Special Issue IT.A.CÀ

FUORI LUOGO

Journal of Sociology of Territory, Tourism, Technology

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Fuori Luogo is indexed in: DOAJ Directory of Open Access Journals - ACNP Catalogue code n. PT03461557 - Index Copernicus International ID 67296.

The journal is part of CRIS Coordinamento Riviste Italiane di Sociologia.

Fuori Luogo is included in the LOCKSS (Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe) network of the Public Knowledge Project (PKP PLN)

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Salvatore Monaco, Antonella Berritto[1]
Which IT.A.CÀ for Naples?
A SWOT Analysis Approach[2]

Introduction

Sociologically, travel can be defined as a path of knowledge and discovery during which people enrich themselves through contact and encounters with different realities (Hall, 2006; Urry, 2002). The dynamics and processes involved in experiences of mobility go far beyond economic relations. They concern social relations, cultures, identities and, more generally, the ways in which communities and individuals meet each other (Cohen & Cohen, 2019; Metro-Roland, Knudsen, & Greer, 2016; Monaco, 2018; Wood, 2018). In the words of Sassen (1991), mobility is the characteristic that best distinguishes the current economic and political period. Through mobility - comprising travel, escapes, pilgrimages, migration, and different forms of tourism - it is possible to understand the changes taking place in cities (Chapman, Miller, & Salley, 2021; Cohen & Cohen, 2012; Corbisiero & Monaco, 2021; Milano, Novelli, & Cheer, 2019; Urry & Sheller, 2004). Many scholars identify an acceleration and a rapidity within mobilities that produce strong changes in daily life, in cities, in the redefinition of spaces and, finally, in the cultural forms of contemporary urbanism (Harvey, 1989; Spaargaren, Mol, & Buttel, 2006; Xiang, 2018). The interconnection between urban structure and the phenomena of urban life rests on the spread of contemporary culture and the intensification of international mobility, migration, and tourism, which forge increasingly discontinuous and multicultural cities (Adu-Febiri, 2004; Babu, Mishra, & Parida, 2008; Corbisiero & Berritto, 2017; Gospodini, 2001). Through their interaction, migrants, tourists, and citizens become the protagonists of a process capable of transforming urban reality (Larsen, 2019; Sassen 2005), defining attractive areas and major urban settlements, changing public spaces, and outlining new identities and representations of the city.

The responsible tourism festival named "IT.A.CÀ Migrants and Travelers" is located within this theoretical framework and within a philosophy that enhances the culture of travel, aiming to create innovative relationships between local communities and tourists and encouraging an understanding of the principles of responsible tourism among travelers, companies, institutions, and tour operators. This national event has taken place every year since 2008 in various Italian cities, combining several of the ethical dimensions inherent in current mobility trends: the inalienable value of authenticity; the relationship among the tourist experience, a sense of belonging, and identity; the prominent role of otherness in travel routes; and the territory. Through hundreds of events scattered throughout Italy each year, the festival invites participants to reflect critically on the concepts of travel and hospitality, but also on migration, global citizenship, inequality, and territorial development. With a series of workshops, events, performances, and guided tours in each city, IT.A.CÀ is configured, on the one hand, as a network of actors interacting innovatively and creatively within the field of responsible tourism, co-designing synergistic and integrated content, methodologies of participation, and communication practices. On the other hand, the event can also be described as a promotional showcase of the actors and cities hosting the festival as they implement projects related to sustainable tourism and hospitality.

In 2018, the festival landed in the city of Naples for the first time. The capital of Campania has only hosted two editions of the event. In fact, 2019 was the last year in which the city of Naples hosted the IT.A.CÀ festival.

This paper presents an analysis of the Neapolitan case in order to identify the drawbacks of the festival and to introduce possible practical improvements (Burns, 2007).

More specifically, the first section of the article analyzes the specific socio-territorial context and explains the specific initiatives of the IT.A.CA festival in Naples. The next section focuses on the methodology and research tools used for data collection and analysis. A SWOT analysis was used to interpret the sociological research results. The discussion section considers the strengths of the initiative and its benefits for the city of Naples, and it identifies its main critical aspects and weaknesses. The paper ends with concluding remarks.

1. The IT.A.CÀ festival in Naples

The theme of the 2018 edition of IT.A.CÀ was "Itineraries, cultures and identities of universal tourism." The tenth edition of the festival involved 15 Italian cities with events distributed throughout the year, from May to October. Participants were invited to experience the emotions of travel in an authentic way and were encouraged to put into practice more sustainable tourism behaviors. For the first time, 10 years after its inauguration, the IT.A.CÀ festival was hosted in Southern Italy. As anticipated, the city of Naples became the first in the south to host the initiative, which came alive from October 12-14, 2018.

