sup>9</sup>. It is therefore on this need and particularly on planning with a systemic and participatory approach that I will focus again, albeit briefly, on the next pages.

In addition to the supposed sustainability of alternative forms of tourism, a second topic of reflection is the very role of tourism as an instrument of progress, that is, of sustainable development, if not achieved through a process of careful planning of the territory. The growth of tourism is encouraged and often proposed as a strategic response to the problems of underdeveloped countries, especially the poorest, and peripheral regions - and even “marginal” regions, i.e. territories of indigenous communities still not integrated today, if not marginally, in the world system of capitalism -. Serious doubts are also nourished in this regard: on the role assigned to tourism for local progress and particularly on the role of tourism forms, alternative to conventional mass tourism, which are proposed as sustainable. Numerous writings are available on the subject, but unfortunately they mainly concern the illustration of projects, financed by governments and international bodies and carried out with the competition of NGOs, published by specialized magazines<sup>10</sup> and by UNWTO<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> In confirmation of the above statements, there is now a very large bibliography of tourist studies, so please refer to <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/94057>,

and to the systematization provided by [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bibliography\\_of\\_tourism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bibliography_of_tourism). In particular for the development of tourism and the role attributed to planning, it is sufficient to see the now classic manuals of Inkeep (1991), Cazes (1992), Beech & Chadwick (2006).

<sup>10</sup> Like *Annals of Tourism Research*; *Tourism Management*; *Anatolia - An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*; *Current Issues in Tourism*; *Tourism Geographies*.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www2.unwto.org/publications>.

#### **4. For a competitive and sustainable development of the peripheries: a systemic and participatory planning.**

The tourist product is ultimately the overall “experience” - that is the set of images, activities and knowledge - that the tourist gets from a destination. This experience and the tourist satisfaction do not depend only on the attractions and services offered, but on the social environment that welcomes the tourist, on the welcome culture of the community with which the tourist comes into contact. To try to build this environment, the involvement of the whole community in the local planning process is indispensable and can be achieved through the active participation of its representatives and various forms of mass consultation (democracy is tiring, but in this case economically essential!).

This approach is also essential with regard to the factors to which the experience and success of tourism is normally attributed: the equipment and quality of the attractions, the activities that the tourist can carry out and the services he can enjoy. In fact, also for this reason, to guarantee a competitive offer of ever better quality for the entire destination (this is what counts and not the quality offered by a single company) it is necessary to involve all the different sectors and subjects of the production system. First, the main task of local development planning is to promote and achieve coordination between these different subjects of the production system, and also between them and the subjects that make up the environment and together with them form the local tourism geosystem. Without such coordination and the collective decision of the objectives and development actions, in the context of a planning that considers the entire geosystem of the destination, it is very difficult (if not impossible) to effectively integrate the various tourist services and also the infrastructures and services of the geographic environment, for example even in the same digital system through an Internet of Things network.

The start of the planning process requires the establishment of a permanent committee representing all social and political forces, which will take its decisions, if not unanimously, by an overwhelming majority. This is the condition for the chosen actions to be effectively implemented and for the strategic choices to remain such and therefore lasting. Plan choices cannot be changed with every change of Minister or Councilor! It is useful that the Committee includes a small team of experts who have the task of providing information, knowledge and working hypotheses to the Committee and of planning and coordinating the actions deliberated by the Committee itself.

Planning is a continuous process and requires continuous monitoring of the plan's results and market changes, starting from an initial plan. The preparation of this plan, the choice of the offer development actions and the related marketing actions, require a preliminary, careful, work of target resource audit. Referring in this regard and to the planning methods to one of the now numerous manuals available (Inskeep, 1991; Godfrey, Clarke, 2000; Page, 2015), I would like to emphasize here only one aspect of great interest for the geographer, but generally neglected by scholars of other disciplines: the delimitation of the region-program or plan, specifically for the promotion of the development of tourism or the spread of its positive effects in the regional peripheries, issue which I will mention later.

As is evident in the case of the Italian peninsula, regional peripheries can be mainly “internal” or precisely inland areas opposed to coastal areas where we not only find important cities, central places of economic development, but also renowned tourist

centers and districts with good accessibility. More generally, they are also rural areas of continental regions, which can be defined as rural peripheries: they are generally mountainous or hilly areas, but even plains, less accessible and often also with lower levels of well-being than regional, national and international cities, central areas of capital development.

Not only that, but regional, peripheries (spatial and social) can even be some coastal areas. In the latter areas, however, as in lake or mountain areas, when endowed with natural resources which elsewhere have allowed satisfactory economic development largely based on tourism, it is understandable that public decision-makers and local operators try to promote similar conventional mass tourism (seaside, mountain); which in fact are already spreading “spontaneously”, unfortunately with effects often even worse than those occurred in areas where tourism has rapidly grown (miserable urbanization, degradation of nature). For these, as for several long-established tourist destinations, a problem of requalification of the offer arises in Italy and other Mediterranean countries, particularly in Portugal and Spain, through a process of continuous planning and monitoring.

It is very different for the other regional peripheries, internal or not, which can base the promotion of tourism, still within the framework of continuous planning and monitoring of local development, on the potential attraction exercised by their protected natural areas and by “agro-cultural” landscapes - combinations of typical agricultural crops, inhabited areas and historical monuments of the rural landscape (villages, castles, places of worship etc., country roads) and often endowed with a relevant food and wine, artisan and even artistic tradition -. Due to the growing trend of tourists attentive to these cultural resources, interested in learning about the lifestyle of residents in the countries and regions visited, to make new experiences in a short time, the contribution of tourism is already growing in many of these regional peripheries; but of course it should still be promoted with careful planning where it is not yet adequate to local potential and in any case to improve its effects<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> It is useful to remember that in Europe the Tourism Unit of the European Commission’s Enterprise Directorate has identified 8 tourist destinations in the rural area:

- traditional and popular destinations, close to large urban areas that receive significant daily flows of tourists and whose development strategies aim to improve the naturalistic, infrastructural and transport offer in order to transform the dominant hiking into tourism (permanent), such as at Sächsische Schweiz in Saxony and in Trossachs in Scotland;
- traditional vacation spots, characterized by a substantial accommodation and infrastructure offer whose development strategies aim to improve the tourist offer and reduce the environmental impact, in response to the needs of more sustainable forms of tourism such as in Schouwen West in the Netherlands;
- protected areas, where an integrated management of tourism, environment and economy is aimed, for example in Vosges in Northern France;
- rural areas, characterized by small villages and villages with a rich historical, architectural, cultural and craft heritage, whose development strategy is to systematize places and resources with the local community but also to balance conservation needs of material assets and improvement of the accommodation offer. Examples are: Pays Cathare in France, Vallonbruk in the Uppland region in Sweden, Vale do Lima in Portugal;
- isolated areas, the attraction factors of which are flora and fauna with particular problems of accessibility, transport, local services, and with opportunities for interventions regarding environmental protection and the development of ecotourism activities (Skafthreppur in Iceland);
- agricultural areas, where agriculture and related activities are the main attraction for tourists and whose development strategies focus on quality production and food and wine (Ballyhoura in Ireland or Bregenzerwald in Austria);



In addition to the attention each destination has pay to the planning of tourism development, the promotion of tourism in regional peripheries requires first of all that the program region includes, together with the potentially tourist peripheral areas a central area, such as the regional capital city or, in the maritime regions, even just an established tourist district. In these regions it is a question of making the coast-inland relationship organic - between the “pulp” and the “bone”, as Rossi-Doria (2005) said - for mutual benefit. Encouraging trips and even short stays in the hinterland constitutes a diversification and expansion of the offer of attractions for residents on the coast as well as for tourists who will generally stay there for almost all the duration of their stay. Promoting the enhancement of the resources of the hinterland should therefore be considered by the operators of the cities and coastal districts - where the sea is the main attraction and which tourists will continue to favor for their stays - an advantage especially for them.

The contribution of tourism to the growth of the economy of the hinterland and more generally of the regional peripheries - both through on-site spending by visitors and even more indirectly, for the role of tourism as a territorial marketing tool - can certainly be important to reduce the gap with respect to central areas. However important, tourism can only constitute a complementary basis to agro-zootechnical, pastoral, forestry activities and also to innovative manufacturing services and industries 4.0, which still favor the values of centrality, on the basis of which the new fundamental telecommunication infrastructures are spreading.

The growth of tourism must therefore be promoted within the framework of an overall, systemic, local development policy, which takes into account all local activities, their possible additions and the necessary environmental conditions (economic-financial, socio-cultural, political-institutional and natural): a policy that requires planning to be used as a fundamental tool for territorial governance. This requirement - indispensable also to the peripheral countries and regions and common to any territory to be promoted as a tourist destination - is even more stringent for the regional peripheries because it requires close collaboration between the center and the periphery, so as to allow an endogenous process that feeds itself - after the initial phase of the local planning and development process, during which the support of superior territorial entities is desirable. Part of the taxes deriving from the contribution of tourism (direct, indirect and induced) which benefit the central areas (metropolises and coastal districts) should be used in the peripheral areas for the development of the offer of attractions (buildings and other historical-artistic heritage, natural resources, agricultural landscapes, to be preserved and made accessible) for tourists and residents of the same central areas. For this collaboration it is necessary, as we said, that the area of the plan includes “pulp” and “bone”.

Unfortunately, however, this collaboration between center and periphery, between their operators and their communities, although beneficial to both, constitutes the most

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- areas near the sea, which aim to develop new forms of rural tourism in inland areas starting from the coast and to focus on a specific rural offer with traces of history and culture (Sitia on the island of Crete or the Basilicata Region);

- mountain or wooded areas, with a defined rural offer but looking for differentiation and strengthening, especially with reference to the quality of local accommodation, the offer of tourism support activities, heritage and food and wine, such as Lungau in the Salzburg region of Austria, Pohjois-Karjala in Finland and the mountainous area of Navarre in Spain (Artale, 2015-2016).

difficult aspect of the planning process and the main obstacle to an adequate promotion of tourism and economic development in peripheral areas, all the more so for sustainable development, in Italy and in other countries.

At this scale it remains difficult to organize direct participation; an adequate involvement of operators and citizens requires, as at regional and national level, a significant presence of associations and a good functioning of representative democracy, founded on political parties rooted in the territory and based on transparent and democratic internal rules.

The inability to plan their future and direct it to progress by territorial communities and their institutions, which is evident today, not only in Italy and in Europe, but in all the countries that are inspired by the current form of liberal or western democracy, also partially defeats the efforts of more broadly participatory planning at the local level which must find consistent political and institutional support at higher decision levels. However, some form of involvement of operators and citizens must be sought at any scale, together with awareness campaigns; at the local scale it is essential to promote direct participation, both in the rural communities of the European regional peripheries, and even more in the rural communities of poor countries and, not least, in peripheral areas of cities, in developed countries and underdeveloped ones.

Peripheries par excellence, those of urban agglomerations, are generally an obstacle to tourism or, at least, are seen as such: as urban and suburban districts from which to exclude the tourist - as is clearly evident from the examination of the itineraries for visiting the cities of organized tours - for safety reasons and for the often negative image offered to tourists by the degradation of the physical and social environments. The periphery of the urban districts is given not so much by the spatial attributes as by the environmental (social and landscape) ones: in fact, there are spaces with poor accessibility but not negatively characterized, since they are prestigious areas, also in pleasant positions, inhabited by higher incomes and /or from activities capable of supporting the high rent of the land; on the other hand, there are areas close to or in the center which, due to their ecological and social degradation, are undoubtedly considered as peripheries.

Some urban peripheries, however, have been transformed into leisure places for residents and tourists and thus redeveloping their socio-economic and even physical environment: on the one hand due to the development of artistic, entertainment, sports, recreational activities in general, craft and commercial; on the other hand due to the growing interest of tourists (especially independent) not only to visit the monuments and museums of the historic centers, but also to experience local ways of life and activities.

The role of tourism in urban regeneration (Amore, 2019), above all in the industrial cities of the North of the world, constitutes a broad and interesting topic which goes beyond the limits of this paper and which certainly deserves specific study. From the studies available, however, it seems clear that the renovation mainly affected the city centers: particularly the "environmental peripheries" included in the central spaces of the agglomerations and the abandoned industrial and/or port areas close to the historic centers. The regeneration of spatial peripheries has been rather poor and limited mostly to areas that increased their accessibility with the extension of fast public transport networks. In some of these areas, the tourist space has been extended for the location of fair and congress or sports facilities and hotel structures; more than a renovation of peripheral neighborhoods, it was the construction of new urban areas (Amore, 2019;

Colantonio and Dixon, 2010; Collins and Shester, 2011). On the other hand, the building recovery of dilapidated areas of the historic centers and their transformation into leisure spaces (for tourists and residents) were mostly carried out with a process of “gentrification”<sup>13</sup>: they did not constitute progress for the previous residents in those areas belonging to the lower income social classes, who were simply expelled and replaced by richer businesses and residents. Often these areas have also returned to being environmentally central, as before their building degradation.

In the wake of the successes of some cities, many others in the last twenty years have focused and are focusing on leisure activity development policies, in order to renew and improve the quality of life in their suburbs. These policies, even where they do not significantly increase the tourist presence, are however very important for the recreation of local human resources, whose quality is a fundamental factor of territorial competitiveness and the development in particular of innovative and in any case highly qualified activities (Adamo, 2012).

## 5. Conclusions

Tourism in the peripheries is growing, often more intensely than in the centers of urban development and other traditional tourism districts, and it is to be expected that it will intensify again: on the one hand, due to the growing desire of tourists to return to being explorers and discoverers of new realities, at least for them; on the other hand because the Internet potentially makes each location visible and makes it possible to intensify “DIY tourism”, independent tourism or in any case tailor-made packaging.

The geography of tourist destinations highlights cases of good practice, success and sustainable development - as well as less satisfactory contrary cases - both in exogenous and endogenous development destinations, both in conventional mass tourism and in the attempt of alternative tourism, often still embryonic.

To avoid offenses to the landscape or the compromise of local ecological conditions, as well as the original reasons of attraction of the destinations, but also to create a coordinated, closely integrated and therefore competitive local production system of subjects, it is essential above all in the peripheral destinations in growth: 1) the adoption of planning, with a systemic and participatory approach, as a fundamental tool for governance and progress; 2) the integration of tourism with other local economic bases. To guarantee their success, local development plans, specifically of peripheral destinations, must also be coherently included in regional plans that integrate their tourism offer with that of the nearby central destinations.

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<sup>13</sup> Among the many writings on the subject I have the pleasure to remember: Lang (1982), Castells (1983), Knox (1991), Smith (1996), Diappi (2009).

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## **DESTINATION “MATERA 2019”: PROMOTING TOURISM IN THE BASILICATA REGION AS A WHOLE**

Angela Pepe, Annalisa Percoco\*

### *Abstract*

According to the literature, organising a big event is a strategic choice for a destination. It is an opportunity to promote the territory and foster its relaunch, increase its attractiveness and build a strong destination image. The choice of “European Capital of Culture” is one such event. It represents a good marketing tool that can promote the chosen city’s key attributes, activate significant tourist flows and reposition the image of the destination. Such processes are also important for their effects on the local community hosting the event. They can help accelerate cultural exchanges in a context that is often in a state of flux. Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei (FEEM) conducted research involving residents, stakeholders and tourism workers to evaluate the impact of Matera 2019 on tourism and to investigate the local community’s perception of the mid to long-term opportunities offered by this event. The first part of this study is more theoretical, the second part analyses case studies of other European Capitals of Culture that have been successful in the past, focusing in detail on policies and tangible benefits to those cities. A qualitative and quantitative analysis follows, involving interviews with important witnesses and questionnaires administered to residents and hospitality operators in Matera and its hinterland. This provided important empirical data about Matera 2019 and investigated peoples’ perceptions of opportunities stemming from the nomination.

### **1. Introduction**

Despite difficult economic situations in recent decades, tourism has grown considerably in terms of demand and supply. It represents a crucial driver for the Italian economy. According to the 2017 UniCredit report drawn up in partnership with Touring Club Italiano, “Italy has become one of the most desirable destinations in the collective imagination of many foreigners and this has had a considerable financial impact: the World Tourism Organization ranks Italy fifth for attractiveness, with 50.7 million international arrivals. World Travel and Tourism Council data for 2016 show that the Italian tourism is worth EUR 70.2 bn (or 4.2% of GDP). This figure rises to EUR 172.8 bn (10.3% of GDP) if all related industries are included”. Significant changes have emerged in buying behaviour and decision-making processes underlying demand and ways of experiencing tourism within the tourist sector. In recent years,

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alongside traditional destinations, “minor” tourist destinations have grown in importance. Such destinations are characterised by natural and cultural resources that are difficult to reproduce elsewhere and add up to a highly identifiable tourist product able to promote endogenous development models with the direct involvement of local communities. For this reason, the concept of “destination” is often associated with that of a global tourist product encapsulated in a supply that creates value for the territory’s stakeholders and components by tapping into an effective demand for goods and services. Policymakers are increasingly relying on major events to redraw the urban map of places (be they cities or small municipalities), revive marginal areas, build new infrastructure, trigger processes of change and attract investments. Such events become pillars of a strategy intended to improve the competitive positioning of a territory, generating benefits for internal and external stakeholders now and in the future. Tourist attractions and entertainment factors also bring about “a significant social impact on the host community as they help form a strong sense of belonging and a sense of place”. As an underlying principle, generating value through events is strongly correlated to the ability to engage people on a cognitive, affective and sensory level, offering them an opportunity to live experiences in accordance with their needs and desires while meeting their expectations. The study shows how events are local marketing tools that the local area can use to improve or reposition its image, attract tourist flows, enhance its resources and activate development processes. The aim of the study launched by Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei (FEEM) is therefore to better understand the local population’s perception of tourist development generated by major cultural events, including its perception of potential and hypothetical changes in the urban and territorial fabric of a destination. This paper describes an ongoing empirical study on Matera “European Capital of Culture 2019”. It focuses on the involvement of the local population and on the value that this major event will add to the hospitality culture. A participatory process can be more efficient and sustainable in the long term than top-down management. Destinations can use a participatory approach to encourage sustainable tourism development that considers the needs of the local community. It offers a valid alternative to traditional destination management when residents are often forced to passively suffer the effects of decisions and strategies adopted by others. Capital of Culture status enhances Matera’s cultural value and allows it to achieve a new model of local development. Winning the title has strengthened its cultural value. More importantly, it has launched a new local development model, involving the area in a social and economic revival. When it was awarded European Capital of Culture 2019 on 17 October 2014, thus becoming the first southern Italian city to receive this title, it became an important magnet for tourism and is increasingly establishing itself as a cultural tourist destination within Italy and internationally. The official statistics shows that in 2018, the town saw 344,813 arrivals (+22.5%) and 547,532 stays (+22.3%), confirming the destination’s overwhelming growth. The steady increase in tourist demand and the presence of the strong cultural attraction represented by the Sassi is now positioning Matera as a strong cultural tourism product that appeals to various targets and visitor flows. Significant benefits have been identified for this type of tourist development, which is sympathetic to local carrying capacities while enhancing and protecting iconic resources. Important among these is spreading a positive image of the destination at international level, bolstered by its successful candidacy for the title. The growth of tourist flows in the city raises the question of how to manage them sustainably to reduce problems that



tourist saturation could bring about in the town's social and economic fabric. The perception of residents is crucial. Overtourism happens when residents are forced to over-adapt their own daily activities to visitor flows and tourism becomes problematical. In this case, residents perceive the tourism as being "too much" and they are no longer sympathetic to the phenomenon. This study was inspired by a need to learn more about tourism in Matera, with a view to reconciling the desires of inhabitants and tourists.

## **2. Role of resident community in planning a tourist destination and carrying capacity**

The local population is crucial to developing a tourist destination because the social habits of locals represent a genuine attraction and can potentially contribute significantly to tourist development. The resources of a territory and the local community culture are considered a unique attraction and asset, giving the destination a competitive advantage. A participatory process involving local communities is more effective and sustainable in the long term than a top-down process. Tourism tends to transform the local area and the quality of life of those who live there in a positive way, but the impact can also be negative. Participation allows the local people to make their opinions heard and can be a means of protecting themselves and their local area. A participatory approach tends to be more sustainable because it avoids creating stereotypes while ensuring the local community is more involved in protecting itself and the surrounding environment from the effects of tourism. Magliulo (2010) explains that "excessive and uncontrolled tourism can deplete resources and have a negative impact on local development". However, proper protection and management of resources together with tourist activity geared to local needs, allows a destination to extend its life cycle and brings about greater and more lasting benefits for the local community (Confalonieri, 2008). The aim is therefore to promote a kind of tourism that distributes income fairly, is respectful of local communities and has a low environmental impact. This new idea of tourism is based on the belief that the local community can be the main beneficiary of development, with a desirable impact in terms of ethics, sustainability and accountability. Contact with other cultures and customs thus become unconventional aspects of an experience that seeks to forge links with what is foreign and with the culture of the place. The local people often see visitors as people who have a negative impact on living conditions and affect the local area, without distinguishing between visitors who travel in a sustainable and responsible way and those who practice mass tourism. Various studies show that a host community's reaction to the tourist phenomenon can be influenced by several factors: the cultural and financial gap between tourists and guests; the ability of the destination and its culture of hospitality to cope with the arrival of tourists physically and psychologically without changing or compromising their local activities and customs; the speed and intensity of tourist development; features of the burgeoning tourist industry and whether the destination's carrying capacity can cope with the tourist/resident ratio. The consent of the local community is therefore essential for developing tourism projects in any tourist destination. Some theorists have attempted to explain the attitude and involvement of local communities as the destination passes through the different stages of its life cycle. One of the main tools for analysing the relationship between tourists and residents comes from Doxey's model (1975), which analyses potential psychological reactions to tourist development within the host

community. According to Doxey, any destination affected by a tourism development process goes through four stages, each reflecting the different states of the relationship between tourists and the local population. The author describes these attitudes as euphoria, apathy, annoyance and antagonism as the life cycle develops in the host location. Stewart, Liebert and Larkin (2003) suggest that under certain circumstances residents may even undergo an identity change when interacting with tourists. However, the negative impacts of tourism are not only expressed through the relationship between tourists and residents. Tourism also has a significant impact on urban space, cost of living and the local manufacturing fabric. The debate over the tourism carrying capacity (TCC) of a destination and various impacts arising from local land-use has intensified. The World Tourism Organization (WTO, 1999) defined carrying capacity as the maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic, sociocultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors' satisfaction. The Touring Club Italiano Study Centre (2005) looked at ways the maximum carrying capacity of a destination can be changed by increasing the destination's capacity (supply) and redistributing the tourist load within the area. The theoreticians Bimonte and Punzo (2005, p.3.) explain that TCC reflects a set of capacities: capacity of the ecosystem, i.e. availability of natural resources in the destination in relation to human use (environmental relationship); aesthetic and experiential capacity, which is a measure of aesthetic and cultural satisfaction and the expectations of tourists who frequent the destination; socioeconomic capacity, which represents the social and economic satisfaction of the population inhabiting the destination with the tourist phenomenon (Satta, 2003). The local community's quality of life improves in the growth stage but decreases considerably when the destination reaches its own carrying capacity and moves toward decline. Therefore, in order to assess the TCC of a location, we must study and determine the characteristics of the two communities coming into contact with one another and their respective attitudes as well as the local physical characteristics. When interests coincide, "the relationship between tourists or alien species, and residents or endogenous species, can be synergistic but negative situations can arise when tourists are perceived as usurpers of resources and intruders in the community" (Gatti and Puggelli, 2010, p.81). The problem becomes more visible or acute when the "availability of resources is reduced and both categories are uneven (for example due to cultural diversity or conflicting aspirations over the use of common resources) and when the arrival of the "alien" species triggers conflicting reactions and interests in the host community" (Bimonte and Punzo, 2004, p.6). According to the 2017 Tourism Report, edited by UniCredit in partnership with Touring Club Italiano, "until a few years ago, Venice was the most obvious example of overtourism". However, other destinations (Barcelona, Amsterdam, Maldives and Iceland) soon raised the alarm that tourism had "evolved into overtourism, in other words a threat to environmental sustainability, with the progressive degradation of attractions that initially determined the success of destinations, and of social sustainability, as the public become increasingly exasperated by entire old town centres being taken over by "B&Bs and rooms for rent.""

