

TOURISM AND CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE URBAN TRANSFORMATION OF NAPLES.

Giorgia Iovino*

Abstract

The paper deals with culturally based development strategies and practices, using Naples as a case study. The city has been affected in recent years by intense and rapid processes of touristification that have generated many negative externalities. At the same time new and interesting community-driven practices were launched in some disadvantaged urban areas to promote their tourist-cultural enhancement. The work investigates some of these bottom-up experiences, with the aim of evaluating whether, and to what extent, these initiatives can generate territorial welfare, combining economic development with social identity and practices by urban dwellers.

Keywords: cultural heritage, tourism, heritage community, Naples.

1. Introduction

Italy has a thousand-year-old cultural heritage that has no equal in the world in terms of size, variety and territorial diffusion. The neglect and degradation of much of this extraordinary legacy is evidence of the inadequacy of the two traditional management models, the conservative public model and the private for-profit model (Consiglio, 2014). The first, afflicted by a chronic under-sizing of financial resources, the second interested only in investing in those territories and cultural assets with the greatest competitive differential, that is, to ensure high profitability in a short time.

Therefore, it is not surprising that in many cities of art there are places with a high cultural attraction affected by overtourism phenomena and “marginal” places that remain in the shadows, despite the presence of a widespread cultural heritage. These are often inner peripheries lacking major attractions or characterized by particularly difficult context conditions, therefore non attractive to investors and too “demanding” for the local public system.

In response to the failures of government and the market, new and interesting forms of organization have grown in the last twenty years, which, going beyond voluntary associations, pursue objectives of economic and social profitability. Such hybrid organizations, which we could define as community-based (Mori and Sforzi, 2019; Consiglio and Ritano, 2014) can take many different legal forms (cooperatives and social enterprises, corporations, foundations, etc.), but are distinguished from other forms of enterprise by the adoption of an open and inclusive governance model, aimed at intercepting local needs and generating territorial welfare.

The paper addresses these issues, using Naples as a case study. In recent years, the city has been affected by intense processes of touristification that have generated many

* Department of Political Sciences and Communication (DiSPC) - University of Salerno Email: giovino@unisa.it

negative externalities in most of the historic UNESCO centre (Iovino, 2021a, 2022a). At the same time, the experimentation of new and interesting community-driven practices aimed at enhancing tourism and culture was launched in some disadvantaged urban areas of the city (Consiglio, Cicellin and Scuotto, 2021; Laino, 2018).

More specifically, the objectives pursued are: a) propose a critical discussion of the different paths of culturally based tourism development, starting from the study case referred to Naples; b) reconstruct characteristics, history, management models of some bottom-up initiatives experimented in recent years in “marginal” areas located in the heart of the historic city; c) evaluate the territorial impacts of these experiences, measuring their ability to activate community-driven development processes based on cultural tourism.

To this aim, an integrated methodological approach was used, which combines qualitative methodologies (documentary analysis of projects, direct observation, analysis of websites and social networks of associations and cultural sites, interviews with some associations) with statistical information useful to describe the socio-economic characteristics of the investigated urban areas in the specific case study.

2. Theoretical background

In the context of critical urban theory studies, several authors (Harvey, 1989, 1991; Loyd, Clark 2001; Zukin, 1991, 2008) have highlighted how, in the advanced phase of urban neoliberalism and platform capitalism (Srnicek, 2016; Celata, 2018), the ability, by the private sector and the dominant coalitions, to extract economic value from the cultural heritage has grown, such as their ability to heavily influence the urban policies. In a context marked by the dismantling of urban welfare, many local governments have been prompted to engage a variety of cultural heritage “valorisation” strategies to attract investment and tourists. At best, they have adopted a *laissez faire* policy, in the illusion of providing, thanks to tourism development, opportunities for income integration to the local population, especially to the impoverished middle class.

As a result, many cities of art have seen a commodification of local cultural heritage and a growing gap between areas of high cultural attractiveness, affected by overtourism (Peeters *et al.*, 2018; Milan, 2018; Dodds and Butler, 2019), and disadvantaged areas, often derelict inner peripheries, despite the presence of cultural assets.

Touristification and its impacts has long been central issue in the national and international academic debate (Cocola-Gant, 2018; Pechlaner *et al.*, 2020; Semi, 2015; D’Eramo, 2017). The availability of low-cost flights and above all the diffusion of digital platforms dedicated to hospitality have dramatically expanded the accommodation capacities of many destinations, resulting in an intensification of tourist uses and consumption (Celata and Romano, 2020; Loda *et al.*, 2020).

As noted by numerous empirical studies (Sequera and Nofre, 2018, Jover and Diaz-Parra, 2020; Arias Sans and Quaglieri Domínguez, 2016; Mendes, 2017; Picascia *et al.*, 2017) such intensification alters the social and economic structure of cities, causes an increase in urban rent and the cost of living, which in turn determines the exclusion, and sometimes even the expulsion, of the poorest inhabitants and of commercial and residential activities for the local population. Functional, social and cultural impoverishment is accompanied in most cases by phenomena of overcrowding, environmental degradation, worsening of the quality of life, tourismphobia (Milano *et al.*, 2019; Colomb and Novy 2018).

This explains why the issue of overtourism is present on the political agenda of many urban governments and why the need to promote sustainable management of cultural heritage is now widely recognized also internationally (UNWTO, 2018).

In the Communication of the European Commission “Council conclusions on participatory governance of cultural heritage” (European Commission, 2014), cultural heritage is defined as “a shared resource and a common good” (art.1).

This means that the cultural heritage, independently of ownership, for its identity value, belongs to the whole community and therefore requires to be managed in a largely participatory way.

This approach is also adopted by the “Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society” (Council of Europe, 2005), more commonly known as the Faro Convention, from the name of the Portuguese locality where, in 2005, the first opening meeting was held.