Due to its strategic location on the Mediterranean, pleasant climate, and rich artistic and cultural heritage, Naples has long been a city with a strong tourist appeal, and only recently has the city been affected by the phenomenon of overtourism (Caputi & Fava, 2019). Since the early 2010s, the Neapolitan city has experienced a consistent increase in the presence of tourists (ISTAT, 2021), spurred by several distinct but closely interconnected factors. An increasing number of direct flights have begun to allow people from all over the world to easily reach the city, which was already served by high-speed trains. In addition, many international events -such as the America's Cup in 2013 and the FISU World University Games in 2019- have helped renew the city's image, which had been tarnished by the waste crisis that hit hard during the early 2000s. The revival of Naples' image has been further strengthened by the many national and international film productions that have chosen the Campanian capital as their set.

The Neapolitan edition of the IT.A.CÀ festival was promoted by OUT (the University Research Centre on Tourism of the University of Naples Federico II) in collaboration with several local associations. One of the innovative elements of this first edition of the initiative in Naples concerned the preparatory training for the event: the university conceived the set-up as an experimental laboratory, organizing a series of meetings that alternated between theoretical and technical teaching in the classroom and experiential modules in the field, in order to design and discuss the themes of the festival. This experiential training lasted 60 hours, during which participants had the opportunity to get to know each other, meet various experts, and work on innovative projects based on urban tourism, sustainable development, and enhancement of local resources. Despite the opulence of the Neapolitan tourist capital, the initiative attracted considerable interest from the host community, especially from the local administration and network of associations. In fact, not only did the municipality sponsor the event, but more than 30 associations and social cooperatives active in the area took part in the festival. For the occasion, the local NGOs developed a rich calendar of initiatives (including guided tours, events, and workshops) in the name of tourism for all. The events of the first Neapolitan edition of the event were mainly concentrated in two of the most known districts of the city, namely Quartieri Spagnoli and Rione Sanità, not far from the historical city center, an area notoriously congested with tourists due to its vast artistic and cultural heritage.

The success of the festival, as demonstrated by the positive participation of tourists, migrants, and citizens, stimulated the organizers to think about how to improve its offerings. Thus, the following year (2019), Naples decided to host the festival again. The theme chosen at the national level was "la restanza," understood not as inertia and a passive resignation to stand still, but as

a conscious life choice, an active presence in the community, and a willingness to take care of places as common goods. As explained by Teti (2022), "la restanza" involves the need for inhabitants to give new meaning to the places in which they live while safeguarding their identity in consideration of the constant changes affecting them.

For the second Neapolitan edition of IT.A.CÀ, the calendar of events was extended, and the initiative reached additional important Neapolitan neighborhoods, some (such as San Giovanni a Teduccio and Scampia) located far from the city center and the traditional tourist circuit.

2. Research on the Neapolitan case: Methods and tools

As planned, at the end of the second edition of the IT.A.CÀ festival, a group of scholars from OUT carried out sociological research with the aim of understanding in detail the reasons behind the decision not to host further editions of the initiative in the city of Naples.

The study involved the main representatives of the associations that took part in the two Neapolitan editions, along with policy makers and academic staff. To manage participant subjectivity, the research team selected subjects with different professional and cultural backgrounds. An aspect of particular importance was the inclusion of participants from different areas of the city of Naples who belonged to organizations, associations, and realities with different goals and objectives. This made it possible to collect a variety of needs, opinions, and points of view, which sometimes conflicted with each other.

Participants carried out lengthy discussions within three focus groups organized after the festival in order to analyze and evaluate the experience.

The focus group, a qualitative technique used in social research that involves discussion among a small group of people, is particularly effective in research that intends to investigate a topic in depth (Cardano, 2003). More specifically, a focus group is used to detect the attitudes, values, and opinions of group members and to highlight the motivations that underlie certain behaviors. The focus group technique is particularly suitable in research focusing on issues that are dealt with collectively on a daily basis. In this way, interrogating certain actors reproduces an artificial "lab" situation in which future plans, new ideas, strengths, and weaknesses can be considered and discussed (Corbisiero, 2021).

The moderator plays a central role in any focus group, proposing a topic of discussion and allowing participants to discuss it among themselves, stimulating reflection through a series of cues and prompts, and encouraging interaction and the exchange of opinions among the participants.

