Inclusive togetherness.
A comparative ethnography of cultural associations making Milan sociable

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"The city, substituting the village, has ratified the impossibility of an automatic correspondence between peculiar identities and collective solidarity"

Costanzo Ranci

"the most insidious amongst the forms of social exclusion are not those based on status or wage but on the access to networks of acquaintances and friends, which may guarantee the support in fundamental moments of life: mourning, job search, access to services, credit and so on and so forth. 'Put it crudely" (*ibidem*), the possibilities are two - "engagement or estrangement" (Sennett 1990) – and debates over the conditions making for one or the other outcome constitute perhaps the most celebrated and enduring contribution of sociologists to the study of place (Gieryn 2000 p.476)"

Giorgio Osti

"The style, Bachtin suggests, is 'how we express something', the way to manage 'differences among a variety of parts in conflict', thus it is essentially 'a form of politics'"

Marianella Sclavi

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CONTENTS

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[1] See note 2 of this chapter.

PART II

Chapter 4. Group bonds and the intentional creation of social relationships. Beyond the bridging/bonding distinction

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[1] Quotation from the excerpt of interview cited at the opening of the chapter.

[2] This is a quotation taken from the opening conversation with Simona and reperorted in the first page of the chapter.

INTRODUCTION

This study was initially elicited from the wish of analytically qualify practices and outcomes produced by civil society groups. Such a wish was motivated on the one hand by the contemporary "world urban crisis" (Petrillo 2000 p. 19) and in particular the associated shrinking of urban public spaces and, on the other hand, by the ever growing expectations toward civic groups that have been diffusing– especially over the last 20 years – in commonsense and sociological scholarship alike. For what concerns the first aspect it is worth citing just the title of some sociological works about contemporary urban conditions: "The decline of the city" (Della Pergola 1994), "The abandoned city" (Magatti 2007), "The lost city" (Petrillo 2000), "The undone city" (Sernini 1987), " In the empty spaces of the metropolis" (Ilardi 1990). In all these studies are present and differently articulated accounts about the lack of public life in the contemporary city and the ongoing *crisis* of "urban public spaces" (Mela 2006 p.195). "The public space, as open place to the participation of everybody and where it develops social relationships among citizens […] has been eroded" (Vicari 2009 p. 7). Thus, such a *crisis* of urban public spaces refers to the shrinking of adequate spatial and social arrangements for the development of face-to-face communication among citizens and thus it is often depicted in terms of predicaments to urban sociality (Dal Lago 2000; Magatti 2007; Petrillo 2000). But sociality, its production and regeneration, is also among the main expectations attributed to the functioning of civil society groups. Indeed, according to recent surveys, nowadays citizens not just expect civic groups to play roles that were once uniquely attributed to political parties and democratic institutions, but they also widely recognize them a broad socializing function (Biorcio 2009). For what concerns scholars' knowledge, a variety of studies have tried to recognize non-profit organizations "the quality of relational spaces adequate to re-generate ties among citizens because capable of eliminating or diminish the factors that provoke the exclusion from social life" (Tronca 2004 p. 165). The positive function of the participation of citizens in free associations with respect to social ties represent a long standing topos because "since the eighteenth century has diffused a sort of stereotype according to which […] civil society is the geometric place of goodness and reciprocity" (Bidussa 1994 p.93). Re-elaborated, such a collective representation is still widely present in many academic contemporary debates on civil society (Cefai 2006; La Valle 2004). Just to cite a few examples about the Italian context: Magatti (2005) focused his theoretical reflections on the "Institutive power of civil society", Garelli spoke of associations in terms of "possibility of constructing concrete solidarity, […] places where the primary trust is formed and it is produced a collective ethos" (Garelli 2001 p. 30), Donati defined the "social private" as a context characterized by the "primary goal of producing goods which consist of social relationships or possess value because conductors of social relationships" (Donati Colozzi 2004 p.135).

Thus, combining the growing concerns for the contemporary crisis of urban sociality and the widespread expectations about the capacity of associations to "build social ties" (Ranci 1999 p. 68) my inquiry aspired at *detailing and qualifying* the outcomes produces by civic groups in terms of creation of social relationships, both among group members and beyond the group. At this respect, I deemed useful observing a specific type of civic groups, consisting in those non-profit organizations

that explicitly confronted with the production of social inclusion in urban contexts. Indeed, the associations[1] I have analyzed in my research assumed that the city is the place that "bring people together in bodily co-presence" (Gieryn 2000, p. 476) which, "put it crudely" (*ibidem*), may result in two type of outcomes: "engagement or estrangement" (Sennett 1990). They deemed "the most insidious amongst the forms of social exclusion not those based on status or wage but on the access to networks of acquaintances and friends, which may guarantee the support in fundamental moments of life: mourning, job search, access to services, credit" (Osti 2010 p. 35). The associations I have observed tried to contrast these forms of social exclusion through the "upgrading of public spaces"[2] in an urban context that they perceived as seriously lacking them. Such spaces – as we shall see in chapter 3 - were in the groups' official communication depicted underling their *urban* inclusive nature, which explicitly differentiated them from enclosed "community" of "entre-soi" (Cefai 2007 p. 154). The associations I've analyzed strived to create inclusive forms of social relationships to contrast what they perceived as a growing fragmentation of the social fabric of the same urban area (Milan "Zone 4") in which they were settled and with respect to which they acted. In particular, I've conducted - from February 2008 to February 2010 - a comparative ethnographic research to understand the functioning of, and outlining the outcomes produced by, ten non-profit groups that – according to their own vocabularies - aimed at "upgrading public spaces"[3], "contrasting social isolation"[4] and "regenerate the social fabric"[5] in Milan. The observed associations aimed at "making *Milan* sociable"[6] because they defined their goals in tight relation with the urban space in which they were settled and with reference to which they acted. They defined themselves "cultural associations" because they used cultural initiatives - such as concerts, arts shows, movie projections and so on and so forth- for "re-embedding" sociality, that is to say in order to "re-appropriate and re-define social relationships at the local conditions of space and time" (Bagnasco, Barbagli, Cavalli 1997 p. 673).

My analysis aims at answering a twofold broad research question. Indeed, on the hand I wanted to *qualify* the different togetherness produced by the observed groups and, on the other hand, to pay a specific attention to the *conditions* and the predicaments of such productions. Studying collective subjects aiming at producing social inclusion through the upgrading of public urban spaces calls for a wider inquiry on the forms of togetherness they enacted in their informal everyday group life and through the formal initiatives they set up. In both cases it is required a close observation to specify

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[1] In this study the category of "associations is interpreted differently from the meaning associated to it by Weber, not as aggregation of interests but as aggregation on shared goals and goods" (de Leonardis 1999 p. 244). Such a general remark will be detailed throughout the contents of the dissertation and especially in chapter 3.

[2] From the self-description one of the observed associations of this study (Esterni) gave about itself and its goals. For further details see chapter 3.

[3] According to the official communication of Esterni, one of the ten observed groups. For more details on this and other statements through which the groups I've observed defined themselves and their goals see chapter 3 of this dissertation.

[4] ibidem

[5] Ibidem

[6] "Making Milan sociable" is part of the subtitle of this study.

and qualify such togetherness with respect to the associations' own formal goals. I've tried to exert this type of observation during the two years of my empirical research, while paying a broader attention to the conditions of possibility in which the observed groups acted and to the relation between their formal repertoire of action and the public sphere. In particular, I've focused my attention on *events*, trying to understand how they worked and which outcomes they produced with respect to the starting research questions. The main argument proposed by this study – illustrated in chapter 9 - links *the way* events were used by the observed associations in their pursues of public sociality to the institutional properties of the togetherness enacted by group members in the everyday group life.

The events I have observed in my field research- as we shall see in particular in chapter 5 and 6 – possessed a tight relation with the urban context in which the observed groups acted because they were used to *intentionally* create "public space of proximity" (Laville 1994) through the proposal of cultural contents that had to compete with many other possibilities to attract attendees. Even more profoundly, the urban conditions in which the observed associations were settled strongly affected the very nature of the collective goals with respect to which they mobilized themselves. Indeed, the "social complexity" in which they were embedded "implies by definition a growing fragmentation of the social experience which elicits […] to continuously evoke the idea of a 'new' sociality capable of restoring the human dimension of social relationships" (Lodi, Grazioli 1984 p. 109). At this respect it is probably hardly a chance if the observed associations in many cases strived to preserve their informal character of small groups, which indeed represents the "ideal answer to the needs of face-to-face solidarity that the individual perceive as negated in its everyday life" (*ibidem*). Also, it is worth anticipating that the creation of inclusive forms of social relationships is a particularly difficult goal to be pursued in an urban context. Indeed, the urban complexity on the one hand is a favorable condition for eliciting the need of regenerating social ties because the "extreme functionalization embed little sociality of place" (Magatti 2007 p. 33) but, on the other hand, it makes particularly hard the establishing of social relationships among diverse people. In contemporary cities, "in centers and peripheries alike, urban residents experience the same pathologies of a sociality that has an hard time in reproducing itself both because past conditions that sustained it are declining and because not always there are at disposal the adequate codes to manage the contemporary cultural pluralism" (*ibidem*).

Also, urban sociality is more often depicted as the upshot emerging from "practices" (Bonomi 1994) than the product of intentioned efforts (Crosta 2007). Moreover, specific predicaments to the generation of more institutionalized forms of public sociality in the city are associated to the elevated mobility that - according to all the main urban accounts (Magatti 2007 p. 21) - characterizes contemporary western cities. Indeed, this makes particularly hard the emergence of institutional properties from "ephemeral practices" (Cognetti 2009) of face-to-face interactions. But the augmented mobility is also necessarily part of the overall context with respect to which the observed *intentioned* pursue of public sociality make sense. Indeed, in the viewpoints of social analysts and civic groups alike, the augmented mobility is a part of broader changes affecting western cities and explicitly threatening the already-known forms of social relationships. Indeed, sociality is often depicted as a "spasmodic need" (Aaster et al. 1994 p. 9) emerging from its

"negation and destruction because of the deep productive changes, which do not give anymore neither 'identity' nor 'solidarity fabric' to social subjects" (*ibidem*). Tensions between "fluxes" and "places" (Castells 2004; Bagnasco 2003; Bonomi, Abruzzese 2004; Magatti 2007) stimulate broad sociological accounts about the ongoing "urban crisis" (Petrillo 2000) in which the lack of urban sociality (Zucchetti 2008), the erosion of public places (Vicari 2009) and the fragmentation of the social fabric are among its main traits (Fantini 1994; Salati 2007). Indeed, "la fragmentation en effet n'est qu'une manière de dire la rupture d'un ordre, c'est-à dire la rupture d'une façon parmi d'autre de composer le pluralisme inhérent à la ville" (Pattaroni 2007 p.1). With respect to the specific urban context in which the associations analyzed in this study acted, Milan - at least since when this city "has returned to be considered a social territory" (Ranci 2007 p. 8) - is often described as a particularly fragmented local society (Fantini 1994 p. 12). Also in this case this type of diagnosis is explicitly associated to major socio-economic changes that have affected this city from the '70s (Foti 1993). The idea according to which "it is out of doubt that the contemporary situation in Milan is characterized by the lack of socialization" (Foot 2003 p. 40) represents a widespread view that extends itself much beyond the analysis of social scientists and diffuse inside and outside the boundaries of a city that in the national collective imaginary is firstly considered with respect to its productive dimension. Various studies have signaled that Milan residents complain about the declining public spaces of their city, especially with reference to the image of a mythical past of neighborhood working-class solidarity (*ibidem*). According to a recent empirical research (Citroni 2010), the diffusion of this specific frame has been confirmed also in the perceptions that residents and city-users (Martinotti 1993) have expressed about Milan "Zone 4", the privileged urban area to which the observed associations referred their goals of generating public sociality. Moreover, also the associations I have studied shared the frame about Milan declining sociality and their actions tried to affect it by generating public sociality at least in two ways. Firstly, the observed groups used to set up cultural initiatives that promoted a *public definition* of sociality, which contrasted its framing in terms of, for example, problem of individuals incapable of carrying out satisfying social life. The actions carried out by the observed associations assumed a definition of sociality in terms of collective concern affecting potentially everybody and relative to the "social organization of a local society" (Bagnasco 1994) which may or may not comprise adequate social conditions for its development. Secondly, the setting up of cultural initiatives by the observed groups aimed at creating "public spaces of proximity" (Laville 1994) in which sociality could develop mainly in face-to-face interactions. In order to define the public nature of such spaces it is worth taking from the outset adequate distance from the – often romanticized – interpretations of face-to-face sociality as a necessarily positive sphere. The "relational spaces" (Garelli 2001) generated by the observed groups made the most evident the ambiguity associated to the notion proximity[1], which "expresses meanings that are potentially in contradictions among themselves" (Breviglieri 2005 p. 2). But especially the empirical evidences collected in my field research highlighted that "the relational and

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[1] The ambiguity of proximity represents a long standing argument of sociology which can be dated back at least to Simmel, a scholar particularly "aware of the ambivalences of direct relationships in the same place. Proximity elicits both positive and negative sentiments that augment chances of affective relationships but also the risk of creating reciprocal nuisance, slanders or even conflict" (Osti 2010 p. 35). Many empirical researches have upheld the impossibility of solving the intrinsic ambiguity of direct forms of relationships (Fischer 1982). This general trait is also valid for relationships that take shape as the upshot of intentioned collective endeavors promoted by civic groups.

inter-subjective production that is typical of civil society may also give birth to enclosed identities, incapable of recognizing systems of reciprocity, solidarity, and wider responsibility […] and to the consolidation of strong and self-referential interests" (Magatti 2005 p. 82). In general, indeed, associations may promote spaces of proximity that constitute themselves in terms of what Bellah et al. (1985) described as "lifestyle enclaves" of "people like us".

The qualification of "inclusive", cited in the title of this study, refers to the goals of the observed groups and it is just a possible attribute of their ways of being together ("togetherness"). *Inclusive togetherness* represents a qualification, among possible other ones, of the outcomes and the practices I have observed in my field research. The aim of my analysis was that of outlining of the conditions allowing the emergence of such a qualification, where inclusiveness was firstly defined by its *public* status. Following Weintraub (1997) this refers to "public as synonym of sociality and social interactions in open spaces, opposed to the private as synonym of parochial sociality and social interactions inside already defined spaces" (Mubi Brighenti 2010 p. 2). Thus, in my study "public" was not treated as analytical category, but instead was used as a "problematic category": not a concept to be used to account for other processes but something that needed itself to be accounted for (*ibidem*) and that called for its specification. Indeed, throughout the analytical chapters of the second section of the dissertation[1] the reader will look at different - enacted - definitions of inclusive togetherness. Such different ways of being together will be depicted stressing the short-sightedness of simply ranking them on a scale of inclusiveness ("more or less inclusive") and instead the utility of framing them in terms of qualitatively different types of inclusive togetherness, each one with its own tradeoffs with respect to the observed broader processes.

The study of the outcomes associated to the intentioned generation of public sociality promoted by non-profit groups can be considered part of a widest theoretical inquiry on the forms of communication, "here with its original meaning of taking part in a common matter" (Thévenot 2007 p. 411). This wide theoretical subject can be linked to broad reflections that are at the very origin of sociology, such as for example those about the relation between individuals and institutions and the changes affecting such relation in contemporary societies. At this respect the collective goal of creating social relationships can be associated to the diffusion of "loose connections" (Wuthnow 2002) and to the widespread discontent about these forms of relation between individuals and institutions in contemporary societies. These broad topics require to be inquired through a situated perspective that take into account the practices in which the observed actors engage themselves and, at the same time, the overall conditions in which they act. At this respect, the changes involved in the decline of the mediating function of "intermediate bodies" (Magatti 2005) and the specificities of contemporary urban conditions are at the very basis of my proposal of considering the intentioned generation of sociality in urban contexts as a specific and autonomous subject of inquiry. Indeed, this may possesses affinities with other domains, such as certain aspects of local participation (Membretti 2005) or the collective mobilizations based on the model of "community organizing" (Petrillo 2000) developed from the '60s as a reaction against the urban decay. But the

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[1] From chapter 4 to chapter 8.

pursue of public sociality I've studied differs significantly from these phenomena[1] and call for an adequate consideration in its own terms. Nowadays "the aspiration [...] at reconstructing a torn and fragile social fabric on the basis of some form of direct engagement" (Ambrosini 2005 p. 15) take place in an overall context that has been affected by significant changes. Such changes make the subject of this study different from apparently similar ones of the past. As already cited, the contemporary crisis of sociality is related to wider socio-economic changes affecting in particular urban contexts. At this respect the associations observed in this study represent also indirect signals of aspects of the "urban crisis" (Petrillo 2000) relative to the production and re-production of non instrumental forms of social relationships. Indeed, it is hardly a chance that the assumptions at the basis of the official communication used by the observed groups to describe their goals2 strongly resonate with many sociological accounts about the ongoing dynamics of privatization of urban spaces (Bauman 2001), the emergence of "privatopias" (Petrillo 2006 p.85) and the associated "crisis of primary sociality" (Magatti 2007 p.490). Many sociologists have argued that the urban dimension is especially characterized by its public places made of interactions among strangers (Gieryn 2000), that are more and more disappearing from urban contemporary scenarios (Petrillo 2000; Sebastiani 1997; Sennett 1977; Bauman 1999; Vicari, Moulaert 2009). In particular, "the European city has historically characterized itself for its capacity of social proximity and integration that are nowadays in crisis " (Magatti 2007 p. 487) and the broader social conditions in which such a crisis is taking place make at the same time particularly hard and urgent the need of thinking about new solutions (Petrillo 2000). This study doesn't dwell upon these broader conditions, but underlines how these can be observed through the analyzed pursues of public sociality, if taking into adequate consideration its own traits. For example, urban social relationships have been the focus of many sociological reflections from the very beginning of this discipline (Tonkiss 2005) and the specific viewpoints assumed by the observed associations push to look at this topic in terms that are consistent with specific sociological accounts. In particular, the observed groups do not frame social ties as taken for granted data of a specific local society, but instead consider them as the object of their collective efforts aiming at creating them. This is consistent with the "reflexive character of contemporary social life" (Melucci 1984) that makes the consideration of inter-subjective relationships as socially constructed not anymore uniquely part of the analytical tools of the social researcher but also part of the implicit assumptions of civic groups that mobilize themselves to construct social relationships. More generally, the collective efforts of the non-profit groups I've studied were consistent with accounts according to which the "accelerated deterritorialization elicits a real industry of restoring of the social tie" (Levy 1994 p. 51). Such an "industry" in Milan already shows significant levels of specialization which internally differentiates the work of "re-inserting those socially excluded" (*ibidem*) carried out by civil society subjects[3].

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[1] In particular in chapter 1 I will outline the theoretical qualification of the subject inquired in this study.

[2] Outlined in chapter 3.

[3] This work is carried out in contexts that qualify social relationships- their quality or "nature" – in different ways, according to categories that then are taken into considerations by the social analysis. Indeed, over time the area of social marginality has progressively been extended from its traditional forms (poverty, disease) toward less visible phenomena (such as socio-economic vulnerability) and lately recognizing more and more the social exclusion associated to relational poverties.

The specific traits of the associations observed in my study represent an indirect signal that indicates such a level of internal differentiation. Indeed, Milan, beyond being characterized by the the aforementioned collective representation about the lack of sociality, comprises also a relevant amount of efforts to contrast social exclusion promoted by civil society subjects (Barbetta 2008). The so-called third sector in this city is a significant and widely internally diversified economic sector (Barbetta, Ranci 1999; Ranci 2003). Such a data may be tied to the "traditional orientation toward sociality, enlarged social interactions and associative life" (Chiesi, Martinelli 1996) that is attributed to this city, and also to recent institutional changes with the introduction of the principle of subsidiarity in the implementation of social policies. Anyway, in Milan the internal diversification of its civil society has recently witnessed the diffusion of collective subjects - such as those that I've inquired- which possess the priority goal of creating "public space of proximity" (Laville 1994) to contrast what the perceived "lack of socialization" (Foot 2003 p. 40). Another trait of the observed groups that is telling about an often neglected feature of their overall context is the fact that they pursued public sociality mainly through the setting up of events. At this respect it is worth anticipating that collective endeavors of creating social relationships through events represent a theoretically controversial strategy[1] which, for this reason, call for adequate empirical analysis. Indeed, according to one amongst the most diffuse accounts about the ongoing crisis of urban sociality, this would derive from the fact that cities' contemporary bedrock is represented by their "functions and events that attract and generate fluxes. In such a context, sociality has an hard time in autonomously re-producing itself because it is more and more tied to specific functions that organize city life." (Magatti 2007 p. 27-28). Thus, events on the one hand "disembed" sociality from contemporary cities while, on the other hand, represent the main repertoire of action used by the observed groups to "re-embed" sociality. The problematic nature of pursuing public sociality through events is evident also assuming other viewpoints. With respect to the analysis of collective action it is possible to cite, for example, the reasons attributed by scholars to the decline and internal crisis of Milan self-administer social centers: "such a crisis […] has not to be referred to the lack of project on the part of self-administered social centers but, paradoxically, is linked to their efficiency in producing (cultural, theatric, musicals…) initiatives" (Aaster et al. 1994 p. 9).

Especially, the controversial nature of using events for creating social relationships emerged in the variety of tensions that group members had to face in their everyday participation in the observed cultural associations. Such tensions have been outlined and analyzed by the researcher[2] through a situated perspective which has addressed theoretical concerns from the point of view of the observed subjects[3]. This represents a specific viewpoint in the inquiry of processes related to civil society subjects. Indeed, an astonishing amount of theoretical expectations have been attributed to civic groups in terms of creation of inclusive relationships but little empirical researches have accompanied such expectations. For example, with specific reference to the regional context of the subject inquired in my study, a previous survey-based research on "associative participation" in

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[1] Strategy here does not refer necessarily to an intentioned behavior or action.

[2] These tensions are in particular described from chapter 4 to chapter 8 of this dissertation.

[3] This type of strategy is the most evident in chapter 7.

Lombardy rhetorically asked itself "if and to which extent associative engagement can substitute primary forms of relationships weakened by the process of modernization" (Iref 1995 p. 67). After a few pages the same study argued "that it is out of doubts that associative participation play a powerful role of integration and enrichment of the social relationships of group members" (Iref 1995 p. 90), though the previous pages did not provide empirical evidences to support this argument. With specific reference to Milan, a recent report on this city generically stated that non-profit groups contribute to "reinforce social relationships" (Barbetta 2008 p. 91). More broadly, it is worth noting that in scholarship "the association" - the category used by the observed groups to define themselves - is deemed as the most suited form of third sector organizations for the production of sociality because it conjugates the "society principle" and the "community principle" (Laville 1997 p. 337). Associations appear as the "the most appropriate solution to homeopathically heal 'the predicaments of a period marked by individualism and fundamentalism alike'(Laville 1997 p. 336). However, how this would happen, nevertheless, it is not clear" (de Leonardis 1999 p. 244), that is to say that also this argument also lack adequate empirical foundation.

More recently, studies on civic groups have rapidly increased and they do not include only analysis based on normative and uniquely theoretical arguments (Maloney et al. 2007). A growing number of empirical researches are addressing the conditions of possibility, the processes, the outcomes and the tensions tied to actions carried out by civic groups[1]. This study aims at contributing to consolidate and develop such researches and in order to start understanding the terms of this possible contribution it is now necessary to briefly sketch some of its methodological aspects.

1. METHODOLOGY

This study is mainly based on the empirical evidences I've collected during the "theory-driven participant observation" (Lichterman 2002) I've conducted for two years in ten non-profit groups pursuing public sociality in Milan. Therefore, my analysis has been mainly based on the ethnographic method, an ensemble of research techniques particularly suited to observe from close *how* groups act in their everyday life, if and especially in *what terms* the aforementioned normative expectations on civil society are fulfilled. A broader account of the methodological options of my study has been developed in the "Methodological appendix" at the end of the dissertation. Here I deem important to uniquely detail which specific type ethnographic approach I've adopted in my research. Indeed, different analytical strategies are possible to ethnographically base the proposal of an argument[2]. Among the possibilities at disposal in contemporary debates, two are particularly known: (1) the inductive generalization based on situated knowledge according to the method of the "grounded theory" (Glaser, Strauss 1967), (2) the disentangle of taken for granted assumptions, according to the examples given by the ethnomethodology school of Garfinkel (1967). The analytical strategy adopted by this research is different from both these approaches and it refers to

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[1] For example, among the studies that have directly inspired my analysis it is possible the researches on social innovation in European cities. Such a line of inquiry has highlighted the critical value, the production of public discourses and social ties of local mobilizations acting in urban contexts (Vitale 2009a).

[2] For a review see Small 2009 or Lichterman 2002.

another ethnographic perspective: the "extended case method" (Burawoy 1998, 2003; Burawoy et al. 1991), in particular as this has been formulated by the so-called "Berkeley school" (Small 2009 p. 20). This is an approach who possess the main advantage of allowing the *extension* of situated knowledge beyond the specific contexts to which it firstly refers to. Generalizations based on the extended case method differs both from the "grounded theory" and from the "interpretative case method" of Geertz (1973). When following the case extended method the "researcher analyzes a particular social situation in relation to the broader social forces shaping it" (Small 2009 p.19) and the generalization develops through the continuous comparison between situated observations and theoretical concepts. Indeed, a widespread research technique used by researchers adopting this method is the "theory driven participant observation" (Lichterman 2002), which consists of a structured way of developing field observations to answer to specific questions formulated drawing on arguments and hypothesis taken from previous studies. According to the case extended method, field observations are used to refine, develop, if necessary revise and, more generally, *extend* the reach of arguments taken from the literature. The extended case method's ultimate purpose is "refining or reconstructing a theory" (Small 2009 p. 21), the latter element in the case field observations are significantly inconsistent with the starting arguments assumed by the study. If the "extended case method" may appear an analytical strategy common to many approaches through which social scientist build their arguments, instead it represents a specific method which has been widely theoretically systematized (Small, Burawoy, Lichterman) and used by researches to build new arguments that extended previous ones. In order to understand how I used this approach it is necessary to hint at the main research questions and the starting hypothesis of the study I conducted.