The Convention, ratified only in 2020 by Italy, outlines the rights and responsibilities of citizens in participating in cultural heritage and introduces the notion of “heritage community” defined as “people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations”. It is a total reversal of the approach to the cultural heritage protection, based on the idea that it is necessary to involve the community in the production, diffusion and conservation of culture as a priority.

In this perspective, we deem interesting to look at some bottom-up regeneration experiences carried out by no profit organizations, which can be defined as community enterprises. Although characterized by different legal forms (cooperatives and social enterprises, corporations, foundations, etc.), these hybrid organizations have some common characteristics: i) generate community welfare, i.e. produce services and resources in the general interest of the community they belong to, ii) adopt an open and inclusive governance model; iii) are deeply rooted in the local context and preserve and promote local identity. Their primary mission is the recovery and enhancement of heritage and cultural sites degraded or dismissed. The driving force that animates them is the *amor loci*, the attachment to their neighbourhood, their city and the desire to experience innovative and sustainable regeneration practices, in order to improve the quality of life of the local community.

In Italy, the discussion on this issue has become particularly lively in recent years. Many scholars and research institutes (Euricse, 2016, 2020; Mori and Sforzi, 2019; Borzaga and Zandonai, 2015; Consiglio and Riitano, 2014; Cellamare, 2020; Trigilia, 2007; Bruni and Zamagni 2013; Gattullo, 2019) have been highlighting how these new organizational forms can represent a valid alternative to public enterprises and for-profit enterprises in the management of many cultural assets, becoming models of social innovation and agents of local development (Bianchi, 2021; Consiglio, Cicellin and Scuotto, 2021).

3. Empirical Analysis: the case of Napoli

The investigated area is the historic centre of Naples, one of the largest and most densely populated in Europe, included in the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1995

(fig. 1)¹. The area hosts a very rich cultural heritage, stratified over more than two millennia of history. Unlike most European cities of art, the historic centre of Naples retains a popular characterization with strong identity connotations (Iovino, 2021a).

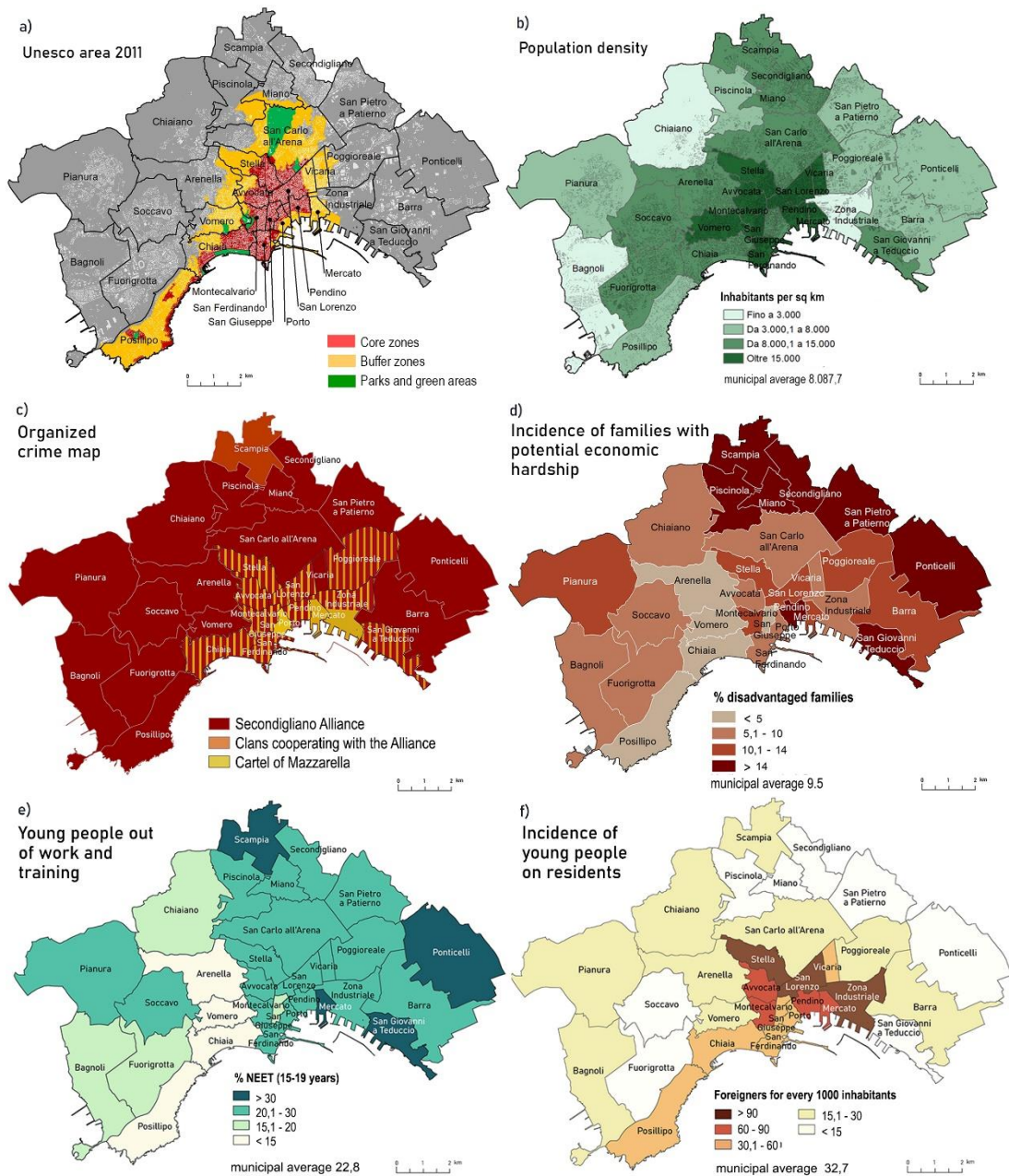


Figure 1 Some socio-economic data at the district scale
 Source: author's elaboration on 2011 Istat data and 2022 DIA data (1c)

¹ The neighbourhoods, wholly or largely included in the UNESCO core zone (in red in figure 1.a), are Chiaia, San Ferdinando, San Giuseppe, Montecalvario, Avvocata, Stella, San Lorenzo, Pendino, Porto. The core zone also includes some smaller portions of the districts of Posillipo, Vomero and San Carlo all'Arena.