### **3. Matera “European Capital of Culture 2019”: impact of tourism and transformation**

The steady increase in tourist demand and the strong cultural appeal of the Sassi situates Matera as a strong and appealing cultural tourism product for various targets and visitor flows. Significant benefits have been identified for this type of tourist development that is sympathetic to local carrying capacities and believes in enhancing and protecting iconic resources. Important among these is the spread of a positive image of the destination at international level, bolstered by its candidacy for and winning of European Capital of Culture 2019. When Matera shot to prominence as “European Capital of Culture 2019”, this boosted the number of tourist arrivals and stays to levels unprecedented in Italy. The official statistics show that in 2018 the town saw 344,813 arrivals (+22.5%) and 547,532 stays (+22.3%), confirming the destination’s overwhelming growth. In one single year, from 2014, when Matera was appointed European Capital of Culture 2019, to 2015, demand increased by +40% in terms of arrivals and +44% in terms of stays. These data confirm that winning the European Capital of Culture title revived interest in the city. It became a useful tool for tourism development and brought about a tangible change in the town’s cultural and economic life. This is more evident if we take a quick look at the hospitality facilities in Matera. If we analyse official data for the period between 2009 (the year when the candidacy was launched) and 2018, we can see an exponential increase in hospitality facilities, which increased from 97 to a total of 639 units, of which no fewer than 608 are categorised as non-hotel, for a total of 3967 extra beds in the town. In a single year (2015-2016), the non-hotel sector increased by no fewer than 182 facilities. In just one year, from 2014, when Matera was awarded the title, demand increased by +40% in terms of arrivals and +44% in terms of stays. These data confirm that winning the European Capital of Culture title generated new appeal for the destination. It became a useful tool for the development of marginal towns and brought about a visible change in the location’s cultural life. Several European cities have been “able to satisfactorily exploit this opportunity and revive their cultural base, thus increasing economic development in various sectors and above all promoting quantitative and qualitative growth in the tourist sector”. Matera’s long journey began in 2009 when a group of citizens proposed its candidacy through actions to raise awareness of a goal that many believed was too far in the future. “Since the 1950s, Matera has been a hotbed of experimentation and innovation. It has attracted great filmmakers and artists but has also fostered fertile hybridisations between outside celebrities and local resources. Matera has made a huge effort. It has recovered from being a national embarrassment to becoming the first town in southern Italy to be named a World Heritage Site; from being an unknown town to one of the main ‘cities of art’ on the visitors’ map. It has undertaken significant actions to restore its fortunes but has not yet exploited its enormous cultural potential”. It is incredible that in just 64 years, Matera has shaken off the description of “national embarrassment” to become a World Heritage Site and grasped the opportunity to become a Capital of Culture. The destination is characterised by a tourism product largely based on the presence of a great cultural attraction in the form of the “The Sassi and the Park of the Rupestrian Churches” and a set of attractions that can mainly be categorised as historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, religious, natural and food and wine resources. Without losing its identity, Matera has managed to become a town that has shown itself capable of reinventing itself and opening itself up to sharing and active cultural

citizenship. It embodies a vision of culture as a means of social growth and not merely economic growth. It proudly owns its origins and specificities and uses these as a basis for enhancing the local area, building a positive image and carving out a position as a city of culture on the international market. The striking thing about this journey is the process of transformation that the town has undergone. It based its candidacy on this transformation and its clear vision of the future. The aim was to make Matera into an open cultural space able to attract tourists, whose presence decrees success or failure for European capitals, but also a hospitable space for human capital able to create added value in innovative sectors, such as the creative sector. It is also “a place: to live and produce culture, innovation and good practice; to establish Basilicata as an innovative region par excellence; to increase the impact of southern Italy as an Italian socioeconomic and cultural centre; to cross-fertilise culture and technology in the best possible way - and to attract new private investment and increase the number of residents in the Sassi”. Making Matera “European Capital of Culture 2019” opens up the idea that culture and tourism must be managed as fundamental factors in a clear strategy to develop the town as well as the region as a whole. “The parameters of tourism in Basilicata have changed; the main objective used to be to raise our profile on the tourist market but now it is to meet hopes and expectations aroused by Matera winning the title of European Capital of Culture. Matera and Basilicata will be measured against the yardstick of tourism organisation, service quality (beginning with logistical factors), and their ability to respond promptly to the multiple needs of growing demand. This is the challenge for public and private systems in the coming months and years”.

#### **4. Research method**

The field study took the considerations set out in the introduction as its starting point and set out to investigate the relationship between Matera as a place and destination from the viewpoint of tourists and residents. The method chosen for this stage of the study included quantitative information gathering and a qualitative investigation step to ensure the research was effective.

The study set out to record the behavioural profiles and satisfaction levels of tourists. The questionnaire prepared for this purpose allowed us to record all decision-making process and consumption stages involved in a trip to Matera by the sample concerned. The survey was carried out on 1039 questionnaires (51% Italians, 49% foreigners) to ensure greater representativeness. Data analysis was subdivided into three sections. The first section drew up an identikit of the sample. The second section analysed the behaviour of tourists during the process of choosing and buying a trip to Matera. The third part analysed the satisfaction of respondents with the services and resources they experienced, using fuzzy methodology. The same methodology was used on residents and involved administering a specific questionnaire designed to conduct a social and tourist-oriented assessment of the impact and perception of the major event on the hospitality culture. Destinations can use participation as a tool to encourage sustainable tourism development based on the needs of the local community. This offers a valid alternative to traditional destination management, when residents are often forced to passively suffer the effects of decisions and strategies adopted by others. All data were recorded in such a way as to ensure that the sample of subjects interviewed was as representative as possible. The questionnaire was divided into two sections.

## 5. Results

### 5.1 *Tourist identikit*

The typical profile of the tourists interviewed was that of a person over 40 years old, employed or self-employed, with a medium-high educational background (graduate or at least high school leaver); from central northern Italy and western Europe, travelling as part of a couple or with their family, taking a holiday of no longer than two days in the town of Matera. Fifty-five per cent of respondents reached the location by car, while 13% chose a combination of low-cost flights combined with car or bus (foreigners chose the latter option).

They gathered information on the town of Matera through the medium of “word-of-mouth through friends and acquaintances”. Foreigners were much more likely than Italians to use digital means. Tourist guides, information from travel agencies and tour operators, consultation of specialist magazines, television and radio were much less important. The least popular tools were trade fairs and package tours. They visited Matera mainly due to its cultural heritage. Thirty per cent mentioned that it was a UNESCO heritage site and 27% mentioned that Matera was European Capital of Culture. Great importance was also attached to food, wine and local cuisine. The trip was mainly organised by obtaining information online and from guidebooks. Tourists were interested in visiting other places in the region of Basilicata, prompted by the culture, nature and local food and wines. They considered the local people to be welcoming and hospitable and judged the hospitality and the quality of the restaurants to be more than satisfactory. Their feedback on care for the urban environment, the road system and connections to Matera, such as signage, was less positive. However, they were so satisfied with their trip that they planned to return in the future. When providing general feedback on their trip to Matera, 51% said they were very satisfied and 41% said they were quite satisfied.

Matera is visited by loyal tourist customers. Among the sample interviewed, 61% were repeat visitors who had already visited Matera. Most of those interviewed said that they mainly stayed the night in Matera (54% Italians, 66% foreigners). Only 31% of Italians and 31% of foreigners stated that they had spent the night in a place in Basilicata other than Matera.

For the positive impact of the European Capital of Culture event to spread throughout Basilicata, tourist flows must be encouraged to move out from Matera to the rest of the region through strategic planning, but this currently appears to be weak. Only 19% said that they returned home on the same day and these respondents were part of the day-tripper target group.

### 5.2. *Residents*

The field of analysis was defined by means of qualitative and quantitative methodology using face-to-face questionnaire surveys. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions and was administered to a sample of 300 citizens randomly on different days of the week and mainly in places where the inhabitants of Matera congregate and frequent. All data were recorded in such a way as to ensure that the sample of subjects interviewed was as representative as possible. The questionnaire was made up of eight questions. It was divided into three sections (apart from the section on social and personal details). The first focused on the relationship between “Tourism, Destination Matera and Residents”. It was concerned with the attitude of

citizens toward guests and the way citizens see the territory where they live. The items in the second section focused on the “Economic, sociocultural and environmental impact of the tourist destination” during Matera 2019, while the last section monitored the opinion of citizens on work carried out in the tourism sector regarding the future of Matera 2019, together with aspects that may be relevant to the development of the town and the rest of Basilicata. The main sociodemographic characteristics of respondents (age, profession, qualifications and gender) were also recorded.

### *5.2.1. Sample characteristics*

The survey was conducted on a sample stratified by gender, age, educational qualifications and professional status. The sample was evenly distributed by gender (about 53% men and 47% women). As far as age distribution was concerned, most respondents (43%) were concentrated in the intermediate range between 26 and 45, while 24% were aged between 46 and 60 and 20% were aged between 18 and 25. Only 13% were over 60. Fifty-five per cent had gained a high school diploma and 33% were graduates, 2% of which held a postgraduate qualification (Masters, PhD etc.) Only 8% finished their education after leaving middle school and 2% left after completing primary school. The main employment categories were employees (18%), students (18%) followed by freelancers (14%) and pensioners (9%). Sector professionals amounted to only 5%, with businesspeople (5%) and shopkeepers (4%).

### *5.2.2. Relationship between residents/tourists, tourism and Destination Matera*

Our results show that 62% of citizens interviewed considered their behaviour toward visitors to be “friendly”, while 16% considered it to be “professional”. Interestingly, a substantial 18% reported an “indifferent” attitude toward guests while 4% actually described them as “non-existent”. This shows that a general benevolent relationship toward tourists is widespread among nearly all interviewees although a small minority of our sample experiences the interaction (guest/resident) passively, while maintaining a certain detachment from those who are observing. This might be a method for local people to preserve their own customs and traditions and offer tourists what they expect to see. Using the Likert scale on degree of agreement/disagreement and choosing between four response options (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree), respondents were asked “whether tourists visiting this area bring benefits to the community”. Fifty-seven per cent of residents confirmed (agreed) that the presence of tourists helps the town and benefits the community. A solid 32% chose “strongly agree”. It can therefore be said that a favourable attitude toward tourism prevails and it is not surprising that residents attach greater weight and value to economic effects. However, a small percentage of our sample (11%) believes that tourists do not benefit the community. According to claims in the literature on the life cycle of a tourist destination, the tourist phenomenon in Matera has not yet peaked and the relationship between tourists and guests is still friendly. Regarding the positive effects of tourism on the destination, just over half (57%) of respondents believed that tourism “increases the economy and well-being of the town”, revealing a widespread awareness of its importance for the local economy. Another 40% confirmed that “it improves knowledge and dissemination of local traditions and cultures”, followed by a substantial 30% who responded that it “ensures the destination is better-known”. This suggests that the local community’s sense of belonging to the local area (community

attachment) assumed significance after Matera was made a UNESCO site and “European Capital of Culture 2019”. Only 17% believe that tourism encourages the “development of new entrepreneurial activities” and “increases employment” (16%). This confirms that residents have a specific view of the positive perception of tourism in the economic sphere. It is important to emphasise the value attached to tourism as a vehicle for promoting awareness of the destination. Conversely, it was found that residents who perceive tourism negatively do so because they blame it for an “increase in the prices of goods and services” (57% of respondents), followed by 53% who claimed the negative effects were “caused by a deterioration in services and quality of life”. Forty-three per cent believed that it “threatened the identity of Matera” and “brought about a degradation of the natural landscape” (20%). A smaller proportion (10%) cited “overcrowding and disorganisation”. This suggests that the carrying capacity has not yet been exceeded. In summary, this analysis shows that the proportion of residents who see the tourist phenomenon in a negative light attribute this to an increase in the cost of living and a deterioration of services with landscape degradation, creating difficulties for the local population. Sixty-one per cent of respondents believed that tourism helps improve the identity and cultural heritage of a place, while 24% stated that it improved conservation. This also shows that the local community places a high value on the town’s cultural aspects. However, 10% gave a negative response, believing that the tourist sector had “no effect”. These responses show that most of our sample acknowledged the positive effects of tourism, while a minority was somewhat exasperated by the fact that more importance is attached to tourism than the needs of inhabitants. Despite the overriding positive view of tourism, a smaller yet significant share of the population views tourism more negatively. Moving on to consider the specific relationship between residents and tourists, we found that 40% see visitors as “welcome guests” and 19% see them as a “resource to be exploited”, while 18% defined them as “temporary residents”. This key definition cropped up again in the “Matera 2019” cultural file. This very positive feedback confirms the hospitality of the target community. Negative expressions such as “outsiders we have to put up with” did not feature at all. These findings show that the interviewed sample is currently unperturbed by the presence of visitors.

### *5.2.3. Destination Matera: perception by residents*

Respondents were then asked to suggest reasons why people might make the trip (attractions). According to 62% of the sample, “art and culture” was the top reason for travelling to Matera. Then 19% cited the “natural landscape”, while 13% believed that food and wine is an attraction worth developing. Conversely, a low proportion (2%) opted for “traditional and artistic handicrafts”. “Relaxation and well-being” (1%) and “shopping and business” (1%) ranked at the bottom of the scale. When asked the second reason for choosing the “European Capital of Culture 2019”, 35% of citizens interviewed cited the “natural landscape”, followed by 23% “art and culture” and 19% “food and wine”. Nine per cent indicated “traditional and artistic handicrafts” as a second choice. None of the sample we interviewed considered Matera to be a tourist town due to “leisure and entertainment” or “worship and religion”.

In line with the reasons given for making a trip to the destination of Matera, it is interesting to note that residents associate the town with adjectives such as relaxing (73%), exciting (57%), appealing (89%), elegant (52%) and also descriptors more focused on aspects such as “welcoming” (67%) and “safe” (77%).

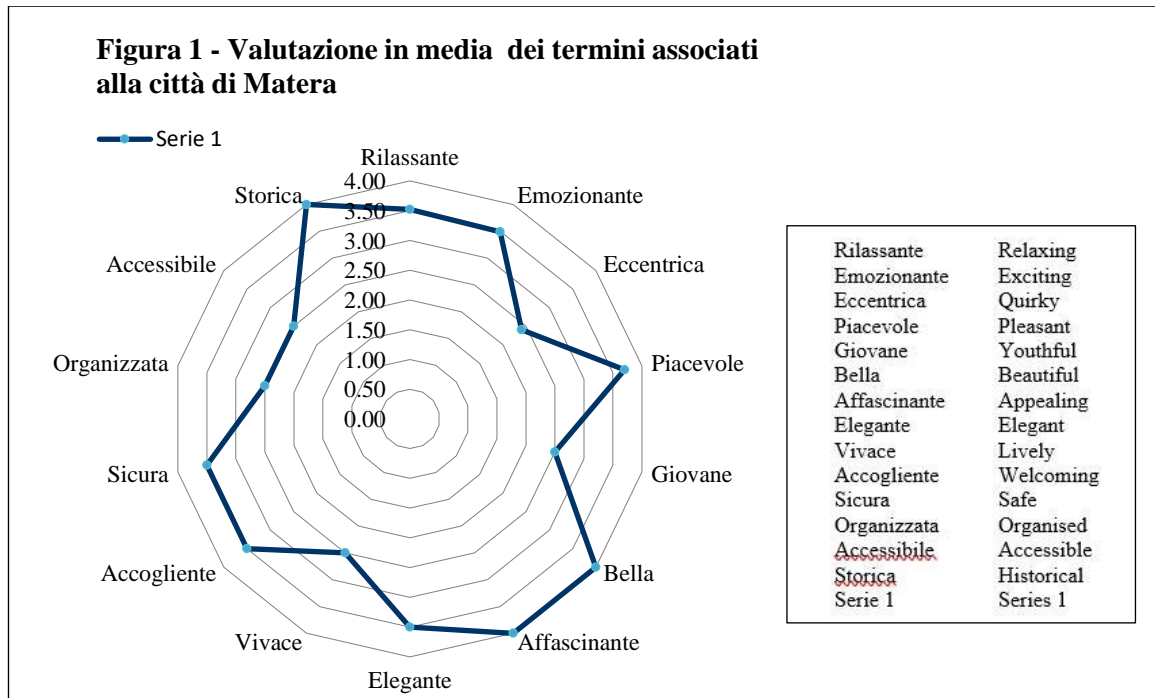


Figure 1: Average assessment of terms associated with Matera and key to the diagram.

According to respondents, Matera is not very “youthful”, not very “quirky”, and not very “accessible” and “organised”. The options respondents were asked to choose between were rated on a 4-point scale (where 1 = not at all 4 = a lot) and the findings show (Fig. 1) that the highest average scores were allocated to the adjectives “Safe”, “Historical”, “Pleasant”, “Beautiful” and “Relaxing” and “Welcoming” (average score of nearly 4) while the lowest average scores went to the attributes “Exciting” and “Elegant” (average score of just over 3). Average scores of under 3 were given to “Quirky”, “Useful”, “Lively”, “Organised” and “Accessible” (for which the average score allocated was 2.48). The picture that emerges when we analyse the adjectives that residents associate with their town is that of a place where a kind of harmony and beauty reign, and these aspects are captivating because of the town’s history. Matera is hospitable but also not very organised. It needs to be made more accessible.

#### 5.2.4. Economic, sociocultural and environmental impacts of the tourist destination “Matera 2019”

We asked some questions to try to establish the effects of tourism on the town and the quality of life of its residents due to the tool of “Matera European Capital of Culture 2019”. Respondents were asked to express their agreement/disagreement with certain statements by allocating a score from 1 to 4 (where 1 was “strongly disagree” and 4 “strongly agree”). Sixty per cent of residents interviewed believe that tourism due to Matera 2019 has brought about a considerable hike in property prices. This finding was also reflected in data published by the monitoring unit of Immobiliare.it, one of Italy’s main property websites. According to the monitoring unit, in 2017 alone property sales prices in Matera rose from EUR 1671 per m<sup>2</sup> to EUR 1847 per m<sup>2</sup> (0.69% more than in 2016), even exceeding EUR 2000 per m<sup>2</sup> for penthouses and lofts



located in the town centre. This trend is the reverse of findings for the region of Basilicata as a whole. More than 50% of respondents also believe that tourism is responsible for a positive effect on the “development of new enterprises and job opportunities for residents” while 43% gave general responses varying from “somewhat disagree” to “strongly disagree” to the statement that there have been no positive consequences on the growth of new business activities or job opportunities for the Matera community. For “attraction of investments”, 50% of residents believed that there had been no positive effects, or the effects had been of little significance, while 46% believed that the effect had been positive (28% agreed and 18% strongly agreed). In short, no clear view emerged about the negative/positive effects of tourism. Residents believe that tourism mainly has a positive impact on the development of new contacts and cultural exchanges (42% agreed, 33% strongly agreed). The analysis also shows that designating Matera a UNESCO site has increased its residents’ awareness of living in a city with a prestigious cultural heritage protected by UNESCO (86% of all respondents). Interestingly enough, when the sample was interviewed about the phenomenon of “depopulation of the old town centre”, they tended to “strongly disagree” (43%) or “somewhat agree” (32%). This means that the respondents do not believe that tourism is currently causing inhabitants to abandon the old town centre. Another opinion that is particularly important for research purposes concerns the degree of agreement over the effects of tourism on “open spaces and deterioration of services”. Scores showed that 71% strongly agree that since Matera became European Capital of Culture 2019, congestion has arisen in urban spaces and services for residents have worsened due to the impact of tourism. Furthermore, more than 50% do not believe that tourism has made the location more accessible and reachable, while 48% strongly agree that the destination of Matera is more accessible and reachable. Feedback on the increase in entertainment events and initiatives since Matera was designated a UNESCO site was positive (56% of respondents), although a substantial 44% somewhat disagreed. However, 57% of respondents believe that tourism has improved the city’s shopping network. A significant proportion of respondents did not believe tourism had led to an increase in town orderliness, such as street cleaning, sign maintenance and care of green areas. Fifty-eight per cent believed there had been no improvement or that the improvements had been insignificant, while 42% believed that town orderliness had improved. Significantly, more than 70% of respondents believe that Matera is a “safe city”. Feedback on the improvement of accessibility to tourist sites was also overwhelmingly positive. More criticism was reserved for the topic of waste: 70% of respondents believe that tourism has led to an increase in waste. Half of those interviewed also noticed no improvement in local public transport or any increase in parking spaces. However, air quality and noise were not considered to have deteriorated. When asked how the sustainability of tourism could be improved in Matera, 69% of respondents believed that the impact of traffic on the old town centre must be limited but the flow of tourists through the Sassi must not be restricted. Fifty-nine per cent did not agree with limiting the number of visitors or charging to enter the Sassi. However, a far from negligible percentage (17%) believe that the number of visitors entering the Sassi should be greatly restricted. Almost all the respondents (79%) believe that in order to optimise the tourist sustainability of Matera, we must greatly improve waste management, keep down energy consumption by applying available technologies and improve the quality of life of residents (83%) and the job quality of those employed in tourism services (71%). The findings reveal

a desire by respondents (87%) for better protection of local identity, promotion of local handicrafts and produce (64%), development of local food and wine and organic produce and environmental certifications as well as for more sustainable urban mobility and the introduction of public green areas. Feedback by residents on the way tourism is currently managed in Matera showed that a proportion (39%) is concerned about “how tourist planning is implemented in the town” and would like to see “greater involvement and participation”. However, 30% state they are “satisfied with tourism in Matera” and would like it to “continue to grow in the same way”. On the other hand, 14% gave negative feedback, stating that they were “not satisfied with tourism in Matera and would like it to develop in a different way”, while another 14% were not “happy with the way tourism has developed” and would like it to “develop in a different way”. Only 3% definitively fail to appreciate tourism and would like to see “an alternative development option”. When specifically asked to indicate aspects that were important to the development of Matera and the rest of Basilicata, high approval ratings were given to the variables: “town orderliness/cleanliness/conditions of visual impact” (89% responded “a lot”), “possibility of reaching Matera by public transport” (89% responded “a lot”) and “language skills of staff in tourist information facilities” (86% responded “a lot”). Eighty-four per cent also responded “a lot” for the factor “links with public transport in other regional tourist locations”. The only variable for which interviewees gave average feedback was the “possibility of getting around by public transport within Matera”. To sum up, respondents hope for more sustainable tourism with a focus on the environment. The results also show that the indigenous population is mostly interested in forms of sustainable tourism that can involve the community and respect the natural environment. As previously mentioned, this is not always the case. Sometimes the local community itself encourages forms of mass tourism, aiming for immediate gratification without giving any thought to the medium- and long-term effects. For these reasons, the participation of local communities must be guided by a number of stakeholders able to mediate between the various needs and guarantee sustainable tourism development and reassessment of the tourism supply through the participation of residents as well as visitor-facing communication and education. It is important to make tourists more aware and encourage them to adopt more sustainable practices. This can be achieved by promoting alternative mobility, as previously stated, but also by consuming and purchasing zero-km products.