2. CASE EXTENDED METHOD APPLIED

Firstly, it is necessary to make clear that the analysis I carried out didn't aim at improving or at reconstructing a specific theory. Instead, I addressed a variety of theories or delimited hypothesis taken from broader perspectives, according to the different outlooks assumed throughout the analytical chapters of this dissertation. Thus, I've used the approach of the extended case method as a reference model to collect, analyze and try to generalize ethnographic notes with reference to a variety of starting theoretical arguments.

2.1 QUESTIONS

This study has initially took off from the intention of theoretically question, empirically inquiry, specify and articulate the arguments according to which "third sector subjects generate sociality" (Borghi 2001 p. 176), civil society subjects are "social actors producers of social ties" (Ranci 1999 p. 68). The research questions focus on *how* such production occurs and *what* social relationships are produced as results of *intentioned* efforts to generate them promoted by civic groups. In particular, my study focuses on the efforts consisting of cultural initiatives set up by non-profit urban groups to generate sociality and on the conditions allowing such efforts to succeed in including subjects beyond the groups. Anticipating the study's hypothesis, the theoretical interest is in understanding *how* the endeavors of generating public sociality promoted by the observed cultural associations developed *in order to understand which* outcomes they produced, observing

such outcomes in the situated contexts in which they took place. I've been particularly interested in studying two specific elements of the pursues of public sociality I've observed. Firstly, I was interested in understanding the functioning of collective endeavors of creating urban sociality when they developed through *cultural events* such as concerts, arts shows, movie projections and so on and so forth. Indeed, these types of initiatives are increasingly part of the repertoire of action of civil society groups (Guala 2007), in spite of the fact that they are hardly considered in literature on civic action. There exists specific studies that illustrate advantages and drawbacks of using events on the part of associations. For example we know that events are particularly suited to build consensus and legitimacy (Vitale 2009b) but less apt to pursue other type of goals because of the "ephemeral practices" (Cognetti 2009) they mainly consist of. What it is still lacking are analysis of the grammar of events aiming at generating public sociality: that is to say studies about the logic of functioning, the regulative power and implications of this form of action when it is used to turn parochial sociability into public sociality. Secondly, I was interested in observing from close in the organizations I had taken as case studies of my research of the "primordial quandary" (Ranci 1999) of non-profit subjects: the inevitable tensions between "the exigencies of functionality and those connected to participation of group members" (Ranci 1999 p. 135). I wanted to understand the situated ways of managing these tensions and the implications of these ways with respect to the pursue of public sociality.

During my empirical research the setting up of events and the management of tensions associated to the "primordial quandary" have been two particularly intertwined elements. Indeed, the observed associations have faced the ever growing "exigencies of functionality" (*ibidem*) of the broader project to which they all belonged[1] by increasingly setting up events over the two years of my study. For the observed organizations, their events represented the main domain in which it developed the tensions "between a tendency toward institutionalizion and orientation to informality" (Membretti 2005 p.8) that are typical of "local participation" (*ibidem*). Though strictly intertwined, I have tried to keep analytically separated the events set up by the observed groups and the tensions associated their setting up, dedicating to these aspects different parts of my dissertation.

2.2 HYPHOTESIS

The main, very broad, hypothesis of my study are two. Put very crudely, I firstly assume the "importance of forms and styles of third sector subjects" (Borghi 2001 p. 176), that is to say I consider the " 'how' of organizations, with their cultures and concrete practices as not neutral but instead as active with respect to the 'what', the social outcomes of their activities" (de Leonardis 1999 p. 244). Secondly I deem the "how" of the groups I studied not as randomly resulting from improvising and "ad hoc-ing" (Alexander, Smith 1993) behaviors but instead as *patterned* and thus analyzable by the social researcher[2]. The arguments proposed have been developed on the basis of the comparative analysis among ten cultural associations whose functioning I've empirically

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[1] This is the Cuccagna Project (CP). For details about such projects see chapter 3 of this dissertation.

[2] Both such hypotheses will be widely developed in chapter 1 and throughout the chapters of the dissertation.

documented mainly through my uncovered participant observation in them. This research has allowed to comparatively observe in different organizations the elements of interest of my research question. Indeed, the observed associations, though being very similar among themselves[1], differently used events to pursue their goals, they reacted to the augmented exigencies of functionality in different ways and they produced different outcomes in terms of creation of new social relationships. According the hypothesis assumed in this study such differences were not accidental but they were linked, though not in a causal way, to *how* the observed groups carried out their pursue of sociality. In particular, according to the main adopted hypothesis of this study the possibilities of intentionally create social relationships on the part of the observed groups were tied to the recurrent patterns that shaped their everyday group life. Such patterns were relative to the institutional properties of the specific togetherness enacted by group members, which enabled and constrained what they could do and say while in group contexts.

Finally, in this introductory part I deem worth mentioning two previous studies that have been particularly important for the overall formulation of my research[2]. Firstly, the title I've chosen for my dissertation represents a tribute to a previous study - "Elusive togetherness" (Lichterman 2005) - that has suggested to me important elements of my own research questions and, especially, from which I've borrowed many methodological aspects to answer them[3]. A second theoretical point of reference for the study I've conducted has been the analysis of "movement areas" in Milan directed by Melucci (1984). Indeed, this study firstly indicated to me the utility of looking at the everyday group practices to understand broader processes tied to the activities carried out by those groups. Indeed, Melucci's study highlighted that the proposal groups belonging to "movement areas" made of "other codes" were firstly observable "in the ways they organize their solidarity" (Melucci 1984 p. 441). This is a finding consistent with what Lichterman's analysis underlined because both studies shows that everyday group life is the context observing which it is possible to account for broader outcomes related to the capacity of groups to pursue their goals. In both cases it is stressed the analytical value of looking at the quality of ties among group members, a dimension often neglected in the study of civic action[4]. At this respect it is possible to anticipate that the choice of the cultural associations taken as case studies of my empirical research aimed at making maximally visible the enabling and constraining properties of different, patterned, "togetherness" among group members. Indeed, I've deliberatively chosen to study associations that were all part of the same

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[1] For details see chapter 3 and for methodological considerations on the selection of the observed groups see the Methodological appendix.

[2] As it will be shown in chapter 1, the hypothesis adopted in my study have been varied and not all taken uniquely by those two studies. Nevertheless, I wanted to cite in the introduction the study of Lichterman and Melucci because of their importance for the widest formulation of my research.

[3] In particular, I've used the concept of "group style" (Eliasoph, Lictherman 2003) as main tool to observe the recurrent patterns of action and interaction that shape group life and their implications on the generation of public sociality. The debts toward the study of Lichterman (2004) and the approach of group style have been introduced in chapter 1 and in the methodological appendix.

[4] For example a dimension too summarily dismissed by Putnam with its division between bridging and bonding social capital (Putnam 2000).

overall project, whose group life mainly took place in the same spatial arrangements and that, especially, shared most of their members. The latter aspect has represented the ideal condition to observe different "togetherness", comparatively analyze their institutional properties and outline their relation to the pursue of very similar group goals. Indeed, observing the same individuals taking part in the same overall project, but acting differently in different settings has allowed to comparatively observe different cultural conditions of possibility for the generation of public sociality[1].

3. CONTENTS

According to Mela (2006) an urban sociology perspective distinguishes itself from a more general sociologist viewpoint because of the privileged attention it gives to the dimensions of space and time (Mela 2006 p. 251). At this respect this study can be deemed as equipped with a broad urban sociology perspective because time and space are the wide dimensions I've used for the organizing the contents presented throughout the next chapters. In particular, in the first part of the dissertation the space will dominate the narration. Indeed, after having introduced – in chapter 1 - the theoretical definition of the inquired subject and the main analytical tools adopted to study it, I will present - in chapter 2 - some broad traits defining Milan "Zone 4", the urban space with reference to which the observed groups of my study officially defined their pursue of public sociality. Then – in chapter 3 - I will outline the main elements through which the observed cultural associations described themselves in their formal - oral or written - statements. Chapters 2 and 3 include context contents, that is to say that they articulate empirical evidences that may help the reader to frame and better understand features of the processes analyzed in the following chapters. But chapters 2 and 3, as well as partially other parts of the dissertation, include also contents not directly tied to the main empirical findings or to the theoretical arguments proposed by this study. For example there will be presented also tracks of analysis that I developed during my research but that eventually revealed to be just *indirectly* useful for my analysis[2]. The analytical chapters (from 4 to 8) make up the second part of the dissertation. In this section the dimension of time dominate the narration. Indeed, throughout the pages of these chapters I will follow the changes that affected the observed groups over the course of the two years of my empirical research and I will partially try to account for them. Every chapter will consider a specific theoretical dimension and develop a comparative analysis on it drawing on ethnographic evidences. In this part I will report uniquely the analysis directly useful for the argument proposed by the study and thus I will not necessarily speak about all the ten observed cultural associations. In the chapters composing this part I've tried on the one hand to depict in detail and, on the other hand, to analyze the variety of togetherness enacted by the observed groups in their group life and through the initiatives they set up to pursue their collective

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[1] Further methodological considerations on this option have been outlined in the Methodological appendix.

[2] For example the overall inquiry illustrated in chapter 2. Indeed, the numerous socio-economic maps of Milan "Zone 4" were part of a track of analysis that – as argued in the last chapter – has not proven to be directly useful for the proposed overall arguments.

goals. In particular, in chapter 4 I've considered *structured* efforts to intentionally create relationships beyond the group – efforts taking place over time, on more occasions- and analyzed how different situated meanings of group bonds differently enabled and constrained the groups' attempts to spiral outward. Chapters 5 and 6 are about the observed associations' efforts to produce sociality through "*ephemeral* practices" (Cognetti 2009) consisting in cultural events. In both these chapters I refer mainly – though not exclusively- to Habermas' model of the public sphere to qualify from a specific outlook the observed collective efforts to create social relationships beyond the group through events. In particular in chapter 5 the vertical articulation of Habermas' model will allow to inquiry the conditions turning an event into an "articulation of the public sphere" (Sebastiani 1997 p. 231). In chapter 6 I question and try to specify the argument according to which civil society subjects are the "infrastructure of the public sphere" (Privitera 2001) by linking "how events enter the public sphere" (Oliver and Myers 1999) to the type of involvement of attendees in the observed events. In the following two analytical chapters I inquiry features composing the group styles of Esterni (in chapter 7) and of other observed cultural associations (chapter 8). Both these last chapters aim at illustrating how the way the observed organizations *used* events was *patterned* by the institutional properties shaping their everyday group life. All the analytical chapters - apart from chapter 6, which is mainly an extension of chapter 5- begin with an *opening* section that it is meant to exemplify the theoretical puzzle addressed in that delimited part of the dissertation. In the conclusive chapter (chapter 9) the spatial dimension will prevail again, reconsidering the relation between the "organized space" (Osti 2010) and the creation of social relationships in urban contexts in light of the findings emerged from the previous analytical chapters. While in those chapters I tried to *specify and qualify the sociality produced* by the observed organizations (among group members and both through structured and ephemeral efforts to create relationships beyond the group), in the last chapter I illustrate the theoretical argument I propose to account for the *conditions of such a production* of sociality. In particular, I resume the main findings of the previous chapters and then I focus on the tensions associated to the introduction of *the event* as dominant form of action through which the observed groups carried out their pursue of public sociality. I will sketch out some considerations on the implications of creating social relationships through events in terms of shift in the nature of the local embeddedness of the observed groups. My argument to account for such implications propose to see them not as causally deriving from events, but instead linked to the *patterned ways* in which the observed non-profit organizations *used* events. Indeed, the analysis carried out in the previous chapters showed that different group styles differently enabled and constrained the way the observed groups related to events. In particular, in the final chapter the proposed argument will be theoretically articulated in three strands that will specify it in relation to the processes observed in the previous chapters.

Finally, a consideration for the reader. This is about the aforementioned choice of including in the dissertation also contents not directly useful for the proposed overall theoretical arguments (summarized in chapter 9) and for the related empirical findings (illustrated especially from chapter 4 to 8). This option corresponds to the – of course questionable - idea that a dissertation should report the different aspects of the inquiry carried out by the author. I'm aware of the fact that adopting such an idea has necessarily implied the cost of internal inconsistency in the analytical narration developed throughout the next pages. Also, I'm conscious of the fact that the reader will

be the one paying such a cost. At this respect I've tried to do my best for attenuating its efforts through the methodological appendix[1] and by qualifying whenever possible the different types of contents exposed in the next pages.

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[1] The last secton of the dissertation.

1. INCLUSIVENESS IN THE PUBLIC SPACE. THEORETICAL DIMENSIONS AND ANALYTICAL TOOLS

In the introduction I've hinted at the fact that this study is about the conditions of possibility of the pursue of public sociality carried out by cultural associations. We have also seen that the adopted analytical strategy aims at highlighting *how* the observed groups worked in order to understand *what* they produced in terms of social relationships, both among group members and with subjects beyond the group. This chapter is devoted to develop these points and outline their theoretical relevance. In particular, after a short introduction, in the first paragraph I will articulate two points that theoretically specify the goals of the associations I have observed in my study in terms of inclusiveness (1.1) and with respect to their constitutive relation with public sphere (1.2). The second paragraph will introduce the main – not all - analytical tools I used in my study and their location with respect to the some ongoing theoretical debates. Other conceptual tools I used in my study will be introduced in the next chapters, when illustrating the empirical and theoretical findings they allowed to outline.

INTRODUCTION. ASSOCIATIONS WILL SAVE THE CITY

As it will be widely illustrated in chapter 3, the associations taken as case studies of my research aimed at "upgrading public spaces where people meet and get together in the city"[1]. It is worth underling this latter element ("the city") because it is important to qualify the type of social relationships the observed groups intended create according to their own point of view. Indeed, the "public spaces"[2] these groups enacted through the cultural events they set up were firstly places of face-to-face interactions that strongly resonate with scholars' accounts about "the urban" as historical context of emergence of a new type of social relationships. According to these accounts, such a context developed in the western societies in the XIX century with the massive urbanization, especially when such a process was framed through the well-trod argument about the shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* (Tönnies 1955). For example, the reflections of Simmel (1997) and Benjamin (1985) widely dwelt upon on the new traits that social relationships acquired in the expanding urban contexts that were taking shape in that period. More recently, Richard Sennett is among the scholars that, even outside the academia, is mostly know for having emphasized the city as "human settlement in which strangers are likely to meet" (Sennett 1978, p. 33). Also Bauman (2001) has reflected upon the qualifying traits of the meetings of strangers *as* strangers: "the strangers meet in a fashion that befits the strangers; meetings of strangers are unlike the meetings of kin, friends or acquaintances. It is mis-meeting by comparison. In the meeting of strangers, there is no picking-up at the point where the last encounter stopped, no filling in on the interim trials and

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[1] From the English web page of one of "Esterni", one the observed cultural association of this research (http://www.esterni.org)

[2] From the quotation put at the opening of this paragraph.

tribulations of joys and delights, no shared recollections: nothing to fall back on and to go by in the course of the present encounter. The meeting of strangers is an event without past. More often than not, it is also an even without future (it is expected to be, hoped to be, free of future) – a story most certainly 'not to be continued', a one-off chance, to be consummated in full while it lasts and on the spot, without delay and without putting off the unfinished business to another occasion" (Bauman 2001 p. 18). In many accounts of scholars that have dedicated their attention to these ideal-typical forms of urban interactions, these used to take place in specific *urban* settings– such as squares, boulevard, cafés - in which the heterogeneity of the urban population had the possibility of getting in reciprocal contact (Dal Lago 2000 p.6). Nowadays, this and other forms of sociality are increasingly idealized in commonsense and sociological accounts alike. In general, as we shall see in this chapter, scholarships more and more value informality and sociality as resources capable of regenerating forms of "social integration" that are crucial to "systemic integration" (Lockwood ..). With respect to the type of aforementioned urban sociality, according to the paradigm of the "lost city" (Petrillo 2000) it is currently taking place a "world crisis of the urban" (Petrillo 2000 p.19) that directly threatens the possibility of developing social relationships in the city because of the privatization of public spaces, processes of ethnic and socio-economic segregations, the security obsession and the profit-oriented logic that govern the urban development.

Such a scary urban contemporary scenario was implicitly assumed in the viewpoints of the observed associations[1], which in various terms depicted themselves as "heroes" whose mission was that of restoring a threatened urban sociality through the enactment of public places that will save the destiny of the city. Indeed – as we shall see in detail in chapter 3- all the groups taken as case studies defined their purposes with an implicit reference to the aforementioned idea of the urban settlement as the place where strangers are most likely to meet. At this respect associations can count on the reassurance of sociological scholarship about their capacity of pursuing their missions. Indeed, in general, literature has widely attributed civil society subjects in general a crucial role in the creation of social ties and for the regeneration of the local social texture in crisis ( ). This represents a long standing expectation that scholars have harbored toward associations: "since Tocqueville, many writers have claimed that civic groups promote broad social ties beyond the group" (Lichterman 2005 p. 11). According to Bidussa such expectation was projected on civic associations even long before Tocqueville, dating back at least to the beginning of the XVIII century (Bidussa 1994 p.93). In more recent scholarships prevail "the fundamental idea that in modern societies, such as in the ancient ones, solidarity precedes the contract among citizens and is embedded not in individuals but in the social, that is to say in the action of voluntary groups and social organizations that operate in an intermediate sphere among the state and single citizens" (Ranci 1999 p. 20). These type of arguments have particularly widespread over the last twenty years because "in a social system which is definitely oriented toward fragmentation and internal disarticulation, the very existence of organizing forms and symbologies capable of avoiding the internal fade-out assume a crucial importance" (Ranci 1999 p. 13).

In our days associations are experiencing a "revival of interest" (Ranci 1999) which contribute to "the obstinate cultivation of a myth: the myth of civil society or, to say it better, of its innocence"

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[1] For further illustration see chapter 3 and especially its paragraph 3.

(Bidussa 1994 p.113). Following La Valle (La Valle 2004 p. 445-446) it is possible to see the "cultivation" of that myth in four different lines of studies that articulate the study of associations. The first one focus on civil society (Alexander 1995; Alexander, Seidman 1990; Walzer 1992) and it has been encouraged by the fall of real socialist regimes in eastern European countries; the second line of inquiry include neo-corporativist accounts of associations (Streek, Schmitter 1985) and studies on "associative democracy" (Hirst 1994; 1997; Cohen, Rogers 1992); the third line of study is represented by the economic perspective on third sector (Donati 1996) and the fourth one is made of the researches on social capital (La Valle 2002, 2004). In each one of these four lines of inquiry it is possible to find normative arguments on the virtues of associations. In particular, it is worth noting that such arguments often explicitly link the positive outcomes attributed to associations to their local character, deemed as particularly favorable element for letting associations pursue their function of creating and regenerating social ties (Caltabiano 2003 p. 72).

The argument according to which the participation in civil society groups (of whatever type) stimulates the establishment of interpersonal relationships that extend much beyond the boundaries of those groups has been named in terms of "social spiral" (Lichterman 2005 p. 7). According to a variety of versions of this argument "when individuals join a civic group, the meanings they develop by talking to one another encourage them to spiral outward, so that they create enduring relationships not only with other group members but with individuals and groups outside the group" (Lichterman 2005 p.11). Arguments about the "social spiral" often include an explicit reference to inclusiveness of the relationships created through the participation in non-profit and volunteer groups because participants interact "with sorts of people they would not meet otherwise, people who come from different backgrounds" (ibid). The social spiral has been articulated by Cefai (2006) in terms of "civic spiral, virtuous spiral of proliferation of associative publics. Taking parts in civic groups, individual would contribute to the dissemination of social ties, to the accumulation of social capital through the dynamics of bridging and to the rise of social, ethnic and religious mixité […]- Little by little it would form nets with varying degrees of formality on the basis of trusting, communicative and cooperative relationships. Further, associations would be places in which the actors could realize their own aspirations in terms of personal autonomy, spaces of reciprocity, sociality, solidarity and nets accumulation of social capital. They would take away individuals from their social isolation" (Cefai 2006 p. 4). Indeed, nowadays "the problem of exclusion and of the social désaffiliation" (Breviglieri 2005 p. 1) represents a particularly serious concern for a variety of broader reasons, among which the re-ordering of the Welfare system. Indeed, this process poses with particular urgency the need of answering to questions such as: "will third sector organizations able of adequately facing the challenge of elaborating a system of welfare mix capable of soften, instead of accentuate, inequalities and social exclusion? Will they be capable of substituting the impersonal and formal impartiality of welfare state administration with a new form of social responsibility that will not produce new, and even more serious and less recognizable, forms of social exclusion? Will they be capable of developing a social solidarity capable of extending beyond the boundaries of the jealous preservation of prerogatives and acquired identities?" (Ranci 1999 p. 27-28).

The relation with the welfare system is out of the analytical focus of this study and it has been mentioned to cite an important element that contextualize the augmented attention toward associations and the relevance of the theoretical stake of the official mission the observed groups of my study gave themselves in terms of creating inclusive forms of social relationships.

1. EXPLANANS[1]. INCLUSIVE TOGETHERNESS THROUGH EVENTS

In this first paragraph I will introduce some theoretical reflections to frame the pursue of public sociality carried out by the observed groups, devoting a specific attention to outline what qualifies their outcomes as inclusive and to specific limits and possibilities deriving from the use groups made of events.

1.1 INCLUSIVE TOGETHERNESS

FROM SOLIDARITY TO INCLUSIVE TOGETHERNESS

I've decided to start the theoretical qualification of my subject of inquiry from a wide focus on the concept of solidarity. At this respect it is worth précising from the outset that this study does not analyze solidarity meant in its classical sociological acceptation of "social ties that institutes social integration"(Ambrosini 2005 p. 15). Nevertheless, I deem useful to briefly develop an opening parallelism between the exigent concept of solidarity and the theoretical status of the observed collective efforts of upgrading public urban spaces.

Solidarity is a concept because that is very broad (Ranci, Torri 2007), controversial, ambivalent in its potential (Bayertz, Baurmann 2002), elusive in its contents (Zoll 2003) and recently born but whose history is already complex and stratified (Ambrosini 2005 p. 15).Thus, solidarity is by definition difficult to be analytically used. Focusing on its stringently sociological meaning, according to Torri (2007) solidarity is qualified by two elements:

1. The fact of taking into consideration the organization of a whole local society (Bagnasco 1994), with reference to all categories of population and not uniquely focusing, for example, on the most marginal members of it.

2. The fact that it refers in particular to the equilibrium between the economic dimension and the conditions and forms of social inclusion.

Instead, my research focus has concentrated in the area of research that Ambrosini has depicted in as "postmodern solidarity" in which the "solidarity action"[1] is characterized by its "aspiration,

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[1] The terms "explanans" and "explanandum" primarily refer to a model of causal explanation that I've not used to propose the main arguments of this study. Nevertheless, I've decided to use these terms for clarity's sake and in particular to distinguish between the observed processes (explanans) and the analytical tools used to observe and account for them (explanandum).

expressed through varied degree of awareness, to reconstruct a fragile or torn social fabric on the basis of some sort of direct and personal commitment in favor of others, or of the society as a whole" (Ambrosini 2005 p.15). In particular, I've observed "postmodern solidarity actions" developing through cultural initiatives aiming at establish the conditions for the development of inclusive forms of social relationships in a local context deemed as seriously lacking them.

In spite of the evident differences, the wide solidarity concept possesses significant similarities with the research subject of this study. Such similarities go beyond their direct casual connection depicted for example by arguments about the social or civic spiral according to which the participation in association strengthen the solidarity of a local society. Also, the similarities I'm speaking about do not refer to the fact that, as Durkheim claimed, solidarity as "a moral phenomenon does not lend itself to an exact observation or to its measure" (Durhkeim 1999 p. 86) and as such there exists uniquely "specific forms of solidarity: domestic solidarity, professional solidarity, national solidarity, the solidarity of the past, contemporary solidarity" (*ibidem*) or "postmodern solidarity action". With reference to Milan, for example, solidarity has been widely inquired in a recent research (Ranci, Torri 2007). Instead, what I would like to outline three specific telling similarities between the concept of solidarity and the analyzed endeavors of creating social relationships promoted by third sector groups:

1) *Social ties among diverse people*. The concept of solidarity was developed in the XIX century and it entered from its earliest days at the core of the new discipline of sociology (Ambrosini 2005 p.16). It was that the time of dramatic changes that pulled the first sociologists to reflect upon what sort of "glue" could keep tying individuals once the traditional way of life had been dissolved and with it the related, already known, forms of social ties. Put it in very short terms, the broader question the first sociologists posed themselves could be "what community after the community? Solidarity, and its many forms, was the main answer to this question: indeed, "what is searched with solidarity is a connective fabric transcending the community dimension without losing the spirit of community" (Portinaro 2002 p. XV). Similarly, the observed associations of my study aimed at creating a "connective fabric" in a context perceived to be characterized by a growing level of diversity. Indeed, as we will see in chapter 3, the official communication of the observed groups stressed the inclusive intentions[2] of the cultural initiatives they set up.

2) *New words for new social conditions*. Solidarity is a fairly new term, born at the beginning of the XIX century (Ambrosini 2005) and widely used by the first sociologists to name the new shape taken by social relationships in that period. Similarly, today it appears the necessity of new terms to speak about social relationships whose establishing, because it has an hard time in reproducing itself spontaneously (Magatti 2007 p.), represents the goal and possible outcomes of groups that mobilize themselves at this respect. Ranci stated that our society cohabit with a "sense of the loss" (Ranci 1999 p. 74) and it is possible to add that

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[1] Author's translation for the italian "azione solidaristica".