The maps (fig. 1), drawn up on the basis of the 2011 census data², show a city still affected by endemic problems, with an overcrowded historic centre, marked by a widespread presence of Camorra clans and a high incidence of disadvantaged families, young people and immigrants (Iovino, 2019).

In this very difficult urban context, the rise of the cultural and tourist industry takes off, a rise driven by the UNESCO “brand” (Iovino, 2022a) and favoured by the growth of international connections (low-cost flights, high-speed trains, traffic sea cruise) and so-called STRs, short-term rentals.

In a few years, Naples becomes a successful tourist destination: among the great cities of art, it is the one that registers the highest growth rate in overnight stays between 2010 and 2019 (fig. 2b), with a surge in the foreign component (+165%).

Elena Ferrante’s novels, TV series and art film set in Naples, reactivate at national and international level the image of the city, compromised by the continuous emergencies (waste, transport, crime).

In 2019 Naples is positioned in the Top10 of the main Italian cities of art, in 5th place for overnights (3.7 million) after Rome, Venice, Milan and Florence and in 7th place for arrivals (1.3 million)³.

The intensification of the touristic flows is supported by the expansion of the accommodation offer, especially the STRs (fig. 2a). According to Airdna (2020), a consultancy company for real estate investments for tourism purposes, Naples recorded in the period 2016-18 a 65% increase in short-term rentals (the highest figure among Italian destinations, after Milan) and a 13% increase in revenue due to this type of accommodation, rating 2nd in Italy and 4th in Europe in the ranking of the 25 destinations with the highest growth rates. The offer peak is reached in the third quarter of 2019, with about 9.900 active listings, 70% of which referred to the whole apartment (Iovino, 2021b).

² More up-to-date data on a sub-municipal scale are not available. The indicators used were developed in 2017 by Istat for all the capital municipalities of the 14 Italian metropolitan cities to provide support to the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry on the safety conditions and the degradation state of the cities and their suburbs. See <https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/202052>.

³ Compared to 2010, the city climbs one position for arrivals and two positions for attendance. It should also be considered that these data do not take into account cruise tourism, nor the short-term rental market, which is largely submerged. We do not have data for 2022, but from the first estimates it seems that tourist flows have returned to pre-pandemic levels.

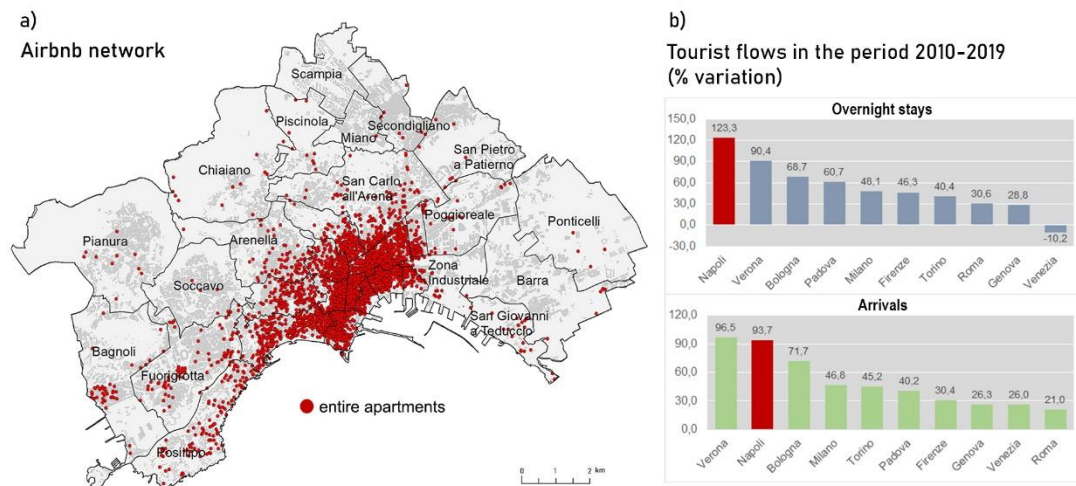


Figure 2 The Airbnb network in 2019 and the trend of tourist flows 2010-19
Source: author's elaboration on Airbnb data referring to 2019 (a) and Istat data (b)

The data relating to visitors to state museums confirm the extraordinary growth of the city and its affirmation as a successful destination for cultural tourism: in the period 2010-2018 the number of visitors increased overall by 181%, compared to 81% of Rome, 42 % of Florence, to 58% of Turin (CST, 2019).

However, tourism growth takes place in a chaotic and deregulated way, producing negative externalities. Entrepreneurs, traders, cultural and tour operators try to make up for the bad reputation of the city and the poor quality of urban public services with a low-price policy, which makes Naples a mass tourism destination, with all the connected implications. The urban government, for its part, adopts a *laissez faire* strategy, in the illusion of offering opportunities for income integration to the impoverished middle-class. The heavy debt situation of the Municipality accelerates the dismantling of urban welfare and the lack of a solid economic base pushes individuals and local institutions towards a profit-driven tourist monoculture.

The Strategic Marketing Plan “Destination Naples 2020” (Municipality of Naples, 2017) accelerates the branding of the historic city. Naples is “sold” as an authentic product: its socio-cultural promiscuity, the presence of a historic centre with a strong personality and even the presence of bad neighbourhoods are promoted as the right ingredients for living authentic experiences. These marketing strategies, however, can backfire, generating processes of commodification, that- in turn- open the door to a deregulated and extractive tourism.