	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 agree	4 strongly agree	Don't know
Increase in property prices	5.02%	6.02%	27.42%	60.20%	1.34%
Development of new enterprises and job opportunities for residents	16.39%	27.09%	37.12%	18.39%	1.00%
Investment attraction	15.77%	34.23%	28.19%	18.12%	3.69%
Development of new contacts and cultural exchanges	6.42%	15.54%	42.23%	33.11%	2.70%
Conservation and protection of cultural heritage	2.69%	9.09%	32.32%	54.21%	1.68%
Increased awareness of living in a town with a prestigious cultural heritage protected by UNESCO	1.01%	8.08%	24.24%	65.99%	0.67%
Depopulation of the old town centre	43.43%	31.65%	14.14%	8.42%	2.36%
Congestion of urban spaces and deterioration in services for residents	11.19%	16.61%	24.75%	46.10%	1.36%

Location more accessible and reachable	21.28%	29.73%	34.12%	13.85%	1.01%
Increase in entertainment events and initiatives	18.64%	25.08%	28.14%	27.12%	1.02%
Improvement in the town shopping network	10.51%	30.85%	40.00%	16.61%	2.03%
Improved town orderliness (street cleaning, sign maintenance, care of green areas)	27.61%	30.30%	26.26%	15.15%	0.67%
Town is less safe	52.04%	21.77%	16.67%	8.16%	1.36%
Improved access to tourist sites	8.11%	21.62%	46.28%	21.96%	2.03%
Increase in waste	8.47%	17.63%	27.80%	42.37%	3.73%
Improvement in local public transport	20.95%	32.77%	29.39%	10.81%	6.08%
More parking places	43.10%	19.19%	24.92%	11.11%	1.68%
Deterioration in air quality	52.19%	22.56%	14.48%	6.40%	4.38%
Worsening noise levels	50.84%	18.52%	18.52%	9.76%	2.36%

Figure 2: Impacts of tourism on the town.

There is also a need to teach people to respect the area and sort their waste for recycling. This can only come about with the support of local communities and tourist operators, who play a key role in spreading good practices since they represent the main interface between tourists and the local area.

## 6. Comments

When it won the title of European Capital of Culture 2019, Matera embarked on a journey to regenerate its image at home and abroad. The picture we have been able to build up based on empirical research showed how this conceptual model is reflected by substantial development of the tourist phenomenon, in a complex interaction between the culture and lifestyles of residents, the size and origin of tourist flows, type of tourism and behaviour of tourists. Some important reflections and considerations emerged from our overall interpretation of survey results.

Firstly, the main point we confirmed is that the “European Capital of Culture” tool increases the visibility and renown of a minor destination. The steady increase in tourist demand and the presence of the powerful cultural attraction represented by the Sassi positions the town as a strong and appealing cultural tourism product for various targets and visitor flows. The findings show that winning the title revived interest in the city. It became a useful tool for tourism development and brought about a tangible change in the town’s cultural and economic life. Despite the highly encouraging trend in arrivals and stays, the average stay in accommodation facilities is still low (1.6 days). This type of hit-and-run tourism typical of artistic cities fully reflects some of the sociological variables of cultural tourism: the primary element is growth in overall interest for culture, short breaks or city trips and multi-purpose holidays.

Interviews with tourists show that Matera is only one of the stops on a tour/journey that unfortunately still only partly involves the rest of Basilicata. Most visitors interviewed stated that they stayed in Matera for only one or at most two nights and then moved on to other neighbouring regions such as Puglia or places in Calabria or Campania. This finding is confirmed by responses from accommodation facility operators in Basilicata which, apart from notable examples such as the Matera-Lucan Dolomite axis created by the pulling power of the *Volo dell’Angelo* zipwire ride, reveal a certain detachment between Matera and the rest of Basilicata. One strategic step to amplify the positive impact of this major event would be to improve the connection

between tourist flows in Matera and the rest of the region because this currently appears to be unsupported by satisfactory integration and development policies.

If we look at the results for a target sample of tourists visiting Matera more generally, we note the absolute predominance of cultural travellers visiting the Sassi, driven by the motivating force of the European City of Culture title. More specifically, visitors were very satisfied with Matera and found it to be welcoming and hospitable. The biggest problems were perceived to be accessibility and the transport system within and outside the region. Some services - particularly information points, the quality of roads and care for public areas - were sometimes judged to be inadequate by tourist respondents. However, points of excellence included the local food and wine delicacies on offer, the hospitality of local citizens and the natural environment (landscape). The overall feedback on a visit to Matera is overwhelmingly positive, indicating a good ability to respond to the needs of holidaymakers.

The major event is also having a great impact in terms of culturalisation, which is particularly evident with regard to the resident population. This impact is due to the various activities carried out by Fondazione Matera Basilicata 2019, which has been active socially. An overall reading of the results shows that local communities have a strong awareness of Matera's potential through the European Capital of Culture award and that the title can act as a driving force for tourism and economic development of the city and the Basilicata area. Residents have equally clear ideas about the role of the "Culture" sector on which Matera will base its market positioning. The findings also show that citizens consider tourism to be a resource for local development and that landscape plays a strategic role within the region. There is a need to unite rather than fragment, to increase the overall supply of tourism provided by the area as a whole and not just provided by a single location. The attractions offered by the entire region must be enhanced using a network approach. Product diversification and internal structuring could deseasonalise tourism and offer solutions to cater for several target traveller groups. For Matera to become a tourist resource capable of reviving the entire Basilicata Region, sustainable management policies must be implemented. An authentic tourist product must be created that can transform potential attractions present in Basilicata into competitive, visible tourist products.

An integrated set of products offers the undoubted advantage of conveying a structured, substantial message about the destination to the outside world, instead of it simply being seen as a set of interconnected elements without any overarching pattern of development and promotion. Marketing the area holistically will certainly make local tourism more visible and appealing for potential or current tourists. Shortcomings in infrastructure and public transport inefficiency could also be overcome in a creative and sustainable way. A targeted strategy could turn this weakness into an opportunity, stressing the attributes of slow travel and going off the beaten track. Adopting a slow mobility approach would appeal to the growing slow tourist movement and visitors who seek unique experiences, quality, low impact and respect for the environment and local resources. A system of discovering the area through responsible, eco-compatible mobility and nature tourism looks like a promising opportunity for internal areas of Basilicata, where visitors can be in contact with the environment and nature while enjoying a host of tourist products. This plan showcases gastronomic delicacies, which are among the most important factors motivating a trip to the region while also representing an essential part of any interaction between visitors and the local culture.

To conclude, though Matera is the linchpin of the entire area, we need to come up with strategies to connect the town to the rest of the region, through participatory, holistic planning for 2019 and beyond.

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## **TOURISM TRANSITION: THE LUCAN DOLOMITES MODEL**

Marcella De Filippo

### *Abstract*

This work presents the case of Castelmezzano and Pietrapertosa, small towns in the Lucan hinterland, in South Italy, that were initially less-favoured but have built a solid tourist economy while observing environmental constraints. The paper examines the territory, which has the status of a less-favoured area, where the morphological characteristics have for decades determined phenomena of marginalisation. It then analyses the resilience process that began with the opening of the Volo dell'Angelo (Flight of the Angel), a tourist attraction that has restored the area's socioeconomic fortunes by exploiting local physical barriers. The analysis concludes by explaining the strategic role of participatory planning in balancing opposing factors such as protecting biodiversity and safeguarding of economic interests.

### **1. Introduction**

In recent decades, the topic of territory/landscape has become increasingly intertwined with local planning strategies and hence opportunities to activate lasting and sustainable enhancement and development processes. The idea of "local development" belongs to the sphere of regional economic geography and social sciences. It refers to a process whereby the local economy and society undergoes an endogenous transformation aimed at overcoming existing difficulties and challenges using resources available to the territory, with the participation of existing local actors.

This means that territory/landscape is no longer seen as a blank slate on which a pyramid of top-down development strategies can be built, but as an active element and social product, "the territory of a community and a space to experience" (Ceccarini, 2014, 2), where local forces are called upon to participate directly in empowerment processes. According to this approach, the community is responsible for enhancing and managing all the tangible and intangible components that go to make the landscape it inhabits and builds and on which it exercises a constant action of redesign and reorganisation (L. Mumford, 1989) "differentiated, layered and memorable" (Bianchetti et al, 2015, p. 70).

This new type of planning facilitates a shift from a traditional government approach to a form of governance characterised by rules, processes and behaviour based on openness, participation and the shared accountability of all actors involved. This bottom-up model is implemented by many actors (public and private) that share the objectives, measures and actions underpinning the local empowerment process in a holistic manner.

This viewpoint also changes the way development policy is assessed. Economic growth is no longer the only yardstick: the general social, cultural and political growth of the community are also considered. We also need to measure qualitative growth in terms of community involvement, cohesion and welfare.

One of the themes that has dominated territory-based production system planning strategies in recent decades is “rural regeneration.” This means that many substantially peripheral areas become proving grounds for endogenous development practices.

Until local development policies became more established, these areas were typically seen as intractable places characterised by overarching negative trends (population decline, little economic dynamism and cultural backwardness), which stood in the way of any hopes of development and revitalisation.

Regeneration strategies for rural areas often see tourism as one possible solution to the meltdown of traditional economies, “a passport to development” (De Kadt, 1979). Tourism is generally considered a stimulus for local, inclusive economic growth and a catalyst for economic competitiveness, given its positive influence on gross income, employment and production.

However, as MiBACT emphasised in its Guidelines for a National Strategy for Interior Areas (2016, p. 4), we must be clear that “tourism is not a universal panacea for problems of underdevelopment.”

Some experiences seem to suggest that it is not always sustainable in practice, particularly in financial terms. Some interesting studies in this area (Lindberg, 2011; Sarrasin, 2012) have shown that tourism is sometimes far from being a strategic pillar for the economic development of an internal area. Such areas are often unable to retain capital and inward investment because they are marginal.

The discrepancy between expected benefits and actual results can be explained by an overestimation of the true attraction and competitive potential of the area and by the inability of social capital and institutional governance systems to generate an innovative development pathway. Weak local expertise and poor business fabric can sometimes undermine the strategic suitability of local areas for tourism.

Over and above the local context, social capital is the cornerstone of development strategies and long-term adaptive resilience due to its dynamic capacities. “Active” social capital can develop a creative vision of the future, anticipate and predict scenarios - and gather and reinterpret external signals and innovations able to determine the overall and lasting success of a development project.

This paper sets out to analyse the impact of Volo dell’Angelo (Flight of the Angel) in the Lucan Dolomites. This was seen as a lever for increasing local communication skills, adding tourism value and developing the community.

A qualitative and quantitative approach was adopted to analyse the tourist development effect of Volo dell’Angelo on Castelmezzano and Pietrapertosa, in South Italy. Data on tourism provided by the Basilicata Local Promotion Agency, and on businesses, taken from the Unioncamere register, were combined with statements collected during telephone interviews with local actors who supported or witnessed the metamorphosis that the area has undergone with the launch of this major attraction. We prioritised witness statements given by the Mayors of both communities, the sole director of the Volo dell’Angelo company and the Director of the Gallipoli Cognato e Piccole Dolomiti Lucane Regional Park. Their account of events, supported by quantitative data, made it possible to define the Flight’s impact in its decade of activity.



During the last decade, the challenge for local actors has been to reverse the marginalisation process by relaunching local development while respecting the local heritage resources and biological diversity in the ecosystems present. The area has been governed by shared policies that have given rise to processes of local growth and cohesion and consequently improved the quality of life of residents.

## **2. Lucan Dolomites and Volo dell'Angelo area**

European Directive 268/75 classifies Castelmezzano and Pietrapertosa, two small internal municipalities perched on the Piccole Dolomiti Lucane, in South Italy, as less-favoured farming areas, particularly among totally delimited municipalities. The National Strategy for Internal Areas states that Basilicata is the Italian region with the highest percentage area (92.3%) occupied by marginal land and describes these villages as peripheral municipalities. The limited anthropic impact, a consequence of decades of local geographical, economic and social isolation, has preserved habitats and biodiversity and allowed the establishment of a regional park, the Parco Naturale di Gallipoli Cognato e Piccole Dolomiti Lucane, and three Special Areas of Conservation (SAC).

As in many marginal areas, the economic and social structure has been subject to patchy development given the orographic constraints, the small population size (about 2500 inhabitants in total), which is also subject to population decline and ageing (the population has fallen by 19% since 2000), and difficult links with basic service provision centres. Due to all these factors, both municipalities have long been affected by a low level of independence in their planning capacities (Salvatore et. al, 2018).

As evidence of the fragility of the economic system, the Mayors of both communities told us that the basic industries in both villages changed in the 1990s. Smallholdings, crafts and beekeeping, which previously represented the main activities, gave way to post-earthquake construction (Irpinia, 1981). However, when the financial flows from building work began to decline in the mid-2000s, a genuine employment emergency began to spread to all economic sectors: “by 1999, the last butchers shop had closed, there were two bars and the village’s long-standing hotel was about to shut down” (Mayor of Castelmezzano).

Faced with this emergency, tourism and enhancing the potential pulling power of the Dolomites began to be considered as a possible solution. The process of building the destination began in 2001, when Castelmezzano was one of the 37 municipalities that founded the lesser-known Italian network “I Borghi più Belli d’Italia” (Most Beautiful Villages in Italy). This national network fed, albeit to a limited extent, tourist flows to the area and tourist entrepreneurship. Joining it raised awareness that a tourist attraction accelerator was required that would position the destination competitively on the market.

Local tourist planning was affected by the environmental constraint of a protected area and three Special Areas of Conservation. These delimited lines of development by imposing a need for sustainable planning and the creation of new income through enhancement of natural capital.

Firstly, the presence of protected areas made it necessary to manage one of the most important and complex aspects when managing areas subject to constraints, i.e. the possible conflict between exploitation for tourism and environmental conservation. The European Habitats Directive clarifies that in areas of Community importance, when balancing opposing interests, environmental protection takes precedence over

economic needs relating to tourism, folklore and commercial events, stating that the “favourable conservation status” of habitats and plant and animal species must be maintained. The system for protecting an area of particular environmental value is therefore incompatible with running an activity that could cause a mass influx of people and ecosystem deterioration.

To address the problem of the local ecological load capacity, it was therefore necessary to plan non-invasive interventions and adopt infrastructures with low environmental and landscape impact.

At a time when the demand for tourism began to consider growing environmental awareness and a demand for innovative and experience-based products in authentic destinations little-affected by mass tourism, these communities began to have an inkling that one possible way out of the crisis in traditional rural economies could be to become a tourist destination. The attributes that were previously considered limiting factors now represented new opportunities for the area (Brown & Hall, 2000), provided that the proposed tourist destination offered a living and dynamic image of the local area and a state-of-the-art way of enjoying the landscape.

In 2002, the local administrators sealed an agreement with the patent holder of Fantasticable, a system of linking two mountain peaks by a steel wire with a harness for passengers. This type of attraction had until then only been seen in Gerarmer near Strasbourg and Chatell in Haute-Savoie, where the infrastructure was used to deseasonalise winter tourist flows in advanced tourist areas.

The EU-funded Integrated Territorial Programme (PIT) offered a financial opportunity to establish an attraction capable of turning two marginal areas into tourist destinations and boost a service supply that accounted for only 5% of the local economic mix in 2006, the year before the Flight was opened.

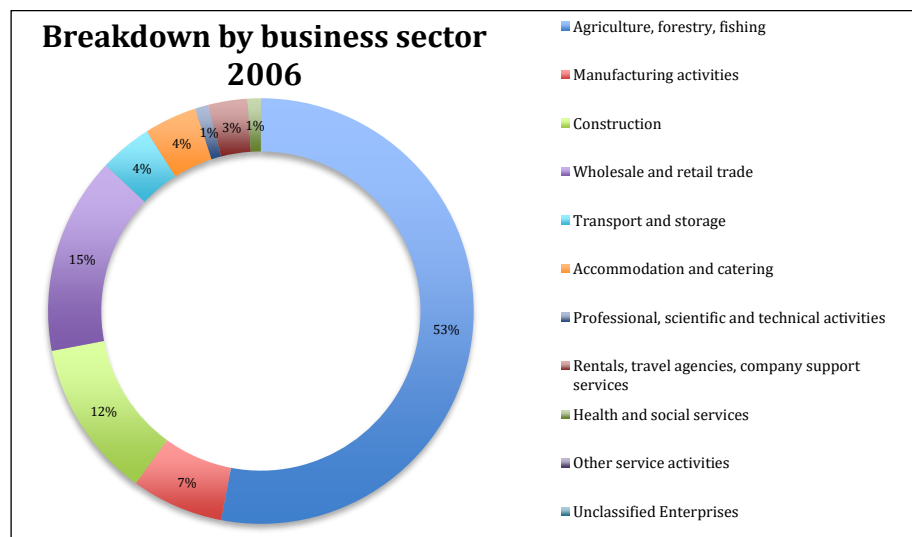


Figure 1: Economic breakdown by business sector, 2006.

Source: FEEM chart based on Basilicata APT data.

Statistical data from the Local Promotion Agency show that in that year the accommodation offered by both communities consisted of only eight facilities and 130 beds, 67% of which were located in the three hotels present, with gross use amounting to 5% of all available beds.

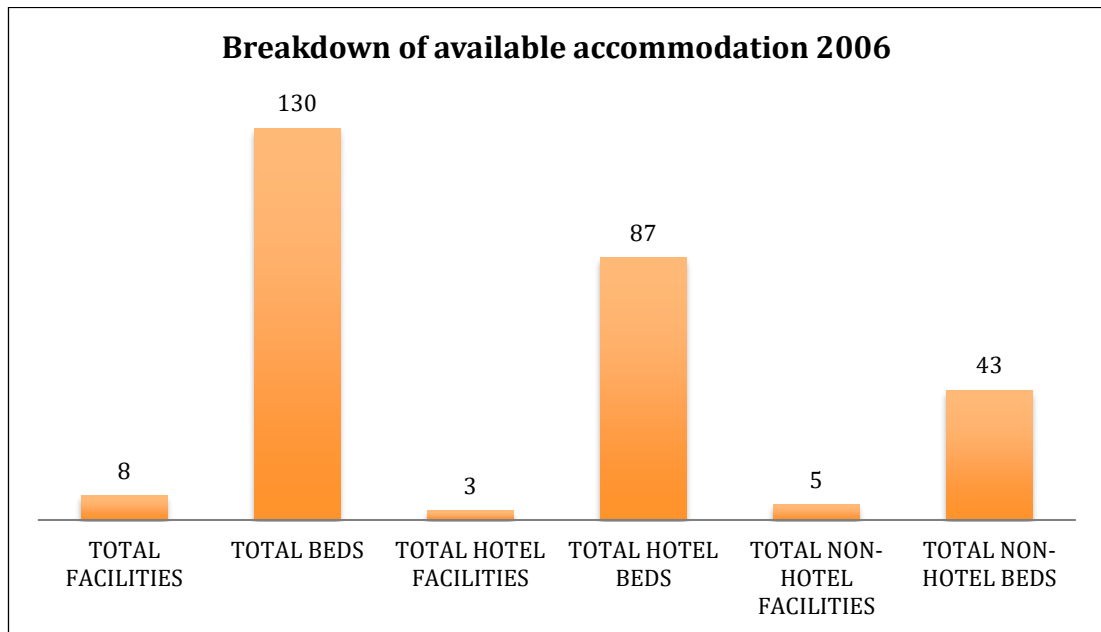


Figure 2: Breakdown of available accommodation, 2006.

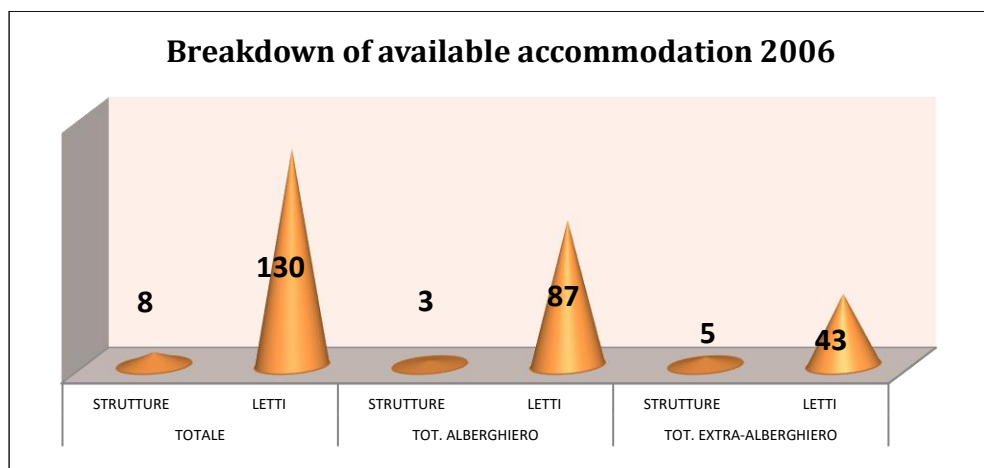


Figure 3: Breakdown of available accommodation, 2006.

Source: FEEM chart based on Basilicata APT data.

The tourist demand amounted to 1715 arrivals, 83% of which were Italian customers, and 2418 stays, a little over one tourist per inhabitant (2123 total inhabitants in 2006). Neither of the municipalities featured on popular travel itineraries and were the destination of a small number of independent tourists, coming mostly from neighbouring catchment areas.

A restaurateur from Pietrapertosa stated, “before the Flight opened, the villages’ prospects looked gloomy and we wondered if we could carry on. The major attraction brought hope to the area”.

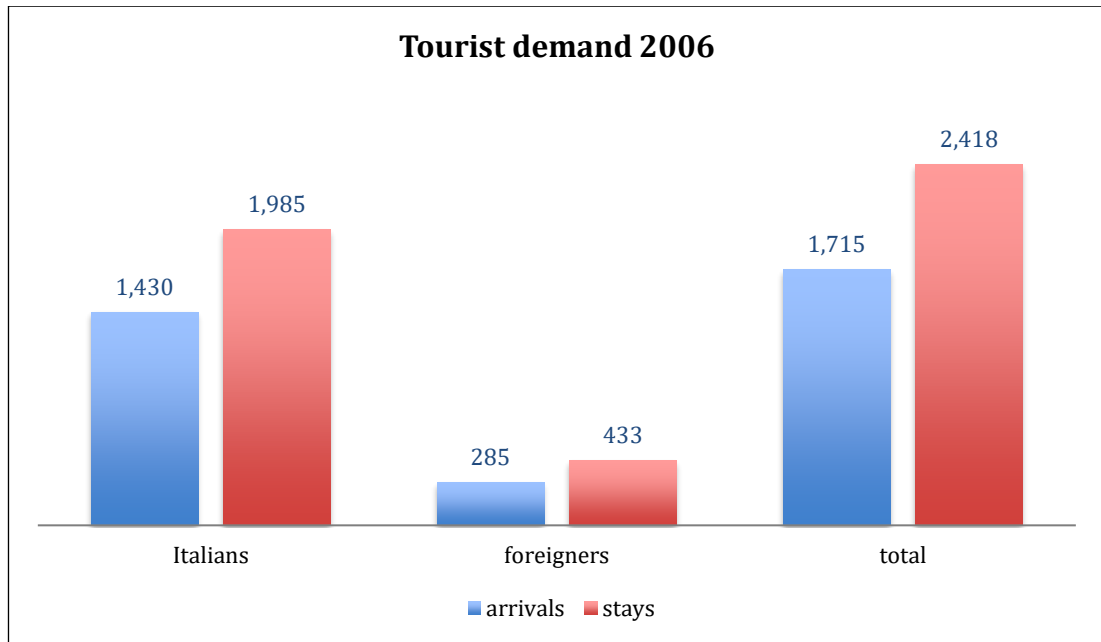


Figure 4: Tourist Flows, 2006.