[2] See chapter 3 at this respect.

nowadays there exists many "senses of the loss". Contemporary sociological scholarships has widely focused on some specific senses of loss that haunt contemporary societies. For example, the increasing "desire of community" (Bauman 2001a) has been widely theoretically speculated and empirically documented (Wuthnow 2002). Studies on social capital - especially the current of research that draws mainly on Coleman (1994) - have been deemed as a line of inquiry focusing on the conditions allowing the reproduction of a resource that is perceived as threatened to be lost and that - hardly by chance- has been defined as "primordial social capital" (*ibidem*). At this respect Bagnasco (2003) underlined that the fortune of studies on social capital has to be referred to the transformations of contemporary capitalism. According to this scholar, the concept of social was born in tight relation to an economic context characterized by big industrial organizations in order to outline how these organizations, in their everyday informal functioning, used to assure the reproduction of specific relational resources that were crucial in terms of systemic and social integration (Lockwood 1999). Nowadays the economic context has significantly changed, big organizations have declined and they have been replaced by the rise of new atomized ways of work organization. In such a context of flexible production, social capital acquire importance as analytical tool to observe the reproduction of relational resources that are considered to lack from contemporary, productive, social conditions.

Similarly, the idea of sociality the observed groups aimed at generating drew on an implicit reference to a loss, defined not in relation to a specific economic context of production (as Colemen's concept of social capital) and quite in opposition to the warm, homogenous, "between us" of "the community". At this respect, community, social capital or sociality are similarly used by social analysts - and the some civic groups- to mean a "integrative resources that come from the past, that are rapidly consumed and have an hard time in reproducing themselves" (Habermas 1976 p.38). In this sense these concepts are used to mean "relational everyday spheres, clearly distinguished from institutions, and that are conceived as the first contexts in which the meaning-making activities take place" (Magatti 2005 p.88). Used as such, they all re-formulate the same concerns for the social order that were present in the shift from traditional to modern societies, for example read through Weber categories of the diffusion of the bureaucratic rationality. Indeed, the sociality the observed groups aimed at generating was deemed as a fundamental integrative resource of the urban spaces where "the social reproduction [...] develop mainly from the concreteness of the relationships with other people in specific and, relationally rich, everyday settings" (Magatti 2005 p.81).

3) *The issue of inclusiveness*. To introduce the third parallelism between the history of the concept of solidarity and this research's subject it is useful remembering that the social environment in which the concept of solidarity "has had its maximal fortune, starting from roughly 1860, was the growing working class movement" (Ambrosini 2005 p. 14). The reference to this element is useful to starting outlining the issue of *inclusiveness* with respect to the actions carried out by the observed groups to create new social relationships. In particular, in the working class movement inclusiveness was articulated in terms of

equality[1], and in the answers given to the question about "who had the right of being recognized as equal? Put it in other terms, where were exactly defined the boundaries of belonging that gave the right to equality and therefore to solidarity?" (*ibid* p. 15). Similarly, but in different terms, the same issue raises nowadays with reference to the intentional creation of sociality among diverse people promoted by non-profit groups. The aforementioned question could be reformulated in terms of who has the right to be included in such a sociality and which differences may end up in "making a difference" at this respect. As I have underlined in the introduction, "associative forms [may] generate a particularistic closure in a plurality of small 'us' " (de Leonardis 1997 p. 180) and thus it is necessary to outline the nature of the criteria that differentiate such "small *us*" from more "universalistic" (*ibidiem*) forms of social relationships. A focusing on the theoretical stake of inclusiveness requires "observing from close if and at which conditions the experience of belonging and participation in the pursue of common purposes that transcend interpersonal primary and domestic ties is a factor of generalization and co-responsibility for the public realm" (*ibidem*). Further, because of the extremely internal variety of civil society subjects (Ranci 1999; de Leonardis 1997 p. 244) this type of outcome must be assessed with reference to the specific field of action in which associations act. In my study this was firstly represented by the cultural initiatives set up by the observed groups, which enabled and constrained their pursue of public sociality and that for this reason I've tried to maximally theoretically consider using the model of the public sphere mentioned later on in this chapter.

In any case, the primary purpose of the observed cultural associations was the establishment of inclusive social relationships. Indeed, the variety of cultural initiatives the observed groups set up were firstly oriented at making *public* the social relationships they promoted, meant in terms of potential and actual openness toward any subject that wish to participate in them. At this respect the promotion of inclusive forms of social relationships on the part of non-profit groups appears already as a particularly controversial issue. Indeed, on the one hand groups, in order to define themselves as such, must draw boundaries with the wider world. On the other hand, in order to be effective in attaining their goals must continuously guarantee the highest "permeability" of such bonds. At this respect, such a theoretical quandary did not represent an unsolvable problem for the observed groups that, at least in once case, will prove capable of enacting in their practices inclusive forms togetherness. Because of the way I have just defined inclusiveness in terms of in-group/out-group it is worth also anticipating that the adopted perspective differentiate itself firstly from a social psychologist viewpoint that focus on "group categorization and identification […]" that study "the segmentation between 'us' and 'them'" and that may pay attention to the "permeability of symbolic and social boundaries" (Lamont, Molnar 2002 p. 170). Also, the adopted outlook is more close to that strand of cultural sociology that "center its attention on how boundaries are shaped by context, and particularly by the cultural repertoires, traditions, and narratives that individual have access to (Lamont 2000, Somers 1994,

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[1] Equality stands in this case for the italian "uguaglianza".

Swidler 2001)" (Lamont, Molnar 2002 p. 170). But these elements are substituted with a focus on how *group styles* (Eliasoph, Lichterman 2003) filter context elements, shape the different ways in which similar groups draw their boundaries, make such differences matter in the groups' capacity of reaching their goals.

FROM SOCIABILITY TO SOCIALITY

As I have already mentioned, the observed groups I have studied pursued *public sociality* and my analysis has focused on which tensions and changes had to face the process of turning a private sociability among group members into a public sociality potentially extending to everyone. Before empirically looking at these tensions it is useful to theoretically qualify the outcomes the observed groups aimed at generating with the help of a short review of some uses of the concept of sociality in sociological literature.

Put it shortly, it is possible to identify in sociological scholarships two wide uses of the term sociality or sociability. In the first case these terms were used to mean a *specific dimension of social interaction*. In this first use, sociability is normally preferred to sociality and it can particularly mean two areas of study – a sociological and historiographical one- about the "study of daily life in fraternal organizations" (Camus-Vigué 2000 p. 214). Sociology studies on sociability draw mainly on Simmel's reflections (Simmel 1997) upon this issue[1]. In the second use of the aforementioned terms, sociality is often preferred to sociability and is considered as a *specific dimension of the organization of a local society*. In this case sociality is rarely treated as specific research subject that is empirically inquired, but it is rather theoretically considered with reference to other broad dimensions of social life, normally in order to outline wide picture about general processes or social tendencies. Just to exemplify, sociality is used in this way by scholars such as Augé (1993), Bauman (2007), Magatti (2007), Martinelli (2007), Bovone, Ruggerone (2009); Zucchetti (2008); Bonomi (Aaster et al. 1994).

In consistency with this division, we can say that in general there exists on the one hand micro-sociological studies, especially ethnographies, that analyze sociability, meant as "sociable interaction" (Aldrich 1974) often qualified and articulated with reference to the three (Potts 2009) or six (Aldrich 1974) traits identified by ideal- type of "pure sociability" (Simmel 1997). On the other hand we have sociality as a dimension of social organization which is qualified in a variety of ways, often with a negative definition with reference to something that is missing. For example Magatti spoke about the "exile of sociality" (Magatti 2007 p. 487) to mean the "microclimate of sociality that develop uniquely inside very homogenous groups" (*ibidem*); in a similar meaning he used the expressions of "collapse of sociality" (*ibidem*), or "face-to-face sociality in difficulty" (Magatti 2007 p. 489), the "gradual withdrawing of sociality" (*ibidem*); also while describing

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[1] In particular, Simmel described "pure sociability" as an ideal- typical form of social interaction characterized by three elements (Turnaturi 1997 p. 14): a playful relation of the content of the interaction to its form; the fact that the interaction is performed as end in itself. An effect of "false democracy" between the participants of the interaction, deriving from the fact that interlocutors leave apart significant traits (of status, profession or income) that are not shared among them and thus may negatively affect the smooth unfolding of the interaction (Simmel 1949).

general urban tendencies he stated the "erosion of the traditional function of habitat of sociality that is typical of the city" (Magatti 2007 p. 487). But it is possible to cite many other scholars: Taurino (Sebastiani 2007) talked about an "elective sociality" in which the processes of attraction and repulsion which are at the very basis of sociality do not happen spontaneously but are the outcomes of choices; Sebastiani claimed that "in the contemporary city there a multiplication of the spaces of assisted sociality which are structured on the basis of welfare categories (spaces for elderly, for teenagers at risk, for disabled people) or on the basis of identity precepts (young groupings, ethnic communities)" (Sebastiani 2007 p. 128). Bonomi stated that "sociality in the contemporary urban context is denied and destroyed" (Aaster et al. 1994 p. 9) and finally Augé notoriously talked about "non places" as spaces in which it prevails an "urban pseudo sociality" (Augé 1994).

In sociological scholarships, it hardly occurred that sociability was analyzed in relation to sociality outcomes, distinguishing and studying the relation between sociality as "premise" and sociality as "result" (de Leonardis 1999 p. 238). In particular, it lacks an empirical inquiry on the conditions allowing the shift from sociable interactions to sociality as the public property of local societies, according to the two aforementioned definition of sociability and sociality. At this respect, the viewpoint of this study wants to represent a proposal that, in particular, articulates the connection between sociability and sociality through the theoretical dimension of inclusiveness. To be more precise, inclusive togetherness theoretically qualifies a specific sociality outcome of the sociable practices that the observed groups promoted through their cultural initiatives and enacted in their everyday group life. It is worth précising that such an outcome does not refer to the numbers of participants in the sociable practices but instead to a trait that qualify the nature of such sociable practices. Indeed, it may exists "associative forms which simply constitute an extension of private sociability (where for example hobbies are cultivated)" (de Leonardis 1997 p. 180). This means that sociability does not change its character, and became a public sociality, simply because of the its extension to a broader number of participants.

It is out of this research focus to assess for example if, and to which degree, the sociable practices I've observed in my field research approached Simmel's ideal-type of "pure sociability". Rather, the analytical focus of this research aims at understanding at which conditions the cultural initiatives promoted by the observed associations succeeded in enacting an inclusive togetherness. This refers to a way of being together that is characterized firstly by its public character, its possibility of including, necessarily at certain conditions, a widening circle of people. In this research inclusive togetherness represents a possible outcome of the actions set up by the observed associations while striving to make Milan sociable. Each observed "strategy" (Citroni, Lichterman 2010) of inclusion possessed its own exclusive costs, and different "strategies" were not equal among themselves in their inclusive outcomes.

SOCIALITY IN LOCAL PARTICIPATION

In general, scholarships has not until now paid much attention to alleged "innovative forms of civic engagement" (Wuthnow 1999 p. 33) that explicitly possessed the purpose of generating public

sociality. My analytical efforts aim at developing this line of research, in particular pursuing an analysis of the conditions of possibility for the creation of inclusive forms of social urban relationships. My own inquiry possess significant relations with other analysis. Indeed, the associations[1] I have observed could be defined firstly as civic groups, where this term do not refer to specific sector of social life (outside the family, the economy and the state). Civic describes a kind of social relationship, not a sector of society. As a short-hand phrase, "civic groups" means groups in which people relate to each other and to the wider society "civic-ally" (Lichterman 2005 p. 8), as citizens, rather than as, for example subjects of state administration.

In particular, the civic groups I've observed in my comparative ethnography were cultural associations that aimed at generating public sociality through the setting of cultural initiatives, such as arts show, festival, concerts and so on an so forth. At first sight these may appear as a new type of civic groups. But, looking more carefully these forms of collective actions are not an absolute novelty especially with respect to urban contexts. Indeed, they can be traced, as a karts' river, in the post World war II history of local participation in Italy (Membretti 2005). Indeed, with respect to this domain of study the intentional creation of a "new sociality" emerged for the first time in Italy at the end of the 60's in the context of the so-called "new urban movements" and their several instances of "counter-powers". These groupings functioned on the basis of a model of direct democracy, with a strong orientation toward autonomy and conflict. They made a cause of, and mobilized themselves with respect to, two main issues: housing and sociality (Membretti 2005). Indeed, it is with reference to these spheres that these groups promoted their first experiences of illegal occupations (squattings) and management of urban abandoned spaces. Then, after a long period of latency, toward the end of the so called the "reflux period", at the beginning of the 90's, in Italy forms of mobilizations oriented toward the creation of sociality explicitly re-emerged. This was the period of the "project-communities" tied to collective efforts that have been defined also in terms of "re-territorializion" (Magnaghi 2000). In the repertoire of action of "project communities" returned the occupation of dismissed places, which were the object of collective efforts aiming at turning them in public spaces of sociality. It is worth noting that, together with the dismissed industrial factories were often occupied abandoned farmhouses, just as the Cuccagna farmhouse[2]. The relevant difference here lays in the fact that the Cuccagna farm hasn't been illegally occupied, but instead it has been legally obtained with a public concourse. But the analogies between the Cuccagna Project[3] and these experiences, often called of "metropolitan occupations" (Membretti 2005 p.6), are significant. For example the fact that metropolitan occupations "aimed at conquer portions of downgraded space with the goal of creating public places of sociality and culture, with the purpose of revitalizing commuter areas and of representing a channel of activation of the local community" (Membretti 2005 p. 6). Experiences of "re-territorializion" (Magnaghi 2000) through metropolitan occupations encountered a favorable general moral climate in the 90's because of a general recovery of the social and political participation in tight relation with the local dimension

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[1] See the footnote 1 of the introduction of this dissertation for details on the use I've done of the term "association".

[2] Venue of 9 of the 10 associations taken as case studies of this research.

[3] The overall project to which all the associations taken as case studies of this research were devoted to.

(Membretti 2005). In particular, the collective mobilizations related to the so called "no-global movement" possessed a strong emphasis on the "local dimension" and the physical settings of everyday life (Montagnini 2005). Also, the participatory forms of no-global movement groups expressed themselves through "organizing forms centered on the informality and of the horizontality of relationships" (Membretti 2005 p. 8): as we shall see throughout the next chapters, another element of continuity with the associations studied in this research. But it is also worth noting that in the experiences of local participation associated to the no-global movement sociality was more a significant element of the way local groupings organized themselves than an issue these groups made a cause of, as it was for the previous phase, both at the end the 60's with the "new urban movements" and at the beginning of the 90's with the "metropolitan occupations". To better understand the nature of the efforts carried out by the observed groups it is useful to introduce further theoretical reflections about them.

A PRAGMATIC STANCE FOR ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVNESS OF THE OBSERVED GROUPS

Before introducing further theoretical reflections, I will briefly hint at a general methodological option adopted by this study. According to such an option in order to assess the effectiveness of the endeavors of establishing inclusive forms of social relationships I will adopt a pragmatic approach that will follow the viewpoint of the observed groups on their actions. Indeed, my study has been informed by the adoption of a widest option according to which "le sens que les acteurs attachent à leurs propres actions, pour parler comme Weber ou la définition que les acteurs donnent de leurs propres situations, pour parler comme Thomas, reste le terrain ultime du sociologue. C'est le garde-fou le plus sûr contre les projections théoriques ou idéologiques. Les perspectives du chercheur se doivent d'être débitrices visà- vis de celles des acteurs" (Cefai 2009 p. 256). In my study, this has firstly meant that if and to which degree new social relationships were created as a result of collectively coordinated activities carried out by the observed groups it will be established following their own perspectives about the outcomes of their activities[1].

It is worth noting that adopting a pragmatic stance for assessing the effectiveness of the observed groups does not mean that there is no a common theoretical dimension that qualify the observed cases and the different activities they have carried out during my field research. Indeed, such a theoretical shared dimension is that of inclusion, a category used in this study both to qualify the type of relationships the observed groups established with subjects beyond the group and as an attribute of the nature of togetherness among group members. At this this research clearly differentiates itself from other studies on inclusion. Indeed, scholarship often use the concept of inclusion to mean the insertion of the dominated, subordinated or powerless people into higher social status of power positions. In this study instead inclusion refers to the possibility of taking part into a public sociality that makes communication among strangers plausible. In particular, with respect to the relationships a group may create with subjects beyond the group, these may be of

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[1] Such perceptions have been empirically grasped with the technique of the "theory-driven participant observation" (Lichterman 2002) hinted at in the introduction and in the Methodological appendix.

different types but what firstly qualified their inclusive nature was firstly the fact of being *public* relationships. This is to say that they should include the "fundamental social requirement of mediation, which allow impersonality, communication and exchanges among strangers, the elaboration and inter-subjective recognition of the 'generalized other'" (de Leonardis 1997 p. 184).

In the aforementioned example of the XIX working class movement inclusion clearly referred to the fact of being part of relationships among workers made of equality and solidarity. In that context, inclusion was subordinated to the belonging to specific groups of workers. Instead, in my study inclusion refers to the possibility of taking part in the sociable practices set up by the observed groups without necessarily belonging to them[1]. The observed associations acted on the basis of a togetherness among group members that was – in spite of their sincere good intentions - differently inclusive for third parts and that thus could differently generate public sociality. Certain inclusive efforts I have observed resulted in exclusive outcomes, while specific ways of being together as a group were particularly receptive toward a variety of types of involvement on the part of subjects external or internal to the groups. Thus, the inclusion in this study is not meant in the usual way this term is used by scholars and neither with reference to the dimension of diversity defined in terms of ethnic or socio-economic status. Rather, inclusion refers to an outcome produced by associations with purposes of creating new social relationships that succeed in including in the sociable activities they set up subjects that are not necessarily group members.

THE "SERVICE OF IDENTITY"

The growing number of research developments that are taking place in the study of civic groups are more and more rejecting a residual definition of their subject of study in terms of organizations pertaining to a social sphere that is external both to the State and the market (Cefai, Eliasoph, Lichterman 2009; Ranci 1999; Donati 1996). This is due to empirical evidences showing that civic groups and third sector subjects are widely involved in both the State and the market and to theoretical efforts of considering these collective subjects as equipped with their own mode of regulation (Ranci 1999). At this respect, with specific reference to Italian studies, Ranci (1999) has dedicated its reflections to study the specifics of such a mode of regulation and he has identified two theoretical points to qualify the actions carried out by third sector subjects. It is possible to sum up these two aspects with the terms of *identity* and *service*. Associations establish "a space in which it take places the constitution systems of belonging that supply collective identification and answers to collective needs" (Ranci 1999 p. 68). Put it in other terms, "the social function of the third sector in contemporary societies is that of building spheres of social identification with specific traits, in which condensate social competences and altruistic resources which make possible the production of collective useful social services" (Ranci 1999 p. 110). Therefore, in general third sector subjects

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[1] It occurred in a few cases that the observed groups aimed at making new group members and include them in the group, but this kind of belonging was a very loose one, which did not call for the type of loyalty envisaged thinking of working class movement solidarity. More often the observed groups aimed at generating a public sociality in which it was blurred the distinction between group members and external parts. They usually pursued this aim through the setting up of sociable activities that were meant to enact an inclusive togetherness, where everyone had the possibility to take part in.

(meaning this expression in its broadest meaning) on the one hand they create context of face-to-face reciprocal recognition and, on the other hand, they produce services of public utility. Thus, associations are "social actors creating social ties" (Ranci 1999 p. 68) and that at the same time produce specific services.

Given that identity and service are the typical traits defining third sector subjects, it remain to be observed how such traits concrete take place and the way they articulate their relation. The observed associations of my study are characterized for a specific combination of identity and service – that I've named the "service of identity" - which consist in the fact that the service they aim at supplying is that of identity. This is something peculiar to the chosen cases, which is different for example from saying that they are "organizations that base their identity on the production of socially useful service" (Ranci 1999 p. 136). Producing a service which consist in the "supplying of identity" means that the chosen groups – independently from the specific cultural initiatives they set up – aim firstly at representing a space of reciprocal recognition, both at the level of face-to-face encounters and at that of building significant stable social ties that last over time. As I will show in detail especially from chapter 4 to 8, the observed groups are engaged in a variety of actions, especially in cultural and arts fields, but in any case these are instrumental activities with reference to their main purpose of contrasting social isolation and making Milan sociable.

This is a specific purpose which represents also an important theoretical challenge. Indeed, associations represent "spheres of social identification with *specific* [and not general] orientations" (Ranci 1999 p. 110). This is to say that the identity civic groups may provide will always partial, connect some parts while necessarily excluding other ones. More generally, a group to be defined as such draw boundaries with reference to other subjects and the wider world. In particular, through third sector groups "the solidarity action is developed on the basis of a specific organizing identity which distinguish who supply the service from its beneficiaries" (Ranci 1999 p. 103). A fully consideration of this trait show the importance of the theoretical stake implied in the action of groups with goals of creating inclusive social relationships and aiming at supplying the "service of identity".

THE THEORETICAL CHALLENGE OF ENACTING INCLUISVE TOGETHERNESS

It is worth further developing the specific controversial aspects implied in the way the observed cultural associations define their own purposes. Indeed, it is "undeniable that the action of third sector groups implies limits and ambivalences that do not depend especially on external circumstances but instead on its very logic of action" (Ranci 1999 p. 26). Further, supplying the "service of identity" implies specific dynamics that make pursuing such a goal particularly controversial.

To understand this point it is useful to refer to the widely known efforts of Polany (1974) of defining in relational terms the main systems of allocation, and in particular to its concept of reciprocity. This represent a specific form of allocation, which differ both from the "market exchange and from the distribution according to authoritative principles" (Ranci 1999 p. 91), a form that is characterized for the presence of two specific traits:

- The symmetry of the parts implied in the exchange: this is to say that the system of exchange must allow the reciprocal exchange of positions, in order to let the recipient of a "solidarity act" may became the promoter of another one.

- The equivalency of the exchange, that is to say that it has to be guaranteed that the exchanged goods may possess an equal value.

The two conditions, though in different forms, are both satisfied in free exchanges of interpersonal affective relationships or in the relational mechanisms of the modern citizenship (Ranci 1999). For example, in the exchange of presents among friends the reciprocity is direct, while the reciprocity is indirect in the case of the anonymous gift relationships of human blood described by Tittmuss (1971) as typical example of tie that bond together citizens in the model of the modern citizenship. Developing a little further this reflection upon the nature of the relationships established by the gift, it is easy to understand that reciprocity is not a property present in the solidarity action of third sector groups. Indeed, this type of action lack both its defining traits and especially that of symmetry. Third sector subjects may at best generate solidarity without reciprocity or, more precisely, "asymmetric solidarity" (Ranci 1999 p. 101). Indeed, the action promoted by third sector groups do not comprise the possibility of interchangeability, that is to say of exchanging the positions of who promote the solidarity acts with and their recipients. Though weakened, the solidarity promoted by third sector groups represent still a worthwhile function in a contemporary context in which the solidarity "has an hard time in spontaneously reproducing itself" (Magatti 2007 p. 33). In particular the third sector may offer a reliable context of mediation and intermediation whereas the public system appears nowadays in a serious lack of confidence ad this respect.

It should be clearer than before the theoretical stake implied by the action promoted by the associations of my research. Indeed, the observed groups aim at enacting symmetric forms of solidarity acts through the setting up of sociable activities involving subjects beyond the group and thus blurring the distinction between in-group and out-group.

The asymmetry assigned to the solidarity acts of third sector groups derive from the fact that they supply their services on the basis of "a specific organizing identity that distinguish the suppliers of the service from their recipients" (Ranci 1999 p. 103). But the observed groups aim at supplying a service require the overcoming of the specificity of the organizing identity and thus implies that associations carry out a symmetric solidarity act[1]. Thus, it should appear more clear the predicaments tied to supplying "the service of identity", which appears as a sort of theoretical quandary.

 In spite of such difficulties the observed groups openly declared of pursuing "inclusive spaces of open sociality" and at least the case of one group can be considered as successful example[2]. The adopted perspective will show that the theoretical quandary represented by the supplying "the

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[1] At this respect, it is hardly a chance that Ranci explicitly claims that "if the recipient was allowed to 'belonging', the symmetry would be at least re-established on a symbolic level" (Ranci 1999 p. 104).

[2] This is the Green PT.

service of identity" dissolve itself, or at least appears as less controversial, when taking into consideration the concrete conditions in which the observed associative actions take place. At this respect it is worth citing two aspects. Firstly, the fact that in general the organizing form[1] of the observed groups make particularly difficult to say who is inside groups and who is outside of them. This is not necessarily due to the informality of the organizing form of the observed associations, which in fact in many cases was not at all informal. Rather, it refers to the fact that the observed cultural associations draw multiple boundaries which also vary according to the specific activities the group promote[2]. This is something different from the informality typical of the "*statu nascenti*" (Alberoni 1989) stage of new collective subjects because in the observed cases it possess a stable and institutionalized character that reproduce itself over time.

The second consideration is about the fact that the field of action in which the observed groups develop their "solidarity action", that is to say sociality, include more possibilities of interchangeability of positions than other areas of social exclusion such as more recognized field of exclusion (for example physical and psychic disabilities, or socio-economic conditions of deprivation).

These two aspects were just cited to exemplifies how the theoretical puzzle of supplying the "service of identity" call forth a situated perspective maximally into account the concrete conditions of possibility in which the observed groups act. But before starting to use such a perspective it is necessary introduce the second element that qualify the efforts pursued by the observed groups of this research.

1.2 A CONSTITUTIVE RELATION TO THE PUBLIC SPHERE

The second element that theoretically qualify the actions carried out by the observed groups is the fact they acted aiming at affecting the public sphere or, to be more precise, the fact that they possessed with the public sphere a *constitutive* relation. Thus, the importance of this relation deserves adequate attention, which will be developed in this chapter in two ways: firstly I will clarify what it means and entail the fact that the observed groups possessed a constitutive – and not instrumental - relation with the public sphere, secondly I will introduce the public as contexts that shape the forms of the action carried out by the observed groups in their pursue of public sociality. In order develop this latter point I will introduce two elements that will further qualify the observed associations with reference to the fact that they act in an urban context and the fact that they use mainly cultural events to pursue their collective goals.