In this specific case, the moderator conducted three semi-structured focus groups using a flexible interview outline that contained the topics to be covered. This facilitated discussion and avoided deviations from the main topic of interest without imposing rigid or standardized questions.

The dimensions investigated included a) general characteristics of the IT.A.CÀ festival; b) specific features of the Neapolitan editions of the festival; c) evaluation through comparison of the two editions (2018 and 2019) of the IT.A.CÀ festival in Naples; d) identification of critical elements and weaknesses in the organization and implementation of the festival; e) strengths and distinguishing features of the Neapolitan editions; and f) suggestions and proposals for the future, with the aim of collecting specific forward-looking ideas on how to achieve best practices and improvements.

A thematic analysis was then carried out on the qualitative data collected in order to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. These aspects were identified following a coding process carried out by two researchers, who first worked independently and then met to discuss the final themes with the entire research team.

Based on the emerging themes identified, a SWOT analysis was performed using the leveraging technique (Kelly & Fairley, 2018; Luštický & Štumpf, 2021; O'Brien & Chalip, 2007). This approach uses an event analysis to maximize positive impacts (such as increased tourism, business, and social aspects), while minimizing risks and negative spillovers in the area. Chalip (2006) suggests that in order to take advantage of the opportunities that arise from hosting an event, a strategic management plan and specific tactics must be designed and implemented.

As reported in the literature, the use of focus groups as an ex-post instrument followed by a SWOT analysis can prove useful in identifying several positive and negative aspects that characterize a tourism event in a specific context (Bhatia, 2013; Goranczewski & Puciato, 2010; Kartakoullis & Karlis, 2002; Mondal & Haque, 2017; Vladi, 2014), considering both internal factors and aspects of the external environment (Helms & Nixon, 2010; Leigh, 2009).

The effectiveness of the analysis in identifying and developing the most appropriate course of action in terms of strategic decision-making depends on the subjects taking part in the study, their level of knowledge of the phenomenon, and their willingness to contribute to the research. In this reported case, some voices were excluded. For example, tourists and other users of the initiative did not participate directly; instead, their evaluations and opinions were presented by the organizers of the events during the focus groups. This may represent a limitation of the study, since the subjectivity of the participants may have conditioned the reported points of view of citizens and tourists.

3. Results

The results of the analysis were synthesized within a matrix consisting of four quadrants (see *Fig. 1*), which provides a visual representation of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The matrix comprises four separate squares, joined together to create a larger square.

Strengths and weaknesses are identified by considering internal factors, that is, those elements in which people involved in the initiative have the ability to intervene. External factors, on the other hand, are processes and phenomena beyond the control of the subjects. These factors can indirectly influence the organization of the event and can represent both risks and opportunities.

Fig. 1 - SWOT analysis output

Internal factors	
STRENGTHS (+)	*WEAKNESSES (-)*
☐ Innovation	☐ Overlapping events
☐ Attractiveness	☐ Communication
External factors	
OPPORTUNITIES (+)	*THREATS (-)*
☐ Network expansion	☐ City size
☐ Institutional support	☐ Global tourism offers

Two main strengths of IT.A.CÀ in Naples emerged. First, the festival brought to the city an innovative tourism event, capable of distinguishing itself from the mainstream offers usually available to travelers. Specifically, the associations in the area worked to promote -through their initiatives- an alternative image of the city, different from that usually presented. They offered visitors the opportunity to uncover the city's lesser known gems by enhancing Neapolitan zones sometimes left off the tourist circuit. Similarly, they focused on storytelling, making visible the area's transformations and demonstrating Naples' dynamism, not only to visiting travelers but

also to native inhabitants. This strategy is in line with those initiatives designed to give to travelers and inhabitants the opportunity to look at the city by capturing the dynamics, needs, and meanings of living contemporaneity usually not known or completely clear to them (Pezzoni, 2013). In other words, according to the focus group participants, the purpose of the festival in Naples was to promote knowledge of the city and some of its areas through the involvement of multiple voices and actors, in order to reach a convergence between dimensions that could define an exploratory and descriptive framework of the dynamics of urban transformation. The second strength, closely related to the first, is the attractiveness of the event. The participants in the initiative considered it interesting and engaging, as evidenced by the large number of participants in both editions.

However, most of the participants in the focus groups shared a feeling that the initiative worked only partially. The incomplete success of the event resulted from both internal factors, which acted as weaknesses, and threats external to the event's organization. The combination of these elements reduced the success of the festival, leading the subjects to decide not to continue with this activity in subsequent years.