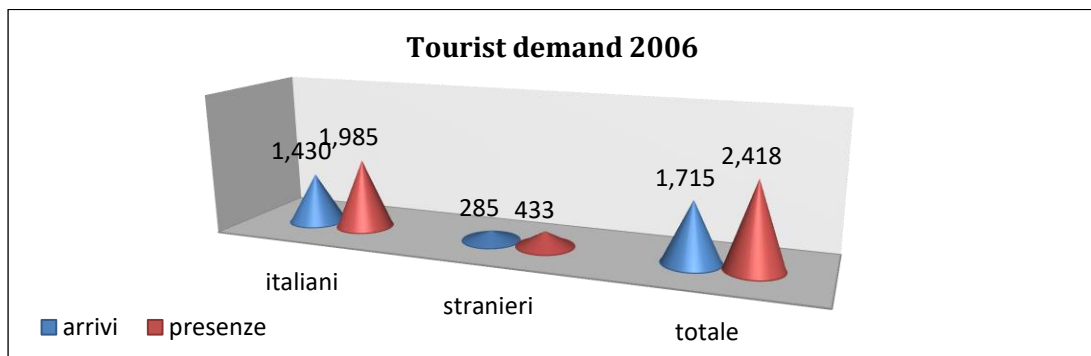
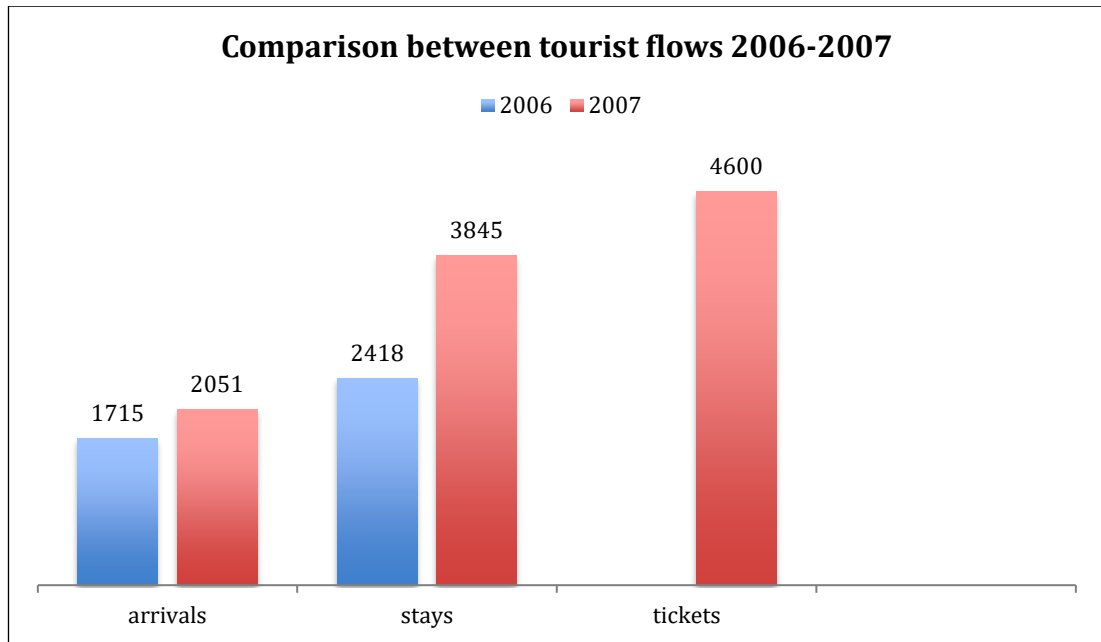


Figure 5: Tourist Flows, 2006.

Source: FEEM chart based on Basilicata APT data.

In 2007, one and a half months after opening, the communities realised that local movement trends had reversed: “The Flight went viral on the internet” (Mayor of Castelmezzano).

In its first year of activity, the figures showed a 20% increase in arrivals, a 59% increase in stays and 4600 tickets sold.



*Figure 6: Tourist flows 2006-2007.*  
 Source: FEEM chart based on Basilicata APT data.

### 3. Impact of the Flight of the Angel in 10 years of activity: tourism

The Flight’s opening boosted the local profile, “the community reacted by seizing the opportunity for growth and new enterprises were opened, bucking the regional trend” (Mayor of Castelmezzano). The tourism infrastructure began to reorganise, and the local fabric gradually became more structured. New attractions were added: “the Via Ferrata (protected climbing route), Percorso delle Sette Pietre (Seven Stones Path), Literary Park, the Nepalese Bridge, properly marked footpaths and several observation points” (Volo dell’Angelo Management Company).

The local administration reported, “10 years later, the Flight has exceeded our expectations, with the number of flights increasing from 4000 in 2007 to nearly 20,000 in 2017” (Volo dell’Angelo Management Company). This boom has created new businesses and jobs, consolidated community partnerships and partly offset the effects of depopulation.

Since 2006, the accommodation capacity has doubled, with a marked difference between the type of accommodation facilities present. The number of hotel beds has remained unchanged, but the number of B&Bs has increased from two to 15 and the number of accommodation facilities managed on a business footing has increased from 0 to 17. This type of accommodation supplements family incomes and allows the resident population to improve its levels of well-being.

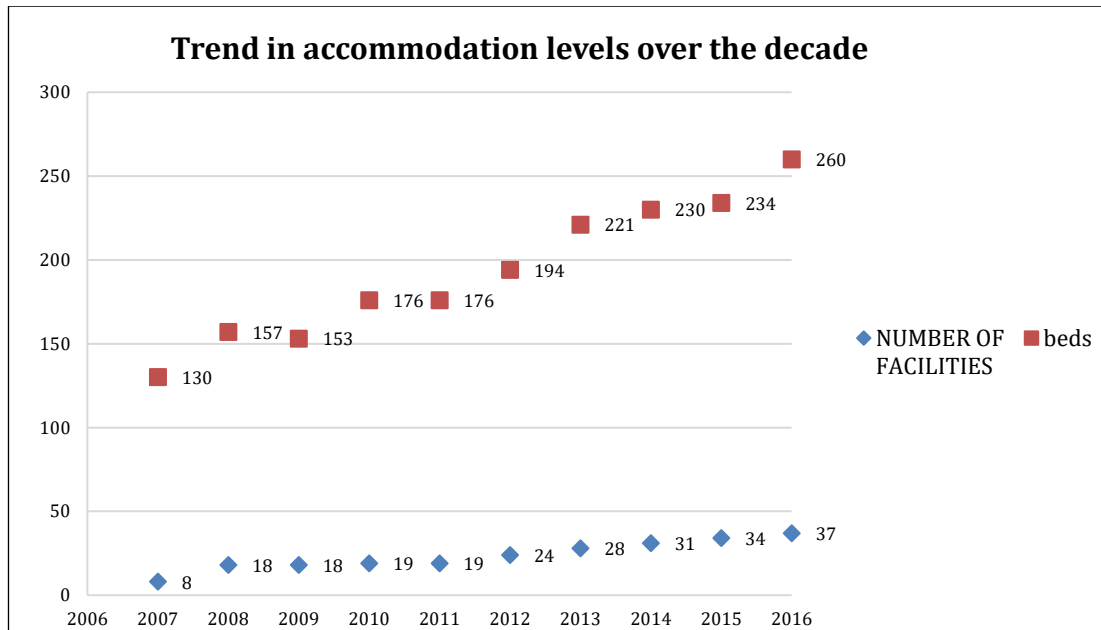


Figure 7: Trend in Accommodation Levels, 2007-2016.  
Source: FEEM chart based on Basilicata APT data.

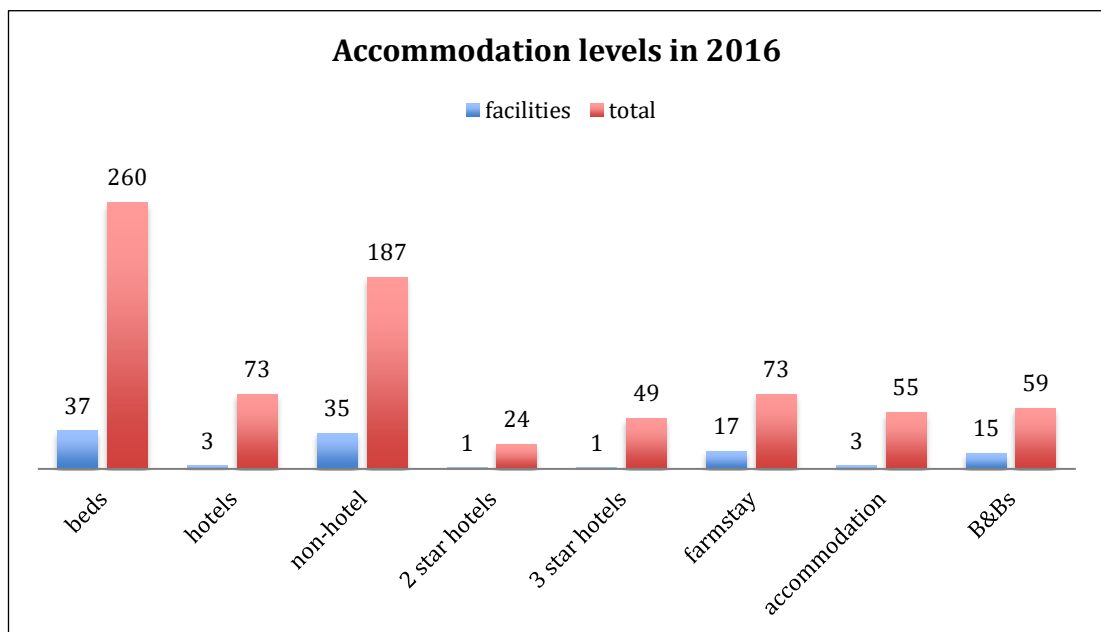


Figure 8: Accommodation Levels 2016.  
Source: FEEM chart based on Basilicata APT data.

Since 2009, several B&Bs have been set up in addition to six restaurants and one self-service restaurant, two pizzerias, one tasting centre for local products and about 10 bars. Two shops selling local produce and two selling souvenirs are also present. The Mayor of Castelmezzano stated that “the real challenge and triumph lies in the fact that no single investor has been manipulating this situation. Instead the local families have turned their hands to becoming tourism entrepreneurs”. Castelmezzano

and Pietrapertosa are living evidence of the theoretical concept of “transition tourism,” whereby a significant reorganisation of the tourism supply in rural areas is effective if shifted toward common tourist products, which are the result of a new planning model focusing on “community-based tourism” (Salvatore et al, 2018). For the potential offered by the developing tourist demand to be fully exploited, the supply must undergo a process of reorganisation and this in turn requires vital, committed local communities (ibid.).

The demand has also responded positively to the bid for social recovery launched locally through the major attraction. In its decade of activity, arrivals have increased by 162%, stays are up by 111% and the number of tickets sold for the Flight have increased by 65%.

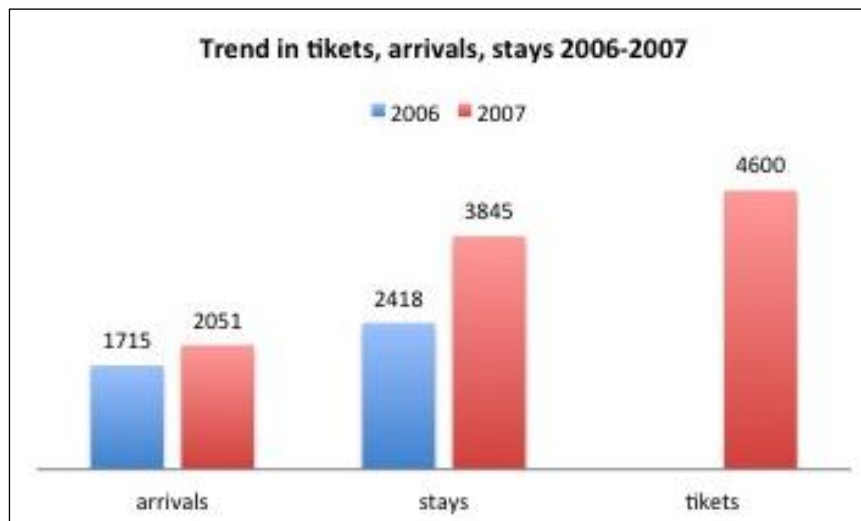


Figure 9: Trend in tickets and tourist flows.  
Source: FEEM chart based on Basilicata APT data.

The number of visitors is also greatly underestimated since “every user who takes the Flight is accompanied by one or two others on average” (Volo dell’Angelo Management Company). This means that the estimated annual number of visitors is approximately 42,500, of whom 73% are hikers. According to this finding, the numbers have risen from just over one tourist per inhabitant to 10.5 fliers per inhabitant and 23 visitors per resident. This pool is also expanded by tourist who stay the night in other areas of Basilicata: one in four operators in Basilicata state that the Lucan Dolomites are the second most popular excursion destination for guests in their facilities, immediately after Matera.

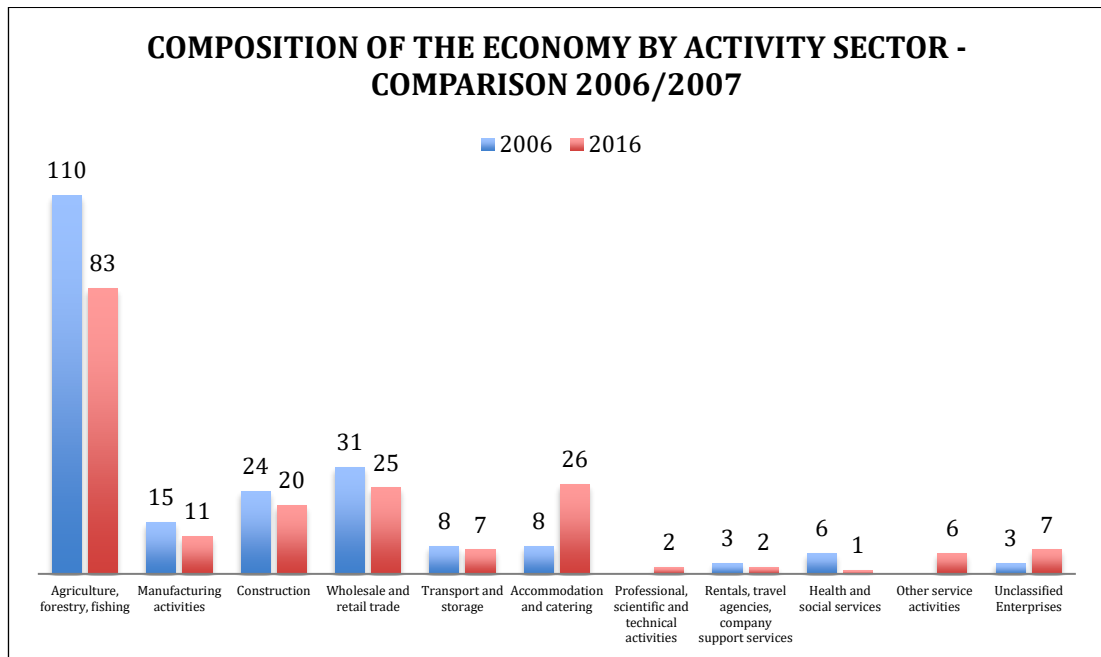
High levels of hikers and greater tourist pressure threaten the sustainability of flows and represent a disadvantage for the tourist economy of places that still see little use being made of the available beds despite having benefited from a substantial increase in overnight stays. For example, only 27% of beds were occupied in the Flight’s peak months.

The Mayor of Castelmezzano stated that the goal for coming years is to extend the time tourists stay in the area. New attractions will be added to what is already on offer, beginning with a themed trail on the village’s history and traditions through eight installations in the *Supportici*, as the village’s ancient gateways are known. The trail will involve the entire village of Castelmezzano, and the residents will participate. An

electric train travelling on a monorail will be built to connect the two villages currently connected by the Flight of the Angel.

#### 4. Direct and indirect financial impacts

When the effects of the major attraction are analysed, it has clearly changed the economic structure of both communities. One of the most obvious outcomes is transition from an economy based on farming and building toward one based on services and recreational activities



*Figure 10: Economic composition by sector - 2006/2017.*  
 Source: FEEM chart based on Basilicata Unioncamere data.

This transformation has also affected employment. Approximately half the active population of Castelmezzano and 38% of that in Pietrapertosa works in the “sport and leisure” sector. Overall, sectors connected with use of the territory for tourist purposes account for 57.5% jobs in Castelmezzano and 53.5% jobs in Pietrapertosa, without counting workers in shops, a sector that is also directly correlated with tourist activity.



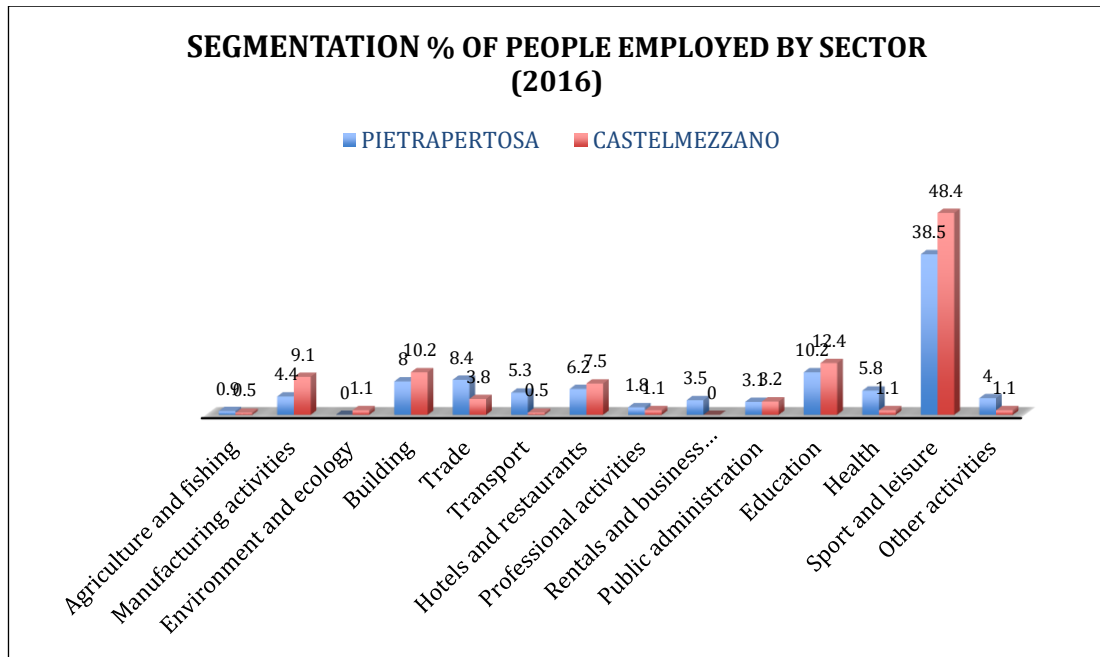


Figure 11: People employed by activity sector, 2016.

Source: FEEM chart based on Basilicata Unioncamere data.

“A minor economy of scale has therefore resulted” (Volo dell’Angelo Management Company), nowadays the villages have a good economy and a guaranteed future, the Flight has graduated from a bid for success to a firm reality (Mayor of Pietrapertosa). The activation of these flows has also placed both communities on the external investment market by raising their profile. In the words of the Mayor of Castelmezzano: “One case worth mentioning is that of Stefano Ricci, a Tuscan businessman who produces ties. After spending a holiday in the Lucan Dolomites, he opened a local company, providing work for 15 local people”. The Flight also “raised the media profile of the Dolomites and sparked the curiosity of film-makers” (Volo dell’Angelo Management Company), who have chosen it as a location for several productions. One of the best-known of these, which had direct financial effects on the territory, was a production entitled “Un Paese Quasi Perfetto” by Massimo Gaudioso, which employed 36 professionals and 202 local extras. According to a FEEM analysis of the film’s impact, the overall amount spent locally was approximately 511.000 euro compared to 140.000 euro received as a regional contribution through a Lucana Film Commission “crisis grant”. Approximately 150,000 euro of the overall sum was spent on food and accommodation for the actors and workers, providing a further financial boost for the hospitality sector. This was supplemented by a knock-on impact estimated at approximately 920,000 euro: for each euro received through the “crisis grant”, the film company spent 3.65 euro locally (Colangelo, 2015).

## 5. Environmental impacts and shared management of ecological load

As mentioned above, since the Flight goes through areas of particular environmental value with EU protection, it was essential to keep a close eye on the anthropic impact that tourist pressure could have on land and biodiversity when planning tourism development.

In the decade that the major attraction has been active, both communities have succeeded in establishing a form of “proactive landscape conservation” (Salvatore, 2015), demonstrating that sustainable tourism is a tangible way of creating income and revenue through the enhancement of natural resources.

The conflict between nature protection and tourist pressure that affects the local ecological load capacity has been resolved by managing problems jointly. This eased latent environmental and social tensions, ensuring a satisfactory state of conservation was maintained without threatening economic growth. Over the years, a low-impact tourist infrastructure plan and a Joint Committee have been set up to monitor disturbance to bird nesting caused by the major attraction and collateral attractions. “Shared management of the natural heritage and partnership between local actors is now on such a sound basis that a common training and professional development programme has been established for Park and Flight operators” (Volo dell’Angelo Management Company).

The Mayor of Pietrapertosa stated with regard to natural heritage protection that: “With the entry into force of the SAC, because the Flight of the Angel and the Via Ferrata both have an impact on the Special Area of Conservation, we have addressed and resolved the problem through an agreement between municipalities, the Region, the Parco del Gallipoli Cognato and Ispra over monitoring the impact on biodiversity. We have set up a legally established Committee of ornithologists tasked with monitoring wildlife. It is also empowered to stop tourist flows immediately in the event of an obvious disturbance to wildlife.”

Local biodiversity and natural resources have therefore been protected and enhanced by the Flight, mainly because “the value of the attraction lies in its wonderful setting. The same attraction would not have worked in other places because the location would not offer the same features. The Flight has also been a means of maintaining footpaths and roads. The birds have benefited so much that black stork records show that the number of eggs has tripled since the beginning of monitoring activities”. (Mayor of Castelmezzano)

Although there is no scientific evidence that birds have been disturbed, the Joint Committee has decided that they will only allow the Flight to run on public holidays during the black stork’s nesting period. The Committee provides tourists with information about what is happening in nature and asks them to behave in an impact-free way, thus encouraging sustainable use of the territory.