A. THE PUBBLIC AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

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[1] Generally, when I use the expression "organizing form" I usually mean it in a strict sense, that is to say with reference to traits of the associations' organizing structure such as those outline in paragraph 1.2 of chapter 3 of this dissertation. For a broad use of the term "organizing form" see de Leonardis 1999.

[2] At this respect the whole chapter 8 of this research widely illustrate this aspect.

This paragraph do not aim at being exhaustive with respect to the meanings of "the public" but it is simply meant to introduce the fact the observed groups engage a constitutive relation with the public sphere and some implications deriving from such a relation.

Peters (2003) identified three conceptual structures that are associated to the public and that "have constituted themselves in the political culture of the western societies starting from the XVIII century and that have remained until today essentially stable" (Peters 2003 p. 2). I will now focus in particular on one of the three structures articulated by Peters.

This will not be the one who identify the public as social sphere of action and responsibility in contrast to the private sphere, according to a "distinction that is of fundamental importance for the modern, liberal oriented, political and legal order" (Peters 2003 p.2). Public space it is not either meant in terms of public sphere as "a collective with a specific communicative structure, or a sphere of the communicative action with specific traits and functions" (*ibidem*)[1]. Instead, I will in particular refer to the second one of the three structures identified by Peters, that is to say the public space as characterized by the *publicity*: a trait typical of those "facts, events or activities that everyone can observe and that everyone can know" (Peters 2003 p. 3). This attribute, though apparently banal, is instead of great importance in this research because qualify the observed collective efforts of generating *public* sociality. Indeed, it means firstly setting up actions that take pains of turning sociability into public sociality, creating the conditions that most ease the *mediation* processes, the translation from the private sphere into the public one. De Leonardis (1997) stated that "the problem of the public sphere is, indeed, the problem of *mediation* in social relationships: what constitute and how it is produced the *medium* that allows the generalization, the elaboration and inter-subjective recognition of social meanings. This is the level of social reality in which it operates the transformation, the 'translation' in the two meanings of particular and universal, concrete and abstract" (de Leonardis 1997 p.189). Using the aforementioned categories, inquiring the public nature of the collective efforts of creating social relationships means analyzing the conditions allowing the shift from sociability to sociality.

It is the very fact that the observed groups aim at enacting an *inclusive* togetherness what qualify these groups as having a constitutive relation with the public sphere. This does not mean that the outcomes generated by the observed groups necessarily upgrade the public sphere. What I'm saying is that the observed associative efforts aim at inscribing themselves inside a public sphere. Indeed, on the contrary of other contemporary civic groups, the cultural associations taken as case studies of this research do not enact an instrumental relation with the public sphere because this is not simply used to pursue the group goals or, for example, to attract the public opinion on the importance of their action and of the goals they purse[2]. The observed group possess a *built-in* relation with the public sphere, a relation that shapes the form of the initiatives they carried out, the justifications

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[1] This is a meaning of public that – with specific reference to Habermas model of the public sphere - will be useful in the second part of this chapter, when I will introduce the conceptual tools that have been adopted to analyze the observed dynamics in the public space in which act the observed groups.

[2] Though this process is also part of the empirical field I've inquired because the observed groups through their actions promoted also a definition of sociality in terms of a public concern.

they gave (firstly to themselves) of their actions and their very associative purposes. In the analytical chapters we will see that the event was the main means the observed groups used in order to "go public". Such a means on the one hand came from the larger urban context in which the groups acted and, on the other hand, played a significant part in shaping the shift that sociability had to engage in order to became a public inclusive sociality. But before looking at the public as context that shape the action of the observed groups, and thus their outcomes, it is worth looking at the topic of the public sphere from a different viewpoint that will allow to sketch other important theoretical implications.

COMMUNICATING AS COMMONIZING

According to recent scholarship "fragmented communities increase the need for people to seek intentional relationships with others, and these relationships can lead to innovative forms of civic participation" (Wuthnow 1999 p. 6). But the shift from interpersonal relationships to civic participation in the public sphere is a potentially problematic move which, for this reason, must not be taken for granted. Indeed, the intentional seek of new relationships implies the need of *going public* in order to create an *inter-subjective* dimension, and not simply an *inter-personal*, that is to say "the intermediate level between objective and subjective, personal and collective" (de Leonardis 1997 p. 189). The "desire of sociality" (Boniburini 2009) that haunts contemporary western societies in itself doesn't necessarily refers to a public dimension, but it can also be connected an inter-personal sphere. Though, specific articulations of this "desire" encourage the emergence of a public dimension. For example, analyses focused on Milan uphold (Agustoni Alietti 2009; Zucchetti 2008 p. 20) and articulate the "desire of sociality" with an, often nostalgic, reference to a recent past period of working class neighborhood solidarity. Foot (2003) stated that "it is complained the decline of a communitarian sense: 'once there was the neighborhood, there was a group of people that always used to gather', […] such a feeling is often confined to the level of a block and it is lived in contrast with a present time (characterized by) 'coldness, where everyone care exclusively about its own business' "(Foot 2003 p. 39). Here, it doesn't matter to assess if such nostalgias may correspond to past social conditions that really included dimensions of widespread solidarity in the social organization of local societies. What instead it is relevant to observe such a nostalgic formulation of the "desires of sociality" implicitly contain also the perception of a lack of a public, inter-subjective, dimension. The need for sociality may contain a desire of communication, meant not simply in interpersonal communication, but as "commonizing" (Thévenot 2007), mediation among different parts.

Recent empirical inquiries on Milan "Zone 4" - the official reference area for cultural organizations I have studied with my research - have widely documented the collective need for more public sociality, a general perception (observed through in-depth interviews) which include a variety of components: for example the "need of being recognized and belonging to something", the will of avoiding a "uniquely individually and instrumentally-oriented way of life" and nostalgia feelings toward recent past conditions often perceived as rich in terms of widespread neighborhood solidarity (Citroni 2010). The observed cultural associations implicitly drew on the most public components of these nostalgias and promoted their action with the goals of turning Milan in "a

place of 'generalized interpersonal knowledge" (*interconnaissance généralisée*) favorable to conviviality, solidarity and safety – without its turning in a communitarian 'between us' (*entre-soi*)" (Cefai 2007 p. 154). Indeed, the observed organizations set up cultural initiatives for the development of inter-subjective communication, where this is meant in its "broad sense of taking part in a common matter" (Thévenot 2007 p. 409). Thus, communication is meant as commonizing and not uniquely according to the idea of transmitting information: "la communication n'est pas seulement entendue ici comme transmission d'un senses ou d'une information. Le terme designe des façon diverses de render commun: par le movement d'un coprs communiqué a l'autre qu'il entreint, par la liaison d'une pièce qui communiqué ave une autre dan laquelle elle donne. La notitoin de communication se fait alors plus concrete, meterielle e plurielle dans ses canaux, que ne l'implique son acception informationalnelle etriqueé. En outre, elle embrasse de gande variations dans la portée de la mise en commun" (Thévenot 2006a p. 8).

The promotion of communication through sociable practices had to confront with two broad context factors both referring, though in different terms, to mobility. This is firstly meant as physical mobility in a context in which social relationship are not anymore "largely confined to the distance of an easy walk" (Gergen 1991 p. 61). Nowadays "globalization poses with more and more urgency the problem of languages, of cultures of their interaction, their meeting and reciprocal contrast" (Agustoni 2003 p. 9). The physical mobility is particular relevant for non instrumental relationships since scholarships widely documented that "the space of [this type of] relationships is selective for its very nature" (Osti 2010 p. 106). But mobility was also relevant for the communication processes that the observed groups aimed at promoting in another sense. This refers to mobility among cognitive forms, to their variations "as a human detaches herself from what is closest and most personal and moves to communicate – […] taking part in a common matter - across increasing relational distances" (Thévenot 2007 p. 411).

As it will be documented in chapter 3, the lack of contemporary public communication that the observed groups aimed at contrasting was perceived by themselves in relation to recent past social changes. For example the observed groups referred in their official communication to the decline of the so-called fordist model of industrial production and to the related crisis in the main agencies that worked with a commonizing function in that type of social organization (such as typically working man clubs). These type of arguments collocated their "commonizing" goals in the most publicly justifiable type of engagement, among different "orders of worth" (Boltanski, Thévenot 1991) generally at disposal to define the public good.

But the reference to past socio-economic and working conditions in the official statements of the observed groups associated their collective goals also to the composition of another, more broad, type of plurality. This is the plurality among different "regimes of engagement in the world" ( ) and whose composition relate the more intimate, affective and physical level of the social experience to the most public one. Also in this case the need to compose this type of plurality make sense, in the viewpoint of the observed groups, with reference to broad socioeconomic changes. At this respect the, often romanticized, image of the factory is used to indicate the place where a specific "communication" was produced. Indeed, both at the eyes of social analysts (Magatti 2007,

Martinelli 2007, Foti 1993) and of the social actors (Foot 2003), the fabric represents the place in which the most intimate and physical level of the social experience was related to the public and political level of the collective life. For what concerns sociological accounts, according to many scholars "the disappearance of the heavy industry has meant that the social controls exerted by the 'communal solidarity' of the 'traditional working class' have also gone" (Lockwood 1999 p. 72). Indeed, the "communal solidarity" created in the factories communized in a range that extended much beyond the physical boundaries of the plants: "the socializing function exerted by working places and the related political and unionist association extended the range of their action also at the level of the neighborhood" (Rovati 2009 p. 32).

More broadly, in the viewpoint of the observed groups sociality was considered an aspect that qualify the public good that the observed groups aimed at producing. At this respect sociality may possess an uncertain and ambivalent status as qualification of the public good, because poses itself at the border of different definition of the public good (domestic, civic, inspired). According to the viewpoint of the observed organizations sociality *was in itself* a public good because it restored the conditions most suited for making commonizing possible among a variety of subjects that extend beyond group members. Indeed, with the upgrading of "public spaces of proximity" (Laville 1994) through cultural events the observed associations created the conditions in which everyone had the possibility of engaging in face-to-face meetings that were the premises for the development of broader processes of commonizing. This is the reason why, though events may appear "ephemeral practices" (Cognetti 2009) that do not guarantee any stable consequences, they were extremely important in the viewpoint of the observed groups. Indeed, they represented suited conditions for composing the urban pluralism (Pattaroni 2007 p.1).

B. COMMONIZING THROUGH EVENTS

We now pass to specify the process of mediation through which the observed groups pursued a *public* sociality. In particular, this last part of paragraph 1 represents an attempt to take into adequate consideration a feature that characterized the specific context in which the associations I have studied carried out their collective efforts. This feature does not refer to the fact that the observed groups acted in an *urban* context that enabled and constrained the "communication" promoted by the observed groups[1]. Instead in this paragraph I will refer to specific limits and possibilities to the actions carried out by the observed groups deriving in particular from the fact that they mainly used events and aimed at affected a public sphere that was generally structured through cultural events. A way to introduce these features of the sector of action of the observed groups is to further articulate their action using the category of *local generative mobilizations* (Vitale 2007). Indeed, in order to outline the part events played in the pursue of public sociality carried out by the observed organizations I find useful to defined them as "local generative mobilizations" (Vitale 2007 p. 10). These are defined as "a specific class of collective action,

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[1] For example, according to Joseph (1998)the urban represents a specific stage for human action: this is characterized by the fact that everyone is encouraged to became an attentive observer (in the many occasions of physical togetherness where it is not required to speak) and thus it is created a specific reciprocity among strangers. Joseph overtly emphasized that this is a specific type of publicity, which for example strongly differ from the political publicity.

organized by 'entrepreneurs', in which the involved actors rise local problems and make them public interacting with authorities and public policies and pursuing one or more shared goals" (*ibidem*)[1]. According to such a definition the repertoire of action of local mobilizations are grouped in three broad categories: "protest", "claim" and "production" (Vitale 2007 p. 12). At this point it is possible to see the groups I've observed in my research as local generative mobilizations "directly enacting" (*ibidem*) themselves in their pursue of the public goods they wanted to generate (sociality) through the cultural events they set up.

THE EVENT AS MEANS BETWEEN SOCIABILITY AND SOCIALITY

Initiatives such as theatre performances, arts shows, festivals, concerts or movie projections represent a privileged repertoire of action through which the observed associations pursued their goals of generating public sociality. This is consistent with what had already been noted in other studies on local mobilizations - and in particular on forms of "social innovations" (Vicari, Moulaert 2009) - oriented to the production of social inclusion in urban contexts (Vitale 2009a). More generally, events are increasingly part of contemporary urban western scenarios: for example Sebastiani recently noted that "an American writer and professor, Robert Hellenga, has been particularly shocked by the wide presence of events in the public sphere of Italian cities" (Sebastiani 2007 p. 125).

Events will be widely treated chapter 5 and 6 of this dissertation and for the moment it is possible to anticipate that they were occasions of face-to-face interactions, focused or non focused gatherings of people in a given time-space delimited setting and in reciprocal co-presence (Goffman 1963). In the viewpoint of the observed groups, events represented the way in which they tried to bring about the change they wanted to generate: events represented the main means - or *medium* - through which the observed groups aimed at generating public sociality. This is tied to the fact that the generation of space of aggregation, "public spaces of proximity" (Laville 1994), pass more and more in Milan through the offer of specific – often cultural- contents that can attract a public that cannot be taken for granted anymore[2]. Independently from their origins, what it is worth noting is that events, though they assumed a variety of forms during my field research[3], highly shaped the pursue of public sociality carried out by the observed groups. In general, scholars have widely criticized the possibilities associated to this form of action. For example, political scientists stated that events consist of practices that are strictly scheduled in terms of their relevance and meaning and that "nowadays, the event […] create its own public and not the other way around as it used to happen in the past" (Sebastiani 2007 p. 127). Apart from

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[1] It is worth underling that the inquired subject of this research differ from the context of study on urban conflicts from which I've taken the definition of local mobilizations In particular such a difference refer to two points: the adopted perspective lack the recur to conflictual forms of action , and it lacks a reference to politic meant as policy and not in the broad sense of politics.

[2] This aspect will be developed and articulated in chapter 3.

[3] For example, in chapter 6 I propose a typology that distinguish in 4 types of events that I've observed during the field research carried out for this study.

what I have already mentioned in the introduction about the controversial aspects of using events to generate sociality, it is worth mentioning another aspect that outlines a specific limit of using to create a *public* sociality. Indeed, on the one hand, the observed group aimed at generating a sociality with a public status, an inclusive sociality opposite to a private sociability limited to very similar subjects whose relationships are confined to the *immediacy* of their personal experiences. On the other hand, the events I have observed in my empirical research were also strongly characterized, among other things, by the immediate nature of the practices they included. Indeed, they were made of "ephemeral practices, strictly tied to the gathering of subjects", practices that existed only in the moment in which the gathering happened (Cognetti 2009 p. 75). Nothing guaranteed that these practices possessed an inter-subjective character, a reference to the "generalized other" (de Leonardis 1997 p. 184). The immediacy character of events did not guarantee the reference to any elements existing beyond that immediacy.

Also, in spite of the potential difficulties tied to the use of events, previous studies underlined that events represent forms of actions particularly suited to "build a shared interest" (Vitale 2004). Further, events may play a critical function that unfold through their capacity of "naming differently reality". In particular, for the observed cases this firstly meant that the official contents of events emphasized the need of creating public spaces in a city perceived as in lack of them and thus contributed to frame sociality as a public concern. But events used as a means to turn sociability into public sociality may significant affect the collective pursue of this type of goal. The shift from sociability to sociality does not "neutrally" unfold but instead it experiences tensions that are tied to the context in which it take place and to the means used to – intentionally in my cases studies - make it happen. Such tensions, and especially the ways in which they are managed, contribute to shape the outcomes produced by associations. For example, in my field research, while over the course of two years the observed associations increasingly recurred to the setting up of events, I have observed how events affected their organizing form and their everyday group life. In particular, the setting up of events that corroborated the groups ' capacity of naming differently often required the observed groups to acquire a public visibility in the media sphere. For this reason and because of the relevant competition among different cultural events that characterizes the urban western landscape (Vitale 2009a, 2009b), the setting up of events often called for the carrying out of marketing and advertising tasks. Given the fact that the associations I have observed not rarely possessed quite informal organizing forms, the engagement in these type of activities required adaptations that conveyed a variety of potential tensions in group life. I've widely observed the raising of these tensions while a part of the observed groups more and more engaged themselves in the setting up of events for massive audiences. For example, tensions about timing have been particularly evident. These opposed, on the one hand, the long times required for establishing social ties with subjects beyond the group[1] and, on the other hand, the short and strict deadlines that setting up events for massive audiences implied.

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[1] For example for the Cuccagna Group for the Construction of Participation (CGCP) and its Participatory events outlined in the analytical chapters of this dissertation.

Thus, pursuing public sociality through cultural events implies specific advantages and drawbacks. On the one hand it gives civic groups the possibility of attaching a public media value to the immediacy of face-to-face gatherings, overcoming a local embeddedness which – as Vitale (*ibidem*) underlines – do not necessarily empower associations but it can be also stifling for them. On the other hand using events requires equipping the groups with adequate organizing forms, that raise a variety of tensions with reference to civic group's purposes such as those tied to ambivalence of pursuing long term goals through a form of action which maximally valorize the immediacy dimension. The specific types of events set up by the observed groups and more generally, how each association related to this form of action, will show different concrete articulations of these – and other- advantages and drawbacks tied to using events to pursue public sociality. Also, the empirical findings of my study will specify previous knowledge and will show that using events is not simply associated to "advantages and drawbacks" in the strategies set up by the observed groups to pursue their goals. Indeed, the implications tied to the introduction of events as means to generate public sociality in groups that previously didn't used them can be best framed in terms of *a shift in the conditions of possibility* for the action of these groups, which firstly redefine the very meaning of "generating public sociality".

Indeed, the fact that events during the my field research increasingly assumed a central role in the shift from sociability to sociality redefined the element through which they (the events) mediated: for example the group life and the participation of single members in it (introducing the aforementioned tensions), the meaning of public sociality (from engaging in face-to-face interactions to striving for defining sociality as a collective concern) and the local embeddedness of the observed groups. In particular, this latter aspect refers to the fact that the observed groups that have increasingly recurred to events during the period of my participant observation have moved their spatial scale of reference from the most proximate local level (the neighborhood or, more often, the urban administrative district of Milan "Zone 4") to much wider ones (the whole city and the metropolitan area). Indeed, the events I have observed engaged a public which was not necessarily from the same neighborhood where the groups were settled of where events took place. Instead, events attracted attendees which were uniquely limited by the physical possibility of reaching the venues where they took place. Also the setting up of these events engaged the groups in relationships with subjects that were not necessarily from the same, unique, spatial area.

Further, a shift in the local scale of action of the observed groups strongly affected their pursue of public sociality: space is not a mere container or support of relationships (Gieryn 2000) but it also shapes those relationship. At the same time, social relationships "shape" the space, according to a circular process between spaces that are equipped with meanings deriving from interactions taking place in them and spaces that are used for the unfolding of those interactions (Bagnasco 2003 p. 63). Thus, a shift in the locales were the observed groups were embedded significantly affected their collective efforts. Indeed, "local societies do not repeat at different scale the same, identical, social structure [..] the way a local society organizes itself at different spatial scales possess its own peculiarities" (Bagnasco, Barbagli, Cavalli 1997 p. 212). The observed groups of my study that have increasingly recurred to events have modified themselves and their pursue of public sociality during the two years of my empirical research according to a process that has been

summarized and analyzed especially in the conclusive chapter of this dissertation. Before considering specific theoretical aspects of such a process in the analytical chapters it is now necessary to introduce the analytical tools I have used to outline them.

2. EXPLANANDUM[1]. GROUP STYLE AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Throughout the past paragraph I've tried to outline the subject of this study, stressing in particular two traits. Firstly the dimension of inclusion which – contrarily to the widespread use of the category of inclusion in sociological scholarship- has been articulated in terms of succeeding in supplying the "service of identity"; secondly the fact that the observed groups aim at generating *public* sociality mainly through the setting up of cultural events. Instead, this part of the chapter is devoted to introduce the conceptual tools adopted for the empirical analysis of the afore described theoretical dimensions (paragraph 2.1), devoting a specific attention to Habermas model of the public sphere (paragraph 2.2). Finally I will try to collocate the hypotheses adopted by this study with respect to some sociological debates and line of research, trying to show how it my analysis can develop, improve and articulate previous studies (paragraph 2.4).

According to Sampson "the capacity to achieve common goals is linked to *informal relationships*[2] established for other purposes and *more formal efforts* to achieve social regulation through institutional means" (Sampson 1999 p.253). With reference to the two cited elements (informal relationships and formal efforts) that Sampson indicates to account for "the capacity to achieve common goals" this study emphases the importance of adequately considering the informal level. In particular, though both formal and informal aspects are deemed important in my analysis, I will consider the informal sphere of group life as a privileged context to observe the taking shape of aspects that affect a variety of broader processes, included the "formal efforts" carried out by the observed groups to generate public sociality. Indeed, the informal group life is important because it is the context in which it occurs the development of the institutional properties that enable and constrain what groups, and group members, can say and do. Such institutional properties will be observed mainly through the conceptual apparatus tied to the notion of "group style" (Eliasoph, Lichterman 2003 p. 741) which allow to pay a close attention to the situated meanings of group members' participation in the specific contexts where the group life unfold. Thus, group style will allow to see the recurrent patterns of interactions that indirectly shape, among other things, also the nature of group boundaries, their "permeability" and thus the possibility of generating inclusive sociality on the part of the observed groups.

Together with inclusion, the second trait that theoretically qualify the goals of the observed associations is their will of generating a public sociality using cultural events as a means to shift from sociability to public sociality. In order to analyze such a shift I will use the normative Habermas' model of public sphere (Habermas 1997, 2000). Indeed - in spite of its "logocentrism" (Berger 2009) and normativity- the latest formulation of such a model supplies the tools to analyze

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[1] See note 2 of this chapter.

[2] Italics mine.

the conditions in which take places processes of mediation (de Leonardis 1997) that anchor the immediacy of the practices that the cultural initiatives included to wider processes extending beyond the settings in which those practices unfolded. Habermas model of the public sphere - on the contrary of the other two broad theoretical accounts (the liberal and the neo-corporativist ones) generally used by scholars to articulate the relation between the private and the public sphere promoted by civil society (Ranci 1999 p. 62)- recognizes the autonomy of civil society as "regulative principle" (*ibidem*). Further, Habermas's articulation of the public sphere in three levels dedicate a specific attention to events defined as "the physically represented public sphere of theater representations, familiar evenings, rock concerts, party meetings, religious celebrations" (Habermas 1997 p. 443).

The use of a strongly normative model, such as is the public sphere's model of Habermas, in a study that stated the adoption a mainly pragmatic stance needs to be further clarified. Firstly, it is worth underling that I'm going to use such a model without assuming its "logocentric" viewpoint, that is to say without considering that the actions in which the observed groups engaged themselves possessed the rational communicative nature that Habermas assumed. Indeed, this type of actions were particular absent if looking in details at the events that the observed associations of my study used to set up[1]. Habermas model of the public sphere will be used in a different way and in particular to articulate, mainly at the macro-level, to social conditions allowing an inclusion in the public sphere. Still, the approach of group style and the model of public sphere remain two perspective strongly heterogeneous and potentially in contrast among themselves. Indeed, the group style offer an analytical pragmatic perspective useful to observe process and dynamics at the micro level and relate them to wider outcomes. Instead, Habermas model offer a normative model to study at the macro level the internal articulation of public spheres (Peterson 2003). Thus, the adoption of such distant perspective in a singly study may still rise some perplexities. For this reason I deem necessary to further specify the use I will do of the conceptual tools that the two perspective embrace. In particular, on the one hand I would like to make the point of saying that the group style perspective will be used to observe how in the everyday group life recurrent patterns of action emerged and reinforced themselves, differently enabling and constraining the capacity of the observed groups to reach their goals. On the other hand, I will use Habermas' model to grasp the specific form of regulation linked to the particular public sphere in which the case study groups act. In particular this apparatus will be useful to observe limits and possibilities of building public sociality through cultural events.

2.1 GROUP STYLE AND THE STUDY OF INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS OF CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS' EVERYDAY LIFE

THE INFORMAL DIMENSION

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[1] See in particular chapter 5 and 6 of this dissertation at this respect.

During the empirical research I've conducted I used the concept of group style to organize my field notes about interactions I had observed taking place in the everyday group life and in particular to grasp the institutional dimensions implicit in the informal group life. Before introducing the main elements that compose the concept of group style I deem useful develop some brief remarks to broadly frame the recent sociological attention toward the informal dimension of social life. Indeed, the informal dimension, after having been neglected for long time in sociological scholarships it started to be considered again as important from roughly the mid '80" (Ambrosini, Boccagni 2008). It is nowadays deemed as an aspect that is "fundamental in the social work" and, more generally, as a dimension of sociological analysis (Bagnasco 2003). As easily predictable, in anthropology the studies aiming at theoretically distinguish the formal and informal dimensions of social life were already well developed in the '70s. In particular, the short review Irvine (1979) made of those studies she noted that "informality actually incorporated several distinct descriptive dimensions that do not necessarily correlate" (Irvine 1979 p. 773) among themselves. The American anthropologist, in her "Formality and informality in communicative events" (Irvine 1979), proposed an interesting articulation of the theoretical status of informal dimension of communicative event. But such a proposal exclusively focused on situated elements included in the observed setting, neglecting to analyze their connection to wider processes. Indeed, in social science in general uniquely from the '80s the informal dimensions of social life started to become important also in macro analysis where, after having being neglected for long time were re-introduced and re-valued (Bagnasco 2003 p. 11). At this respect it is hardly a chance that at the beginning of the '80s in the US several books on cultures of corporations – such as "Theory Z" (Ouchi 1981), "Corporate cultures: the tires and rituals of corporate life" (Deal, Kennedy 1982) and "In search of excellence" (Peters, Waterman 1982)- became real best-sellers (Hatch 1999 p. 194). In some macro-sociological theories the informal dimensions of social life became deemed as privileged contexts for the regeneration of integrative resources perceived as more and more lacking from our societies. More recently, according to Bagnasco (2003) the need for such integrative resources is particularly evident in our days because of the change in the conditions of industrial production which make the most clear that "contemporary society live of integrative resources that come from the past, that it consumes while it is problematic is capacity of reconstruct them" (Habermas 1973 p. 28). Indeed, the informal domain is deemed as made of "context of direct, face-to-face, interactions in which are produced and reproduced everyday routines, standaridized and recoursive forms action that are decisive for individual self-confidence and the functioning of the whole society" (Bagnasco 2003 p. 11). At this respect, at the macro level of analysis of general social organization, Giddens (1984) was among the main scholars that underlined the importance of taking seriously informality (Bagnasco 2003 p. 11).