The UNESCO historic centre quickly becomes a privileged observation point for investigating the negative consequences of overtourism (Iovino, 2021a; 2021b): increase in urban rent and the cost of living, gentrification, loss of services for citizens, disappearance of neighbourhood and craft shops, increase in traffic, waste and pollution levels (atmospheric and acoustic), privatization of public spaces, loss of identity and sense of belonging, growth of inequalities between places with high cultural attractiveness affected by touristification and places that remain on the margins of tourist flows, weakening of social ties, tourismophobia⁴.

⁴ In 2018 Naples hosts the first national meeting of the SET network (Southern Europe in the face of Touristification), which brings together social movements and neighborhood committees of various

In this perspective, it is very interesting to look at some bottom-up valorisation experiences carried out in particularly difficult areas of the historic center of Naples, inner peripheries that are unattractive for investors and too “demanding” for the local public system.

Among these experiences, that of *Rione Sanità* (Sanità neighbourhood) represents an exemplary case, a best practice admired and studied at national and international level (Consiglio, Flora and Izzo, 2021; Massa and Moretti, 2011; Iovino, 2022b).

The area has long represented a symbol of urban marginality, despite its centrality and the presence of an extraordinary cultural heritage (fig. 3): churches, monasteries, noble palaces, large catacomb complexes (Catacombs of San Gennaro, San Gaudioso, San Severo, Cimitero delle Fontanelle).

Its decline begins in the first decade of the 19th century with the construction of Corso Napoleone and its bridge, commissioned by Giuseppe Bonaparte to directly connect the two royal residences (Palazzo Reale and Reggia di Capodimonte). The bridge isolates the neighbourhood, cuts it off from urban routes, making it an infamous enclave, sadly known for the Camorra bloody feuds.



Figure 3 Tourist map of the Vergini Sanità area

Source: website of the Vergini Sanità Association <https://borgovergini.it/mappe-borgo-vergini/>

The process of “redemption” of Rione Sanità starts in the beginning of the third millennium⁵, with the arrival of Father Loffredo (2013; 2019) as pastor of the basilica of *Santa Maria alla Sanità*. Under his guidance, in 2006, six young people found *La Paranza*, a social cooperative that intends to promote a social and economic regeneration process in the area. Culture and beauty are the key ideas of the renaissance project, aimed to recover the rich abandoned or underused local cultural heritage of the neighbourhood, and, in so doing, to break the isolation of the district and create jobs for the young people (Izzo, 2021a).

⁵ For further information on the history of “La Paranza” and the revival of the “Rione Sanità”, see the work in three volumes with the evocative title *Culture and society move the South* (Council, Flora and Izzo, 2021), published by the “Rione Sanità new publishing house. The work is the result of a collaboration between the San Gennaro Foundation and the Department of Economics of the University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli and the Department of Social Sciences of the Federico II University.

In 2008 the cooperative, supported by the *L'Altra Napoli* Onlus association, wins a tender by Fondazione con il Sud for the recovery of the paleochristian basilica of San Gennaro, which becomes the gateway to the homonymous catacomb complex and new entrance to the neighbourhood from North. The following year, the Archdiocese of Naples entrusts La Paranza with the management of the archaeological site of the Catacombs of San Gennaro and San Gaudioso, owned by the Vatican. The recovery of the burial system becomes the fulcrum of a wider regeneration project that aims to strengthen human capital and social ties within the local community.

The results are extraordinary: between 2009 and 2019 the visitors to the Catacombs increase from 12.000 to almost 160.000 (with a much higher growth than the two main museums of the city, the MANN and Capodimonte), the square meters of recovered assets from 8.000 to 12.100, permanently employed young people from 8 to 34⁶.

The economic outcomes on the territory are significant. Izzo (2021b) estimates the direct impact of the Catacombs in the neighbourhood at 21,8 million euros for the year 2018 and, based on a prudential multiplier of 1,5 (each euro of direct expenditure generates indirect and induced effects equal to 1,5 euros), comes to hypothesize a total economic impact of 32,8 million euros for the benefit of the district and the wider urban context.

Even more extraordinary results, although less immediately visible, are achieved in terms of local social and relational capital. In just a few years, the number of local stakeholders engaged in socio-cultural activities multiplied. As Izzo (2021a, p. 41) points out, a network of businesses, associations and cooperatives was formed, starting from the experience of Paranza, a network that designs “an unprecedented neighbourhood constellation”, aimed at improving the quality of life of the local community.

The “Paranza effect” (Corbisiero and Zaccaria, 2021) becomes contagious, strengthens social ties, encourages local planning and the social and creative use of the territory, frees energies that innervate the territory, fosters reappropriation practices of places and supports the experimentation of innovative organizational models. New associations arise and the attitude of the local population changes towards the Catacombs project and its promoters, passing from mistrust to full adhesion and sharing.

In 2014 the “San Gennaro Cooperation” association and the “San Gennaro Community Foundation” are established. The first brings together several associations, organizations and cooperatives of the Third Sector engaged in the area, while the second becomes a catalyst for all the subjects of the profit and not-for-profit world that intend to cooperate to produce community welfare, i.e., to respond to the local needs. For the first time Rione Sanità rises to the fore not for criminal acts, but as a place with a strong identity, full of memories and culture, a laboratory of social innovation. The catacombs receive many awards and recognitions, and the district becomes one of the most requested film locations in Naples, inspiring documentary films and television

⁶ According to the data on the association’s website, flows resumed in 2021 (almost 87.000 visitors) although they have not returned to the levels of 2019. On the other hand, employment (40 people) and square meters recovered (13,500) increased.

broadcasts⁷. In 2022 it is included by the English magazine “Time out” among the coolest urban districts in the world.

