

TOURISM AS SUPPORT IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF INNER AREAS: A MULTI-SOURCES APPROACH

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ABSTRACT: In the 2014-2020 programming period, Italy has put in place a new integrated policy called the National Strategy for Inner Areas (NSIA). This policy aims to contribute to the country's economic and social recovery. Rural tourism is an opportunity for the economic growth of these areas. The aim of the work is to represent the complexity of rural tourism in Inner Areas (IAs), mainly Peripheral and Ultra-peripheral ones, compared with Urban Poles and "Belt" municipalities, using a multisource approach. A pilot study was carried out for the Campania region.

KEYWORDS: Tourism, Inner Areas, Economical grow, Multi-source approach, Indicators

1 Introduction and methodology

According to NSIA, in 2020, the 7,903 Italian municipalities are classified in 7 categories, from Urban Pole (182) to Ultra-peripheral ones (382). IAs include mainly Peripheral and Ultra-peripheral areas (total 1,906), fragile territories with a far "distance" from essential services. In the IAs, the agricultural, pastoral and forestry sectors play a central role as opportunities for economic growth and for the value of care and environmental prevention (Lucatelli, Storti, 2019).

On the other hand, rural tourism can be an effective means of providing socio-economic opportunities to rural communities. It can also help to increase the attractiveness and vitality of rural areas, mitigate demographic challenges, reduce migration and promote a range of local resources and traditions, while retaining the essence of rural life (UNWTO, 2020).

The aim of the work is to represent the complexity of rural tourism in IAs, compared with Urban Poles and "Belt" municipalities, analysing main components and driving forces, by using a multisource approach. The study identifies useful indicators for the evaluation of these phenomena by exploiting the opportunity given by using Big data, open data and traditional sources.

There were identified 15 basic indicators declined in three Pillars:

- Infrastructural density and touristic fluxes;
- Economical impact of touristic sector;

- Agricultural sector support.

For the construction of indicators were used 7 data sources: survey and administrative sources (Continuous Population Census, Survey of Museums and similar institutions, Capacity of Collective tourist accommodation establishments, Statistical Atlas of the Municipalities), Statistical registers (Statistical register of active enterprises - ASIA, Frame SBS) and Big Data on Agritourisms.

To improve data quality (e.g. timeliness, accuracy, punctuality) and to increase the amount of related information, the use of web scraping techniques has been proposed in this work. In this work, web data acquisition focuses on specific web scraping. Customized software programs have been developed to extract information from the website <http://www.agriturismoitalia.gov.it>, which is the official website for authorized Italian Agritourisms, of which about 25,000 units.

To complete the study, we analyse the potential of municipalities defined as non-tourism (Istat, 2022) by integrating data with information on the presence of sites of tourist interest using open data.

Based on the Law 77, 2020 (G.U. N. 25/L Law 17 July 2020, n. 77), Istat classifies the Italian municipalities in "main tourist category", i.e. the potential tourist vocation of the municipality identified mainly on the basis of geographical (proximity to the sea, altitude, etc.) and anthropic (large urban municipalities) characteristics. There are 1,704 (21.5%) municipalities considered non-tourism, i.e. where there are no accommodation facilities and/or where tourist flows are absent.

Using the open data available on the website of the members of the National Statistical System (Sistan), we analyse the presence of Natura 2000 areas (DGE, 2023), monuments, local festivals and other attractions in the non-tourism municipalities.

2 Some results and Final remarks

The pilot analysis was carried out for Campania region. The following areas have been joined for the calculation of indicators: Poles/Inter-municipal Poles, Belt (260 municipalities), Intermediate (126 municipalities), Peripheral, Ultraperipheral (165 municipalities).

The potential of accommodation facilities is evidently very high in Peripheral and Ultraperipheral Areas. The exception is Visitor pressure on museum and similar institutions that, as expected, is higher in the Poles. Even the economy of the tourism sector confirms the potential of Peripheral and Ultraperipheral Areas.

The used source of big data, by its nature, excludes a part of the agritourisms, in particular those not in possession of the certification given by Ministry of Agriculture.

In fact, thanks to the "Agriturismo Italia" brand by Ministry of Agriculture, tourists and professional operators can easily distinguish officially accredited businesses. This distinction is very important, especially for the international market

where the Italian agritourism reality is not always perfectly known and the various operators could easily be disoriented by other forms of hospitality, equally present in the rural area.

Therefore, it cannot be excluded that a part of the agritourisms is missing, even if they are located in the Peripheral and Ultraperipheral Areas, but not in possession of the official certification. This is caused by uneven territorial marketing throughout the territory and the lack of associations among the structures.

Finally, some Municipalities considerate non-tourism has a certain number of attractions, underling the potential attractiveness of these areas.

Switching from a single source to multi-source statistics seems therefore the way to go. However, this transition is not easy. Multi-source statistics present new problems that need to be overcome before the resulting output quality is sufficiently high and these statistics can be efficiently produced. What complicates the production of multi-source statistics is that the supporting data are available in many different varieties as data sets can be combined in many different ways (de Waal *et al.*, 2019).

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