The attention given to informality at the theoretical macro level was accompanied by the development of empirical analysis on informal dimensions of social life situated in clearly delimitated areas of study. For example in the analysis of social politics in those studies that analyze empowerment processes, especially as these have been formulated by Friedman (Tosi 2001 p. 20). But it was especially in organizational analysis that the study of informal dimensions developed. In particular after the publication of the famous volume of Crozier e Friedber (1977) "have developed a variety of family of so-called 'soft approaches' that increasingly transcend the boundaries of organizations showing an interest toward the organization as process that invest the whole everyday

life" (Bagnasco 2003 p. 10). The analysis of organizational cultures and subcultures rapidly developed in a variety of strands, among which it was included the interpretative-symbolic approach (Geertz 1973) on organizational culture (Hatch 1999). More generally, in organizational studies a deep change has been developing for more than 30 years, which is manifest in the birth of a "plurality of approaches, surely heterogeneous among themselves, that have contributed to problemitize the rational and instrumental oriented logic – the so called 'purposes' paradigm' – that was previously mainly used to look at organizations, and that have verbalized symbolic, cognitive and normative dimension of the organizing processes" (de Leonardis, Vitale 2001 p. 115). Among these heterogeneous plurality of approaches particularly important for this study are those that focus on the analysis of organizational cultures. Especially, among these it is worth underling the perspective on meaning-making offered by Weick (1993; 1997) - based on the concept of "organizing" and "sense making" - because it particularly resonates with the theoretical dimensions inquired in this study. Indeed, with Weick's perspective the "accent traditionally put on functions and apparatus move on processes of sense making through which organizations create, know and recognized their context. Organizations, creating sense, institute settings and context of action, create their own reality" (Bifulco, Vitale 2003 p. 98). Also inside organizational studies more recently the relevant development of the concept of *practice* (Bruni, Gherardi 2007) contribute to corroborate the systematic analysis of the informal dimensions of organizing processes. But it is especially the neo-institutionalism (Powell, di Maggio 1991) the perspective that most approach the conception of informal dimension adopted in this study. Indeed, firstly - though from a point of view mainly concerned with isomorphism processes – this approach devote a specific attention to the study of organizations underling the importance of informal social sanctions, rather than the authoritative interventions, in shaping group life. But especially the affinity with this approach derive from the fact that the neo-institutionalist perspectives put at the core of their analysis that fact that groups follow taken for granted understandings that organize patterns of action over time. As I will show in the next pages, the recurrent pattern of actions and interactions – articulated with the concept of group style (Eliasoph, Lictherman 2003) - are also at the core of the argument proposed by this study because, according to the adopted hypothesis, they are deemed to enable and constrain groups' efforts of generating public sociality.

Finally, the recovery of the informal dimension of group life is not an exclusive domain of sociology but has involved other social sciences. For example it is a long standing strand also in history. In particular, in parallel to the invention of micro-history, and oral history, historiographic French studies have regenerated a strand of studies that begun at the end of XIX on the everyday life of fraternal organizations. This is the historiographic area of study on sociability defined in terms of "the way through which individuals come together and share spaces characterized by divisions of class and status or open to all social components" (Malatesta 1993). Sociability will be further treated afterwards in this chapter, when illustrating the consistency of the argument proposed with previous findings on sociability of historiographic studies.

ANALYZING INSTITUTIONAL PROPERTIES THROUGH GROUP STYLE

As already mentioned, in my study I have adopted the approach centered on group style to study the everyday informal life of the cultural organizations taken as case studies of this research. This approach is based on the assumption that informal contexts of group life are a good settings to observed institutional properties of civic groups that affect wider processes in which they are involved. The approach of group style assumes that informal dimensions of group life are patterned and that is possible to study and outline those patterns. Indeed, taken for granted understandings that shape interactions in the informal everyday group life develop over time - according to the typical process of "institutionalization" (de Leonardis 2009 p. 31) - in routinezed patterns of interactions. Such patterns can be framed in terms of group styles (Lichterman 2006 p. 539). These represent the shared ground on which the everyday interactions of group life draw. Thus, group styles refer to structures, though not social structure but cultural structures (Rambo, Chan 1990, Alexander, Smith 1993; Somers 1995), that is to say "patterns of publicly shared symbols, meanings or styles of action which enable and constrain what people can say and do" (Lichterman, Cefai 2004).

As it could be evident from the few things I have said about it until now, the group style approach appears as a model for the analysis of organizational culture informed by a "subjectivist epistemology" that is typical of anthropology (Hatch 1999 p. 195). Further, this approach is tied to the pragmatic turn in sociology (Silber 2003), and in particular it was born as a specific strand of American cultural sociology studies (Spillman 2002): a plurality of perspectives that has grown from the '80s, that is nowadays quite consolidated and that conveys the idea that culture itself is structured and that it structures interaction" (Lichteran Eliasoph 2003). In particular, the recent strand of studies in cultural sociology has raised in contrast to the way the structural-functionalism of Parson used to see culture, that is to say as a set of values and orientations that social actors interiorized in the process of socialization, bringing with them in the specific settings in which they acted. American cultural sociology studies that have developed from the '80s have drawn on Durkheim's concept of collective representation and have specified it through a diversified sets of categories of analysis that include "codes" (Alexander, Smith 2003), "boundaries" (Lamont, Molnar 2002), "tools" (Swidler 1984) or "languages and vocabularies of action" (Bellah et al. 1984; Wuthnow 2002). The group style approach arose in this area of study, aiming at innovating and improving it through a contextualist frame which devote a specific attention to the close analysis of face-to-face communication in the concrete settings where it take place. Indeed, Eliasoph and Lichterman (2003) founded inadequate the theories and the conceptual tools that were at disposal in American cultural sociology at the mid of the '90s to fully account for the processes they were observing in the specific settings in which they were carrying out their research. Indeed, using those tools of inquiry many puzzles the researchers confronted in their fieldwork still remained unsolved. Thus, they inductively developed the concept of group style to fill the gap between the processes described by analysts that focused on collective representation and the empirical evidences they were collecting. For example, they observed that "expressive individualism" (Bellah et al.) was used quite in the opposite way from what scholars of this specific collective representation had predicted. In particular, they observed that expressive individualism, instead of discouraging the political engagement, was used by the actors they were observing to mobilize and commit themselves toward public causes. To solve this puzzle they proposed a perspective that stressed how

the collective representation of expressive individualism was used in the everyday life of the group. They noticed that at this level of group life this and other collective representations were *filtered* through the shared ground on which everyday interactions among group members drew and developed. In order to systematically observe and analyze such a shared ground the concept of group style and the related notions it included were formulated and used by Eliasoph ( ) and Lichterman in their studies. It is worth underling the fact that the concept of group style - on the contrary of other tools at disposal in cultural sociology- allows to observe how organizational cultures - and in particular the institutional properties of group life - *filter* wider aspects of the context in which groups act. Such a function of filtering was previously mostly neglected in cultural sociology and it has been particularly useful in my study to

observe how the same context constraints differently affected the pursue of public sociality carried out by the observed groups of my study[1].

Indeed, observing groups styles allows to see how models, stimulus, constrictions or collective representations are filtered and re-elaborated in group life, assuming in this way a normative value for group members. Observing group styles is possible to account for the reasons why a single collective representation may be associated to a variety of behaviors in seemingly similar groups. Indeed, collective representations do not translate themselves automatically into specific actions, mechanisms but the concrete unfolding of these process always occurs through the mediation of the institutional properties of group life, which can be observed through the group style.

Lichterman and Eliasoph (2003) emphasized the situated character of group style, as recurrent pattern of action that refer to specific group contexts. Thus, the study of group style require situated analysis because it is not possible to theoretically observe them, nor inquiring them through interviews. Indeed, interviews take place and enact a different setting from those where group life unfold, a setting that it is likely to be associated to a different group style from that – or those - governing group life[2]. The study of group styles require to look at how group members use collective representations while they are in group settings, and require the researcher to repeat its observations over time in order to be able to outline the implicit patterns that shape these uses.

In particular in my study I observed that cultural associations differently used cultural events - a form of action deriving from the broader context in which associations where situated - to pursue equal goals of public sociality and I focused my attention on the implicit patterns of action and interactions that were tied to such uses. Thus, I comparatively noticed regularities that repeated themselves over time and that cued me in accounting for the outcomes associated to the way the observed groups used events. Similarly, I have adopted the same perspective also with respect to other elements that affected all the groups of my study. For example over the period of my participant observation the overall project to which all the observed associations belonged has progressively seriously aggravated its monetary needs. I have considered this context constraint as a collective representation that elicited a variety of behaviors in the groups I was observing and I've tried to outline how such a variety was tied to their different group styles.

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[1] For an overview of this process see chapter 9, for differences among the observed organizations see chapter 8.

[2] The analysis I've developed in chapter 7 about Esterni is telling at this respect.

To be more precise, group styles mattered in shaping the outcomes of the pursue of public sociality carried out by the observed cultural organizations in two ways. Firstly, group styles enabled and constrained what groups could formally say and do for creating relationships *beyond the group*. Secondly, groups styles allowed to observe different ways of being together *among group members* and to see the reasons why these ways were not equally inclusive toward third parts. This point refers, on the one hand, to small events including the setting up of sociable practices open to attendees[1] and, on the other hand, to the everyday settings in which group life developed.

But before going on, it is necessary to introduce the elements used by Eliasoph and Lichterman (2003) to articulate the concept of group style.

I have previously said that group styles conceive the patterns of actions and interactions that shape group life in terms of (cultural) structures. As structures, these patterns are made of different parts which are in reciprocal relations among themselves. These parts analytically articulate and specify the shared ground of interactions of group life along three dimensions:

- "group boundaries: put into practice a group's assumptions about what the group's relationship (imagined and real) to the wider world should be while in the group context;

- group bonds: put into practice a group's assumptions about what members' mutual responsibilities should be in the group context;

- speech norms: put into practice a group's assumptions about what appropriate speech is in the group context" (Eliasoph, Lichterman 2003 p. 739)

These are three dimensions that have been analytically distinguished to outline specific features of the shared ground on which interactions in group context are based. Finally, it is worth précising that by "group context" is meant the concrete setting in which group life unfold. It refers to the physical setting in which individuals act collectively as parts of the same groups, reciprocally recognizing themselves as such. Throughout the empirical chapters of this dissertation I will stress the differences in the way group members behaved while in group context and while they were in other settings. In some cases I will try to link some of the observed differences to the force of group styles in enabling and constraining the possibilities of actions and behaviors of group members[2].

2.2 HABERMAS' MODEL OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE

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[1] In this case the concept of group style has been partially integrated with that of "organization of sociality", elaborated drawing on the concept of "work of sociality" of Daniels (1985). See chapter 5 for the application of these concepts.

[2] Because of the wide importance of observing the situated meanings of group life and their embeddedness in the concrete contexts where they develop, it should be evident the role ethnography play in grasping group styles. These, indeed, are defined as "recurrent patterns of interaction that arises from a group's taken-for-granted understandings" and this imply the necessity of observing in detail such understanding that are implicit in the everyday life of groups. Hardly by chance, indeed, the founders of the group styles approach share with ethnographers the stress they put on the heuristic value of "breaching episodes" that allow to look more clearly at the implicit patterns that govern interactions while actors are "repairing" such interactions.

As I have already hinted at, according to Ranci (1999 p. 64) the modern conception of civil society can be articulated in two main versions: the liberal-pluralist and the neo-corporativist. Both versions possess the drawback of "not giving to civil society the value of autonomous regulative principle that they have given the State and the market. According to the pluralist viewpoint: "the conceptual and moral dominance of individual interests implies that all associations are mere tools to pursue individual goals […] The problem consist in the little value associations get in this conception. […] they are simply defined as means to aggregate and articulate some interests (Black 1984 p. 240). The neo-corporativist vision, because draw the value of associations on their political power delegated from the State, have deemed them as not worth of analytical autonomy as principle of social regulation" (Ranci 1999 p. 65).

In my study, in order to consider associations as autonomous actors, though in relation both to the state and the market, and in particular to observe the articulation from the private to the public sphere through cultural events I will refer to the last version of the normative model of the public sphere of Habermas[1]. Indeed, this normative model possesses the advantage of giving civil society subjects – such as associations - an autonomous status in the articulation between the private and the public domain, something that is absent from the pluralist and neo-corporativist model alike. In particular, Habermas' model of public sphere assign a specific function to civil society groups that is summarized with the metaphor that consider these type of groups "the infrastructure of the public sphere" (Habermas 1993 p. 441). Not all civic groups alike represent this "infrastructure" but uniquely those whose collective actions fulfill certain requirements that Habermas widely specified in its reflections. These - though certainly questionable - have been deemed useful in my study because they offered a framework to read, at the macro level, the process through which the observed groups tried to "enter the public sphere" (Oliver, Myers 1999) through the cultural initiatives they set up.

Further, Habermas' last version of the model of the public sphere included specific reflections about cultural events and their articulation in the functioning of public sphere. Thus, the German philosopher offered insights particularly useful in my study to analyze the shift from private sociability to public sociality through events. In particular, Habermas introduced a "vertical articulation" (Privitera) of the public sphere in three levels that explicitly consider cultural initiatives and events. The three levels were distinguished on the basis of their communicative density, their organizational complexity and the scale of the action that take place in them (Habermas 1992, p. 443). The first basic level is represented by the face-to-face, simple and episodic, meetings that happen in cafés, restaurants, sidewalks or other informal gatherings of people (Sebastiani 2007, p. 230). The second level is the "organized public sphere", so called in opposition to the episodic, and not organized, first level of the public sphere. The third level is the

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[1] It is worth to specify that I will speak of public sphere in different terms from what I've done previously in this chapter. That is to say that I'm not referring now to "the problem of the public sphere, that is […] the problem of mediation in social relationshiCPs […] that allow the generalization, the elaboration of inter-subjective recognition of social meanings" (de Leonardis 1997 p. 189). Speaking of public sphere I will now refer to the normative theoretical model elaborated by Habermas ( ) , in particular in its second formulation that he has given in "Between facts and Norms".

more abstract because it "tends to make itself independent from the physical presence of a public" (Sebastiani 2007, p. 230) and it refers to the media communication were messages can reach a wide potential audience, gain the public opinion attention and in this way hope to influence the political powers. The cultural initiatives set up by the observed associations of my study fit the intermediate level of Habermas' threefold articulation, "the physically represented public sphere" (Habermas 1992 p.443). But according to Habermas, it is possible to speak about the presence of contexts that articulate the public sphere uniquely when each one of the aforementioned levels is tied to all the other ones he predicted.

With respect to Habermas' perspective about civil society groups as "infrastructure of the public sphere", these would be contexts particularly close to the "life world" of their participants. Instead, the analysis carried out in chapter 5 and 6 will illustrate how the process through which the cultural initiatives promoted by the observed associations acquired a public value in the media sphere required taking distance from the life world of actors engaged in such activities and in particular from their most intimate type of engagement with the world ( ). Indeed, the model of the public sphere has been used in my analysis also to observe which tensions and transformations the meanings elaborated in group contexts experienced when they strived to acquire a public value in the media public sphere. This has allowed for example to specify how the aforementioned shift in the local embeddedness of the observed associations took place. More generally, the model of the public sphere has allowed also to question the spatial dimension of the observed processes. Indeed, studies drawing on Habermas' model of the public sphere have been particularly attentive toward such a dimension. For example, Sebastiani (1997) in her reading of Habermas articulation of the concept of public sphere emphasizes the role of space, and especially urban places, in shaping two of the three levels of Habermas model of the public sphere. Further, also in the classical public sphere, the agora represented the physical space in which opinions were formed through free discussion and at the same time expressed through the reciprocal exchange of opinions. In the modern bourgeois public sphere, the European cities represented at the same time the physical spaces in which population density made the most likely encounters at the episodic level of squares, sidewalks, in general the street life and especially in cafés and clubs. These were places where opinions were discussed and at the same time the physical settings in which the more abstract level of the public sphere – that at those time was the press - acquired his visibility and scenario. In contemporary societies and cities the role of urban spaces in shaping the dynamics of the public sphere - especially at the local level – has been explored ( ) but further developments are possible. Indeed, the model of the public sphere specify the requirements that the activities the observed associations carry out have to possess in order to "enter the public sphere" (Oliver and Myers 1999).

Finally, Habermas' model has been used (especially in chapter 5) to inquiry the "competences" (Lanzara 1993) required to the observed groups when their activities aimed at affecting a (media) public sphere and then which implications these activities had on their pursue of public sociality (especially in chapter 6). With reference to the first point, sociological scholarship suggested that

the "upgrading of public spaces"[1] require specific competences, but it supplied uniquely generic indications at this respect. For example, Bauman underlined that "urban living calls for a rather special and quite sophisticated type of skills" (Bauman 2001, p. 19). Sennett (1978) specified such skills with reference to interactions among strangers in urban contexts and verbalized such skills in terms of "civility", articulated using the metaphor of the mask[2] (Sennett 1978 p. 264). This study move the focus from individual competences to collective ones, paying a specific attention to how different togetherness encouraged or made more difficult the pursue of public sociality as outcome of cultural urban events.

2.3 POSITIONING THE ADOPTED HYPOTHESIS

The positioning of the adopted hypothesis about group style into wide debates on cultural sociology and civic action has already been widely developed by Eliasoph ( ) and Lictherman, the scholars that have firstly formulated the conceptual apparatus tied to group style. Thus, in this paragraph such debates will be at best cited. Instead, I will briefly mention the connection of the approach based on group style with specific arguments proposed by Melucci and then I will go on trying to sketch out how this study can improve previous works, detailing specific findings of them.

The approach focused on group style links the outcomes of collective action to the way a group organize itself in its everyday life, while striving to pursue its goals and adapting itself to the broader context in which it acts. In particular, the approach of group style stresses the routine and institutional character of the actions promoted in the informal contexts of interaction among group members. The concept of group style underlines the importance of looking at institutional properties, according to a perspective particularly consistent with neo-institutional stances (Powell, di Maggio 1991), and stresses the importance of taking seriously the taken for granted understandings that shape group life. Such a perspective - though at first sight may not appear as such because of the difference in the vocabularies, empirical research subjects and debates of reference - possess significant similarities with that proposed by Melucci, and in particular with the findings the Italian sociologist outlined in its research of the beginning of the '80s on the "areas of movement" in Milan (Melucci 1984). Indeed, the main findings of that research underlined that the "antagonism" of the groupings inquired expressed itself mainly in the way "in which internal solidarity was structured", because it was in that context that occurred the proposal of "other codes"[3] (Melucci 1984). Thus, methodologically Melucci's inquiry indicated more than twenty years ago that internal solidarity among group members, and in particular the way in which different parts coordinate themselves and relate to each other, was a good context to explore the

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[1] From one of the observed groups (Esterni) official statement about its goals. For more details see chapter 3.

[2] In particular, Sennett underlines that "civility" is " the activity which protects people from each other and yet allows them to enjoy each others's company. Ewaring a mask is the essence of civility. Masks permit pure sociability, detached from the circumstances of power, malaise, and private feelings of those who wear them. Civility has as its aim the shielding of others from being burdened with oneself" (Sennett 1978 p. 264).

[3] Which is the literal English translation of the Italian publication on that research.

group outcomes. This indication is consistent with the features groups style highlight. At this respect it is sufficient to cite that group style has also been defined as "how people coordinate themselves as a group" (Licheterman 2006 p.). Secondly, the perspective proposed by Melucci in that study repeatedly underlined the need of analytically considering the *form* of the actions proposed by groups, because of its relevant implications on the *contents* promoted by such groups (Melucci 1984 p. 443). In my own study such a suggestion has been particularly useful for taking into accounts the specific features in which the analyzed groups acted and to analyze the implication associated to the form of the *event* in re-configuring the conditions of possibility for the observed pursue of public sociality. In general, many findings of my study derive from the combination of Melucci's intuitions with the research tools offered by the perspective of group style. Indeed, it is possible to anticipate that according to my study events do not *by themselves* re-configured the conditions of possibility for the actions of observed groups but instead this process was linked to the patterned ways in which events were used in their pursue of public sociality. Therefore the approach of Lictherman and that of Melucci have operated jointly in allowing to account for the processes observed during my field research.

2.3.2 SPECIFYING PREVIOUS STUDIES

As I have already outline in the introduction the analytical strategy adopted by this research follow the approach of the case extended method ( ), a procedure that systematizes that idea according to which the purpose of an analysis is that of developing, improving and revisiting theories, arguments and hypothesis taken from academic debates (Small p.). This study doesn't aim at reconstructing arguments taken analysis following the approach of group styles of from the study of Melucci, considering instead these previous works firstly precious for the analytical and conceptual tools they offered. Many other are the studies with reference to which this research aims at supplying a specific viewpoint, capable of improving previous empirical findings[1]. Indeed, the argument according to which "dynamics of social cohesion are directly affected by strength or weakness of social ties" (Rovati 2009, p.) is widely diffuse in sociological accounts that deal with these type of empirical subjects. In particular, my study can be considered as a specification of the vague argument according to which "networks, social capital, forms of face-to-face solidarity are shaped by social and cultural conditions [...], in particular cultural factors may open or close broader solidarities" (Osti 2010 p.). Thus, the argument I'm proposing with this study aims at detailing *how* "cultural factors" affect the possibilities of "broader solidarities". Also, it is worth précising that I'm using "cultural factors" to specify the link between, on the one hand, ties among group members and, on the other hand, wider processes that civic groups aim at affecting, that in my case referred mainly to the generation of public sociality. Indeed, in sociological literature elements that in my study have been kept separated are often overlapping, in particular with a coincidence of bonds among group members and solidarity of a specific local society: "social cohesion can be measured drawing on the degree of reciprocal trust and on the feeling of belonging to the same

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[1] In this study the reference to the extended case method is not declined with respect to a specific theory, as in many other analysis that explicitly claims to follow this specific type of approach- My loose reference to different theories represents a specific use of the extended case method.

group/community; its virtuous character depend mainly on the […] attitude to collaborate with others" (Rovati 2009 p. 29). The research presented in the next chapters keep separated the nature of ties among group members and the conditions in which the solidarity that characterize such ties can enlarge toward third parts. The "attitude to collaborate" (*ibidem*) among groups members will be specified and put in relation to the form of relationships that groups engage with subjects beyond the group.

PUTNAM AND THE SOCIAL CAPITAL PERSPECTIVE

Probably the most known scholar's attempt of linking the participation in civic groups to wider processes of social cohesion is that developed by Putnam through its concept of social capital, by now part of the commonsense and everyday language. Let's consider briefly some aspects of the way this approach relate to my study, trying to outline how I have tried to specify Putnam's perspective[1].

Putnam in its work on Italian administrative regions associated their varying "institutional performances" to their different civic traditions, expressed through their levels of social capital (Putnam 1993). In its subsequent work conducted on US civic groups, Putnam (2000) documented the decline of associative life and - implicitly answering to the numerous critics that its work on Italian regions had prompted ( ) - introduced a distinction between two forms of social capital. In particular he analyzed the *level* of social capital in its country distinguishing between bonding social capital - ties among group members - and bridging social capital - bonds with subjects beyond the group. Further, in its second work Putnam proposed the specific argument according to which "the more the level of bonding social capital of a local society, the more will be its level of bridging social capital" ( ) and thus the capacity of the members of that local society of building relationships with subjects external to their belonging groups (Putnam). Such an argument refers to the very core element of my study and it shows that also Putnam – as Licterman, Eliasoph and Melucci- has been concerned with the internal dimensions of group life as privileged context of observation to account for wider processes, about the establishment of relationships with subjects beyond the group. Given the strong affinity, this specific argument has been used (in chapter 4) in accounting for the empirical documentation I have collected. Through such operation I have had the possibility of noting with my own eyes that the distinction between bridging and bonding was not enough to fully account for the processes I observed in my field research. In particular, Putnam's argument did not allow to qualify and understand the nature of ties among group members, the relationships they established with subjects beyond the groups and the conditions that articulated the shift from groups bonds to ties with third parts. Such a perspective was not able of supplying the conceptual tools to observe how variations in the ways a group coordinated itself in its everyday life were associated to the possibility of creating new social relationships. Instead, using the group style perspective I've had the possibility of observing that there were different kinds of "bonding social capital" and that those differences made a difference in terms of "bridging outcomes", something that the "social

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[1] I wider consideration at this respect is developed in chapter 4.

capital" framework by itself could not access because it included only the possibility of "more" or "less" - bridging or bonding - social capital.