## **6. Conclusions**

New tourist phenomena in peripheral areas are destined to become important drivers of change. However, there is a need for social structures to evolve through governance geared to sustainable development and “multilevel management of transition” (Kemp et al, 2007) that tends to emphasise the fundamental role of communities.

Nowadays tourism is a territorial product because it is closely connected to gaining an experience of places and those who live there. From this perspective, smart integration with the local area and community through shared policies that allow inhabitants to become involved in establishing the tourism supply and entertaining tourists represents a break with old tourist provision processes and provides a valuable support for designing tourist experiences. A focus on the welfare of the community and integration with the territory helps the destination’s social sustainability.

Organising and managing tourism development through partnership means that the host community is bound to enter into a kind of “collective pact” (Magnaghi, 2012). Within this, each actor involved must be able to find its own comfort zone and help create territorial, environmental and landscape added value” (Salvatore et al, 2017). Our analysis shows that the tourist region of Castelmezzano and Pietrapertosa represents a small-scale model of economic development. For these municipalities, the major attraction “Flight of the Angel” has offered an opportunity to enhance the unique local environmental and landscape features, offering tourists an opportunity to live an equally rare experience: travelling to the opposite mountain top suspended over a void. The Flight has created widespread awareness among local government and the public that there may be opportunities for development and growth in less-favoured areas. Each new attraction is an added value for its host community but only works if local protection and community involvement are guaranteed. These factors are essential for a form of development that keeps sight of the goal of sustainability.

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## **“A CROOKED, OPEN, MODEST CITY” – INTERCULTURAL TOURISM AS A TOOL TO GRASP URBAN SUPER-DIVERSITY AND BUILD SOCIAL COHESION**

Francesco Vietti\*

### *Abstract*

The connection between migration, tourism and cultural heritage in the urban setting is complex, with rich potential in terms of social progress, but also with risks that must be tackled with awareness of the symbolic and political meaning of each of these elements. This paper offers a critical discussion about *Migrantour*, an international project that, over the last decade, has been developing an innovative approach to urban tourism involving migrants as intercultural companions for walking tours in several Italian and other European cities.

*Keywords:* Migration, Tourism, City, Diversity, Social Cohesion, Migrantour.

In an essay on cosmopolitan life, Immanuel Kant observed in 1784 that ‘out of the crooked timber of humanity, no straight thing was ever made’. A city is crooked because it is diverse, full of migrants speaking dozens of languages; because its inequalities are so glaring...  
Richard Sennett, *Building and Dwelling, Ethics for the City*

### **1. Introduction**

Sara steps into the Peace Mosque followed by a group of twenty-five women she is accompanying through the open-air market of Porta Palazzo. Sara’s parents are Tunisian who migrated many years ago to Turin, the city where Sara was born, where she studies at university and where every Saturday she works alongside her father at a fruit and vegetable stand in the market. The women she is guiding around the Islamic prayer hall are Italians, and mostly from Turin, who have chosen to participate in a special walk on International Women’s Day. The itinerary was created for women by migrant women as an opportunity for sharing, getting to know each other and for

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reflection on themes that both unite them and spark discussion. It is a fresh way to wander through the city, observe the territory, to discover unfamiliar places or those seen as difficult to access. In the mosque, Sara speaks about the veil and of the five pillars of Islam. She shows how *kajal* is used to augment the beauty of the eyes and she passes around a small flask of scented rose water.

At the same time, Madhobi is accompanying her group through the alleyways of the Torpignattara neighbourhood in Rome. Madhobi was born in Bangladesh and grew up in the Italian capital city where today she studies languages at university. Here too, many of her fellow Romans have chosen to sign up for an intercultural walk: they visit shops brimming with *saris*, learning how to wear them and set them off with jewels; they experience the art of *henné* tattooing and sample tasty foods traditionally cooked for weddings and other ceremonies. To finish, they meet women from a Bangladeshi Association for a debate about women's rights. In Florence, Erii too is accompanying the 8<sup>th</sup> March special edition Migrantour walk: her Japanese background enables her to explain the complex dressing ceremony and the specific role of *geishas* in Japanese culture and the Western idea of Oriental femininity. Meanwhile in Milan, Emma, an English teacher of Bolivian origin, leads the tour of Via Padova, speaking about the impact made by historical female figures in their own country, the migratory flows of women from Latin America, the projects for the integration of migrant women but also family traditions and recipes.

It is no coincidence that on the same day, hundreds of kilometres apart, Sara, Madhobi, Erii and Emma are leading a hundred women to explore the intercultural heritage of the neighbourhoods where they live. This is the result of long-standing process – begun as a pivotal experience launched a decade ago in Turin – which has become the international project “Migrantour. Intercultural Urban Routes” currently involving 16 cities across Europe.

In order to analyse the assumptions and the aims of this initiative, it is necessary to refer to the concept of “traveling cultures” proposed by James Clifford (1997) more than twenty years ago in his seminal book *Routes*. Clifford invites us to ethnographically observe those “transit sites” crossed by tourists, travellers, government officials, police officers, merchants, pilgrims, artists, seasonal workers and immigrants, as well as powerful global forces such as television and goods. In particular, we should pay attention to the different scales of what, following Hall and Williams (2002), we can define as the “migration-tourism nexus”. The boundaries between these different forms of mobility are sometimes evanescent and it is possible to study the common work of the imagination in the processes of representation of the otherness related to “contemporary nomadism” (Callari Galli, 2004; Riccio, 2019).

Cultural diversity related to global migration is a key element of tourist attractiveness that many cities have used to transform their multi-ethnic neighbourhoods into places of leisure and consumption where tourists can enjoy “the whole world in a city” (Collins and Castillo, 1998). This kind of urban tourism has been often portrayed in negative terms: many authors underscored how the processes of gentrification exclude migrants from the economic and social benefits brought by tourism, while at the same time the reification of ethnic differences represents their cultural heritage in an exotic and over-simplistic way (Rath, 2007). Such analyses show how the connection between mobility and heritage in the urban setting is a complex phenomenon with rich potential but also risks that must be confronted with knowledge and awareness of its symbolic and political meaning. Assuming these critical stances, since 2009 the

Migrantour project has been developing an innovative approach to urban tourism: migrants of different origins are actively involved in designing intercultural walking tours and leading citizens and tourists to discover the history of immigration that shaped the development of the neighbourhoods.

In this contribution, I present a critical analysis of the Migrantour walking tours in several Italian and European cities. My research has been conducted from a significant but problematic position, because of my role as scientific coordinator of the project, alongside an interdisciplinary team including professionals from the tourism sector, members of NGOs and other academics (historians, geographers and anthropologists). In fact, my study has a self-reflective character and it is grounded in a corpus of qualitative interviews (involving colleagues, migrants and tourists) and long-term ethnographic observation of the decision-making dynamics within the project.

## **2. Cities, tourists, migrants: from slumming to responsible tourism**

The starting point of my analysis aims to put into historical perspective the theme of the ethnic neighbourhoods as places of leisure and consumption of cultural diversity. The origin of this process can be traced back to the 1800s, when in London and, shortly after, in New York, a new trend spread among the well-to-do classes: slumming. Ladies and gentlemen would “walk the slums” for the curiosity of observing how migrants lived, “people of whom they had heard speak but whom they were as ignorant of as if they were inhabitants of a strange and distant country” (Heap, 2009). So started a process that would soon transform neighbourhoods of the great metropolises that were subject to great flows of migration into tourist sites.

This kind of urban tourism was immediately seen as problematic and ambiguous but also potentially charged with a great transformative force at the political level. For much of the well-off bourgeoisie slum walking remained merely a useful hobby for satisfying a taste for the exotic; yet for other tourists, the visits took on a different value. Consider what happened in New York: in a short time, the living conditions of migrants living in poverty in Chinatown, Harlem and the Lower East Side of Manhattan, where people went to see “the Jews and the Italians”, were brought to the centre of public attention and political debate. The tours inspired philanthropists, intellectuals and politicians leading to the birth of charitable associations and significant reforms in the field of welfare (Koven, 2004).

In the arc of a few decades the great international metropolises began, therefore, to build a part of their own tourist offerings on the theme of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. New York made its Little Italy, Little Odessa and Little India the distinctive features of an image based on the touristification of the melting pot; Paris elaborated the *bohémien* charm of its Latin Quarter; San Francisco proposed its Chinatown as a model for all the Chinese neighbourhoods that were forming across the Americas, Europe and Oceania. Indeed, it was Chinatowns, with their high degree of aesthetic elaboration and architectural stylisation that became over the course of the twentieth century, the symbols of “ethnic quarters” as places for entertainment and the consumption of diversity (Lin, 1998).



*Figure 1:* A photo from September 1909 showing an evening tour of Chinatown in New York.

Source: Munsey's Magazine.

After the Second World War, and even more in the last thirty years, with the acceleration in processes of economic and cultural globalisation, neighbourhoods have emerged in many other European cities that, because of their “multiethnic” label, have become significant tourist destinations, such as Raval in Barcelona or Kreuzberg, the “Turkish Quarter” of Berlin. Alongside the dominant narrative that describes metropolitan areas subject to significant migration as places of poverty and degradation, an alternative discourse was formed that represents “ethnic quarters” as places of encounter with the different aspects of a “day-to-day multiculturalism” (Semi and Colombo, 2007). From the revolving kebabs in the windows of Turkish eateries to Oriental take-aways, through to CDs of Berber music, spices, Indian bridal dresses, statues of Buddhas, Andean bags and ponchos: the variety of objects and products that symbolise and render cultural difference tangible, while also attracting the tourist eye, is huge. As highlighted by anthropologists Volkan Aytar and Jan Rath (2012) in one of the most well-known and thorough studies on the theme, the processes of touristification of cultural diversity brought about by migration is ambivalent: on one hand it emerges the vitality and dynamism of migrants in attracting visitors and investment to the areas where they live and work, especially entrepreneurs engaged in various sectors of “ethnic business”. On the other, lies criticism of the dynamics of planned transformation and “regeneration” of those areas by local governments and international investors that aim at their gentrification and, if not by expelling migrant residents altogether, then by excluding them from the benefits brought by visitors. The growing tourism and leisure industries in these neighbourhoods offer opportunities to natives and immigrants, skilled and unskilled and males and females alike. They participate as organizers of cultural events, as web designers, as owners of



cafes, coffee shops, restaurants, travel bureaus, hotels, souvenir shops, telephone and Internet shops, but also as waiters, cooks, dishwashers and janitors (...). Together, they engender “globalization from below” and create mainstream but unique products in terms of innovation, production and consumption (...). In our globalizing world – where local difference and place identity are increasingly important – heritage and cultural diversity have become crucial components of the cultural capital of post-industrial societies. (Aytar and Rath, 2012, p. 2).

The awareness of the various opportunities and risks connected to the interaction between migrants, tourists, entrepreneurs and policymakers in the urban setting prompted the multidisciplinary team who set up the Migrantour project to adopt the perspective developed by responsible tourism about the economic, social and cultural impact of tourism in countries in the global South as a way to imagine a collaborative means of grasping urban super-diversity in the “era of migration” and to build social cohesion in European cities (Davolio and Somoza, 2016). From this perspective, the themes of encounter and participation are at the core of project planning. In an encounter whose protagonists are the citizens that live and work in the multicultural neighbourhoods, migrants were called to design and lead urban intercultural routes sharing their own life-stories and their point of view about the past, present and future of the city. It is through this active participation that the people and places acquire the right to represent themselves rather than be represented: a crucial point in order to avoid commercialising diversity, reducing it to a product to promote and sell, or painting it in an exoticized way for use and consumption by tourists fascinated by a taste for otherness.

Moving through this hybrid field, made of connections and overlaps, does not therefore mean neglecting or underestimating the structural differences between “regimes of mobility” (Glick Schiller and Salazar, 2011) that distinguish tourists and migrants across the globe and within our cities. These boundaries are often reinforced by the control, surveillance and governance of freedom of movement in the neo-liberal world. Nina Glick-Schiller and Noel Salazar have clearly indicated the need not to depoliticize the issue, while maintaining a high focus on the hierarchies of status and the conditions of inequality and exclusion produced by the possibilities and constraints linked to the inseparable binomial mobility/immobility.

### **3. The Migrantour network**

The Migrantour project took its first steps in Turin, capital of Piedmont, a region in the North-West of Italy, a few kilometres from the Alps and the French border and with a long history of migration behind it. Here in 2009 the social cooperative Viaggi Solidali, a tour operator active in the field of responsible tourism, first thought to involve a group of first- and second-generation immigrants as companions for a pivotal set of urban walks. The idea originated from two simple considerations: Turin, like many other Italian and European cities, had not yet given value to the intercultural richness of areas in which historically a significant presence of citizens of migrant origins had settled; to understand the social reality and daily life of these areas, there was no better way than to interact with residents and seek the accompaniment of locals – “locals” irrespective of their region or country of origin or that of their parents.

Viaggi Solidali’s initiative has been supported from the beginning by the NGOs ACRA and Oxfam Italia, that have contributed their knowledge and skills in the field of integration and social cohesion projects for third-country nationals, as well as a

strong focus on the ethical values and best practices for developing full European citizenship. These three organisations, members of the Italian Association for Responsible Tourism (AITR), in 2013 identified a series of partners with experience in the field of intercultural training, migrant integration and responsible tourism to spread the project widely across Italy and Europe.

Since 2014, each partner of the Migrantour network has implemented in the chosen cities a similar programme of activities. First, a preliminary study is carried out to sketch the history of migrations that transformed the various neighbourhoods through which the intercultural urban routes pass. The second step is a training course for people interested in becoming intercultural companions. The people who during these years have applied for the courses are usually of very different origins and ages, with different life stories, educational backgrounds, skills and work experience, but sharing certain fundamental characteristics: good knowledge of the language of their country of residence; a high level of curiosity for the local history; and a desire to share their personal experience of migration and their involvement in the social, cultural and economic life of the city. The free training courses for aspiring intercultural companions aim to reinforce such attitudes. Anthropologists, sociologists, geographers and historians help share knowledge about the relationship between migration and the territory; professional tour guides and communication experts contribute to teaching guiding skills, group management and vocal skills; specialists in specific fields (interreligious dialogue, world food and cuisine, museums, cultural heritage, etc.) are called upon to deepen topics on which the walks will focus. A fundamental part of the training course concerns the field research and the active involvement of the intercultural companions in the process of finalizing the contents of the routes. This is a very important step not only for personal engagement but also for mutual exchange between course participants, since every contact, discovery and choice is shared and discussed, thus becoming part of the “community of practices” constituted by the whole group of trainers and trainees.

The walks are finally adapted for primary and secondary schools, with advanced training designed to enable the intercultural companion to work with students and young people: year after year the Migrantour routes have been tested as an effective tool for didactic courses in Global Citizenship Education. Combined with appropriate workshops or supplemented with ad hoc preparation by teachers, the walks contribute to tackling stereotypes and prejudices related to race, gender and class.

Today the Migrantour network includes 17 cities in six different countries: Turin, Milan, Genoa, Bologna, Parma, Pavia, Florence, Rome, Naples, Catania and Cagliari in Italy; Marseille and Paris in France; Brussels in Belgium; Lisbon in Portugal; Valencia in Spain and Ljubljana in Slovenia.

#### **4. The intercultural urban routes in Cagliari, Catania, Lisbon and Valencia**

Each city has its specific history of migration and its unique present. There are cities like Genoa and Florence where migration flows are part of a long history of travel, tourism and international trade. In others, like Lisbon and Marseille, contemporary migration reflects the complexity of their colonial and post-colonial past. Meanwhile others live, each in their own way, the contradictions and dramas of current events: Paris and Brussels, profoundly shaken by terrorist attacks during the last few years; Valencia, which rapidly lost a significant share of its migrant population as a result of the financial-economic crisis and is on the brink of a new wave of emigration. Being

of migrant origin has very different meanings and consequences for the daily life of people in the different countries in which the project developed. Similarly, intercultural dialogue at the local level operates with different assumptions and objectives according to the political, social and educational context.

The features of the Migrantour routes are flexible, so that they can reflect the different characteristics of the neighbourhoods involved in the project. These areas are often characterised by a certain discontinuity with respect to the surrounding environment: central districts with a wide variety of resident migrant groups such as Porta Palazzo in Turin, Esquilino in Rome or Mouraria in Lisbon; areas with a strong predominance of a single nationality such as the Chinese community in the Canonica-Sarpi neighbourhood of Milan or the Belgian Moroccans in the municipality of Molenbeek, Bruxelles; or multi-ethnic outskirts far from the city centres, such as Torpignattara in Rome or Orriols in Valencia. In all these different contexts, the Migrantour routes aim to identify themes and narratives to tell the story of the migrations that have transformed the area over time and the specific contribution that different generations of migrants have made to enriching the tangible and intangible heritage of the city. In several cases, the Migrantour walks represent a complementary experience linked to the visit of local museums about migration: Migrantour Paris cooperates with the *Musée de l'Histoire de l'Immigration*; as Migrantour Genova does with “MEM – Memory and Migration” (a section of the Maritime Museum).

A common characteristic of the walks is the effort to give a historical interpretation to the phenomenon of migration, identifying links and parallels between different flows over time and thereby providing tools for dialogue and mutual understanding between residents. Thus it emerged how all the cities developed through a similar path of immigration flows: first the urbanisation of people from the rural areas surrounding large urban agglomerations, often attracted by the initial processes of industrialisation; then a wider internal migration at a regional and national level that prompted people from disadvantaged peripheral areas to move towards more economically developed urban centres; then a phase of colonial and post-colonial migration which, in certain countries in particular such as France, Portugal and Belgium, involved chains of migration from the (ex-)colonies, often accompanied by a parallel repatriation of citizens that had previously emigrated from the homeland to overseas territories. Finally, in the current period, the international migration linked to the unequal distribution of resources and wealth between the “centres” and “peripheries” of the world in the era of globalisation. Inequalities that ground the legitimate aspiration of an ever-growing number of individuals to improve their quality of life by crossing national boundaries and imagining a future elsewhere where there are greater opportunities to live in dignity: an endeavour that, as demonstrated above in the cases of Spain and Italy, is witnessing new waves of emigration from Europe towards other countries.

In the following paragraphs, I present an outline of the Migrantour walks in four different cities of the network, two located in Italy (Cagliari and Catania) and two in other European countries (Lisbon in Portugal and Valencia in Spain)<sup>14</sup>. I consider these case studies to be good examples of the variety of intercultural routes developed by

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<sup>14</sup> I would like to thank the local coordinators of the Migrantour network who provided me the information included in the following sections: Laura Longo in Cagliari, Flavia Monfrini in Catania, Filipa Bolotinha in Lisbon and Tomàs de los Santos in Valencia.

the network partners and of the different characteristics of the neighbourhoods involved in the projects.

#### *4.1 Cagliari: Marina*

Marina is one of Cagliari's four historic neighborhoods, a point of connection between the heart of the city and the port. It is not the area where the majority of immigrants live, but it is where the meeting and exchanges between different cultures is more evident. It was originally designed to be an area dedicated to warehouses and accommodations for port workers nearby. Under the Pisan domination, the area was surrounded by walls then taken down to make space for a road axis which connected it to the other quarters of the city. Under the Aragonese domination, the number of residents increased, boosting the area's tendency to provide hospitality to merchants and fishers. Even today the local streets from Via Barcellona to Via Napoli are named after the communities which established some prosperous trade relations there (the Moors, the Pisans, but also the Sicilians and the Genoese). Following the 1943 bombings, the urban environment changed: some buildings in the neighborhood testify to the legacies of the war and of the subsequent reconstruction.

While in the past the Marina district was deemed unsafe because of the low light conditions and the people who frequented the port, nowadays its reputation has changed: its streets enhance the different elements that once came from the sea for business purposes and that today represent the multicultural richness of the city. There is food from all over the world, spice bazaars and restaurants offering culinary traditions from Indian to Argentinian. As a gathering place, the walking path of Via Manno winds inside the Marina district and, near Via Roma, there are porches which host shops of all kinds, tastes and pocketbooks. To complete the location's commercial offerings there are historical hotels, which over time housed writers and artists from all over the world, from Balzac to Lawrence and Carlo Levi.

The urban fabric is enlivened by the presence of numerous associations and social cooperatives, dedicated to after-school activities for foreigners' children, hospitality afforded to asylum seekers and leisure activities for everyone. There are also many religious buildings, in particular the churches of St. Eulalia, St. Agostino and St. Sepolcro, where excavations of significant archaeological value can be noted. The first prayer hall in the city also rises in this neighborhood, although is still too small to house the Muslim community that requires a dedicated space to exercise its faith.

The Migrantour walk starts from Piazza Yenne, the junction between Castello, Marina, Stampace and Villanova, the four neighborhoods of the historical part of Cagliari: an ideal location to discuss the importance of the square across periods and cultures. The walk continues towards Via Manno until Hostel Marina, where the concept of "hospitality" means welcoming tourists as well as students and migrants. Then the route reaches Piazza San Sepolcro, which offers a variety of choices for intercultural companions: take participants inside the church of San Sepolcro organized by its double rite – Catholic and Orthodox – as well as by a double altar; opt for a visit to the office of Sicomoro, a social cooperative committed to taking in unaccompanied underage foreigners in Cagliari; meet with the coordinators of Sportello Kepos by Caritas, a location where foreigners and Italians can be heard, where they discuss the actual and perceived presence of foreigners in the city, dismantling prejudices and sharing numbers and stories.

From the square the walk continues towards one of the narrow streets of the Marina district, Via Barcellona, in order to reach the last stop: the Indian restaurant Namasté with its owner, Jasvir, ready to speak about her country of origin and her journey as a female entrepreneur in Italy, offering some spiced tea or a sweet Ladoo.

#### 4.2 Catania: St. Berillo and Civita

The selected area to develop the intercultural route includes the quarters of St. Berillo and Civita. The entire area is situated in the heart of the old town of the city, near the nightlife streets (pubs, restaurants and cocktail bars); its touristic character is confirmed by the strong presence of hotels and B&Bs. The urban decay endured by the housing stock, which allows for low rent rates and fire sales, contributes to its attractiveness and ethnic rooting which favour the development of migration chains and the reception of newcomers. For example, for almost three generations the Senegalese community has been residing in St. Berillo, attracted by the presence of the *Fera 'o Luni* (the most famous historical market in Catania along with the fish market, Peschiera), which provided jobs for many residents.



Figure 2: One of the stops of the Migrantour walk in Catania is the Mosque of Mercy.

Source: Migrantour Catania staff.

This territory is organized by strong public interest and rising conflict between the major political forces and the real estate industry and the weak powers of residents. Moreover, there is no shortage of centres for gathering and activism purposes, such as A.P.S. Trame di Quartiere, which organizes Migrantour Catania. Among the places of worship it is worth mentioning the Mosque of Mercy (*Moschea della Misericordia*) in Cutelli Square, an important point of reference for all of the

Muslims residing in the area, and the church of *Crocifisso della Buona Morte*, the first church in Catania engaged in the reception of refugees.

