Chapter 50
Cultural Event Management and Urban E-Planning Through Bottom-Up User Participation

Angelo Corallo
University of Salento, Italy

Anna Trono
University of Salento, Italy

Laura Fortunato
University of Salento, Italy

Francesco Pettinato
University of Salento, Italy

Laura Schina
University of Salento, Italy

ABSTRACT

Cultural events are an important driver of socio-cultural-economic transformation. The growth of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has affected the ways in which people can play an active role in cultural event management and urban planning. This work proposes a methodological approach that identifies the key elements for building bottom-up urban e-planning strategies. After a brief theoretical analysis of the impact of cultural activities, tourism and ICTs on urban planning, this paper presents the results of an empirical study carried out in the Puglia region (south of Italy) during the cultural event known as "La Notte della Taranta", in which the crowd created added-value information via comments posted on social media. Data were collected using a mobile application specifically created for this event as part of the Folkture project, as well as from Facebook and Twitter posts. Using network-analytic and sentiment/semantic algorithms, the work aims to support the event management decisional process and produce results valuable to the field of urban planning.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural events are considered a valuable asset linked to a region's intangible cultural heritage. According to the definition promoted by UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization -, the concept of cultural heritage now includes intangible aspects such as traditions, living expressions, performing arts, social practices, events, etc. The value of such events is not exclusively commercial: UNESCO is convinced that cultural activities, goods and services have both an economic and a cultural value, because they convey identities, values and meanings (UNESCO, 2005) that can be passed on to future generations.

Events attract investment and generate tourist flows, increasing the visibility of the territory's assets and facilitating new socio-cultural dynamics (Janiskee, 1980; Brunet et al., 2001; Bowdin & Allen, 2006; Allen, 2008).

The diverse nature of the impacts of cultural events makes them highly attractive and suggests that they may provide solutions to a series of urban and regional problems.

They also have implications that go beyond the specific theme of the event and raise issues of economic, social and cultural nature.

Extensive descriptions of research based on empirical verification and various techniques used to assess the economic effects of event organization, including the use of multiple indicators of various kinds, can be found in Cherubini and Iasevoli (2009), Richards and Palmer (2010), Bracalente and Ferrucci (2009).

While the economic results are often used to generate economic advantages or to enhance a location's image, another key element for the development of a community is the event's social dimension, which facilitates interaction between diverse individuals and groups and helps to develop the meaning of the place, its identity and its social bonds (Richards & Palmer, 2010). An in-depth analysis of the social impacts of events is performed in the volume edited by Richards et al. (2013), which explores the various social aspects of events, specifically examining their role in the growth of social capital, social cohesion and the participation of local communities.

From the cultural point of view, events are an important opportunity to recover a community's traditions and elements of its identity. Indeed, the festive and celebratory nature of the event brings together and involves the entire community; it strengthens the population's cultural identity and represents its social capital. This is even truer if the event is founded on tradition and local culture, presented to the community as an important tool of collective identification (Quinn, 2009). However, estimating the impact of events must necessarily take account of the destination's characteristics (size, resources, carrying capacity, etc.); the type of event; the safety of all the people involved (from the public to the organisers); the relationship between supply and demand; the distance between the social and cultural models of the residents and those of the tourists; the system of relations between the main stakeholders and their involvement in the organisation of the event (Trono & Rizzello, 2014; Trono, 2016).

The synergism between public and private entities should also be considered, together with the perception of the event's benefits, costs and objectives on the part of both the organisers and the local community (Rizzello & Trono, 2013).

Events enable interaction among people and cultures, and free media, expression and information are fundamental to the existence of culture: cultural diversity is strengthened by the free flow of ideas (UNESCO, 2005).

Technology, like mobile phones, now facilitates these communication exchanges related to their "living moments". Such information, if based on knowledge, can enrich the cultural corpus of documentation

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