STUDIES ON SOCIAL INNOVATIONS

The analysis I have conducted can be also associated to previous findings of research on "social innovation in European cities" (Vicari, Moulaert 2009). Social innovation was defined as "a dynamic of integration among three goals: 1) the fulfillment of social needs that don't find adequate answers or that are alienated; 2) promotion and sustainment of the empowerment of people; 3) changes in the modalities of governance" (Vitale 2009 p. 17). Thus, my study differs from researches on social innovation especially because it doesn't focus on governance implications of the actions carried out by the observed groups. In spite of such difference, the main findings of my analysis confirms and specify in particular three processes that had already been outlined by researches on social innovation:

1) Outcomes and tensions associated to the setting up of events. Vitale (2009) argued that events represent a form of action capable of attracting a strong visibility on it and thus suited to attract consensus and legitimacy for the groups that use it. This has been widely evident in the cultural associations I have studied in my research, who over the two years of my field research increasingly used events to acquire credibility and legitimacy especially at the eyes of possible funders.

2) The relevance of two conditions of success for the action of the observed groups. The analysis of the empirical evidences I've collected has underlined the relevance of two specific mechanisms that had been identified as "conditions of success" (*ibidem*) in the cases of social innovation in European cities analyzed by Vicari and Moulaert (2009). In particular such mechanisms refer firstly to the capacity organizations have of "coordinating the widest bottom-up participation with an institutional guarantee" (Vitale), and secondly to the capacity groups have of "going up of scale", augmenting the reach of their claims, often originally born as specific and local (Vitale 2009). The presence of both such mechanisms has been articulated for the observed group by events because this form of action has revealed to be particularly suited to be institutionally guaranteed from above (especially from a financial point of view through sponsors) and capable at the same time of adapting itself to different territorial scales, according to the subjects each time involved in the organization and fruition of the proposed events.

3) The capacity of "naming differently" of associations. That is to say their capacity of affecting the symbolic order promoting new framing in the public opinion. Also in this case this type of outcome took place in the processes I have observed firstly through events. Indeed, some of the observed events explicitly framed sociality as a *public* concern, underlining for example the lack of adequate spatial arrangements for its development in Milan.

These three processes, here just very briefly hinted at, have been an useful point of reference in my own analysis. Throughout the analytical chapters of part two of this dissertation it will be evident how the specific perspective adopted by my study has allowed to develop and specify these

processes with respect to the pursue of public sociality promoted by the observed cultural associations.

SOCIABILITY

The analysis I have carried out possess significant affinities with studies on sociability. More generally, I consider the approach focused on group style also as a set of useful analytical tools to specify and analyze sociability, defined as "field of inquiry on the everyday life of fraternal organizations" (Camus-Viguè 2000). In particular, the overall formulation of my study is consistent with findings of the historiographic approach on sociability in particular when they underline broader implications associated to the everyday communication that take place in specific settings.

In historiography, indeed, sociability has a long standing tradition which dates back to the nineteenth century studies of Michelet ( ), who analyzed the mutations in everyday communication between the end of seventeenth and the following century. This type of analysis has been more recently recovered in France with the works of Agulhon (1969, 1970, 1971). In particular, its study "*Le Cercle dans la France bourgeoise, 1810-1848*" (Agulhon 1977) represented – as claimed by its subtitle- an analysis of "mutation of sociability" in an historical period in which it passed from being enclosed in the houses and strongly shaped by the family to became "public, egalitarian, collective, and masculine" (Agulhon). The study of Agulhon argued that in a historical period of Restoration, sociability represented the main contexts in which political modernity ("democracy" with the language of that period) diffused in the whole society: through the new customs of discussion in the bourgeois circles or clubs the ideas that in the period couldn't find any other public expression had the possibility of circulating and developing.

With respect to the viewpoint adopted in my study, two specific aspects are particularly significant of Agulhon's work. Firstly, his viewpoint on sociability. Indeed, he didn't deem it in terms of "pure sociability", that is to say as a "superficial" and "divorced from reality" (Simmel) process, but instead as taking place in contexts of interaction possessing significant ties with broader social processes. Secondly, Agulhon offered a perspective that focused on *mutations* in "the ways individuals come together and shared the same physical arrangements" (Malatesta 199..). Agulhon referred to mutations occurring over time, while in my study I focus on changes in sociability among different groups and different settings in which the group life of a single organization unfolded. Further – in particular in chapter 5 – I apply the frame of sociability also to analyze interactions taking place during "ephemeral practices" (Cognetti 2007), such as the events I have observed. In particular, with respect to events, my study will question some theoretical arguments according to which they would be "manifestations that previously schedule what should 'occur', in terms of relevance and meaning: the event is not anymore the product of a collective action, neither its quality can be referred to the expression of its critical functions in the public sphere" (Sebastiani 2007 p. 126). Events are in particular accused to develop "assisted sociability" (Sebastiani 2007 p. 128), but my focus on "organizations of sociality" during events will show that events may contain different "styles of sociality" and they do not necessarily exclude the possibility of expressing critical stances.

From a sociological perspective, Simmel remains the main theoretical reference for the study of sociability, though its specific viewpoint has not been directly useful in my own analysis because of its – already mentioned- conception of sociability in terms of "the fun aspects of socialization which are "divorced from reality" in the sense that "they have no practical purpose" (Simmel 1981 p. 125 e 123; Camus-Vigué 2000 p. 214). Instead, four specific studies on sociability are more close at this respect to the viewpoint I've adopted in my study. These are the research of Aldrich (197) on a Mensa organizaton, Fine and Holyfield (199) study of a group of mushrooms collectors, the analysis of Daniels (1985) on the action of community based organizations, the research of Edmondson (2001) that studied rural communities in the west Ireland and the analytical comparison carried out by Camus-Viguè (2000) between the Rotary club in the US and in France. Given their importance for my study, it is worth briefly considering them.

Firstly, Aldrich (1971) wrote about "sociable organizations", recognizing that sociable interactions can become institutionalized within an organization. Aldrich studied a Mensa group and he found a playful conversational style where talk was its own end, and thus approached the ideal-type of Simmel's "pure sociability". But Aldrich's study also explicitly recognized the institutional properties of the everyday interactions in an organization and the different "style of sociability" that may characterize them. Fine and Holyfield (1996), studied sociable practices in a group of mushrooms collectors and focused on how group cohesion was generated through repeated interactions among the members of that voluntary organization. Both these two first studies underlined that sociability was a central part of what made the group attractive to people beyond it (Potts 2009). These scholars deemed sociability as an attribute of interactions that encouraged subjects beyond the group to become active members of the groups, though without specifying how this would happen. Daniels (1985) analyzed the "sociability work", underling its importance in events organized by "community development organizations". The notion of "sociability work" was used to signal that the "conscious production of the ambience to elicit sociability requires preparation. Organizing a setting, providing refreshments, and guaranteeing the appearance of participants all take planning" (Daniels 1985 p. 363). Daniels argued that sociability work, though being crucial for the effectiveness of "community developments groups", was scarcely recognized in those groups and it was normally deemed as a "natural" component of women's sensitivity. Daniels instead showed its complexity, the quantity of work it required and he, more generally, underlined that "the work of sociability is not well understood in our society, nor is it given the serious consideration it deserves" (Daniels 1985 p. 363)[1]. Subsequently, Edmdonson (2001) in her study on rural communities in the west of Ireland argued that "sociality is a more complex phenomenon than what is implied by the straight forward question about how people get things done in society" (Edmondson 2001 p. 60). Edmondson explicitly argued that exist "different forms of sociality" (Edmondson 2001 p. 59) and proposes a model for studying them which underlined the implications of sociality with reference to broader civic processes. In particular her analysis explicitly criticized Putnam arguing that "there are different type of sociality, not just one type of civic culture (nor even just two – traditional and modern). Are they all equally appropriate for

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[1] Daniels' work has been particularly used in chapter 5 of this dissertation, where I've analyzed the organization of sociality in cultural events set up by the observed groups of this research.

producing enlightened democratic politics?" (*ibidem*). The response Edmondson gave to these questions was clearly negative. In particular, this scholar argued that the sociality of the specific "North Ireland community" that she studied was "sufficiently different from the type of sociality writers like Putnam have in mind to accentuate the complexity of the connection between the civicness of a community and the quality of its governance" (Edmondson 2001 p. 60). Thus, the study of Edmondson underlined the importance of studying from close sociality in order to understand broader political and civic processes. Even more relevant than this latter one for my own study was the adoption of the category of sociability made by Camus-Vigué (2000), especially because of the comparative formulation of her study which analyzed the functioning of two Rotary Clubs in France and in the US. In particular it is important to note that this sociological study implicitly incorporated the main findings of Edmondson by underling the political value of sociability. Indeed, Camus-Vigué explicitly referred to the reflections of Tocqueville about the relation between cultural customs (or "more" in the vocabulary of Tocqueville) and broader social institutions. The same political value associated to the cultural customs is also present in the approach focused on group style adopted by my study. In particular this is specified with respect to the need of analyzing in detail different types of associative participation before attributing them function of creations of new social relationships. At this respect it is worth noting that both the approach of group style and that of Camus-Viguè underlined that different togetherness are not necessarily equal among themselves in sustaining practices that may be crucial for making groups reach their own goals.

STUDIES FOCUSING ON THE ORGANIZING FORM OF NON PROFIT GROUPS

There are a series of studies that link the outcomes produced by civil society groups to features of their organizing structure[1]. Indeed, "looking at the organizing form, some scholars (Maloney, et al. 2007; Rotolo 1999; Salamon 2004) have in particular underlined that in the last decades numerous associations have became more professionalized and 'marketized', that is to say that they have acquired an higher level of internal structuration and more remunerated members […]. Professionalization processes bring with them controversial consequences. On the one hand associations may augment the quality of their interventions both in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. At the same time, though, an higher level of internal structuring may diminish their traditional capacity of creating social capital, that is to say a widespread social fabric (Backman, Smith 2000; Eikenberry, Kluver 2004; Lichterman 2006). The paradox is well depicted by Backman e Smith (2000) when these scholars speak about "healthy organizations, unhealthy communities. Processes of professionalization and 'marketization' of associations have consequences on the creation of sociality" (Forno, Polizzi 2010 p. 32). This a perspective that is articulated in a variety of ways in the international debate (Sebastiani 2007 p.200) and not all the analysis negatively conceive the augmented level of professionalization of civic groups. For example Minkoff (2002) talked about the emergence of a new type of non-profit subject that she defined as "hybrid" because combining "advocacy and service provision as its core identity" (Minkoff 2002). This would be a particularly suited type of organizing forms for facing

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[1] In this dissertation the organizing form is always striclty defined

contemporary social changes because it allows to move among "distinctive environmental uncertainties and boundary conditions" (Minkoff 2002 p. 377). The Italian debate at this respect has recently developed a significant level of internal articulation (La Valle 2004) and it contains also refined and not unidirectional arguments. For example Ambrosini and Boccagni (2008, 2009) stated that there exists an ambivalent relation between the "territorial embeddedness" and the traits of efficiency and efficacy of third sector organizations.

According to the vocabulary used in perspectives that focus on organizing form of non-profit groups, what I've observed over the course of my two years of field research would be described in terms of "professionalization" of the observed cultural associations. At this respect it is worth anticipating from the empirical evidences presented in the next chapters that most of the observed organizations during the period of my research increasingly acquired a structured organizing form and more and more recurred to fund-raising oriented activities. This was mainly due to the increasingly lack of monetary resources of the overall project to which all the observed associations belonged. Anyway, the implications of this process would be probably described in terms of augmented predicaments in the exercise of the traditional function of associations of creating social relationships (Ranci 1999). Also, the ever growing use of events made by the observed groups over the two years of my field research would probably be described as signals of the weakened critical function exerted by civil society groups and as expressions of a scheduled way of being together that are not capable of regenerating the contemporary fragmented urban social fabric (Sebastiani 2007). The arguments proposed in this study aim at improving - by specifying - the study of professionalization of non-profit groups, in particular showing *how* this process developed in the observed cases and which aspects it entailed in terms of possibility of creating inclusive forms of social relationships. Indeed, my comparative study will show that professionalization is not an inevitable process tied to augmented "exigencies of functionality" (Ranci 1999), neither it is something that develops randomly and thus it is senseless trying to account for it. Instead, I will try to show how changes in the organizing forms are tied to the patterns of actions that shape the everyday group life of associations. I will pay a specific attention to *the event* because this form of action significantly accompanied the changes in the pursue of public sociality carried out by the observed groups over the period of field research.

With my empirical analysis I will firstly show that professionalization represents a more complex process than what many scholars have argued, because it is tied to a variety of elements, partially context factors and partially aspects that are part of the group life. Also, I will stress how professionalization do not affects only the organizing form of the observed associations but it is tied also to the informal contexts in which group life unfolds. My analysis will detail previous arguments such as that of Horch (1994) who stated that an augmented level of structuring in the organizing form of non-profit groups is tied to a weakening of their "community reference and emdeddedness" (*ibidem*) and to a diminished level of solidarity among group members. We will observe in particular that an augmented level of professionalization is not *tout court* associated to a loss in the capacity of the observed groups to create social relationships. Indeed, the adopted perspective will show that processes of professionalization are a part of a broader shift consisting in the change of conditions of possibility of the pursue of public sociality for the observed

associations. It will be shown that to account for such a process it is not particularly useful a perspective that uniquely focus on the changes in the organizing form meant simply as organizing formal structure. Instead, my study will show the utility of a perspective that take into account on the one hand the stable patterns of interactions that shape everyday group life and, on the other hand, the specific conditions offered by the public sphere that the observed groups aim at affecting.

In particular in the final chapter, I will outline in a non causal way the implications of the professionalization processes on the observed pursue of public sociality. In particular I will focus my attention on events, a repertoire of action widely used by associations I have analyzed in my study, though rarely considered with respect to the outcomes produced by non-profit groups. The adopted vertical model of the public sphere of Habermas will allow to inquiry the *grammar of events* through a perspective extending beyond the face-to-face settings in which the cultural initiatives set up by the observed groups took place. This inquiry will show that events are worth to be taken seriously and observed from close because they can significantly differ among themselves, for example in terms capacity of affecting a media public sphere. The associations I have observed increasingly used events, but they have set up different type of events, each one associated to different processes in terms of possibility of creating inclusive forms of social relationships[1]. We will see that the change in the organizing forms associated to the increased use of events produced risks for the possibilities of creating social relationships but at the same time opened new possibilities. More generally, my overall inquiry on the "grammar of events" has benefited from Habermas model and, at the same time from the adopted focus on group style. Indeed, this focus has allowed to analyze *how* associations related to events, how they used this form of action not simply as "automatic reaction" to context constraints. I propose the see different uses of events as patterned by the possibilities of actions offered by different institutionalized way of being together among group members. In general, from a methodological point of view my study will reveal that implications associated to changes in the organizing form cannot be uniquely observed from a theoretical point of view. Instead, assessing them call for a pragmatic viewpoint that take in adequate consideration the elements that are part of the concrete situations where associative actions take place. In particular, I will show the usefulness of looking at the settings where interactions among group members take place because in these context it is possible to observed patterns that shape broader processes such as the official pursue of the group goals.

The next chapter introduces the privileged urban context with reference to which the observed groups defined their goals of generating public sociality. Indeed, in order to understand how they pursued such goals I deem firstly necessary to adequately consider the spatial dimensions of their context of actions.

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[1] See in particular chapter 6 of this dissertation at this respect.

2. MILAN "ZONE 4" AS TERRITORY, CONTEXT AND LOCALE OF THE OBSERVED EFFORTS OF MAKING MILAN SOCIABLE

This chapter introduces the spatial context of the pursue of public sociality carried out by the cultural associations included in my study. Indeed, their endeavors for creating new social relationships - both at the level of face to face gatherings and at that of more stable social ties - did not occur abstractly but they were embedded in specific time-space conditions. As I have already said, time is the pillar on which I've structured the empirical chapters that make section II of this study[1]. Indeed, the proposed overall argument articulated in those chapters and summarized in chapter 9 aims firstly at accounting for the mechanisms and processes that developed over time, while the observed associations strived to make Milan sociable. But space conditions too are important for understanding the observed endeavors of creating inclusive forms of social relationships in Milan. The relevance of space for my subject of analysis can be articulated at least in three strands:

- *as territory of reference* to which the observed groups referred they goals of creating sociality in their formal communication;

- as *context* of the activities - mainly consisting in the setting up of cultural initiatives- the observed groups have carried out to pursue their goals;

- as *locale* (Giddens 1984) or *region*, that is to say as "space created by interactions" (de Certeau 2001 p. 187) the groups have developed while carrying out their activities.

Though not equally, in these three articulations alike Milan "Zone 4" represents the spatial area to be considered. In terms *of territory of reference* Milan "Zone 4" was the urban portion to which the observed cultural organizations referred their purposes of public sociality. This element will be widely articulated and illustrated in the next chapter, when introducing each one of the observed associations through the official statements they used to present themselves and their official purposes. In other chapters of this study we will see that, though at other respects the spatial scale of the observed actions changed, during the whole period of my empirical research Milan "Zone 4" has kept being the area of reference to which all the observed associations referred their goals in their formal communication.

When considering space as *context* of the activities the observed groups have carried out, things are a little bit more complicated. At this respect in the past chapter I've said that the spatial scale of the observed actions changed over the course of my empirical research, extending itself more and more toward the pole of the whole city and beyond it, especially for the observed groups that set up events widely using marketing and advertizing activities. It is worth adding that this represented uniquely a general tendency that did not affected all the observed groups. For example in some

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[1] Especially in chapter 8.

cases groups used events in a way that reinforced their relations with the local neighborhood in which they acted instead of projecting them beyond it, into a wider spatial scale. Further, at the level of the overall project to which all the observed associations of this research belonged - the Cuccagna Project, CP - we can consider Milan "Zone 4" as *compromise* trait between an initial "situational embeddedness" (Ambrosini Boccagni 2009) of a group of citizens that shared the need of regenerating the public sociality of a specific, quite limited, urban area but that was already progressively extending the spatial scale of such an "embeddedness" when I started my field research. At this respect a specific administrative reform encouraged and made not immediately evident this shift. Indeed, from its beginning, in 1998, until the end of my field research the Cuccagna project has kept Milan "Zone 4" as the formal context of its actions but in the meanwhile the boundaries defining this administrative area have significantly changed as it is illustrated in the next picture. In particular the left map represents the old (before 1998) Milan "Zone 4", while the right map depicts the new "Zone 4" (after the new division had been introduced in 1999).
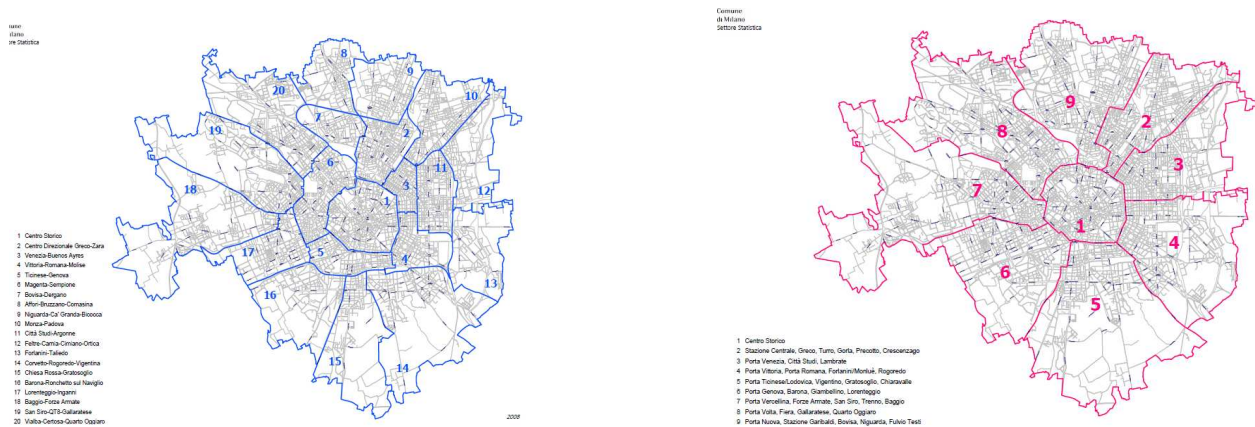
Figure 1. Old and new Milan urban districts or "Zones"[1]

The context of action of the observed groups over the course of my empirical research has been that of (the new) "Zone 4" not uniquely because this has been the main official reference point of the group's communication but because their activities have been carried and oriented toward this urban portion of Milan. The reference to this area and to its specific traits is thus a necessary operation for analyzing the sociable endeavors of the researched associations as "sociological facts that are spatially formed" (Simmel 1997).

For what concerns Milan "Zone 4" meant as *locale* things are even more complicated. It is worth remembering that "locale" (Giddens 1984) refers to both the context of action and to the product of the action. In particular, according to the relational approach (Osti 2010 p. 32) "locale" conflates two meanings. Firstly as "space where occurs the development of significant relationships, that is to say relationships in which the actors share at least the meanings they give to the context in which

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[1] Source and elaboration: Comune di Milano, settore statistica.

they act " (*ibidem*). Secondly, "locale" can be considered synonym of "region" as "space created by interactions" (de Cereatu 2001 p. 187).

With respect to the first point, members and promoters of the observed cultural associations shared their conception of Milan "Zone 4" as an urban area lacking public spaces and adequate conditions for the development of face-to-face interactions. According to the point of view of the observed subjects, this conception extended to at least the whole area of Milan, though considering especially Milan "Zone 4" the space of interventions to contrast this lack of open "public spaces of proximity" (Laville 1994). With reference to the second point, Milan "Zone 4" as locale will be widely questioned by the observed groups over the two years of my empirical research. Indeed, this area was only approximately, and especially at the beginning of my empirical research, the space outlined by the relationships the observed groups have developed while pursuing their goals. As I have already mentioned in the past chapter, the proposed perspective will stress how the boundaries of this "region" (de Cereatu 2001 p. 187) have changed over the course of the research I've carried out.

Milan "Zone 4" has been recently widely inquired through different viewpoints in a recent empirical research that I have directed (Citroni 2010). Many of the findings of that research highlighted the relevance and the internal articulation of the interviewees' perception about Milan "Zone 4" as an urban area strongly lacking public spaces and occasions of open sociality (Pisano 2010, De la Pierre 2010). These findings complement the common sense image of a city in which, though poverty and socio-economic inequalities are still serious social problems (Zajczyk 2003), its residents often conceive social isolation among one of the main collective concerns. Also, such findings are tied to the subject inquired in this dissertation because they are also part of the implicit assumptions at the basis of the observed efforts of generating a public sociality. Nevertheless, in this study such findings will be widely neglected, and they will be considered only when strictly relevant for the pursue of sociality carried out by the cultural organizations I have analyzed. Instead, I will pay attention (in this chapter) to a wide description of the most general dimensions that characterize Milan "Zone 4", the territory of reference, the context and the starting "problematic locale" of the observed efforts of making Milan's sociable.

The purpose of the reflections and empirical evidences presented in this chapter with respect to the overall study I have conducted is twofold. Indeed, the chapter comprises two elements that, though strictly entwined throughout the chapter, it is useful to describe as separated with respect to the main argument proposed by this study. Firstly, this chapter aims at giving the reader some elements that can help his/her understanding of the empirical evidences I've documented and illustrated in the following chapters. These elements are not directly useful for the overall argument I'm proposing with this study but they help the reader to contextualize the actions, dynamics and processes I have observed in my empirical inquiry. Secondly, this chapter illustrate the reader a significant, though probably not apparently consistent, part of the analytical inquiry I have conducted. At this respect, some of the contents contained in this chapter are not directly useful contextualize the empirical evidences I have collected. Also they may appear at first sight neither useful to better understand how I constructed the main theoretical arguments proposed by this

study. Here, in particular I'm referring to the fact that at the beginning of my field research I took seriously the observed associations' claims of taking charge of the territory in which they were settled and I deemed necessary to document some objectified dimensions characterizing that territory. Indeed, to understand how the observed groups related to their territory I thought at the outset of my inquiry that it was necessary to understand how some broad socio-economic dimensions articulated themselves in that territory. But then, over the course of my two years long field research, this track of inquiry resulted to be not very useful. Indeed, though many of the observed groups kept their official focus on their take in charge of the territory, in the meanwhile they developed a specific way of acting that widely transcended Milan "Zone 4" and, in general, any spatial reference. Though unfertile, the track of inquiry that focused on Milan "Zone 4" has been part of the analysis I have conducted and for this reason I deem useful to document it in this chapter. Further, as it will be argued in the conclusion, the fact that this line of inquiry was not directly useful during my inquiry was itself a telling finding that cued my overall understanding of the empirical evidences collected.

In the first paragraph of this chapter I will approach Milan "Zone 4" starting from some remarks useful to characterize this area with respect to Milan and I will go on introducing some traits of the neighborhoods it comprises as these are perceived by the residents that I've interviewed. I will use also some territorial maps to represent the spatial distribution of broad socio-economic variables. This paragraph will mainly give the reader some broad elements useful to have an overview about Milan "Zone 4" on the basis of the perceptions I have collected through interview. The second paragraph give more detailed information, using data and statistical indexes to illustrate the spatial articulation of some elements of the three dimension that characterize the urban condition according to Wirth (1938). It is worth noting that Wirth's argument will not be used analytically but to merely organize my exposition. In particular, it will be offered a short statistical description of the some socio-economic dimensions, stressing especially their spatial distribution through the wide use of territorial maps. Finally, in the third paragraph I will devote a specific attention to the spatial distribution of some non-profit collective subjects active in Milan "Zone 4" and to the presence of public sociality occasions in the neighborhood where are situated the cultural associations taken as case studies of this research. In this case the purpose is the same of paragraph 1, that is to say to give the reader some useful elements of "pre-comprehension" to contextualize from a broad viewpoint the processes described in the following chapters. In general, in all the three paragraphs specific attention will be paid to outline the internal differences that characterize Milan "Zone 4" from the varied viewpoint taken into consideration throughout the chapter.

1. SPECIFICS AND INTERNAL CONFINES

Observing Milan "Zone 4" from a point of view focused on the whole city in which it is contained, four types of considerations can be developed. These are about the historical "vocations"[1] of this

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[1] I've used the term "vocation" because of a series of recent conferences have explicitly questioned the "vocations" of Milan "Zone 4" on the basis of recent publication about this urban area. To follow such debates www.quattronet.it, for more detail about this use of the term vocation see Citroni 2010 p. 52, footnote n. 56.

urban area, the elevated concentration of social projects for urban requalification, the considerable presence of Public Residential Buildings (Erp[1]) neighborhoods and, finally, the internal articulation of the urban and social fabrics.