Specifically, an awareness emerged from the focus groups that some problems involved the internal organization of the festival. The two internal factors identified as having the greatest negative impact on the success of the two Neapolitan editions were the overlapping of multiple initiatives and communication problems. Regarding the first aspect, participants pointed out that in both years Naples hosted a dense calendar of events. This led in several cases to the scheduling of some activities at the same time, forcing tourists and travelers to choose which event to take part in. Secondly, participants underlined the partial effectiveness of both internal and external communication, mentioning that communication within the organization and among partners within the initiative was not always clear and understandable.

Regarding threats, most participants named Naples' size as a limitation. Naples is the third largest city in Italy, after Rome and Milan. The festival events, being spread out in different locations, were not always easily accessible or connected to each other by public transport. Some of event organizers recalled that the festival had begun in the Bolognese Apennines and had obtained particularly positive results in smaller, more limited territorial areas. Thus, it is safe to add that the IT.A.CÀ festival in Naples, as in other big cities, was less attractive because it clashed with so many other tourist events. Although the festival certainly provided new and original offerings, it entered an already heterogeneous, competitive market.

The focus group discussions concluded by brainstorming opportunities that could in the future represent starting points from which to reprogram activities in the light of the findings. In detail, participants identified two main feasible paths. The first concerned the possibility of expanding the network of associations and actors who could contribute their support to improve the events offered at the festival in Naples. Networks and social connections are important since they enable the creation of relationships between the different actors within the social fabric, which can create processes of community empowerment (Ciaffi & Mela, 2009).

In order to increase its appeal and competitiveness in the city, the festival would need to offer additional stimuli, capable of both attracting an even greater number of participants and prompting mutual enrichment. In this sense, participants described IT.A.CÀ not only as a good opportunity to promote the city from a tourism point of view, but also as a chance for local associations to build relationships and create new synergies with other community realities. Beyond its programmatic objectives, the festival was described as a moment in which to exchange and share ideas, get in touch with different realities, and create unexpected professional collaborations.

Another opportunity highlighted by the focus group participants concerned the economic sphere. Both editions of the festival were self-financed. Participants considered co-designing the festival in the context of scarce resources a serious difficulty. In this sense, the financial support of the local administration could represent a tool to ease these difficulties, allowing for easier and more carefree organization.

4. Discussion

As highlighted in the literature on the subject (Ashworth & Page, 2011; Barrera-Fernandez, Hernandez-Escampa, & Balbuena-Vazquez, 2016; Hall, 2002), people who practice urban tourism usually look for new experiences, but they also seek good economic value. During their short-term trips, they tend to choose events and initiatives that are accessible, affordable, reachable, and original. For these reasons, the realization of a tourist event must include good coordination in terms of its organization and implementation. Without these central elements, the prerequisites for success are missing. However, these factors alone are not sufficient to ensure success.

The territorial features of the location hosting the initiative plays a fundamental role too. The same event organized using the same approach at the same time can have different outcomes depending on the host city's structural and organizational characteristics (Cibinskiene, 2012; Getz, 2004; Gursoy & Kendall, 2006; Maditinos, Vassiliadis, & Charlebois, 2006; Monaco, 2021).

In this sense, not only must the offerings be appealing in the eyes of tourists, but they must also fit within a context that facilitates the experience. Thus, the transportation network, air quality, traffic congestion, and safety, for example, are all elements that contribute to the success of tourism initiatives (Bhavya Sree, & Chandrakanth, 2017; Gursoy & Nunkoo, 2018; Sassen, 2012).

The size of the city further affects its touristic features, since the responsiveness of a host city to tourist flows differs depending on whether it is a small or large city (Law, 2002; Caust & Vecco, 2017).

In the specific case of Naples, the wealth of lively initiatives and events already on the calendar, together with a dense schedule of events distributed over a large and not always well-connected area (Berritto, Punziano, & Mazza, 2018; Corbisiero, 2019; De Vivo, 2017; Morlicchio & Rebeggiani, 2016; Punziano, 2016), represented a double-edged sword. Naples has a reputation that precedes it, and the city attracts an ever increasing slice of tourists every year. It is no coincidence that Benjamin (1963) called it a "porous city," within which courtyards, arches, staircases, and people alternate. At the same time, however, the city's characteristic overabundance also represents a risk for the success of new events and initiatives, which must deal with wide and varied competition.