The Migrantour walk follows the perimeter of the St. Berillo quarter and descends to Civita, starting from the office of the Associazione Trame di Quartiere to the Mosque of Mercy in Cutelli Square. The part of the route covering San Berillo allows participants to cross the demolished area, but the focus of the stories told by the intercultural companions lies not merely in the historical aspect of the quarter. Stops such as the Piazza Stesicoro, *Fera 'o Luni* and the Piazza della Repubblica convey a general outline of the history of Catania and help to spur a storytelling/debate on identity and origins. A mural portraying Saint Berillo, the first non-native bishop in Catania, coming from Antioch, marks the walk and the neighborhood's "migrant" aspect from the very start. Stesichorus, a Greek poet the square was named after, allows for an in-depth analysis of Catania's Greek origins and then compares them with the companion's countries of origin (in particular Liberia, founded by former slaves who returned home). The market in Catania shares many common traits with Arabic *souqs*; the carob tree and the statue of Cola Pesce, a legendary Sicilian character, in Piazza della Repubblica offer an outlook on gastronomy (a popular sub-Saharan African dish is made of carob) and partly on local and African myths and legends.

Another aspect stems from the stop in Piazza Giovanni Falcone: the dialogue between religions. In the same building we can find a Catholic and an Orthodox church thanks to the parish priest of the church of *Crocifisso della Buona Morte*, who made a room for the Romanian community living in Catania to organize its place of worship. Similar phenomena are not new to the intercultural companions who all share – each in his/her own personal way – stories linked to inter-religious exchanges and local ritual traditions. The final step of the route consists of a stop in a Senegalese or Moroccan shop, based on the group's needs, which allows for an in-depth analysis of the various culinary cultures and symbolic meaning of meals, as well as a visit to one of the largest mosques in southern Italy, the Mosque of Mercy.

#### 4.3 Lisbon: Mouraria

Lisbon and Mouraria are joined, with the history of both originating from the presence of diverse people and cultures. In 1143, Lisbon was conquered by D. Alfonso Henriques, becoming a Christian city, and was selected as the capital of the Kingdom of Portugal. The birth of Mouraria goes back to the same period, built outside the walls as the only territory where the Moors were authorised to reside. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the first migrants were forcedly led into slavery in Lisbon, which in that era was in fact the largest European centre of the flourishing slave trade.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 1974, Portugal became a democracy after half a century of dictatorship. This was the start of the phase of decolonisation of Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau. Between April and November 1975, Portugal took in half a million Portuguese and their descendants from the ex-colonies. At the end of the 1980s, African migration from Lusophone countries took on an economic character. Together with flows from Africa, a growing number of migrants began to arrive from Brazil, benefiting from bilateral accords between the two countries and special provision for regularisation. Finally, from the 1990s to today, migration towards Lisbon has involved new areas of departure such as Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Russia,

Romania and Moldova) and Asia (China, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan). Over 50 nationalities are represented in Mouraria, with a percentage of foreign residents (24% of the total population) well above the average for the city. The largest groups of migrants are those from Bangladesh, India, China and Brazil, while the African communities tend to reside in outer areas, even if they regularly visit Mouraria for business, work and other services. The territory of Mouraria is extremely rich from the perspective of historical heritage, being one of the oldest quarters of the city: *Fado* was born here. Considered until recently a socially degraded area, situated close to the elegant city centre, Mouraria in reality is the new centre of Lisbon from a cultural, social and commercial point of view, because of a thorough process of urban redevelopment led by City Hall and the local organisations. Bit by bit the area has also become the stage for new artistic and commercial activity among Portuguese and Europeans, testifying to the development of new dynamics related to the leisure industry, consumption and entertainment that have identified Mouraria as a “trendy” and attractively “vintage” area.

The Migrantour walk connects five main spots in Mouraria. First, *Casa Comunitária da Mouraria*, the home of the Associação Renovar a Mouraria which has a cafeteria open to the public and a rich programme of cultural events. The Association develops permanent activities to support the local community (for example, Portuguese lessons for migrants, a legal help desk and educational support). The second stop is *Rua do Capelão*, the most traditionally “Portuguese” area of the neighbourhood, where you can take in the history of *fado* at every step. In the second part of the route, intercultural companions lead participants to *Largo de São Domingos*, where one of the most important Orthodox churches in the city rises, but which is also a meeting place for the African communities, which give life to the informal market here in which typical products (*cola, mancara*) are sold and small services (shoes and bags repair) are provided. It continues to the *Centro Comercial da Mouraria*, a shopping centre where you can find every possible type of product of Asian origin, and finally to *Rua do Benfornoso*, the heart of the Bengali community, with its restaurants, halal butchers, hairdressers and much else besides.

#### 4.4 Valencia: Orriols

The place chosen for the activity of Migrantour Valencia is the neighbourhood of Orriols, in the northern outskirts of the city. The area, as we know it today, was formed through three waves of migration: beyond the original nucleus of local citizens, the first great migration was made up of the families or prisoners of the penal colony located in the Monastery of Sant Miquel dels Reis, for the most part republican prisoners, victims of reprisals of the Franco regime. These families came to live in the neighbourhood so that they could visit and aid their detained family members. The second wave of migrants occurred in the 1970s and was linked to the exodus from the rural areas to the city. This large migration, decisive in changing the social and urban environment of the area, came primarily from the regions of Estremadura, Andalusia and Castilla-La Mancha. The third arrival of migrants has its origins in the first years of this century and concerns foreign citizens, principally people originating from Latin America and Africa. Orriols is a neighbourhood of crowded streets, a lively quarter with a great social dynamism. It is situated outside the traditional tourist routes of the

city and is an area that has undergone a serious deterioration in its historical assets due to local policies of speculation in construction.

The Migrantour walk aims to connect different social, cultural and commercial spaces that render Orriols a unique area of Valencia for the richness of its intercultural character. It starts from the office of Valencia Acoge, an organisation that provides support and advice to migrants for the whole city. Then the routes pass through an area that, though not particularly attractive from an architectural point of view, has other qualities that make it an interesting environment, even if it is little known to its own inhabitants. Here the Islamic Cultural Centre of Valencia open its door, promoting a variety of activities (whether religious, educational or social) not only with Muslims, but for the whole local community. Right in front of the Centre the few remaining houses of the historic centre of Orriols can be seen, with their narrow streets and ancient residences (some of medieval origins). These remnants give an idea of the old Calle Mayor with its town hall (now demolished) and the city prison opposite. Behind this nucleus of houses, today there is a large field that should sooner or later become a garden (as often promised by the Municipality). The walk continues, focusing on social and cultural themes and visiting the project Orriols Con-Vive, an intercultural centre that has become a meeting place for the different people and organisations of the area. The next stop is one of the most interesting monuments of the neighbourhood: the ancient Gothic church of the now-vanished monastery of Santa Catalina de Siena that in 1971 was moved, stone by stone, from the centre of Valencia to Orriols. Finally, the intercultural companions lead the participants to the Evangelical Church whose members are mostly Roma people, the most important cultural minority in Spain that, despite a long history of economic marginalisation and social stigmatisation, has played a crucial role in the process of identity-building and heritage-making of the country.

### **5. Voices from the field: the intercultural companions**

The most important element uniting the tours described above and all the other Migrantour walks is the contribution of the intercultural companions. They are women and men originating from over forty different countries who speak at least thirty different languages, all with their own set of knowledge and objectives to meet through the project: the desire to meet new people and to express their thoughts about the city in which they live, the possibility of acquiring new professional skills and, at the end of the project, obtaining an income by carrying out paid work. All those who participated in training and the creation of the routes were asked to make a common effort: to weave their own personal or family stories of migration with the history of the city, and to share their knowledge with their colleagues as a tool for building authentic intercultural dialogue capable of reflecting the complexity of the daily exchanges between cultures taking place in the neighbourhoods where the walks happen.

In this last section of my article I offer an insight into the intercultural companions' self-representations and perception of the impact of Migrantour training and walks in



their daily life, and their own role in developing the project. The following excerpts come from interviews collected by the local coordinators in each city of the network<sup>15</sup>. In Bologna, the intercultural companions were trained by Next Generation Italy, an association created in 2008 by a group of young “second generation in families of migrant background”. Semhar was born and raised in Asmara, Eritrea. She recalls:

“I came to Italy for studying. I have been living in Bologna for 15 years now and I work here as an intercultural mediator. I have chosen this job because I’m very interested in migration issues and, mostly, in interculturality. I consider Bologna as my city of adoption, and I love this place nearly as well as I love my native city. Migrantour gives me the chance to know my city better, and to help others know it better, from different standpoints. We create opportunities to gather different cultures and religions”.

Her colleague Ali came to Italy from Pakistan at the age of 5. He came across the Migrantour project in the middle of a long-standing process of identity-building:

“Until the age of 18, I felt only Italian. Then someone, and the law, pointed out to me that I wasn’t an Italian citizen. Curiously, I didn’t even feel I was a Pakistani citizen. What did I have to do? After a long, tough process, I concluded that these two languages, cultures and identities were part of me. This is why now, during Migrantour’s Bologna walks, I like to illustrate the features of today’s society to different people, who share the same places and, sometimes, are challenged by the same worries. A lack of knowledge contributes to conflicts; therefore, getting to know each other is vital”.

Some of the Migrantour Bologna intercultural companions have experienced a different type of migration, namely an internal one from the South of Italy. This is the case of Filomena, whose family has been living in Basilicata for several generations now, and who came to Bologna to study anthropology. She explains:

“I fell in love with the city. I come from a village from the provinces. It is so small that one can cross it, and meet all its inhabitants, within a few hours’ walk. To me, living in Bologna has had multiple meanings: I have seen the urban spaces changing, in terms of their proportions and our perceptions. A stroll in the city allows for exploring diverse worlds: street markets with their colours and scents bring me back to the flavours of traditional peasant food from Lucania. I realize that those smells are synonyms for ‘home’; also for other people who are from distant countries”.

In Naples, the group of Migrantour intercultural companions includes twelve people trained by Casba, the first social cooperative founded in Campania by citizens from a foreign background. Among them is Pierre, from Senegal, who has been living in Naples for almost twenty years now. He is a social worker and a reference person for the institutions, city organisations, and other communities of migrants:

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<sup>15</sup> I would like to thank the local coordinators of the Migrantour project who collected the interviews included in this section: Filomena Cillo in Bologna, Laura Fusca in Naples, Fatima Rochdi in Brussels and Stefan Bulat in Paris.

“When I was a child in Dakar back from the seaside and with some friends, we dropped into the market to get some ‘aussa’, a type of stock made from entrails and prepared in huge cooking pots by men: a coin was enough for buying a taste. I often share this memory when telling about ‘bror e’ purp’ – octopus broth – sold by the merchants of the Borgo di Sant’Antonio market in the morning, to fight cold. I am always profoundly moved: on the one side, this brings me back to my childhood and, on the other side, I am happy to see the reactions in those who listen. They are moved too, because they identify with what they hear”.

His colleague Yuliya is Ukrainian. After joining the project, she decided to become a licensed tour guide and now works full-time in the tourism sector:

“I consider Migrantour a necessary initiative. I guide Neapolitans to places that they fear or simply don’t know. I bring them into contact with my Ukrainian culture and with the culture of many new Neapolitans from all over the world, who work, pray, and achieve their aspirations here. We live our lives. This cannot be frightening”.



*Figure 3: One of the intercultural companions of Migrantour Naples at work with a group of tourists during a walk in a market area.  
Souce: Migrantour Naples staff.*

In Brussels, Migrantour is coordinated by AlterBrussels, a not-for-profit association engaged in promoting the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the city through alternative forms of tourism both for the inhabitants of Brussels and for tourists. Neimar, from Brazil, is one of the intercultural companions who lead the walks in the neighbourhoods of Matongé:

“I have lived in Belgium for two years. At the beginning I was struggling to speak French because of my accent”, she says. “Being actively involved in the Migrantour project has made me aware of the richness of this double culture. I guide tours in several city neighbourhoods and museums, but I am fond of Matongé: it reminds me of home, a little. I feel comfortable here”.

The route in Cureghem, another neighbourhood of the Belgian capital, was instead designed by Ibrahim, from Albania:

“Preparing walks in Cureghem gave me the chance to get to know my personal and family history better. I have learned how and why we came to Brussels. I love the interreligious visits we organise here. Contributing to cross-cultural dialogue and being a mediator give me a sense of self-empowerment. I am happy to share these moments with travellers and hosts. This is particularly true when our walk ends up at Saaber’s, who is a Syrian refugee specialising in toasting dried fruit and who has opened his shop in Cureghem. He has managed to rescue his equipment from Syria. The streets are filled with the scent of Saaber’s dried fruits!”.

Many intercultural companions claim that a personal interest linked to knowledge possessed before the migration was empowered thanks to the new skills acquired during the training courses provided by the Migrantour project, and therefore transformed into an opportunity for personal growth and concrete professional improvement. This is, for example, the case of Siga, one of the intercultural companions of Migrantour Paris, who designed and now leads the walks in the “African fashion district” of Goutte d’Or:

“I am French from Mali. I was already personally interested in the themes of history and migration and now I have been able to integrate my own knowledge thanks to the training course. The Migrantour project has enabled me to enrich myself culturally through the diversity of meetings and tours, and to overcome some stereotypes I myself had about immigration”.

The mixing of personal vocation and new, open horizons linked to the Migrantour project also emerges from the poetic words of Sanja, an intercultural companion on the art tour in Belleville, Paris:

“I come from Croatia and my friends call me ‘migratory bird’. My love for travel does not allow me to rest long in a place. Living in Paris, in the working-class neighbourhood of Belleville, you only need to cross the road to meet different but at the same time, blended, cultures. Here I discovered a small world that keeps on amazing me. Paris has become my nest and now I can travel the world simply by walking through the streets of Paris. For me, this cultural diversity is a good example against all the difficulties and limitations of society such as racism and nationalism. It is not surprising that a neighbourhood like Belleville is an oasis of creative energy where everything is possible. What could a migratory bird want more than having a nest in an oasis?”.

## 6. Conclusions

Mobility studies have shown that, despite their diversity and specificity, migration and tourism are two interconnected and intertwined phenomena of the contemporary world (Urry, 2000; Adey, 2017).

Since 1950 the global number of migrants and tourists has risen from one hundred million to over one billion per year (Unwto, 2009). In the era of globalisation, as the Indian anthropologist Arjun Appadurai clearly noted: “Tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 33).

Cities are undoubtedly a privileged environment for observing and analysing the combined effect of migration and tourism. Research that sought to grasp urban super-diversity by focusing on the uses of urban space, rather than on the reified categories of “ethnicity” and “community”, proved to be particularly fruitful. This approach makes it possible to place at the centre of ethnographic observation the needs of citizens, the issue of the (un)equal access to public space and the conflicts over the different interpretations of local heritage. From this perspective, neighbourhoods emerge as a key dimension, both for integration policies implemented by local governments and for socio-cultural initiatives designed by researchers who want to apply their scientific knowledge (Pastore and Ponzio, 2012).

As outlined in the previous paragraphs, the Migrantour project appears to be an interesting example of how concepts, theories and methodological tools developed by anthropologists, geographers, sociologists and historians in the field of migration, tourism and urban transformation can be applied to identify the needs for change expressed by a territory and its inhabitants, to start a collaboration with the local population and to plan an intervention aimed at creating new possibilities for employment and civic participation.

In these short final remarks, I would like to recall the title of my contribution and the epigraph I chose to introduce the text. To what extent can the claim for a “crooked, open, modest city” launched by Richard Sennett (2018) in his recent and influential book *Building and Dwelling, Ethics for the City* be evoked as a paradigm to analyse the relevance of the Migrantour project?

I consider that there is no disputing the fact that our contemporary cities are definitely “crooked”. In the narrow streets of Marina in Cagliari as well as in the bustle of the open-air markets in Catania, in the gentrified patchwork of Mouraria in Lisbon as well in the juxtaposition of concrete low-income housing and the stone jewels of the Renaissance in the outskirts of Valencia, migrants and tourists represent tangible elements of what Appadurai (1996) defined as the “ethnoscape” of globalisation. Our cities are crooked because they are full of “disjunctures” and “differences”: and these inequalities underlie the premise for the step towards the second, crucial element of Sennett’s list. In his analysis about contemporary society, Sennett laments that the “closed city” – segregated, regimented, and controlled – has been spreading, affecting the lives of billions of individuals in urban agglomerations in the global North as well as in global South. As a radical, vital alternative, he argues for the “open city”: “Ethically, an open city would of course tolerate differences and promote equality (...) but would more specifically free people from the straitjacket of the fixed and the familiar, creating a terrain in which they could experiment and expand their experience” (Sennett, 2018, p. 9).

It seems to me that the above-mentioned testimonies by the intercultural companions explicitly or implicitly express the wish to “open the city”, taking a clear stance in the struggle that Sennett rightly pointed out as one of the most crucial political challenges of our times: that between the supporters of the “closed city”, xenophobic and subjected to an anti-democratic regime of control, and those who instead support the possibility of an “open city”, which presupposes a cosmopolitan way of thinking and living in an urban space.

Here we reach the third and final element: modesty. Designing and leading an intercultural urban route is useless if the participants of the walks do not assume a specific ethical commitment to practice “a certain kind of modesty: living one among many, engaged in a world that does not mirror oneself. Living one among many enables (...) richness of meaning rather than clarity of meaning. That is the ethics of an open city” (Sennett, 2018, p. 302).

In conclusion, a “modest city”, so understood, is the only possible environment where a project like Migrantour, or other similar experiences of intercultural urban tourism, can effectively support social cohesion and build mutual comprehension and respect among all residents, and at the same time avoid the risk of becoming just another way to exploit migrants using an agreeable and joyful label.

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## IS THE STREET ART A DRIVER FOR TOURIST VALORISATION OF MARGINAL URBAN CONTEXTS? THE EXPERIENCE OF NAPLES

Giorgia Iovino\*

### *Abstract*

The work investigates the role that street art practices can play in marginal and complex urban realities as identity markers and instruments for territorial enhancement. The intent is to understand, through the analysis of some street art experiences conducted in the suburbs of Naples, to what extent these unconventional artistic practices are able to favor the rewriting and re-signification of degraded and often abandoned landscapes and if they can be used by local institutions as drivers to develop alternative and territorialized tourist routes.

### **1. Introduction**

Over the last few years the city of Naples has become an interesting area for experimenting with street art practices, as evidenced by the proliferation of projects, festivals and tourist tours dedicated to the theme and the large number of street artists who wanted to leave in the Neapolitan capital their own sign (Iovino, 2019a; Salomone, 2018; Amato, 2015).

These unconventional artistic practices took place in a scenario marked by the progressive disengagement of the state at local scale and by urban policies that are often more attentive to the interests of the dominant urban coalitions than to pursue goals of socio-spatial equity. For this reason, they appear to local public policy makers as an interesting field of opportunities to promote the image of a different city, creative and inclusive and, at the same time, encourage the activation of urban regeneration and tourism development processes in degraded peripheral contexts.

This explains why, alongside artistic practices usually considered *off*, in the sense proposed by Vivant (2007), i.e. illegal or without institutional support, other practices have spurred, that may be considered *in*, i.e., formally authorized, promoted by cultural associations or, as in the case of Naples, produced with the support of local authorities, in line with the urban commons policy proposed by the major of the city De Magistris. The present work investigates the role that such “insurgent” practices (Cellammare and Scandurra, 2016) can play in marginal and complex realities as identity markers and tools for tourism development. Our general aim is to understand, through the analysis of the experiences carried out in some peripheral areas of the city of Napoli, to what extent these expressive forms, territorialized and territorializing, are able to

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generate new narratives and new urban imaginaries, stimulating the rise of alternative tourist routes compared to traditional destinations by tourists in the city.

The empirical analysis is based on a methodological approach which comprises: (i) conduction of semi-structured interviews with diverse stakeholders, involved both in the policy-making sphere and in the graffiti art worlds, including tourist guides and tour operators offering street art itineraries; (ii) extensive documental analysis of existing information, such as policy documents, strategies, publications and reports from city government; media news, associations website and specialized blogs active in the urban art field; (iii) participant observation and visual recollection of the art work in the city.

The paper is structured as follows. The next section briefly illustrates the relationship between street art and territory, proposing some interpretations. The third section focuses on the distinctiveness of the investigated area, trying to highlight spatial patterns and long-term characters of the city and its suburbs. The fourth section examines the street art practices and institutionalization processes experienced in recent years in Naples, questioning their ability to generate territorial effects. The fifth paragraph, finally, proposes some conclusive reflections aimed at evaluating the potential of street art as a tool for tourism enhancement.

## **2. Street art as a territorialized and territorializing practice**

Street art, as a *territorialized* and *territorializing* artistic practice, features a specific interest for geography (Iovino, 2019a; Amato, 2015) and more generally for all those disciplines that place at the center of their field of study the territory and the territorialization processes that shape the living environment of human societies<sup>16</sup>.

Form of expression intrinsically urban, the street art is born *out of* and *for* the shattered suburbs of contemporary metropolitan areas. There the street artist rewrites fragments of landscape, appropriates interstices and urban residues, he paints, colors and reinvents these marginal spaces, removing them from anonymity, producing new semantics and making them places of critical reflection, contemplation and discussion. Artworks by street artists are, therefore, *territorialized* or *site specific* (Kwon, 1997), due to dense relationship with the context within which they operate and from which they are conditioned<sup>17</sup>. Abandoned factories, overpasses and underpasses, enclosure walls, façades of degraded buildings, industrial wrecks, railway wagons and road signs become the canvases through which the artist relates himself to the places and to those that those places live or simply pass through.

The search for a dialogue with others makes street art a popular and non-elitist, horizontal and non-hierarchical expressive form: street art speaks to the general public,

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<sup>16</sup> Territorialization (Raffestin, 1984; Turco, 1988), is the process by which human societies transform space (natural data) into territory (data produced by culture). A phase of territorialization can be followed, in correspondence with a crisis, by a phase of de-territorialization, which is, according to Raffestin (1984, p. 78), “first of all the abandonment of the territory”. The de-territorialization is generally followed by a phase of re-territorialization, which closes a TDR cycle (territorialization de-territorialization, re-territorialization), in a continuous transformative dynamic.

<sup>17</sup> Street art dialogues with the context not only through interaction with the inhabitants, but also from the spatial and material point of view, using the imperfections of the surfaces and incorporating the architectural and / or casual elements of the street into artistic creation.



inhabitants, visitors, passers-by, tourists and it relates to them and, in this way, it becomes a carrier of a critical discourse about the city<sup>18</sup>.

The rewriting work born from this interaction is carried out with expressive techniques and methods that can be very different, ranging from spray cans to stencil art, from sticker art to muralism, from mosaics to video projections, from collages to LED art. The piece produced becomes part of a hermeneutic path based on emotions and on the empathic elaboration of signs and symbols, a path that activates the narrative potential of places.

Beyond the aesthetic value of the pieces, the artistic action has a social function and, when accompanied by true experiences of dialogue and interaction with the citizens and the local community, can lead to the rediscovery of the sense of place and the bonds of community. Viewed in this perspective, the street art can, therefore, take the form of a *territorializing act*<sup>19</sup>, capable of restoring a face and an identity to fragmented urban fabrics, to deterritorialized spaces without quality or services, “no places” expelled from the life cycle of the city.

The resignification capacity of these artistic practices and their growing popularity have stimulated the interest of many actors (institutions and public stakeholders, art galleries, large companies, cultural associations, etc.), giving way in recent years to new paths of institutionalization and/or commodification of this expressive form. A change harshly criticized by “purist”, i.e. street artists faithful to the origins that continue to paint illegally, keeping away from the fashions, the rules and the market (De Innocentis, 2017)<sup>20</sup>. An emblematic example of this “purist” orientation is the “artistic euthanasia” of the Italian street artist Blu, who canceled all his murals in Bologna, to protest the privatization, commodification and, more generally, instrumentalization, or even “domestication” (Costa and Lopes, 2015) of these unconventional and transgressive practices<sup>21</sup>.