1) It is worth underling four "historical vocations" that characterizes this area with respect to whole city of Milan. Firstly, the historical *commercial* vocation which is still observable in many visible urban signs: the widest wholesale vegetable and fruits' market of Italy and the ample spaces occupied by its structures, the vast area of the former city slaughterhouse, or the old public commercial buildings in liberty style along Via Molise. Directly linked to this "vocations" it was the massive presence of railway lines, begun with the "Ferdinandea station" settled in 1846 and then moved and renewed over time. Nowadays Milan "Zone 4" comprises five railway stations (Dateo, Porta Vittoria and Rogoredo, Porta Romana and Rogoredo) including a railway yard and an high-speed railway station. Closely linked to the presence of these railway stations is the historical industrial "vocation" documented by the numerous presences of industrial factories until the mid 1970s, most of whom are still clearly visible even if abandoned. The relevance of the industrial past is at the very basis of the self perception[2] residents of this area possess of the entire "Zone 4" as a popular area, even not exclusively peripheral. This perception is the backdrop of many nostalgia feeling about an "intense street life, occasions of sociality amongst various categories of people, a much more intense solidarity"[3] that characterize many conception of Milan "Zone 4" collected during interviews recently conducted with residents of this area. Anyway, what it is most important to underline is that the commercial and industrial "vocations" of this area have had a significant impact on its urban development: the massive building structures that they implied, and that have remained over time even when their roles was ended, contributed to the fragment the urban fabric of the area and to the fact that many parts of it remained until recently relatively isolated because they experienced more difficulties that other parts of the city in being involved in the building expansion of the central zones of Milan (Moresco 1972 p. 322).

Further, these three "vocations" have contributed to the emersion of another trait that is typical of this area. This is the re-conversion of the numerous abandoned buildings of the area through massive, often international, projects of urban regeneration. Just to cite some of the most known examples at this respect: "Milan Santa Giulia"[4]; "Mecenate 79"[5], the

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[1] Erp stands for the italian "Edilizia residenziale pubblica".

[2] Perception widely heard during the interviews made in this area and analyzed in Citroni (2010).

[3] From an interview's transcription.

[4] Il più vasto progetto di riqualificazione urbana d'Europa, che è stato elaborato da uno degli architetti di fama mondiale più quotati;

[5] Il quale prevede la costruzione su un'area di 36000 metri quadrati di un nuovo quartiere attraversato da una strada pedonale alberata, parcheggi sotterranei, negozi, centri commerciali, uffici, tre torri di vetro che ospiteranno un albergo e tre residence, per un valore complessivo del progetto di 150 milioni di euro;

"European library of culture and information"; the "The city of the taste and well-being"; the "City of justice".

2) In Milan "Zone 4" concentrate numerous public sponsored projects oriented to the qualification of urban deprived areas. At this respect it is possible to cite that in this area are currently taking place three of the five "neighborhood contracts"[1] that are present in the whole city, the "Social cohesion project"[2], many funds deriving from the application of the law 266/297 that financed small and medium-sized businesses to stimulate the regeneration of deprived areas[3] and finally the "Social custody" project in all the Erp buildings "to offer support to the fragile population resident in council estates" (Rovati 2009 p.36). The concentration of these projects and interventions of local policy on the one hand indicates the presence of relevant resources but on the other hand indirectly suggests the relevant presence of fragile populations and of neighborhoods strongly at risk of social and urban degrade.

3) A third point, tightly related to the preceding one, refers to the elevated presence of Erp buildings in Milan "Zone 4". To clarify the relevance of this point it is necessary to precise that in this area 12,165 people live in Erp buildings, one of the highest absolute number in Milan, exceeded only by the area of Barona-Lorenteggio and by those of Vigentino, Chiaravalle and Gratosoglio. This data is corroborated by a series of negative indicators that accompany it. Firstly the fact that in "Zone 4" are contained the most degraded and run-down Erp neighborhoods in Milan: Gabrio Rosa, Rogoredo, Forlanini e Ponte Lambro (Zajczyk 2003 p. 33). Further, this data has been uphold by a more recent research which affirmed that "the neighbourhoods of Corvetto–Rogoredo and Molise-Calvairate - both in Milan "Zone 4"- possess the distinctive characteristic of having a notable concentration of Erp buildings that are extremely degraded and in which live a particularly vulnerable population (Rovati 2009 p.49). Furthermore, according to the same investigation, of all Milan's urban administrative districts, Milan "Zone 4" is the one with the highest presence of "at-risk residents" living in Erp buildings (Rovati 2009 p.34).

According to recent sociological scholarships on Milan, this city may be considered "substantially separated into three distinct macro-areas, in which the presence of negative indicators gradually increases moving from the centre toward peripheral areas" (Zajczyk, Borlini, Memo 2006 p. 141). This threefold divide of Milan resonates my own division of "Zone 4" in three concentric parts whose boundaries, though, just partially overlap with those of the whole city outlined in the aforementioned research. The differences are due to

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[1] Author's translation of "Contratto di quaritere", which is a specific type of intervention of local urban policy. The neighborhoods in which these projects are taking place are Ponte Lambro, Mazzini and Molise Calvairate. For more detail see on the implementation of these policies in Milan "Zone 4" see Pisano 2010b.

[2] Author's translation of "Progetto Coesione Sociale" that was implemented in particular in the neighborhood called Mazzini. See Luppi 2007 for a research that inquiry the outcomes produced by this policy in Milan.

[3] In particular in the neighborhood of Corvetto-Rogoredo and Molise-Calvairate.

the different extension of the inquired space (Milan "Zone 4" doesn't comprise the most central part of the city) but especially to the different nature of the criteria used to draw the boundaries. Indeed, my way of identifing the boundaries has not drawn on statistical indicators - that I've used, though in another way- but on the perceptions expressed by interviewees. Indeed, my main interest focused on how the internal structuring of Milan "Zone 4" was perceived by the members and public of the observed associatons and by who daily used it. Indeed, "the perception of a city's structure is acollective fact and for this reason must be considered in its collective aspectes. We grasp the principle elements of such a representation not through the study of single individuals, but examining what is shared by the most individuals." (Milgam, Jodelt 1976 p. 108). In particular, on the basis of the interviews carried out for this purpose, two main perceived internal confines have emerged. These simbolic boundaries articulated the "mental maps" (Agustoni 2000 p. 37) of the interviewees and they coincided with two large infrastructural barriers. The first boundary divides the more central part of Milan "Zone 4" from the remaining territory and it coincides with Viale Piceno and Via Umbria, arterial road of public traffic and third ring of the historic-urban development of Milan (Fantini 1994). The second internal frontier coincides with the railway track, an architectual barrier beyond which begins the "real periphery" according to the interviewees. We will consider more closely in the following paragraphs the main traits of the three subsections that compose Milan "Zone 4" according to perceptions gathered during interviews. In the next picture the unbroken black lines represent the boundaries of Milan "Zone 4" perceived by the interviewees.
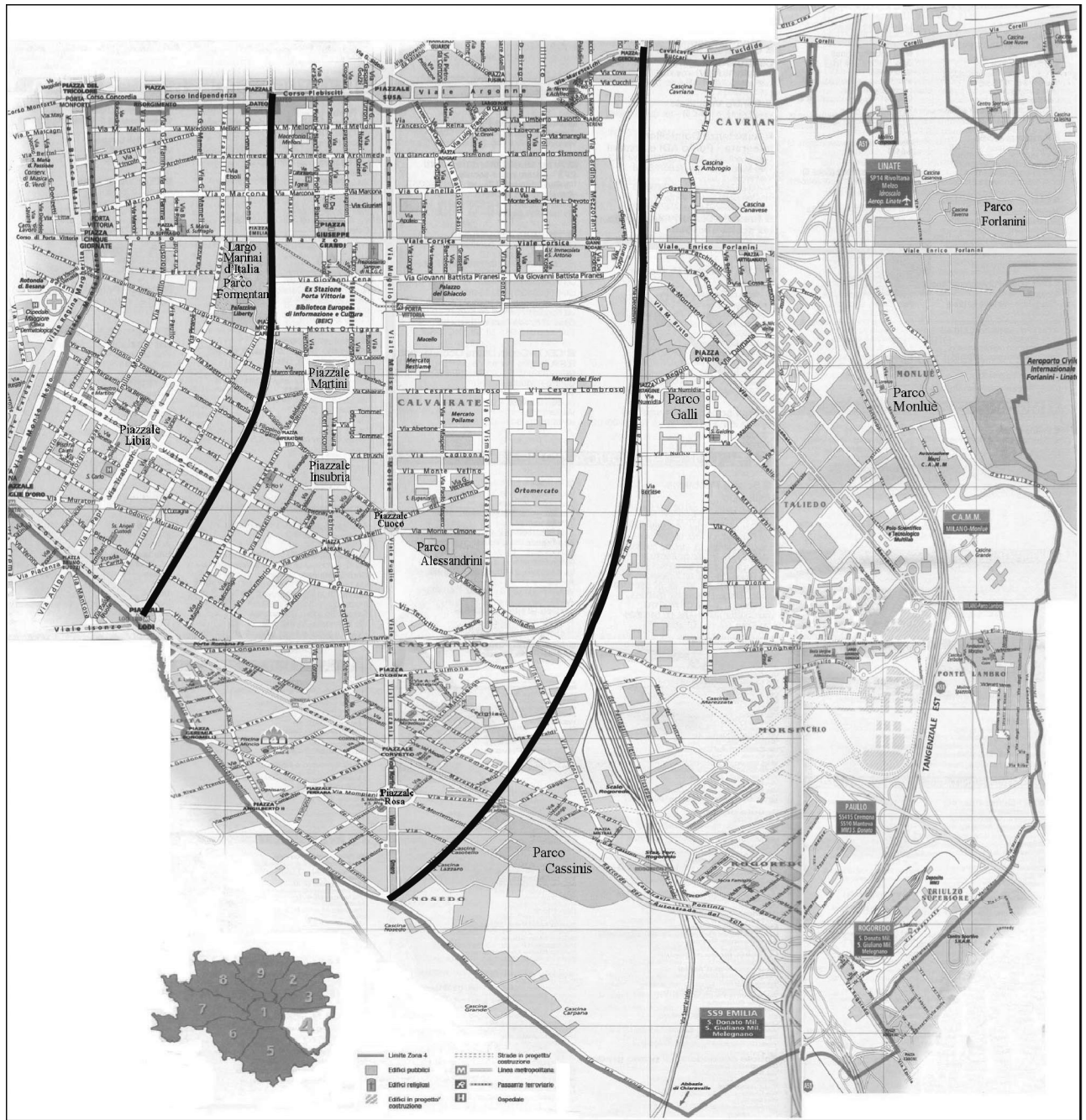
Figure 2. Map with the boundaries perceived by the interviewees[1]

THE CENTRAL AREA. BETWEEN SERVICES AND PERCEIVED RELEVANT CHANGES

The main, and most recognized by the interviewees, neighborhood of the central part of Milan "Zone 4" is "Porta Romana", which is also situated nearby the venue of the observed cultural

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[1] Source: Consiglio di Zona 4, Comune di Milano, 2007,"Guida alla zona 4 ". Elaboration:mine.

associations, the building of the Cuccagana's farmhouse[1]. This neighborhood has rapidly grown since the end of the eighteenth century with a massive industrial development and it is still linked to a popular and working class imagery in the accounts the interviewees have given of it. Apart from this, numerous other areas, less equipped with a specific identity, have been cited in the course of the interviews (such as Piazzale Libia and Viale Lazio, or the park of Largo Marinai d'Italia, a meeting place for pensioners during the good season). According to the perceptions most diffused amongst those interviewees, the population with the highest social-economic status reside in this central area, where there is also the highest concentration of bars, restaurants and places of public consumption. These perceptions are confirmed by the statistical data presented in the following maps:
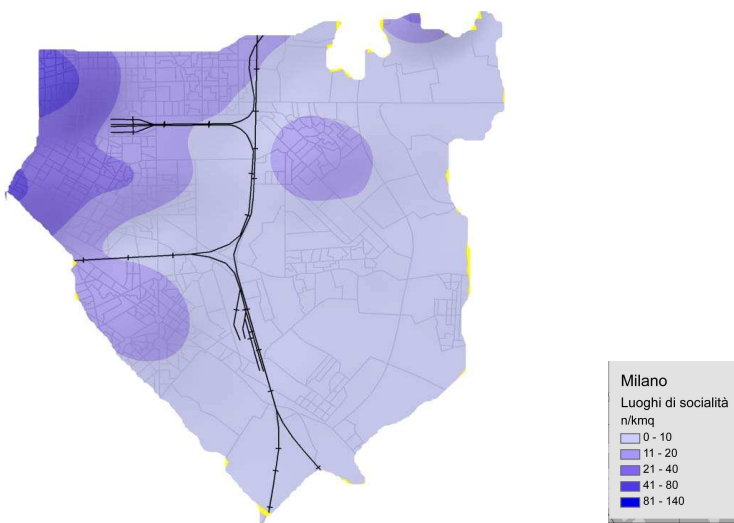
Firgura 3. Map of spaces of sociality in Milan "Zone 4"[2]

Figure 3 represents the spatial distribution of "all the urban spaces in which the needs of communication, aggregation and creativity can be satisfied, [..] The principal attribute of these places is the fact that they are used out of work time and, thus, constitute leisure-time activities" (LabSMA 2000 p. 4). In particular the map represents the spatial distribution of "associations, places of worships and oratories, venues of political parties, self-managed social centers, art galleries, libraries and mediateques, museums, theaters, cinemas, sport centers, parks, stations, socio-educative centers" (*ibidem*)". In spite of the wide heterogeneity of the subjects it includes,

The image seem to confirm that commercial or non commercial "sociality places" are distributed in Milan "Zone 4" according to the traditional central-periphery model. Therefore, this is a data consistent with findings about the whole Milan, insofar as this city "has a distribution of places and spaces used for cultural activity, collectively strongly polarized. The peripheral areas of the city lack the spaces for leisure activities, both of private and public nature. This phenomenon was of

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[1] See the figure for detail about the positioning of the Cuccagna farmhouse in the map.

[2] Data source and elaboration: Lab. GIS, Sociology department, University of Bicocca Milan.

particular concern and worry to the interviewees, who asked for political interventions through the conversion of abandoned areas or local libraries in the direction of a proliferation of multifunctional spaces, equipped with arrangements for socializing and the aggregation of heterogonous people" (Labsma 2000 p. 12). It is worth noting that the observed associations of my research were situated in the central strip of Milan "Zone 4", proposing their activities in the urban portion in which the cultural opportunities were seemingly the highest with respect to the other two portions of "Zone 4". Furthermore, in general the perceptions of the most centralized portion of Milan "Zone 4" collected through the interviewees depicted an area devoid of relevant problems, well-equipped with services and structures able to guarantee a good quality of life (Citroni 2010a p. 59). Also, the interviewees - and in the particular the long-term residents that have been interviewed- expressed a strong perception about a rapid change occurred over the past thirty years[1]. Most of the perceptions of the changes were formulated with reference to a past in which the local social fabric, through filled with internal divisions mainly along the social class line, was considered as integrated as a whole thanks to the presence of factories and the linked informal places of aggregations. Instead, the contemporary social texture was widely considered with concerns,often associated to recent diffusion of immigrant from developing countries.
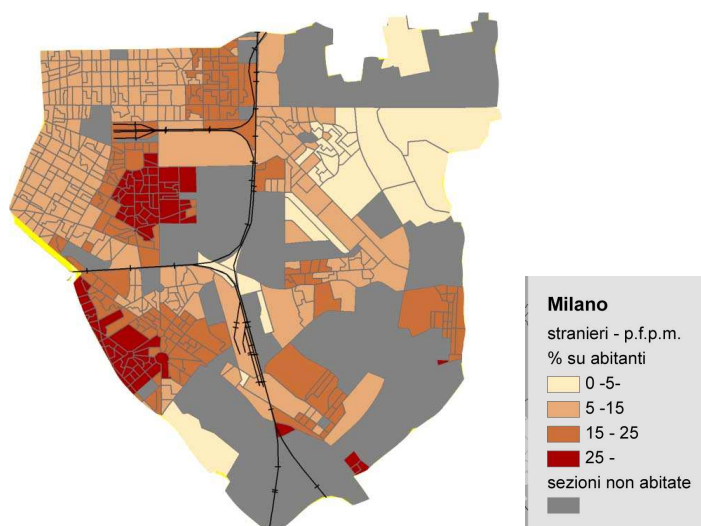
Figura 4. Map of inmigrants residents from developing countries[2]

Figure 4 shows that immigrants from developing countries do not reside in the most peripheral parts, as it could have been expected but, instead, they are mainly concentrated in the intermediate

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[1] For example: "In 1978 it was very different… The houses were occupied by a different type of people, old, workers. Now there are a few, and they are young architects and professionals. I have first hand experience of these changes, In my building, there have been changes year after year, in the society of Milan as well. The professions, the newspapers they read, the positions which are slowly changing. In front of the road used to be full of small shops, the butcher, fruit vendors, now there isn't anyone left – there's the estate agency, the bank" (AM, 61 anni).

[2] Source: 2001 National Census. Elaboration: GIS laboratory, Dipartimento di Sociologia, Università di Milano Bicocca).

partition of Milan "Zone 4" (especially in the neighborhood of Molise-Calvairate and Corvetto), just at the edge with the most centralized part. Relevant fluxes of immigration represent a very recent phenomenon in Milan (Borlini, Mingione, Vitale 2008) whose consideration helps in accounting for relevant perceptions of changes expressed by the interviewees. Finally, it is worth noting that it was widely common among the interviewees a textured knowledge of the areas in which they resided, often associated with both negative and, less frequently, positive judgements about the perceived ongoing changes[1].

THE SEMI-CENTRAL AREA: FROM OUTSKIRT TO CENTRAL AREA, STILL A PERIPHERY

The most central black unbroken line in figure 2 of this chapter represents a boundary that according to the interviewees' accounts separates the most central part of "Zone 4" with the rest of the area. It is symbolic border that is charged with many consequences for the internal structuring of the zone investigated. For example, a housing estate agent referred of fluctuations in house prices up to 1500 euro per squared metre in the area 500 metres around Viale Umbria, within or outside the afore mentioned boundary. The other boundary which demarcates the semi-central area corresponds to the railway tracks, beyond which according to those interviewees "the real periphery begins".

The semi-central area comprise numerous Erp neighbourhoods[2]: once peripheral areas, they have now assumed a position of relative centrality in the city thanks to the rapid urban expansion of Milan during the 1960s and 1970s. They now are well connected, though in many cases they possess many traits that characterize them as deprived areas. In particular, the Erp neighbourhood of Molise-Calvairate is well linked both with the centre of the city and with the periphery (Merlo 2009), it embrace characteristics which, for importance and compactness, separate it from the urban area which surrounds it in respect of its positive, but especially negative aspects[3] (*ibidem*). Indeed, "the residents of this area are mainly elderly, invalids, insane people and immigrants from poor countries. These are, especially for what concerns insane people and elderly, usually individuals that live by themselves and that are part of most fragile economic population" (Lembi 2005 p.16). A similar situation is present in the area of Corvetto, where also the presence of Erp buildings is relevant. The most relevant perceived problems here relate difficulties and lack of resources experienced by local primary and secondary schools, and to predicaments in the cohabitation among the elderly population and recent foreign immigrants. But the perceptions of the interviewed residents of this area varied among themselves sensibly according to the neighbourhood (Grigioni, Gabrio Rosa and Mazzini) of residence of the interviewees. Nearby Corvetto there is the vast urban

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[1] In particular, negative opinions refer to the closures of numerous shops and cinemas in the area, while positive opinions cite the perception of a reduction in the incidents of petty crime in the last ten years, and the increasing presence of private social health centres in the area, particularly appreciated by the oldest interviewees.

[2] The main ones being Molise, Calvairate, Ponti and Corvetto:

[3] For example according to a recent research carried out by the "Molise - Calvairate Committee" the '82,5% of the roughly 3000 Erp apartments of this neighborhood are in relevant conditions of deterioration (Tavolo migranti Molise-Calvairate 2009 p.1).

area including the general fruit and vegetable market, which was often cited during the interviews with reference to concerns about its internal mafia infiltrations. Beyond this area, especially towards the railway tracks interviewees cited many dismissed factories and other residual spaces where waste gather and in some case provisional shelters are built (Cottino 2003). But, in this ex-industrial peripheral urban landscape new activities are also developing, including an art gallery, a photography studio and a sushi laboratory (Merlo 2009 p. 226).

With respect to the most central portion of Milan "Zone 4", the perceptions expressed by the interviewees about the semi-central part underlined with a stronger emphasis the lack of "sociality occasions", particularly for younger people, and problems tied to the cohabitation with immigrants, especially in the Erp neighbourhoods. Indeed, often in this area "immigrants constitute a group of people in difficulty who, more than the others, combine the characteristics which we normally associate with a condition of poverty: a scarce education, fragmented job career, weakness of family relationships or an accumulation of disadvantaging factors within the family" (Zajczyk 2003, p. 14). In general, the main perceptions about the neighbourhoods comprised in the semi-central part of Milan "Zone 4" approach this area more to its peripheral counterparts than to its central one. Further, this type of reading is consistent with the findings on the general spatial distribution of social vulnerability in Milan (Zajczyk 2003 p. 38) and with the last census data presented in the next map.
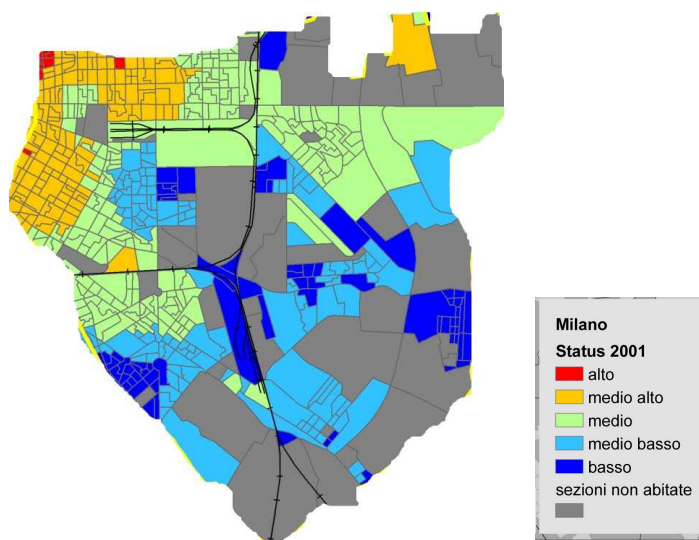
Figure 5. Spatial distribution of socio-economic index[1]

This map represents the distribution in Milan "Zone 4" of an index of socio-economic status[2] and it largely uphold the picture interviewees had impressively draw about the concentration of socio-

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[1] Source: 2001 National Census. Elaboration: GIS laboratory, Dipartment of Sociology, Universiy of Milan Bicocca. For the construction of the index see the next footnote.

[2] The index summarizes values of each census' section about occupation (percentage of unemployed), the density of buildings (given by the number of residents every squared meters), educational qualification (percentage of graduates) and occupations qualification (percentage of middle and senior management).

economic resources in the most central part of Milan "Zone 4". In particular, the blue colored parts of the map clearly indicate the similarity of the intermediate area with the most peripheral parts, than with the central ones at least with respect to the socio-economic dimensions summarized in the represented index.

BEYOND THE RAILWAY TRACKS: NOT ONLY MARGINALIZATION IN THE MARGINAL URBAN AREAS

According to the interviewees, "beyond the railway tracks the periphery begins". More generally the use interviewees made of the term "periphery" clearly conflated its spatial and social meanings, thus indicating at the same time the physical outskirts and the more socio-economically deprived areas of the city. But looking at this portion of Milan "Zone 4" from a closer point of view this area appears at first sight extremely inhomogeneous and made up of neighbourhoods where the concepts of periphery and "peripherization" (Guiducci 1991) do not always overlap. Indeed, previous researches on this area underlined that it articulates itself in neighbourhoods where the spatial marginalisation does not always correspond with conditions of deterioration and social marginalisation (Ruggerone 2009 p. 103; Salati 2006). It is worth taking a closer look at these neighbourhoods to understand this point. The main neighbourhoods of the part of Milan "Zone 4" beyond the train station are Bonfadini-Taliedo, Forlanini-Monluè, Zama- Salomone, Rogoredo and, beyond the ring road[1], Triulzo Superiore and Ponte Lambro. Along Viale Ungheria is the residential area of Bonfadini-Taliedo, developed during the economic boom with the construction of massive Erp buildings for the immigrant population which worked in the many industrial companies, craft trades and commercial enterprises settled nearby. Nowadays, the area is made up of both public-funded housing (rented or redeemed) and new private residences. Along Via Mecenate, in the restructured aircraft hangars that hosted Caproni's production, there are many sites of the advanced tertiary economy, and the largest private convention structure in Italy[2]. The surrounding area is occupied by smaller industrial businesses and transport companies. In Via Fantoli there is the "Scientific and Technological Centre", an institute of research in the bio-medical field. Nearby, beyond the ring road is the neighbourhood of Forlanini and the old suburb of Monluè, that now host a big park and the two care centres for immigrants run by catholic sponsored organizations. In the area within the ring road is the residential area of "Nuovo Forlanini", an area of deemed apartments perceived as highly qualified because of the significant presence of green areas, well distributed public services (schools especially), recently restructured buildings and an intense street life (Magatti 2007 p.110). The neighbourhood of Zama-Salomone[3] is dominated by the presence of the so-called "white houses", old crumbling Erp buildings of 18 floors inhabited by 400 households. According to what I've been told by an inhabitant of this building and reported in a previous research – "there are three main problems in these blocks: the sociable places [meaning the lack of them and especially the lack of places where young people can go beyond the oratory], the mouses and foreigners" (Salati 2007 p. 58). Beyond these imposing housing blocks, there are new blocks of

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[1] Standing for the italian "tangenziale"

[2] It is the structure of the "Est End Studios". For further detail see Citroni 2010.