Following the Rione Sanità model, other difficult districts of the city, such as Forcella and Porta Capuana, also begin to focus on the bottom-up activation of tourist-cultural enhancement processes.

The data in the table (tab. 1) show the socio-economic marginality that characterizes these inner peripheries located in the heart of Naples (in the Pendino and San Lorenzo districts⁸), multi-ethnic, complicated and fascinating districts in which beauty and decay, culture and educational poverty, illegality and creativity coexist.

Indicators	Pendino	San Lorenzo	municipal average
Population density (inhabitants per km2)	1.415	4.381	8.087,7
Foreign Resident (per 1.000 inhabitants)	84,0	91,1	32,7
School dropouts (val. %)	16,1	15,0	10,7
Unemployment rate	35,8	39,1	27,8
Young NEETs 15-29 years (val. %)	27,2	26,0	22,8
Families in economic hardship (val. %)	14,0	11,1	9,5

Table 1 Pendino and San Lorenzo districts: some socio-economic indicators
Source: Istat, 2017 (data referring to 2011)

Both districts have very ancient origins, as evidenced by the presence of historic buildings and monumental complexes, often abandoned or in conditions of serious degradation (fig. 4). In Greek times, there was a Gymnasium in Forcella famous for its Sebastò, games similar to the Olympic ones in honor of Augustus, and a temple dedicated to Hercules.

The stones of the so-called “Cippo a Forcella” which were part of the walls of ancient Neapolis date back to about 2.300 years. Among the most important discoveries in the district is the complex of San Carminiello ai Mannesi, a private house converted into a thermal complex after the eruption in 79 AD. It is probably for these reasons that the area was called Termense or Forcillese, from the shape of the Greek letter epsilon (Y), emblem of the Pythagorean School which seems to have been located here. The Y is also present in the urban form of the neighborhood, whose main road ends with a Y-

⁷. Among the awards received, the following should at least be mentioned: the “Amato Lamberti Social Responsibility” Award in 2016; the “Riccardo Francovich” National Award, in 2017 received by the Society of Medieval Archaeologists for the best synthesis between rigor of scientific content and effectiveness in communication; the “Rotondi Award to the saviors of the Art”, received in 2017 for the recovery and enhancement of the Catacombs and its innovative management; the international “Remarkable Venue Award” by Tiqets, assigned to the Catacombs in 2020 as “Best Experience in the world” and in 2021 as “Best Attraction” in Italy. Several documentary films are dedicated to the Paranza’s experience, such as “The human factor”, which collects the best Italian stories of grassroots entrepreneurship; “The Paranza of Beauty”, broadcast by Rai; “The Rione Sanità System - The Discarded Stones”, winner of the Procida Film Festival; “The certainty of dreams”, presented in 2020 at the Turin Film Festival.

⁸ Forcella is located between Pendino and San Lorenzo districts, while the Porta Capuana area in part of San Lorenzo district.

shaped junction (highlighted in figure 4), that recalls the features of a fork (forcella in italian)⁹.



Figure 4 Cultural Heritage in Forcella and Port Capuana
Source: author's elaboration

However, the current fame of the district rather than linked to its ancient origins and its cultural resources, derives mainly from its criminal history (for decades it was the stronghold of the Giuliano criminal clan) and from the notoriety of the television series Gomorra, partly filmed in the district. The TV series, very popular nationally and internationally, crystallizes the image of Forcella as a hopeless bad place.

The area of Porta Capuana, which was the ancient eastern entrance to the city, does not have a better reputation. It was built in 1484 by the Aragonese, in front of Castel

⁹ The initiatory symbol of the Pythagorean Y, ideal crossroads between vice and virtue, is the coat of arms of the ancient Forcella Seat, artwork of an unknown Neapolitan sculptor (16th century) preserved in the Diocesan Museum of Naples.

Capuano, the oldest castle in Naples, of Norman origin¹⁰. To the Sedile (Seat)¹¹ of Capuana belonged TO aristocratic families such as the Orsini, the Colonna, the Pignatelli, the Ruffo.

For centuries the area has been a crossroads and meeting place for merchants (also due to the presence of the nearby Borgo Sant'Antonio Abate market) and travellers¹². The so-called Latin Quarter was located here at the beginning of the twentieth century. It was a meeting place for intellectuals, writers and artists of the time, on the model of the most famous Parisian district.

Due to its strategic position with respect to the main transport infrastructures (the area has easy and direct access from the motorway, railway and port network), Porta Capuana district also boasts ancient industrial traditions, as evidenced by the former Sava military woolen mill, one of the last examples of industrial archeology in the heart of the city. The factory was planted by the Borbone royal family in the monumental complex of Santa Caterina a Formiello, once defined as an *insula*.

In the early 2000s, the district experiences a worsening of living conditions, largely linked to the transfer of judicial activities that had historically characterized the area. Between 2006 and 2007, the decommissioning of the court of Castel Capuano and the District Court, housed in the former convent of San Francesco di Paola¹³ is completed. The launch of the UNESCO Great Program has not helped. It includes redevelopment projects concerning Castel Capuano (financed with 5 million euros), Porta Capuana with a section of the Aragonese walls of (1,5 million euros) and the recovery of open public spaces (600 thousand euros). The construction sites, still open, cause disservices, increase the degradation and complicate the living standards of the area, which is already very compromised.