Even outside the art world there are critical voices (Tomassini, 2012) that underline the risks and limits of an urban policy that “abdicates” its role and exploits an art “that is by its own nature, anti-institutionalization” (Costa and Lopes, 2015) for masking the degradation and abandonment of difficult territories and the institutions’ inability to implement appropriate strategies for these areas. Sometimes the goal of these operations is to transform the artistic work into a brand aimed at increasing the

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<sup>18</sup> The highly disputed charge of street art is linked to its origins and its history. It represents, in fact, the evolution of writing or graffiti in the 1960s in the New York ghettos as an illegal and clandestine practice of rebellion against the pre-established order and the conquest of urban space by suburban gangs. See Lewisohn, 2008; Genin, 2016.

<sup>19</sup> Territorialization occurs through a succession of territorializing acts (Raffestin, 1981), aimed at exercising a symbolic control (denomination), practical control (reification) and creating organizational structures that facilitate its management (structuring).

<sup>20</sup> According to De Innocentis (2017), it is possible to identify four categories of street artists, in addition to *purists*: the *independents*, who work in a legal and authorized manner, but do not accept indications from above and seek a close synergy with citizenship and the territory; *the artists who live in a middle ground*, as they oscillate between legal and illegal, between independence and institutionalization; the *designers and illustrators*, who experience street art but do not have much experience of these practices; the *former street artists*, who have embraced new commercial-oriented artistic paths.

<sup>21</sup> It is not possible here (nor does it fall within the scope of this article) to reconstruct the interesting critical debate that has developed in the street art world on the existing tensions between the processes of commodification and institutionalization of these artistic practices and their impacts on the degree of creativity and artistic value of pieces or the artistic reputation building mechanisms. On this issue see Costa and Lopez, 2015, Hansen, 2015.

attractiveness of the city or some of its parts for tourists<sup>22</sup>. Actually, street art is an important agent of transformation in urban life, as several studies testify. It acts indeed on the social value enhancement, on the promotion of inclusion, participation and citizenship, but even on the urban image (producing symbolic value) and on the economic value creation mechanisms, promoting real estate valorization, gentrification/touristification processes (Andron, 2018; Costa and Lopez, 2015). This paper will not discuss the theoretical framework of these interesting issues (including the controversial role of street art and more generally of the art-driven urban renewal programs, in branding the creative city), deeply studied by many authors in recent years<sup>23</sup>. Although inspired by the theoretical discussion about the phenomenon, our contribution provides a fundamentally empirical set of evidence to improve our knowledge about the geographies and the governance of street art in Naples, rather than pursuing a more conceptual approach to the assessment of culturally driven regeneration programs or tourism policies and all the critical issues and dilemmas there involved.

In this perspective we focus in the following paragraphs, on street art practices and institutionalization processes experienced in recent years in the area of investigation.

### **3. The area of investigation**

Naples, for several reasons, turns out to be an environment particularly suited to the development of unconventional artistic practices, such as street art, characterized by a close relationship between artistic action and the places where this action is located, namely the fragmented and degraded suburbs of contemporary cities.

In the national and European panorama, the Neapolitan capital stands out, in fact, for the complexity and typological variety of its suburbs (fig. 1), extremely heterogeneous in terms of geomorphology, urban history, social composition, settlement and functional structure, real cities in the cities that make up an intricate urban patchwork (Pagano, 2001; Laino, 2008; Amato, 2008).

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<sup>22</sup> In Italy, the institutionalization of these practices has been reinforced by the economic crisis and the budgetary constraints faced by local authorities. Deprived of the necessary financial resources to be used for improving the urban environment, many local governments have in fact seen the street art as a useful and free tool for urban regeneration. It is the case, for example, of Rome that has set up a series of street art projects in its suburbs or even of the Municipality of Turin that has welcomed and promoted important events such as MurArte or the most recent PicTurin project.

<sup>23</sup> Starting from the works by Landry (2000) and Florida (2002, 2005) an intensive cultural and academic debate has developed around the cultural approach to urban regeneration policies and its multiple impacts. The direct link between urban development and the presence of an open and tolerant culture proposed by Florida and welcomed in the public sphere by many policymakers has been questioned by post-modern critics. Authors such as Lay (2003), Zukin (1991, 1995), Peck (2006) Miles (2005), to name a few, have highlighted the negative effects taken by culture-led (or art driven) practices where culture is just another commodity for the masses or even worse “a carnival mask” (Harvey, 1989), behind which increasing social inequalities and urban conflicts are hidden. More specifically on the question of touristification or tourism gentrification see Cocola-Gant, (2018), Lees (2012), Colomb and Novy (2016).

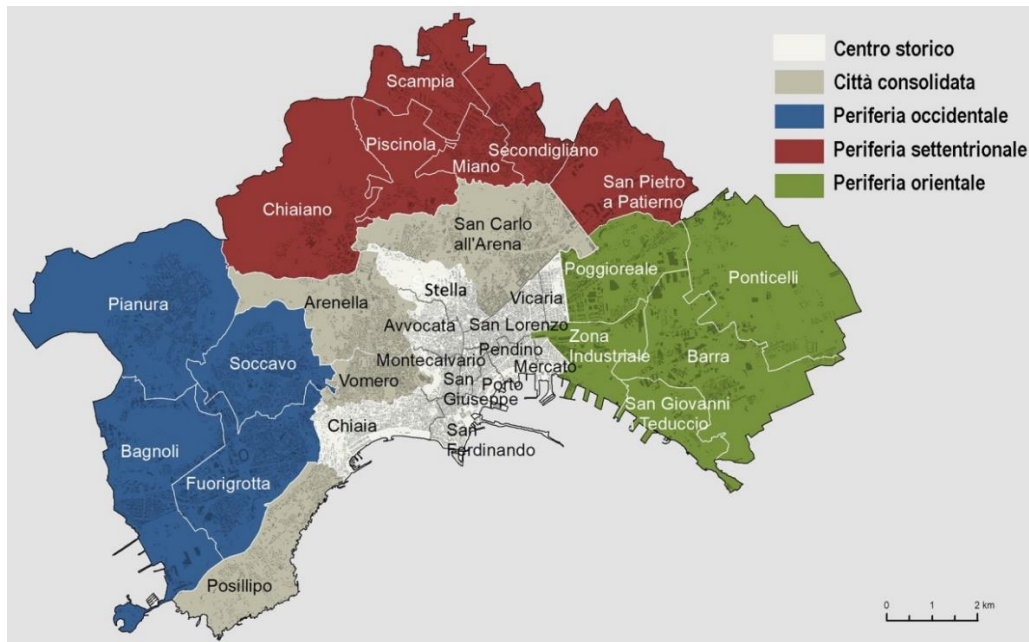


Figure 1: Naples and its neighborhoods according to PRG 2004.

Source: PRG 2004, modified by the Author

Revisiting the clusterizations suggested by other Authors (Laino, 2008; Berruti and Lepore, 2009), in a recent work (Iovino, 2019b) I proposed a taxonomy of the Neapolitan suburbs partitioned into seven main groups:

1. *the internal suburbs* located in the “womb” of Naples which include the very central neighborhoods of Mercato, Pendino, San Lorenzo, Montecalvario, Stella and Vicaria;
2. *the historic industrial suburbs*, mostly abandoned or being discontinued located at the two ends of the city (Bagnoli in the West, Industrial Zone, San Giovanni a Teduccio and partly Barra in the East side);
3. *the “quality” public housing areas of the first peripheral crown* dating back to the Fifties and today inhabited mainly by middle class dwellers;
4. the marginal peripheries of the great public building, placed mainly in the North-eastern quadrant (Secondigliano, Scampia, Barra and Ponticelli) and in the western neighborhood of Soccavo;
5. *the suburbs of illegal construction*, which grew out of control in the 1970s and 1990s, especially in the western and northern areas (Pianura and Chiaiano are the most striking examples);
6. *the “waste” places of the first and second crown*, “no places” without any urban recognition, real existential suburbs such as the Roma camps or some megastructures abandoned by the institutions and turned into criminal enclaves (i.e. the “Vele” of Scampia);
7. *the new spaces of socialization and production of active territoriality*, a typology of heterogeneous spaces that includes buildings or open spaces almost always owned by the city, entrusted to no-profit associations or local committees for the performance of activities of collective interest.

This latter type of peripheral spaces is linked to the second reason that makes Naples an area of great interest for the study of places' re-appropriation practices, such as the street art. That is the abundant and growing presence of associations, local committees, urban movements that for years, opposing the anomaly and the socio-environmental degradation of the suburbs, have been carrying out an enormous quantity of fertilization projects and initiatives. These latter range from the care of public spaces to urban gardening, from courses for school recovery and work placement to many projects that bring young people closer to sport and cultural activities (theater, music, painting, etc.). A varied and plural morphology that draws a geography of self-organizing capacities and local planning, a geography that is different from that of dominant economic flows, but also compared to that of organized crime networks which, sadly known, represent an historical and archetypical character of the city.

The activism and planning effervescence of local associations concerns both the inner marginal areas and the second crown neighborhoods. In Scampia alone, for example, there are over a hundred associations and local committees that have been operating in the neighborhood for years, carrying out a myriad of projects and initiatives<sup>24</sup>. A long-lasting tradition of associationism also boasts the peripheries of the "belly" of Naples (according to the famous expression by Matilde Serao). Not surprisingly, right in the historic city center, in the populous San Lorenzo district, in 2012, an innovative path started with the occupation of the former Asilo Filangieri. It gave birth to a new category of socialization spaces: urban commons, i.e. spaces owned by the municipality but directly administered by citizens, through a collective use declaration inspired by civic uses, which establishes methods of access, program of activities and functioning (Micciarelli, 2017). Currently there are eight initiatives like that in the city. Most of which regard sites of great historical importance: the former Filangeri Asylum, the "Scugnizzo Liberato" and "Santa Fede Liberata" in the ancient center, the "Giardino Liberato" in Materdei (Stella district), Lido Pola and Villa Medusa in Bagnoli.

As producers of "social profitability", these public spaces have been recognized as commons in the municipal statute and regulated by specific resolutions. A result made possible thanks to the agreement between the local associations involved in the experimentation of practices of re-appropriation and self-management of public spaces and the city administration which, referring to the works by the Rodotà Commission (Mattei, Reviglio and Rodotà, 2007), who recognized the legitimacy of such practices and initiated a process of institutionalization of this category of assets, entrusted to the competences of a specific department (the Councillorship for Commons, a unique case in Italy). The Neapolitan experience, object of study and imitation by other national and European urban realities (Palermo, Turin, Barcelona, Madrid), is considered a best practice at the EU level, and received the "Good Practice City" under the Urbanact program.

Among the drivers of this path to institutionalization, a non-secondary role is played by budget cuts to local authorities that have become stronger for the economic crisis and the payment of the interests of the city debt. Actually, the Municipality is in a situation of pre-financial distress, responsible in turn for a further contraction of urban

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<sup>24</sup> The literature on Scampia is now very extensive. Among others see Amato 1993; Andriello, 1983, Braucci e Zeppoli, 2009. For a brief review on the Scampia model see Pollichieni, 2016.

services. In this difficult situation local governments tend to devolve a large part of the city's cultural and social policies to civil society and local associations.

A similar path of institutionalization has also involved street art. In 2016, the Municipality recognized the phenomenon as a "new cultural expression" of youth, issued a specific disciplinary document (DISP/2016/0005488), through which the normed use of public surfaces is foreseen "for urban creativity interventions (drawings, murals, writing, etc.) (...), with the intention of redeveloping the urban context, especially the peripheral one, of the city of Naples".

In a context marked by the dismantling of urban welfare, the street art is entrusted with the role of eliciting regenerative actions. It is not by chance that among the meritorious elements for the granting of the surfaces there is the presentation of artistic projects "that contemplate the involvement, both in the conception and in the realization, of the social context (inhabitants, associations) of the area affected by the project".

#### **4. Street art in the Neapolitan suburbs**

In Naples this art form boasts a long tradition, which dates back to the late 1970s, to the precursor works carried out by Felice Pignataro in the northern suburbs of the city, in particular in Scampia where this artist, of Roman origins, chose to live and die. In this notorious neighborhood, emblem of marginality, he founded, in 1981, together with his wife Mariella, the cultural association GRIDAS (Group of Awakening from Sleep), with the aim of reawakening the consciences of citizens who lived there and of promoting a shared path of critical reflection and hope. His artistic work with strong ideological and social connotations is an act of condemnation of the conditions of degradation and anonymity of suburbs, especially those of the large public housings with functionalist inspiration, where the inhumanity of the urban configuration exalts individualism, isolation and self-segregation. It is no coincidence that Pignataro's favorite surfaces are the numerous barriers that mark these marginal landscapes (fences, gates, walls). Physical and social barriers to which the artist wanted to give a new ephemeral face, painting them, often in collaboration with the schools of the neighborhood, to convey alternative visions of the world, centered on solidarity and social cohesion (Pignataro, 1993; Di Martino and Il Gridas, 2010). As a tribute to the artist, who died in 2004, the GRIDAS transformed the new Scampia subway station into Felimetrò, an area that exhibits about twenty works created by the artist in memory of his forty-year work in the neighborhood and in the city.

Over the years the works of a new and large generation of local artists have been added to Pignataro's precursor works. Among these is Jorit Agoch, a rising star of Italian street art, increasingly known internationally. Born in Naples from an Italian father and a Dutch mother, Agoch is known for his "branded" faces, faces of ordinary people or famous people taken from the local and Italian culture (San Gennaro, Maradona, Eduardo De Filippo, Hamsik, Ilaria Alpi, Pasolini, Massimo Troisi, etc.), portraits with two red stripes on the cheeks. This is a reference to African tribal rituals where the artist has stayed several times, but at the same time it is a symbolic element that contains an egalitarian message, the aspiration towards a world devoid of social hierarchies, in which all men are part of the same human tribe.

Also Diego Miedo and Arp are Neapolitans. The first is active principally in Gianturco, in the eastern suburbs of Naples, where he created many of his giant and monstrous and floating creatures (Miedo and Schiavon, 2016). The second, Arp, is re-known for his funny skeletons that perform surreal actions, a clear reference to the profane

sacredness of the city and to the devotion to the dead, exemplified by the cult of the “capuzzelle” and of the “pezzentelle” souls<sup>25</sup>. Of Casertan origin are, instead, Zolta famous for his stripped and colored figures with an original and unmistakable style and Lume, whose “urban vegetation” that scratches the surface of abandoned and disintegrating walls, seems to reclaim the spaces that man has taken away from nature. The red and blue anthropomorphic figures of Cyop & Kaf adorn the Spanish Quarters with over 230 artworks, small and large, made on walls, gates, newsstands, collected for future reference in the volume *Quore Spinato* (Cyop & Kaf, 2013). Rosaria Bosso, also known as Roxy in the Box, has left her mark in the dense network of alleys and palaces of the Spanish Quarters with her Vascio Art: dozens of colorful posters of famous figures such as Frida Khalo, Rita Levi Montalcini, Amy Winehouse, Artemide, Anna Magnani, portrayed seated as if facing the windows of their bass.

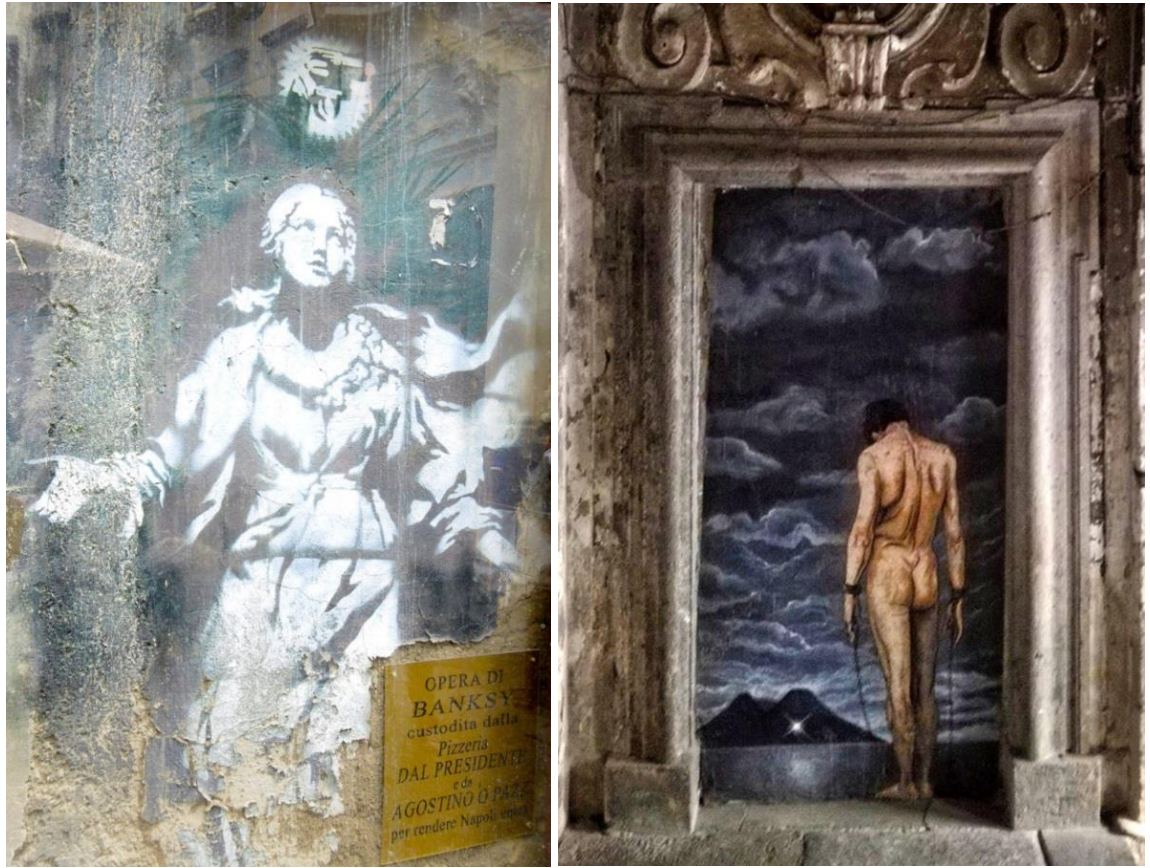
Alongside local artists, the Neapolitan urban scene is populated by many internationally renowned artists. Many of them were attracted by the contradictions, the lights and the shades of the city, and perhaps also by its anarchic spirit. All of them left their ephemeral creations here. Consider the beautiful works by Ernest Pignon-Ernest, from Nice active in Naples for many years (particularly between 1988 and 1995) or the provocative *Madonna with gun* (fig. 2), the only Italian work by the English artist Banksy<sup>26</sup>, the most famous street artist in the world, and yet see the man in chain by the French artist Zilda who adorns the historic Sanfelice building in the Sanità district (fig. 2) or the tributes to Caravaggio made in red and black by Christian Guémy, known as C215.

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<sup>25</sup> The *capuzzelle* are skulls of dead people with no identity or family, while the souls *pezzentelle* are the abandoned and forgotten souls, remained imprisoned in Purgatory, able to fulfill the prayers of those who had taken them into care.

<sup>26</sup> Banksy identity is still unknown. His murals, executed with the stencil technique, are of a satirical and subversive nature and address social issues such as media manipulation, homologation, the atrocities of war, etc. His *Madonna with gun*, now protected by a display case, highlights the paradox of a city marked by the mixture of sacred and profane, faith and criminality, revealing its contradictions and dissonances.





*Figure 2: “Madonna with gun” by Banksy and “le vent pèse autant que les chaînes” by Zilda. Source: photo by the author.*

Other artworks to be mentioned are: the “Figures of Women” realized by Alice Pasquini at Calata Trinità Maggiore, the “Little Men” scattered in the Decumani by the Florentine artist Exit Enter, the goldfinch made by two Germans - Becky Stace and Bambus - on the Blue *Vela* of Scampia, the Siren Partenope at Materdei by Bosoletti (an artist from Argentina) wanted and financed by the residents of the neighborhood. Of special significance are the murales by the American artist Ryan Spring Dooley and the most recent artworks by Nafir, Frz and Serror from Iran.

Among the places of the city most affected by these rewriting practices are the social centers occupied in the 1990s, such as Officina 99, an abandoned factory located in Gianturco in the industrial area or the Ska, Laboratory of Experimentation and Antagonistic Kulture, located in the ancient center near the Monastery of Santa Chiara (fig. 3). The murals created in these spaces, in addition to reflecting the cultural and social battles undertaken in those years, appear as markers of identity and instruments of re-appropriation of the urban territory.



*Figure 3: The Laboratory of Experimentation and Antagonistic Culture.*  
Source: photo by the author.

The social centers have more recently been joined by the so called self-managed “liberated” spaces, recognized as urban commons. Works by Hohn, Zolta, Cristina Portolano, Lume, Raro and by many other artists adorn the sixteenth-century structure of the Santa Fede, a former female recluse hostel. There the second edition of the Obla Fest dedicated to illustration artworks took place in 2018. In the former Carcere minorile Filangieri, formerly a Prison for teenagers, now a recreation center called “Scugnizzo liberato”, ancient walls now host artworks such as: Zilda’s Angels clearly inspired by Italian Renaissance artworks, the abstract human figures by Zolta and the bio vegetarian artworks by Lume.

An important stop in an ideal journey to discover the urban art in Naples is also the former Judicial Psychiatric Hospital (OGP) in Materdei. This building today they host the *Je so pazzo* social center. The entire façade painted by Blu (fig. 4), the well-known Italian street artist whose identity is unknown, illustrates the horror of imprisonment. Inside its walls are tattooed by the visionary images of Ericailcane, Diego Miedo, Arp, Zolta and others.





Figure 4: Former OPG “Je so pazzo” work by Blu.

Source: <https://www.itinari.com/it/street-art-and-street-food-in-naples-57j4>.

Apart from these structures “liberate” (freed or released) returned to the community, the areas of the city most affected by street art interventions are the Spanish Quarters, the Decumani area and the Sanità district (fig. 5), although important achievements are present in more peripheral neighborhoods in the first and second crown.

The growing attention to these open-air artistic practices, often of high aesthetic quality, has set new energies in motion and activated a new local planning, as evidenced by the promotion of alternative tourist itineraries, aimed at the discovery of these ephemeral creations.

Alongside the practices *off*, in recent years we have witnessed the emergence of practices *in* carried out by local associations and supported by local institutions<sup>27</sup>.

One of the first social street art projects in the city was the one that involved Ponticelli, a neighborhood in the eastern suburbs marked by serious situations of degradation and marginality, as well as by the massive presence of illicit activities managed by Camorra clans<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> We refer to the distinction proposed by Vivant (2007) between artistic practices *in* and *off*: the former are formal practices recognized and promoted by municipal institutions to animate the city’s cultural life, while the latter are informal practices conducted by artists or cultural associations without institutional support and without commercial purposes.

<sup>28</sup> Rural area of Naples until 1860, then Independent municipality until 1924, when it was again annexed to the Neapolitan city, Ponticelli experienced a rapid and chaotic urban development in the second post-war period, becoming the site of industrial activities, today largely abandoned, and of large public housing complexes (Iovino, 2019b).