The ambivalent nature of the city of Naples therefore represents both a stimulus for offering something new and different, and a brake which prevents the results from meeting expectations. The experience of the IT.A.CÀ festival in Naples perfectly embodies this double soul. The capital of Campania strongly desired to host this initiative to promote a laboratory of experimentation on urban and social issues. In the attempt to overcome the limits of overtourism, the promoters of the Neapolitan edition of IT.A.CÀ aimed (not without difficulty) to put the spotlight on areas that have been defined as the "peripheries in the centre of the city" (Orientale Caputo, 2007). These neighborhoods are rich in history, culture, and possibilities, kept wholly or partially away from the tourist gaze because of their historical condition of socio-economic hardship. In this sense, the festival also represented an opportunity to instigate a transition towards urban regeneration and enhancement, based on the dynamism and social and cultural innovation found in the work of associations and the involvement of part of the local population and the migrant community that settled here some time ago. Through IT.A.CÀ and other initiatives, the work of the different associations operating in the Neapolitan area has produced a relaunching of the territory capable of attracting and credibly managing other social, economic, and territorial resources (Laino, 2001). From this critical perspective, the festival in Naples represented good practice, highlighting the centrality of social relations in which people's cognitive capacities, values, information, skills, conflict, (in)security, and creativity come into connection within a shared project and play a significant role in tourism and territorial enhancement (De Masi, 2018). Significantly, the actors who participated in the project were not only carriers of needs but also active subjects, capable of activating a transformation so as to allow the promotion of sustainable tourism. The innovative aspect involved the dissemination of practices and methods of aggregation and forms of participation that have contributed to building a new face for the city (Mazzette,

2013). The festival encouraged new forms of urban cohesion through which citizens felt the need to meet and recognize themselves within urban spaces, and their involvement in planning the project became an opportunity for social change and cohesion.

However, the Neapolitan edition of the festival ran into structural difficulties, which in some ways discouraged investment in future editions barring a change in structural and contextual conditions. Consequently, intervening in the present is crucial to imagining the future replication of this initiative or others based on the same assumptions. To pursue this objective, certain preparatory actions appear necessary. First, the creation of intersections between tourism and local development through participatory territorial governance is of fundamental importance. In other words, the goal is to create a structured collaboration between the network from below and the network from above. The analysis of the data highlighted a disconnect in Naples between the institutional network and the activities being carried out in the city. At same time, the network of associations does not always appear internally cohesive. Without a change, clusters and subsets could appear, which -even if they pursue the same objectives- do not communicate with each other and in some cases even compete with each other, to the detriment of tourism.

A second necessary task entails identifying and creating structured and coordinated training opportunities for actors within the network. This activity is necessary to create a shared base of themes and knowledge on which to structure coherent, integrated tourism offers. To pursue this objective, the university could become more proactively involved. This institution -which has already contributed to the success of the initiative in the Neapolitan context- could make its experts available to offer specific training to the associations interested in the themes of hospitality and responsible tourism, through seminars, workshops, and round tables.

A final possible action could involve the organization of the network's activities by themes and shared purposes, in order to seize opportunities together, including economic ones. In other words, in the absence of public funding, a valid alternative could involve co-designed fundraising.

Conclusion

This study on the Neapolitan experience of the IT.A.CÀ festival makes it possible to advance some more general considerations regarding tourism opportunities. From the analysis of the data, a story emerged of a city with many tourist attractions, although these are not always located homogeneously within the urban area. Moreover, while the diversity and multitude of opportunities represent an asset, these are not always well managed due to the lack of a single structured and institutional governance. The IT.A.CÀ festival in Italy is a community-led initiative that promotes social innovation and contributes to the development of cities. In Naples, the festival has been primarily organized by community enterprises, stakeholders, and associations. However, due to the limited economic resources, public policies and municipal administration did not consider such initiatives a priority, and private investors were not interested in them as they were less attractive than the artistic sites of the city (Corbisiero & Zaccaria, 2021).

The recent growth of tourism in Naples reveals the need to create new capital accumulation, which can be achieved through the cultural heritage and tourist capital (Milano *et al.*, 2023). The absence of support from public authorities means that the active associative fabric takes up the responsibility of promoting such initiatives, which serves as an investment in new identity. This strategy, although not governed by any specific authority (Corbisiero, 2020), can be used to convert ancient locations into new symbolic centers of city tourism (Mansilla & Milano, 2022).

This complex scenario makes it difficult to introduce new initiatives that could increase the value of local tourism, such as IT.A.CÀ, which aims to offer a more responsible and sustainable tourism. At present, this initiative has the potential to represent an intervention related to local development and social inclusion. According to the research results, participatory practices promoted

from below, while constituting an essential element of tourism development, lack the coordination and institutional support capable of fostering real tourism development and giving rise to regeneration processes in a broader sense that considers the social, environmental, and economic context.

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