The relocation of judicial activities, for its part, generates heavy repercussions on the social and economic system of the district: numerous commercial activities go into crisis, the value of properties decreases and there are intense phenomena of residential turnover, with the shrinkage of the middle class and the settlement in the area of immigrants, coming mainly from Eastern Europe, Africa (Nigerians, in particular) and China. The new mobility plan launched in 2011 contributes indirectly to the depreciation of the area and the housing turnover. In order to safeguard the UNESCO area, the plan closes a large part of the historic centre to vehicular traffic (from 8.00 to 18.00) included two important arteries (Via Duomo and Via Pessina Piazza Dante), with serious repercussions on the neighbouring areas out of the device, such as Porta

¹⁰ The castle was probably built on the remains of a Byzantine fortress at the end of the major *decumanus*. It was a royal residence before being used as the seat of the judicial administration.

¹¹ The “Sedili” (Seats), also called Seggi o Piazzie (Squares), were administrative institutions of the city of Naples from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century. The nobles had the right to participate in six of them, while the rest of the citizens were aggregated in the seventh seat, that of the people. Capuana Seat was one of the most important.

¹² A Tuscan journalist described the area in 1847 in Naples in miniature (G. Valeriani, 1847, p.423-424) as follows: “Whoever wants to truly know the Neapolitan plebs in all their habits, including their virtues and vices, should come to the Porta Capuana, at any of the 24 hours of the day, and learn about it. (...) Porta Capuana is the universal theatre, it is the Cosmopolis of our people... When the Jews wanted to give us an idea of confusion, they quoted the Tower of Babel, and we, wanting to paint the Tower of Babel, quote Porta Capuana. There is neither night nor day here. Always the same hell on both sides (of the Gate)”.

¹³ The transfer to *centro direzionale* (Central Business District) of the Justice of the Peace offices is still in progress. These were in the spaces of the Augustinian convent of San Giovanni a Carbonara, in the former Garibaldi barracks.

Capuana (and in part the Forcella itself). As noted by the informal local development agency Aste e Nodi, which includes university urban planning scholars, “the closure of traffic in the old town was propagandized mainly as an action of valorisation of the patrimony of the areas that were forbidden to the traffic. This message, in turn, aroused the opposite sentiment in the areas excluded from this action. In other words, not only did traffic increase, but it was also clear that for the public decision-maker the area of Porta Capuana was excluded, at least for the moment, from the operation of tourist enhancement” (Autiero *et al.*, 2019).

This feeling of exclusion is reinforced by the growing presence of immigrants which, on the one hand, favours new arrivals and new (often informal) commercial activities linked to their countries of origin. On the other hand, it leads to the concentration in the area of reception centres and houses, dormitories and public showers, Caritas (a charity) canteens, with inevitable impacts on the territory in terms of physical and social degradation¹⁴.

The great centrality of the area, close to the station and the *decumani* and the possibility of renting at affordable prices becomes an element of attraction not only for immigrants, but also for artists, intellectuals and associations engaged in cultural and social activities. The recent history of the Capuana insula of Santa Caterina a Formiello is clear evidence of this. In 2003 a group of photographers, architects and designers move to the former convent/wool mill complex and it will remain there for a few years, carrying out interesting initiatives (Laino, 2018)¹⁵. In 2005, the same year in which the *Madre* museum of contemporary art opens not far away, the Carlo Rendano Association founds, in a small courtyard of the factory Lanificio 25, a cultural laboratory. It becomes a center for the promotion of activities and live events in the artistic and musical fields. The place becomes a point of reference for the district, for the whole city. New settlements follow: Intolab which manages a space for coworking cultural activities and the Made in Cloister Foundation, founded in 2012. The latter is responsible for the recovery and restoration of the small sixteenth-century cloister, which was in a state of total abandonment. Today it is an exhibition and performing art center. It hosts numerous cultural events, including international ones. One of the best known is InterACTION, an exhibition project held in the cloister every two years. Here artists from different countries are called upon to create site-specific works and interact with each other, with the space and with the community, giving life to an exhibition collective.

¹⁴ To combat social exclusion and encourage dialogue between inhabitants and migrants, the URBinclusion (2019) project “Re-design your neighborhood” was promoted as part of the European Urbanact III programme. The project, which sees among its partners Aste & Nodi (lead partner), some social cooperatives, the Madre Museums, the Federico II University, the Goethe institute and ActionAID Italia, envisages a very articulated path aimed at promoting the integration between inhabitants and migrants and to strengthen the knowledge and sense of belonging of migrants through various activities, such as training courses for the co-planning of tourist itineraries in the area guided by the new inhabitants (in collaboration with Migrantour).

¹⁵A coworking project is launched in the 600 square meters of the factory, a project that seems to give life to a cultural and productive district. Among the first businesses established are the nomadic architecture laboratory LAN and the Neapolitan laboratory La. Na, which set up exhibitions, photography workshops and architectural projects in collaboration with US schools. Craft activities are opened in the structure, such as workshops for woodworking, the production of frames, etc. The experience ends after 7 years “due to the different life paths of the protagonists and a legal dispute with the owner” (Laino 2018, p. 100).

Made in Cloister, even more than *Lanificio 25*, has played an important role in the regeneration of the complex and the entire district¹⁶, acting as a magnet and facilitator for other socio-cultural activities that settle inside in the former factory. This is the case of Officine Gomitoli, an intercultural centre born from the long experience of the Dedalus social cooperative which is very active in Porta Capuana area. Also located in the complex are the Zapoi association, an architectural studio and carpentry and screen printing workshop, the Morra contemporary art gallery, the studio-house of the “Alves and Durham” cultural association, founded by the two famous artists.