Figure 5: The Street art map in Naples created by Inward.  
 Source: <http://www.inward.it/attivita/mappa-del-writing-a-napoli>.

With its 52.000 inhabitants, it is one of the most populous and youngest districts of the city and the one with the highest incidence (31,4%) of NEETs, young people under 25 years not (engaged) in education, employment or training<sup>29</sup>. Its peripheral location strengthens the marginalization and the underlying dynamics: school dropout, high crime and unemployment rates, lack of public services and equipment.

In this border area, the first Italian Territorial Center for Urban Creativity was established in 2010, directed by the Inward Observatory (International Network on Writing Art Research and Development), committed to promoting, in collaboration with public agencies and private subjects, processes of social regeneration in difficult peripheral contexts. One of the main instruments to achieve these goals has been the use of unconventional artistic practices, such as street art, urban design, graffiti art.

At the end of 2010 Inward developed, with the support of the Vodafone Foundation, Cunto (Urban Creativity Naples Eastern Territory), the first national experimental project of urban social creativity. This experience was followed in 2015 by the launch of a structured program of social street art, conducted with the support of MiBACT and Siae. It was sponsored by various local public agencies (Municipality of Naples, Fai Campania, National Archaeological Museum, etc.) and by private subjects.

The program led to the creation of a small district of urban creativity (fig. 6). Eight Italian street artists have painted eight large murals on the gray and anonymous facades of the four popular buildings of Parco Merola, a public housing complex hosting 160 households relocated there following the earthquake in 1980.

<sup>29</sup> These district data have recently been made available by Istat for Naples and other metropolitan cities in order to support the Parliamentary Investigation Commission on the suburbs.



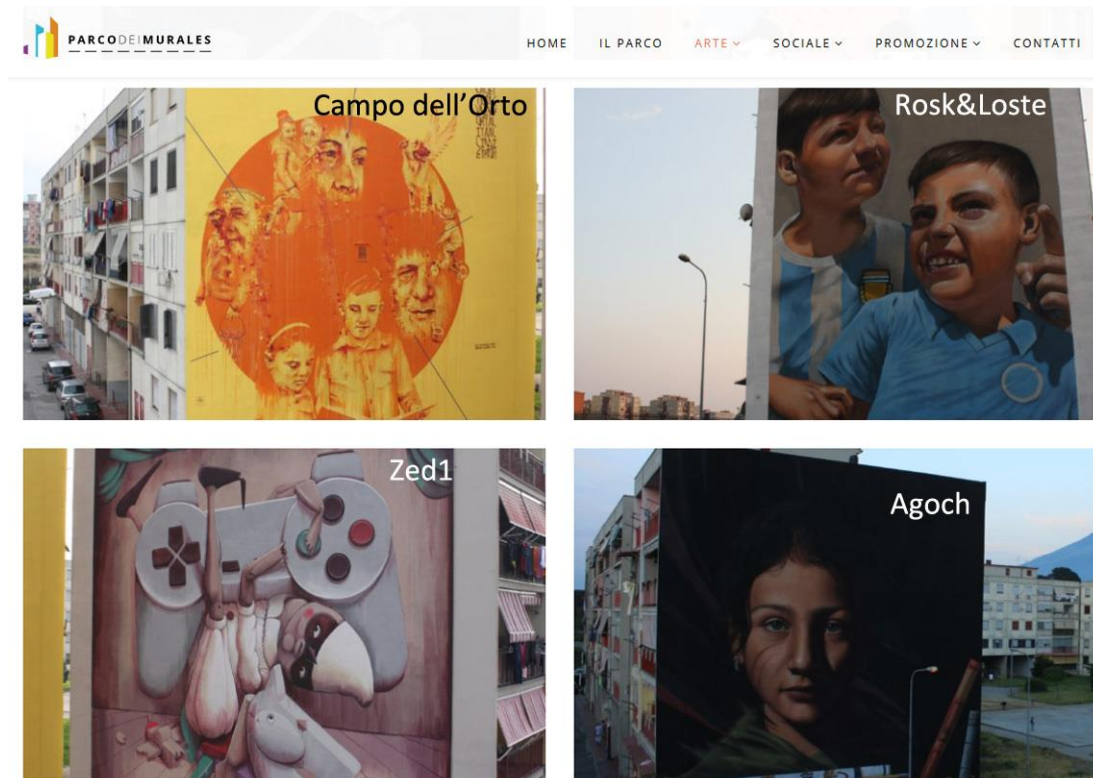


Figure 6: Some works of the park of murals from the website  
 Source: <http://www.parcodemurales.it/arte/opere/>.

The first completed work was *Ael. Tutt'egual song'e creature* (Ael All kids are equal), painted by Jorit Agoch commissioned by Unar, the National Anti-Discrimination Office of the Department of Equal Opportunities - Presidency of the Council of Ministers, (together with Miur and Anci), to celebrate the International Roma, Sinti and Caminati Day (fig. 5). The work depicts Ael's "branded" face (the initiatory signs that "mark" all the portraits of Agoch), a small Roma with an intense gaze, represented with a pile of books to underline the importance of school education in the dynamics for social integration. The *zingarella*, as it has been nicknamed by the inhabitants of the neighborhood, is an actually existing child from the nearby Roma camp struck by a serious fire some time before. The mural by Agoch paved the way to several other artworks by Italian street artists<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> The list includes: *A pazziella 'n' man 'e creatures* (The little toy in the hands of the little kids), by the Tuscan artist Zed1, on the importance and quality of the game for kids; *Chi è volut bene, non s'o scorda* (Who is loved, he does not forget it), by the Sicilian street artists Rosk & Loste, a tribute to the Neapolitan soccer and to the happy season that the city has lived with Maradona (one of the two little boys is depicted with the Argentine mallets); *Trattenimiento de peccerille* (Entertainment for the kids), by the Friulian Mattia Campo dell'Orto, with two children taken in the reading of *Lo Cunto de Li cunti* (The tale of the tales), by Giambattista Basile, surrounded by the characters that populate his stories (the artwork is meant to remind the central role of reading in youth formation); *'A mamm' 'e tutt' 'e mamm'* (The mother of all mothers), by La Fille Bertha, a celebration of motherhood, depicted in the guise of a mother-lady, inspired by the *Madonna della Misericordia* by Piero della Francesca where the Madonna is portrayed in the gesture of protecting two little girls by a mantle; *Je sto vicino a te* (Being close to you), by the Apulian artist Daniele Nitti, who, exploring the theme of solidarity, represents a small village, a metaphor of a settlement model on a human scale; *'O sciore cchiù felice* (The happiest flower), a work by the Piedmontese Petani dedicated to the value of local knowledge and wisdom, which

These artistic interventions have been accompanied by social laboratories, managed by qualified personnel (a team of tutors, psychologists and volunteers from the civil service), aimed at listening to the needs and aspirations of the local community and carrying out recreational-educational activities, especially intended for children, adolescents and mothers living in the park.

The Park, once detrimentally known as *o parco d'e cuoll spuorc* (The park of the dirty necks), is today known as the *Park of murals*. In the intentions of its promoters, the initiative should work as a social incubator, helping the local community “to reflect on his own identity, on the values and on the contribution that anyone, without distinction, can give to the territory” (interview with Luca Borriello founder of Inward, in Perrone, 2018).

A few years after the completion of the program, awarded as part of the “Segnali d'Italia” campaign promoted by IGD Decaux, it is possible to register the emergence of some regenerative micro-processes ranging from the creation of a football pitch at the foot of the mural by Rosk & Loste for the implementation of condominium bookcrossing activities and the creation of a small playground. Indeed, the street art project had the merit of breaking the isolation of a neighborhood-enclave, favoring a rediscovery of the sense of place and the bonds of community.

In 2016 they were promoted the first tourist tour in the Park, led by the children of the cooperative Arginalia, created to promote employment in the suburbs of East Naples. However, lack of cultural resources or other primary factors of attractiveness, the image of an infamous neighborhood with a high crime rate and the periphery of the area compared to the historical city and its wealth of assets did not allow the activation of a real tourist circuit.

More successful was the experience of *Rione Sanità*, which in recent years has become a testing ground for a participatory art project, sponsored by the Municipality. Located in the heart of Naples in the Stella district, the ancient settlement Virgini-Sanità represents one of the most degraded and disadvantaged inner city suburbs. However, unlike Ponticelli, it has a cultural heritage of extraordinary value: Roman necropolis, hypogeum, splendid churches and magnificent baroque palaces built by the Neapolitan noble families between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to enjoy the healthy air of the area (hence the name due to its salubritas). At the origin of its decay there was the construction of the Maddalena bridge (118 meters) at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The bridge was built to join the Capodimonte Palace to the Royal Palace, completely isolated the area at the time, transforming it into a ghetto, a criminal enclave with very high rates of early school leaving and widespread phenomena of juvenile delinquency.

In 2016, the project *Luce* was launched in the district, promoted by the cultural association “Fazzoletto di perle”. The initiative, interestingly financed by the sale of the artwork “Sanità” by the Neapolitan painter Tommaso Ottieri, received the patronage of the Municipality and the support of the San Gennaro Community Foundation, whose main inspiration is Father Loffredo, a parish priest operating in the district and essential reference for the local community. The Foundation, established in 2014, brings together various local actors committed to supporting local fertilization

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refers to the research work of Aldo Merola a botanist, the director of the Real botanical garden of Naples; *Cura 'e paure (Treat your fears)*, by Luca Caputo, also known under the pseudonym of Zed40, which represents an imaginary family, the typical Parco Merola family, united by a common territorial rooting and intent in taking care of their living environment, transforming it into a common good.

projects and initiatives ranging from the recovery of cultural assets to the study of support courses, from the promotion of laboratories for the employment of young people to projects related to sport, theater, music, painting. Bottom-up initiatives carried out by the many local associations and cooperatives that have been working in the district for years, experimenting with new socio-spatial practices<sup>31</sup>.

The participatory art project arises in this context and testifies to the resilience, the design effervescence and the energies present in this problematic area. Thanks to *Luce* project followed by *Ultravioletto* project, the palaces and churches of the district have been embellished with seven murals by internationally well-known street artists, South Americans and Spaniards, such as the Mexican Addi Fernandez, the Argentinian Bosoletti<sup>32</sup>, the Chilean Mono Gonzalez.

The objective was to give a new image to the district and, at the same time, to stimulate identity-making processes, rediscovering the sense of place and community ties. To this end, the interventions were headed by laboratory activities involving the inhabitants, in particular the younger ones. Their smiling faces are reproduced in “Light”, the tondo made by the Spanish Tono Cruz on the wall of the building in front of the Basilica of S. Maria della Sanità (fig. 7).



Figure 7: “Speranza nascosta” by Bosoletti and “Luce” by Cruz at Sanità.

Source: photo by the author.

In a city marked by one of the highest population densities in Europe and by a chronic under-allocation of public spaces, urban services and equipment, these bottom-up interventions testify the liveliness and the desire for cultural experimentation, and, at the same time, the aspiration to regain urban public space. The painted characters fit into the daily life of the street, become familiar with the inhabitants, enhancing the sense of belonging and pride by the local community.

The artistic creations realized have also contributed to breaking the isolation of the area, opening it up to the city, they have increased its notoriety and tourist flows thanks also to the hard work by local associations and cooperatives.

<sup>31</sup> Much has been written about the Rione Sanità as an “active community that produces meaning and income” (Bonomi, 2018) and about its ability to activate community welfare. Among others see Nocchetti, 2018; Massa and Moretti, 2011.

<sup>32</sup> There are three works by Bosoletti in the Rione Sanità. Among these “Hidden Hope”, a woman’s face marked by the years, depicted on the wall of *La Tenda* a center for the homeless for the innovative ultraviolet technique used, the image needs to be deciphered, converted into negative.

The success of the initiative has pushed the Municipal government to promote and to finance another participatory art project, also in the Sanità district, the *Wi-U Adolescents in Art*. This project is aimed at the cultural growth of peripheral areas at risk. Designed and implemented by a group of social cooperatives (Il Grillo Parlante, La Casa dei Cristallini, etc.), Wi-U has tried to involve young people of the neighborhood in artistic and creative activities to keep them away from organized crime or deviant paths. Many laboratories have been activated in the two editions of the project: creative writing workshops, screenwriting, video photo, graphic communication, artistic make-up. Among the proposed activities, a central role was assigned to street art, which is also linked to the educational project *Io sono Felice! (How happy I am!)*, curated by the *Madre* museum, in collaboration with the San Gennaro Community Foundation and the Municipality. As part of this project, the itinerary called *Dal Madre alla Sanità e ritorno* was developed, a tour to discover places made famous by films and TV series and street art works, with the guidance of the *WI-U teenagers in art*, formed in association.

### **5. Street art as a resource for tourism?**

After a long period of decline, Naples, thanks to the cultural and tourism promotion policies implemented by the municipal administration<sup>33</sup>, has been interested since the 1990s in a resumption of touristic flows. This positive trend has strengthened in recent years, benefiting particularly from the growth of urban cultural tourism at international and national level.

Currently the Neapolitan city, with about 1,3 million arrivals and 3,2 million presences, is, according to the most recent Report on Italian Tourism (Buonincontri, 2018), 6<sup>th</sup> in the ranking of the main Italian cities of art (after Rome, Venice, Milan, Florence and Turin). As part of the Top 10, Naples was also the city of art which has experienced in the last five years (2013-2017), the highest rate of growth in arrivals (over 80%).

As a result, the offer of tourist itineraries in urban areas has been enriched and diversified, especially that relating to “alternative” and customized itineraries, aimed at the discovery of picturesque and unusual places not besieged by mass tourism and therefore more capable to relate to the territory and its inhabitants. It is in this context that the growing interest in street art must be located by sector operators and local institutions.

The 400 ml association<sup>34</sup> was one of the first to move in this direction, promoting *Naples Paint Stories*, an original tour, an urban storytelling, through the streets of the historic center to discover the great Italian and non-Italian artists who chose the Neapolitan suburbs to create their own works (fig. 8). More recently, a second tour has been added in the eastern suburbs, in Gianturco, where the local artist Diego Miedo has realized most of his artworks.

The initiative born within the NAU project - Naples Urban Action, supported by the ANCI, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and the Department of Youth

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<sup>33</sup> On the Neapolitan “renaissance” of the Nineties and the role of the Municipality and other local actors such as Napoli99 Foundation, see Rossi, 2009.

<sup>34</sup> It is an association formed by young urban creatives that has among its objectives the promotion of culture with particular attention to the urban art. Its name reflects “the nature and spirit of its members: 400ml, in fact it is the content of a spray paint spray expressed in milliliters” (from the association’s website).



Policies of the Municipality of Naples, was based on a careful study work, aimed at surveying and mapping the works present in the city (in particular those created by the “purists”). In this perspective, the itineraries proposed are led by art historians and experts in urban art (often the so-called local riders).



Figure 8: The itinerary proposed by Napoli Paint Stories in the historical center.

Source: <http://urbanlives.it/artisti/la-storia/streetart-napoli/>.

Over time, these tours have gained some notoriety, reaching around 5.000 visitors a year (data referring to 2017 and 2018, according to the association’s website), mainly concentrated in the autumn and spring seasons. To this figure it should be added the participants in the events organized by Napoli Paint Stories, as OblaFest paint, market & music festival dedicated to illustration, street art and muralism. The event, held in May 2018 in the complex of Santa Fede Liberata saw the participation of almost 7.000 people, reflecting the growing interest in this form of expression<sup>35</sup>.

Currently there are several tour operators (Getyourguide, Musement, Travelfashiontips, just to name a few) who offer in their packages itineraries explicitly dedicated to graffiti or more frequently mixed tours, which include urban art among the various attractions proposed (fig. 8). Recommended tours of street art also appear in most web portals and city guides (such as Lonely Planet, Benaples, Visitnaples, Napolidavivere, Napolilike).

The *leit motiv* of this constantly growing “creative” tourist offer is the possibility of living an authentic and unique experience, of getting in touch with the local population, of getting to know places that are often infamous, but at the same time marked by the charm of the unusual and different like living debris of history usually are.

As part of this creative and experiential tourism operate, for example, Vascitour and Tour Angels (fig. 8). They offer visits to the heart of Naples in less-known areas (from

<sup>35</sup> On this occasion 30 illustrators, muralists and street artists (such as Alice Schiavone, Alleg, Arpaia, Biodpi, Come, Cyop & Kaf, Raro, Zolta, etc.) have left their works on the walls of the former female prison.

the Spanish Quarters, to the Museum, to the Pedamentina) to small groups of tourists accompanied by the mythical figure of the “Fratammè” (the brother not of blood, but of friendship), an inhabitant of the neighborhood who acts as a local guide<sup>36</sup>.

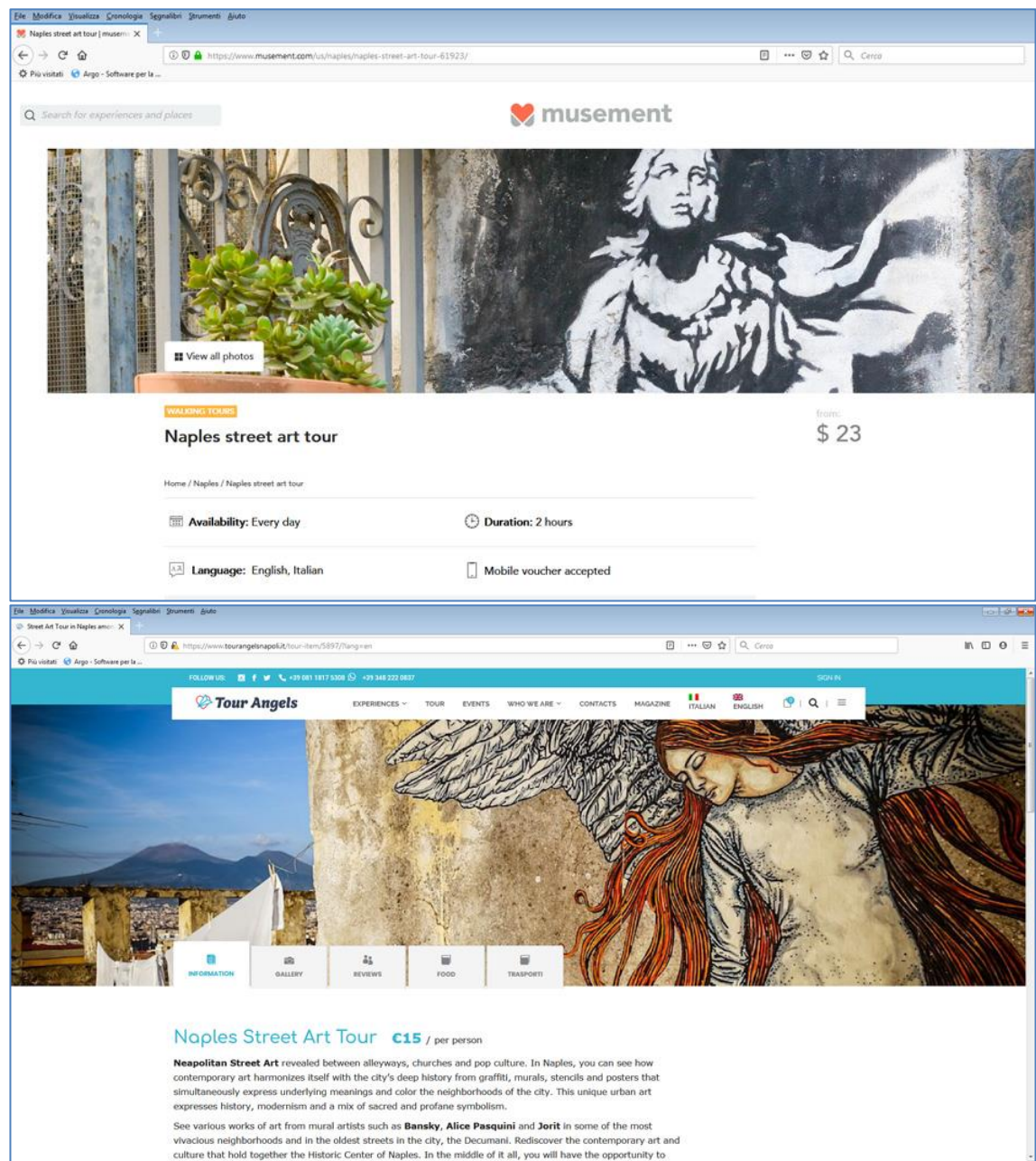


Figure 9: The itinerary proposed by Musement (a) and Tour Angels.  
Source: <https://www.musement.com/us/naples/naples-street-art-tour-61923/>;  
<https://www.tourangelsnapoli.it/tour-item/5897/?lang=en>.

<sup>36</sup> Vascitour purposes experiential travels in Naples. According to the website “You could sleep in a ‘basso’, eat with Neapolitans in their houses and live the city in an alternative way, since Vascitour links you with the local inhabitants. You will find your personal *FrataMME* during the trip: he/she will stay with you to make exciting, emotional and inspiring your holiday in Napoli”. See the website <https://www.vascitour.com/>.



Most of the offer is concentrated in the perimeter protected by UNESCO, and in particular in the areas of the historical center with a higher density of historical heritage. These are still niche paths, but they contribute not only to re-launch the image of Naples as a creative city, but also and above all to stimulate pride and respect for places in the local community.

This explains the reasons that led to the institutionalization of these practices, an institutionalization that appears, moreover, fully consistent with the policy of common goods, pursued by the mayor De Magistris.

In a context characterized by a situation of pre-financial instability, street art is seen by the urban government as an opportunity to set up urban regeneration paths in the suburbs, as well as a marketing tool to promote the image of Naples as a creative and inclusive city.

It is no coincidence, therefore, that the city is today an interesting laboratory of social street art practices, even though their territorial impact is not always able to trigger real regenerative processes. In particular, from a touristic point of view, the interventions implemented so far seem to have generated more or less significant repercussions depending on the territories involved. Modest results have, for example, been achieved by the project of the Inward observatory, which concerned a particularly difficult and uncomfortable territory, a neighborhood of second crown geographically far from the heart of the city, devoid of attractiveness. The *Park of murals* manages to attract a very small number of visitors, mainly students and social workers, with a decreasing trend compared to the first years of activity.

Conversely, more evident and visible results under the profile of tourism demand have been achieved within the Vergini-Sanità suburb, endowed with a very rich historical and artistic heritage, as well as a central position in the historical urban fabric. Here street art has become one of the many factors of tourist attraction in the area.

The success of the Rione Sanità experience has recently found new areas of application. In Forcella, another infamous and disadvantaged enclave of the “belly” of Naples, the project “NeaPolis ReStart” was launched. The project, organized by the Cultural Association AGORA’, in collaboration with the MANN (National Archaeological Museum of Naples), the Academy of Fine Arts and the Municipality aims at bringing young people closer to art and culture. This aim is pursued through an unconventional dissemination of the artistic heritage beyond the confined space of the Museum. It contributes at the same time to the rebirth of one of the most difficult and fascinating neighborhoods of the city. In this perspective with *Art dint ‘o street*, the project includes a planned path from Mann to Forcella and back, along which to create fifteen murals inspired by the works exposed at the MANN. The murals painted by international artists and Neapolitan writers in close collaboration with the inhabitants of the area are entrusted with the task of restoring walls, alleys and buildings, and contributing to the social, cultural and tourist enhancement of the area.

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