Lanificio 25 and Made in Cloister are among the most active partners of “I love Porta Capuana” (tab. 2), an independent and self-financed project of participatory and sustainable urban regeneration, which brings together over 20 partners including associations, cooperatives, foundations (Castel Capuano Foundation, Comunità del Centro Storico Foundation, Banco di Napoli Foundation), institutional partners (Soprintendenza, University, etc.) and local entrepreneurs (for example, the Caracciolo hotel). Launched in 2013, thanks to the facilitation activity of Aste e Nodi, the collective I love Porta Capuana has as its objective the construction of a network between inhabitants of the district, entrepreneurs, traders and local associations in order to enhance local resources (monuments, local culinary and artisanal traditions), recognizing them as elements of identity and using them as levers for tourism development. Great importance is attributed to advanced technologies and the development of applications for smartphones and tablets aimed at spreading a new image of the neighborhood. The activities promoted by the I love Porta Capuano coordination include cultural events (such as the Award for young artists “L’arte in gioco”), urban exploration workshops (such as “This Must be the Place” project) and participatory planning to create tourist itineraries in the district (on the model of the initiative “Porta_mi a Napoli”, launched in May 2012), creations of food and wine itineraries (such as “Food and Art”, launched in 2014) which enhance the culinary contamination typical of this multi-ethnic district¹⁷.

Project	year	participants	aim
<i>I love Porta Capuana</i>	2013	Aste e Nodi, Lanificio 25, Made in Cloister and others	Create a network between inhabitants, entrepreneurs, traders, to enhance the cultural heritage, cuisine and craft traditions of the district

¹⁶ The Made in Cloister cultural project rests on three pillars, as declared by the Foundation: 1) recuperate, reconvert and develop the local artistic heritage coherent with the territorial vocation; 2) re-launch the notion of “handmade” through the interaction between master craftsmen and international artists and designers; 3) create a network of creative enterprises, to be placed within the complex in spaces to be reconverted, establishing a constant dialogue with the local community, museums and educational institutions in the area.

¹⁷ From the “Food and art” experience comes *Cocked with love in Porta Capuana*, the recipe book illustrated by 10 artists that tells the typical cuisine of Porta Capuana. In 2013, in collaboration with the Federico II community psychology laboratory, *I love Porta Capuana* developed a research project aimed at deepening the knowledge of the needs and resources of the area (Arcidiacono *et al.*, 2016). The results of the study, based on visual methodologies (photography and video), highlight the degradation of the district and the perception of abandonment experienced by its inhabitants.

ZONA NTL – Napoli, Turismo & Legalità	2016	Annalisa Durante Association; Manallart; Legambiente; Vesuvius Literary Park and others	Establishment of an open area (Not Limited Traffic) to raise awareness of the resources present in the districts of Forcella, Maddalena and Porta Capuana.
NeaPolisRestArt	2017	Agorà Association with MANN and others	Promote the cultural, artistic and social enhancement of Forcella through the creation of a laboratory dedicated to re-reading the masterpieces of the MANN and the creation of a street art tour (“Art dint’o street”) between the MANN and Forcella, inspired by the works conserved in the museum.
PRIUS - Progetto di Rigenerazione Urbana e Sociale	2019	Maestri di strada (Street Teachers) with the Annalisa Durante Association and others	Recovery of the Durante school in Forcella for recreational, educational and cultural uses (theatrical activities with the “I Teatrini” association)
Forcella Alla Luce del Giorno	2019	L’Altra Napoli Onlus, Istituto Toniolo, Associazione Sanitansamble e altri	recovery of an abandoned former glass factory as a multifunctional space for children and teenagers; creation of the Little Forcella Orchestra for children; redevelopment and enhancement of cultural sites

*Table 2 Some projects launched in the districts of Forcella and Porta Capuana (in bold the most important partners of the project)
 Source: author’s elaboration*

In addition to the I love Porta Capuana project, other initiatives insist on the area (tab. 2), including “Zona NTL Napoli, Turismo & Legalità”, promoted by the Annalisa Durante and Manallart Association, with the idea of transforming Forcella, Maddalena and Porta Capuana into an area of legality and tourism, open to all (Not Limited Traffic).

Forcella is the area affected by the other projects briefly presented in the table, such as the PRIUS-Urban and Social Regeneration Project or the NeaPolis RestArt project, born from a collaboration between the Agorà association and the National Archaeological Museum of Naples (MANN) to promote cultural, artistic and social district¹⁸.

The most ambitious project in the district is undoubtedly “Forcella alla luce del giorno” promoted by the Onlus L’Altra Napoli and financed for 1,3 million euros. The idea is to replicate the model created at Rione Sanità, to which L’Altra Napoli has largely contributed.

¹⁸ The project envisages two phases: the first aimed at making the young people of Forcella aware of the MANN (National Archaeological Museum of Naples), through a visit and re-reading of some of the masterpieces preserved there, described and interpreted by the participants; the second, called «Art dint’o street», aimed at creating a street art itinerary between Mann and Forcella, 15 murals inspired by Mann's works placed in sites and corners of great cultural interest, but little known to the Neapolitans themselves.

The project features four pillars: 1) the construction of the “house of glass”, a multifunctional space at the service of the neighbourhood, born from the recovery of a large abandoned glass factory and destined to become a center for social aggregation and for contrasting juvenile delinquency, as well as a cultural and musical education pole; 2) the establishment of the Forcella “Piccola Orchestra” (Small Orchestra) for children between the ages of 6 and 11, with the intention of replicating the success of the Rione Sanità Orchestra “Sanitansamble” (project partner)¹⁹; 3) the recovery and enhancement of the church of the Augustissima Archconfraternity of the Disciplina della Croce and of the archaeological area of Carminiello ai Mannesi, providing for the creation of youth cooperatives for the organization of guided tours in both sites; 4) the creation of vocational schools (one for luthiers and one for pizza makers) and textile restoration and crib art workshops (in the premises of the Compagnia della Disciplina della Santa Croce and in the church of *Sant’Agrippino in Forcella*), to combat the educational poverty of minors and to offer the children of the neighborhood protected educational experiences, in order to distance them from criminal circuits. The process of bottom-up valorisation followed by “urban commons” looks somewhat different. It starts in 2012, with the occupation of the former Asilo Filangieri, a historic 16th century²⁰ building located in the San Lorenzo district, institutionalized as a common good by the local administration.

Abandoned after the 1980 earthquake, the Asilo, which covers an area of over 5.000 square meters, is occupied by the collective of show business workers “La Balena”, which converts part of the interior spaces into accessible, usable and inclusive spaces, available to the entire community to carry out artistic, cultural and social activities. Thus begins the innovative path that leads to the creation of a new category of socialization spaces, the urban commons: spaces owned by the municipality, administered directly by citizens, through a declaration of collective use inspired by civic uses, which establishes methods of access, scheduling of activities and functioning (Micciarelli, 2017). The local government recognizes eight commons in the urban area, including some of great value and with a strong artistic-cultural vocation, such as the former Filangeri Asilo, the Scugnizzo Liberato (former complex of San Francesco delle Cappuccinelle) and Santa Fede Liberata (former Oratory of Santa Maria della Fede) located in the historic centre and *extramoenia* the Giardino Liberato (former complex of San Francesco delle Teresiane) in Materdei (Stella district)²¹.

These abandoned public structures are recognized as commons in the municipal statute (art.3) and regulated by specific resolutions, as “places of strong sociality, elaboration

¹⁹ Sanitansamble has received numerous awards, has played for the Pope and has performed at the Teatro San Carlo and in many other prestigious Italian and foreign theatres. It was established as an association in 2014 and currently has over 80 young people belonging to two orchestral formations. As reported on its website, Sanitansamble is inspired by the experience of “El Sistema”, a didactic model conceived and tested in Venezuela by Maestro José Antonio Abreu, which “promotes collective musical practice as a means of community organization and development in areas and difficult social contexts”.

²⁰ After being used as a factory for the exercise of arts and crafts, the complex was converted in the first post-war period (at the behest of the Countess Filangieri di Candida who had bought it) into a boarding school for young orphans and boys from less well-off families.

²¹ The other three are the former *OPG Je so pazzo* (Youth Psychiatric Hospital, renamed Jam crazy) in Materdei, Lido Pola and Villa Medusa in Bagnoli.

of thought, intergenerational solidarity and deep roots in the territory” (resolution 7/2015).

The Neapolitan experience has been the object of study and imitation by other national and European urban realities (Palermo, Turin, Barcelona, Madrid) and is considered a best practice within the European Union, as evidenced by the “Good Practice City” award. received under the UrbanAct program.

4. Conclusions

Naples has experienced in the last few years an intense and swift process of touristification which has generated significant impacts in the most attractive areas of the historic centre. Compared to other urban realities, this process features specific intricacies in the Neapolitan context, due to the extreme fragility of the socio-economic system, the pervasive presence of criminal organizations, the weakness and inefficiency of local governance, the pre-existing financial situation in the city.

For this reason, it is particularly interesting to look at the bottom-up experiences that have been carried out in some inner suburbs of the historic city, marked by very difficult contextual conditions. The paths analysed differ from each other in terms of purpose, forms of management, composition and number of players.

The experience of Rione Sanità is undoubtedly the most successful. It is the only one that, in the spirit of the Faro Convention, has managed to give life to a “heritage community”, a community that is concerned not only with enhancing cultural resources, but also - and more importantly- with transforming and innovating the places where these resources are located. The common element shared by the many bottom-up initiatives launched in Rione Sanità is the adoption of a community-driven entrepreneurial approach, i.e. an approach based on the active involvement and empowerment of the local community. At the same time, it relies on the ability to generate economic returns, thus contributing to the improvement of territorial welfare. The experiences of Forcella and Porta Capuana feature interesting elements but are still in an embryonic stage. The projects “Forcella alla luce del sole” and “I love Porta Capuana” seem the most promising for the composition and the profile of the actors involved. In both cases, culture and society are the cornerstones of a site-specific regenerative path, aimed at combining economic growth and attention to the local community. *Forcella alla Luce del sole* shows a greater ability to intercept financial resources, thanks to the involvement of the L’Altra Napoli onlus, rich in experience and power of vision. For its part, the Porta Capuana socio-cultural hub project sees a particularly broad and diversified network of stakeholders, which, if on the one hand makes the experience particularly stimulating, on the other complicates the implementation of the projects.

The experience of urban commons is also of great interest, an experience that has favored the collaboration between local associations rooted in the area and allowed the recovery of valuable historic buildings, saving them from abandonment. However, these “liberated” structures, that aspire to be configured as cultural hubs, are not always able to dialogue with the context, i.e., to embrace a truly open and participatory model of governance²².

²² The limited ability to communicate with the context is confirmed by the results of a recent study (Vittoria and Mazzarella, 2021), aimed at examining the social outputs of the former Asilo Filangieri,

However, it must be recognized that, beyond the shadows that always accompany every social innovation, these bottom-up valorisation processes can represent a valid alternative to look at to favour the recovery of cultural heritage and promote more sustainable tourism, in a perspective of accountability for the use of resources and the sharing of the benefits generated by them.

These are still isolated experiences that would need to be supported on a political-institutional level, in order to make a qualitative leap and establish themselves as true urban magnets, capable of attracting investments and generating employment. On the contrary, the local government, hiding behind the lack of financial resources, guarantees a purely formal support to these bottom-up initiatives or, in the best case (as for urban commons), grants the free availability of the structures, without, however, being able to promote ideas and policies that can fertilize and systematize these experiences.

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the most dated and tested experience in the urban context. From the collected data emerges, on the one hand, a notable managerial liveliness (deduced from the high number of assemblies and work tables, cultural initiatives, etc.) on the other, a low “pervasiveness” of the asylum in the neighborhood (deduced from questionnaires administered to the inhabitants of San Lorenzo, of the neighboring districts and the more peripheral ones) which would seem to configure the Asilo Filangieri more as a club asset than as a common.

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