[3] Previously known as Alberto Villasanta and usually called "Trecca" by the interviewees.

flats, well-equipped green spaces parks and numerous industrial factories in disuse and that often are used as homeless' shelters (*ibidem*). This part of Milan "Zone 4" include also the neighbourhood of Rogoredo, which has been an important industrial centre since the nineteenth century and that now hosts the headquarters of important service companies[1] and it is well connected both to the centre of the city and to the outskirts via public transport. Despite being geographically the most peripheral area, according to a recent research Rogoredo differentiates itself positively from the critical situation which characterises the nearby zone of Corvetto (Merlo 2009 p. 256). Beyond the circumferential Milan road, the neighbourhood of Triulzo Superiore consists of a few roads around the San Donato metro station and close to the railway depot. Ponte Lambro is the most easily recognisable neighbourhood because of the natural (the river) and artificial (ring road) infrastructures that represent its confines that delimit it. In the perceptions of the interviewees Ponte Lambro represents the most the image of the urban peripheral decay. The perceptions of the interviewees living in this area, though, are much different and quite opposite. Indeed, they spoke instead of dense network of interpersonal relationships - according the topos of the village in the city, highly widespread certain social milieus of Milan (Foot 2003 p. 39) - and the presence of numerous associations and more generally third sector subjects (Citroni 2007). Such accounts distanciate the interviewees' viewpoints from the dominating media discourse on this neighbourhood that, according to them, unjustly attribute the area a negative reputation. Nearby Ponte Lambro, in the most external part of Milan "Zone 4", there are also two big gypsy camps and, along the railway embankment, temporary shacks often built and inhabited in particularly precarious conditions (Cottino 2003).

Thus, this rapid overview of the main neighbourhoods included in this portion of Milan "Zone 4" indicate that not all of its areas undergo processes of "peripheralization" (Guiducci 1991), that is to phenomenon of urban and/or social decay. Instead, the aforementioned neighborhoods include relevant amount of endemic resources and they are witnessing the activation of a growing number of requalification projects[2] that for dimensions and economic relevance extend their scale of reference much beyond the areas to which they firstly refer to. At this respect, it is worth noting that these projects possess often scarce or problematic ties with the neighborhoods in which they are settled and with the population that inhabit them (Magatti 2007; Salati 2007).

2. SOCIAL ECOLOGY OF MILAN "ZONE 4": A PLURAL AREA

Wirth's paper "The Urbanism As a Way of Life" is amongst the most cited in the history of social science (Hannerz 1992). In that text, the American scholar identified three dimensions to define the "urban condition" and I will refer to these dimensions as plot for the narrative offered by this chapter. Thus, I'm going to use Wirth's argument not analytically but uniquely to organize the exposition of the contents presented. The aspects that Wirth identified were the *dimension* of urban settlements, the *density* of population that live in it and its *heterogeneity*.

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[1] Sky for example.

[2] Just to cite two examples: Milano Santa Giulia o Mecenate 79

2.1 THE DIMENSION

Over the past three years the resident population of "Zone 4" – currently 148,749 – has diminished with a trend that is predicted will accentuate in the near future, consistently with the demographic processes affecting the whole city of Milan.
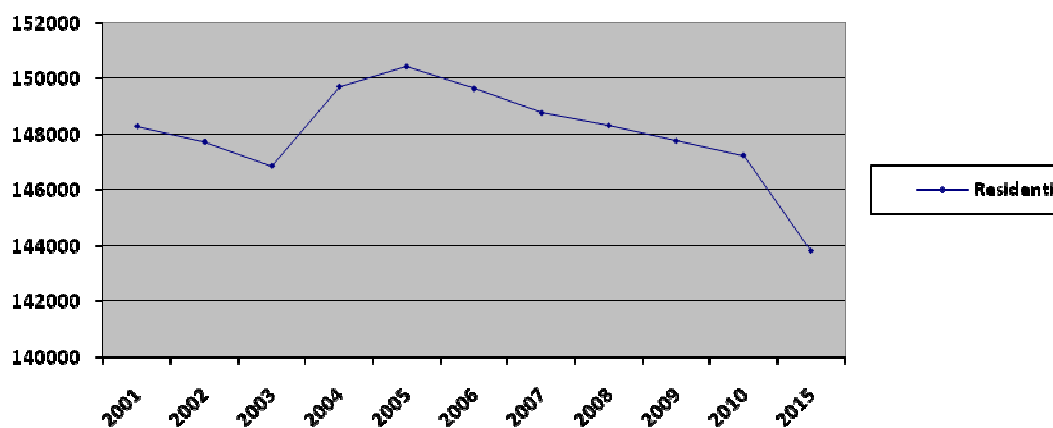
Figura 6. Population trends in Milan "Zone 4"[1]

According to the last census, more than a half (55%) of Milan "Zone 4" population reside in its semi-central area, while the central area and the periphery are populated by less than a quarter of the whole. The residents between 40 and 59 years old are the most prevalent within this population, but the elderly are also numerous, particularly in the intermediate band. Young children and adolescents are condensed in families who live in the outer districts, while the young nuclear families without children are more present in the central area of "Zone 4". The next maps show the spatial distribution of these dimensions.

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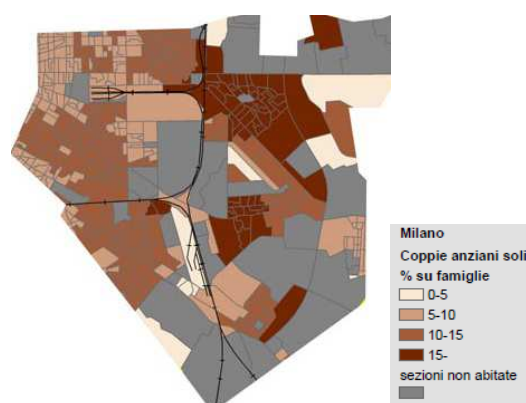
[1] Source: Statistic department, Council of Milan. Elaboration: mine.

Figure 7. Elderly residents who live by themselves

The map in figure 7 clearly shows that, though elderly people are present throughout the whole observed area, those who live by themselves, and thus represent a particularly vulnerable population, concentrate in the outskirts.

Given the enduring importance of educational qualification - highlighted for example in recent territorial analysis on social polarization in Italian cities (Cesareo 2007 p.29) – it is worth considering the spatial distribution of this variable. At this respect, my analysis have indicated that the less educated population do not uniquely concentrates in the most external parts of Milan "Zone 4", but it is associated to the neighborhoods, peripheral or semi-central alike, most at risk of social exclusion according to recent researches, such as Molise –Calvairate, Corvetto (Bovone, Ruggerone 2009), or Ponte Lambro and Bonfadini-Taliedo (Salati 2007). Hardly by chance, the next map shows that the territorial distribution of unemployment substantially replicates the lowest levels of education.
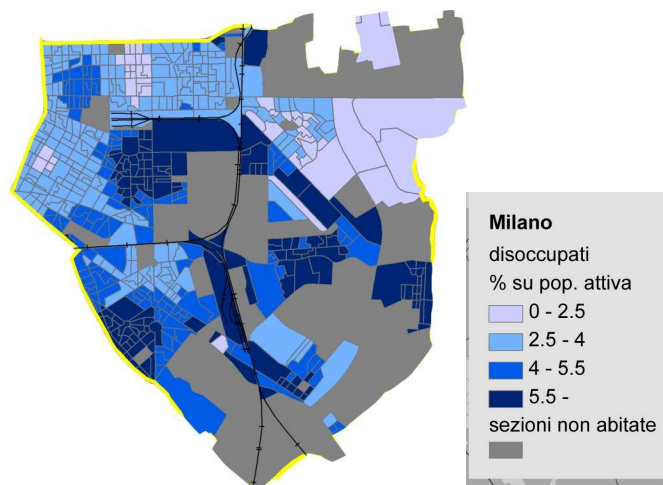
Figure 8. Map of the unemployed residents of Milan "Zone 4"[1].

The foreign population resident in Milan "Zone 4" is of 20,003, the 13.4%, of the whole population of Milan "Zone 4", a percentage slightly higher than the average of the other urban administrative districts of Milan. But even more interesting is to observe that this percentage significantly varies in the different portions I've divided Milan "Zone 4", from a percentage between 5-10% in the central area, up to over 25% in the semi-central and peripheral Erp neighborhoods. The immigrant residents are mostly young. Indeed, for example, foreigners with an age below 15 years old are, in percentage, more than double in respect of their Italian peers in the zones of Molise-Calvairate and Corvetto-Rogoredo (Merlo 2009).

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[1] *Ibidem.*
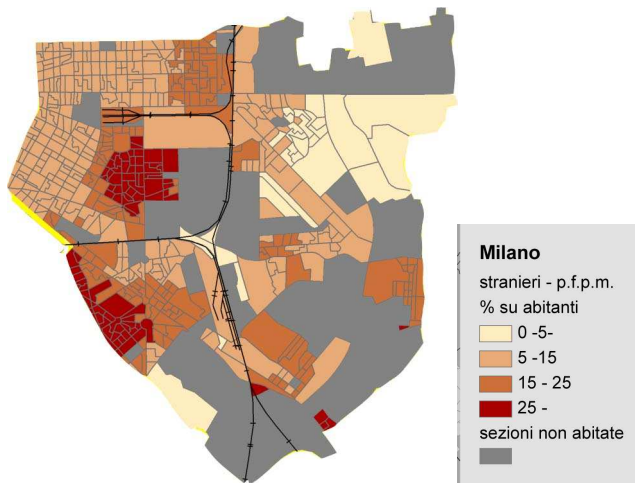
Figure 9. Map foreigners from developing countries[1]
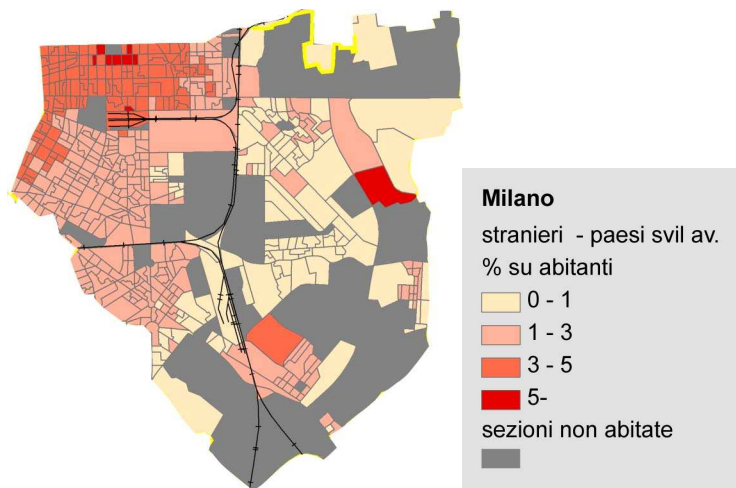
Figure 10. Map foreigners from developed countries[2]

The previous two maps shows that foreigner immigrants coming from developed countries are concentrated mostly in the central and semi-central strips of Milan "Zone 4", while immigrants from countries with a strong migratory pressure are in the strip/band semi-central and periphery (with particular concentration in the zones of Molise-Calvairate-Ponti and of Corvetto). The distribution of the diverse ethnic groups is fairly differentiated, although in every case there are not phenomenon of ethnic segregation, consistently with what happens in the whole Milan (Borlini, Mingione, Vitale 2008). Also in parallel with data about the whole city, the nationalities of foreigners most present in "Zone 4" are Philippines, Egypt, China, Peru and Ecquador, with a rise in the citizens arriving from Romania and Bulgaria, following the enlargement of the European Union to 27 countries.

[1] *Ibidem.*

[2] *Ibidem.*

2.2 THE DENSITY

Milan "Zone 4" extends for 20.95 square kilometers, with a population density of an average of 8,000 inhabitants per squared kilometer, an intermediate level compared with the other zones of Milan.
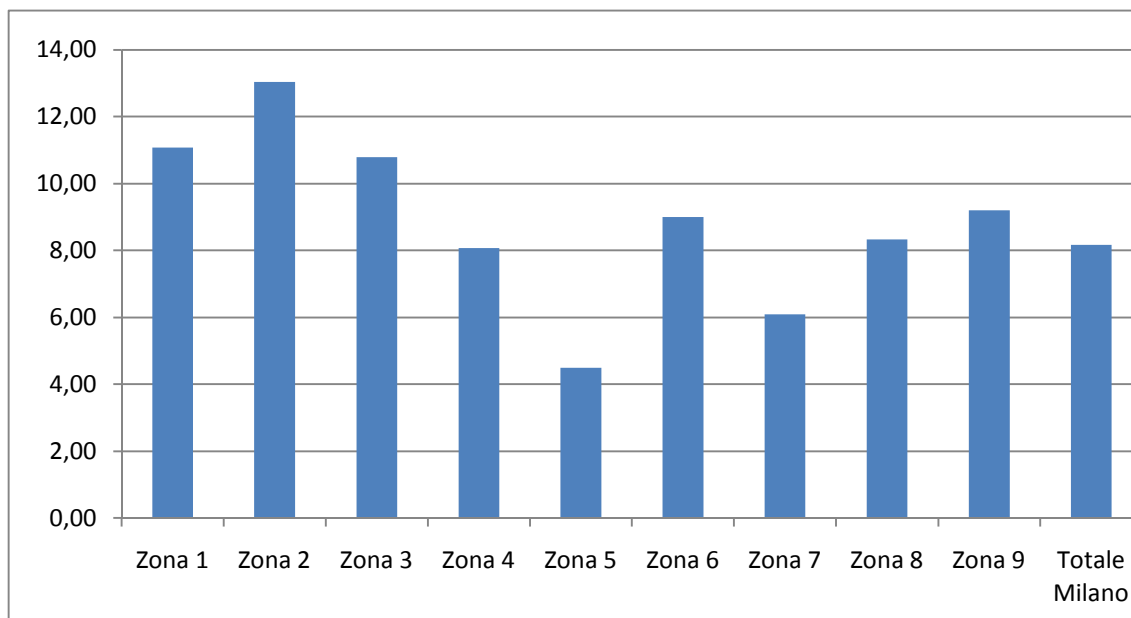
Figure 11. Density of Milan' administrative Zones[1]

Similarly to what we have considered with respect to the presence of immigrant population, it is worth noting that the internal variability of the density is fairly elevated: from 2,3in the area furthest from the centre until up to 32 residents per square kilometer in the most central areas. In order to correctly read these data it is important to keep in mind the elevated presence of empty spaces (mainly dismissed factories and terrain vague) in the semi-central and external portion of the Milan "Zone 4"[2]. Indeed, these spaces increase the actual density of many neighborhoods situated in the most external parts of Milan "Zone 4".

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[1] Sources: Statistic department, Council of Milan. Elaboration: mine

[2] For more details on these empty spaces see footnote n.92 in Citroni 2010 p. 79.
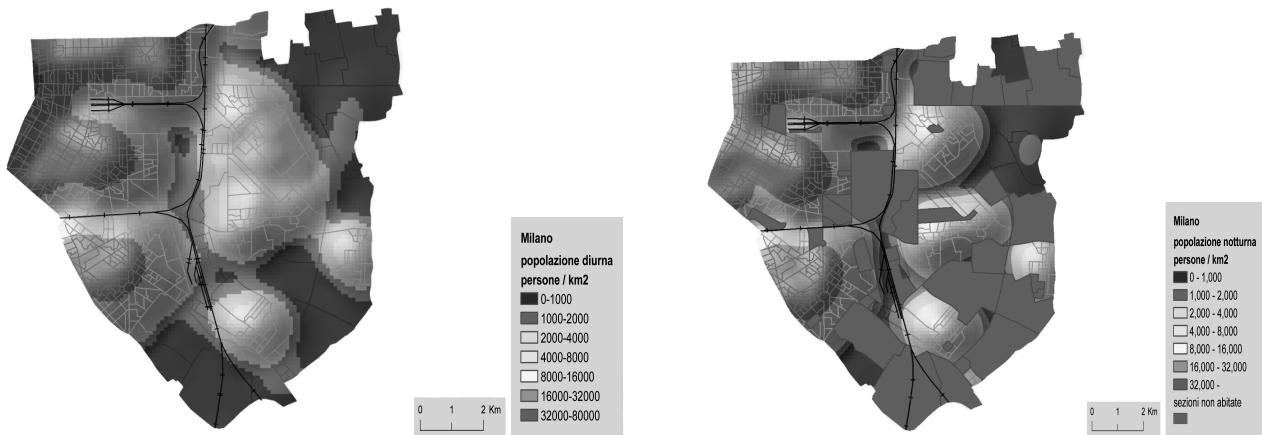
Figures 12 and 13: Maps daytime and nighttime populations[1].

At first sight comparing the maps in figures 12 and 13 it appears a substantial consistency in the way Milan "Zone 4" is used during the day and at night. This, though, does not necessarily mean that those who live the area during the day are the same people that reside in it and thus "lives it" at night. It simply means that, though we do not know the composition of this two ensembles, they are roughly numerically equal. Further, the relevant presence of urban and extra-urban public means of transportation located in this area may suggest that that the two populations (night-residents and day-workers) do not coincide, especially in the central and semi-central parts of Milan "Zone 4".

2.3   HETEROGENEITY

We now pass to compare some statistical indicators that refer to selected sub-parts of each one of the three portions into which I've divided Milan "Zone 4". The sub-parts are the neighborhoods of "Morsenchio-Ponte Lambro" for the peripheral portion, "Castagnedo_Grigioni" for the semi-central and the area around the headquarter of the observed associations for the central area. This last area is not perceived as a "real" neighborhood by who reside in it, that is to say a space equipped with its own recognizable identity, starting from its name. Instead it has been selected and named – as "Cuccagna neighborhood" - by the researcher because of the will of adequately comparing with the other two neighborhoods the area closest to the associations' venues. The following map represents the selected neighborhoods (in color) and the positioning of the observed associations (the black point):

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[1] Source: 2001 National Census. Elaboration: GIS laboratory, Dipartment of Sociology, Universiy of Milan Bicocca.

Figure 14. Three selected neighborhoods in Milan "Zone 4"[1].

It is worth also underlying that the three urban spaces do not possess any representative value with respect to urban portion (central, semi-central or peripheral) in which they are situated. They are simply useful to comparatively observe the variation in the distribution of some socio-economic dimensions across the observed space. Let's start from the educational qualification.

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[1] Source: Consiglio di Zona 4, Comune di Milano, 2007,"Guida alla zona 4 ". Elaboration:mine.

	Illiterate	Alphabetized	Elementary school diploma	Middle school degree	High school degree	University degree
"Cuccagna neighborhood"	0,17	4,6	11,5	32,6	34,0	27,23
"Castagnedo-Grigioni"	0,28	4,3	16,7	31,3	34,0	12,38
"Morsenchio-Ponte Lambro"	1,4	8,4	30,5	35,4	19,9	3,7
"Zone 4"	0,46	5,6	18,2	28,4	30,8	15,4
Milan	0,5	5,6	17,6	27,9	31,5	16,9

Figure 15. Educational qualification in comparison[1]

The previous figure illustrates the relevant differences in the educational qualifications possessed by those who reside in the selected areas. For example, in the area of "Taliedo-Ponte Lambro", the rate of illiteracy is eight times greater than that of "Cuccagna neighborhood", which – it is worth noting- possess a particularly low rate, even when compared to the average of the whole Milan. Complementing this data is the fact that the percentage of university graduates in "Neighborhood Cuccagna" is seven times higher than in "Morsenchio -Ponte Lambro". Therefore, there is a notable difference between the areas that cannot be justified simply by the higher population of older people in the more external area compared to the more central one. As it has been previously also seen observing the maps in figure 9 the distribution of the unemployed residents is consistent with the distribution of educational qualifications, displaying further numerous criticisms also in the semi-central area. We know that "in Milan the elderly population is notably increasing and that it constitutes one of the most important groups in the map of the social unease" (Zajczyk 2003 p.135) and, in particular, that the elderly who live by themselves represent a sector of the population particularly at risk of social exclusion. According to the analysis I've carried out, this type of population is more present in the "Cuccagna neighborhood" rather than in the other two selected urban spaces.

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[1] Source: 2001 National Census. Elaboration: mine.
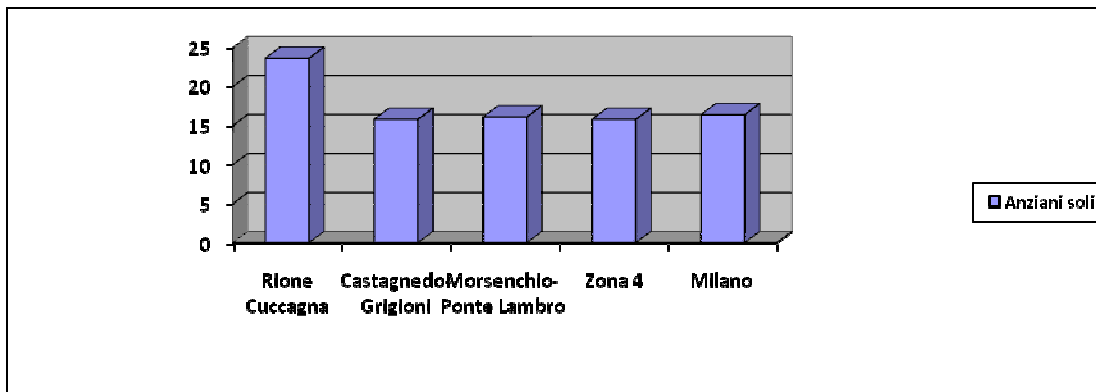
Figure 16. Comparison among elderly who live by themselves[1].

We can consider this data a sort of 'anomaly' with respect to the more general distribution, represented by the next map, characterized by the concentration of the elderly in the more peripheral areas.

Figure 17. Map of the distribution of elderly living by themselves[2]

This map shows that the elderly who live by themselves are in general concentrate in the areas equipped with an elevated presence of a population with numerous/multiple factors of difficulties, as in the cases of the neighborhoods of Molise- Calvairate and Corvetto (Lunghi 2009 p. 232-234). The distribution of immigrants in the three selected areas – depicted in the next chart - follows the traditional centre-periphery scheme, that is to say constantly increases moving going from the center towards the more external of the selected areas.

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[1] The chart indicate the percentage of elderly on the total of residents Source: 2001 National Census. Elaboration: mine.

[2] Source: 2001 National Census. Elaboration: GIS laboratory, Dipartment of Sociology, Universiy of Milan Bicocca.
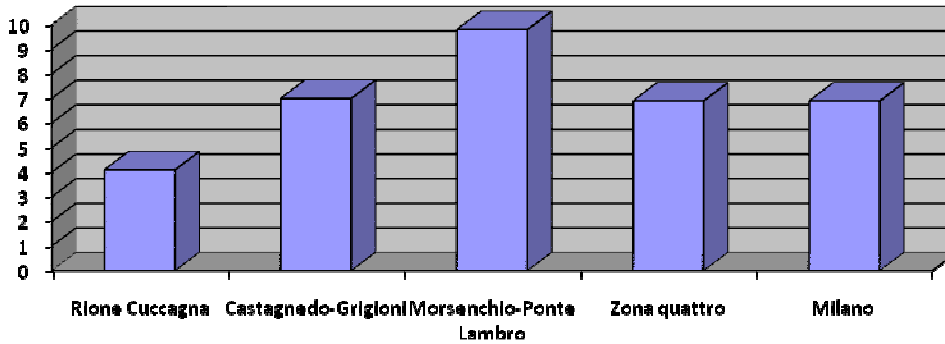
Figure 18. Comparison among foreigners in different areas[1].

Finally, the comparative analysis I've developed considering a variety of other socio-economic dimensions that here have not been illustrated[2] indicate that the centre - periphery scheme, though generally valid, it cannot be assumed always as such in Milan "Zone 4". Instead its validity has to be assessed with respect to specific socio-economic dimensions and delimited areas. Thus this corroborates the need of recognizing the plurality and individual character of the peripheral neighborhoods (Ruggerone 2009 p. 103) and, more generally, of all the parts included in Milan "Zone 4", independently from their distance from the city center.

3.   THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTIONS OF ASSOCIATIONS IN MILAN "ZONE 4"

The third part of this chapter focuses on the spatial distribution of associations and more generally of third sector subjects in Milan "Zone 4"[3]. From what I'm going to say next it will emerge two main findings. The first one is about the good presence of associations in Milan "Zone 4". The second finding is about the seemingly paucity - in peripheral areas and central ones alike - of associations that act, as the observed cases, with the primary purpose of generating public sociality. With respect to the first finding, it is worth noting that previous studies on Milan "Zone 4" (Bonifacci, Cucca 2010, Barzanò 2010, Pisano 2010) or parts of it (Magatti 2007; Salati 2007) had already underlined the importance of associations for the residents of this area at risk of social exclusion, as well as the active involvement of non-profit groups in the supplying of public services[4]. The analysis I've carried out has in particular underlined the importance of associations and third sector groups in supporting the elderly, the minors and especially the immigrants, the "social sector" where the public policies are particularly lacking (Barzanò 2010).

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[1] Source: 2001 National Census. Elaboration: mine.

[2] For more details see Citroni 2010a.

[3] This spatial contextualization will be integrated in the next chapter by a short presentation of the main traits of the organizational structure of some of the associations active in Milan "Zone 4".

[4] This latter element is consistent with what had indicated previous researches on Milan local welfare system, which clearly stated that in this city "the autonomous intervention of third sector actors play a part that is more significant" than in other Italian cities (Mingione 2003 p. 9).

Starting from an overview on the spatial distribution of associations active in Milan "Zone 4" looking at the map underneath one can notice at first sight a fairly homogenous presence of non-profit associations in the area.
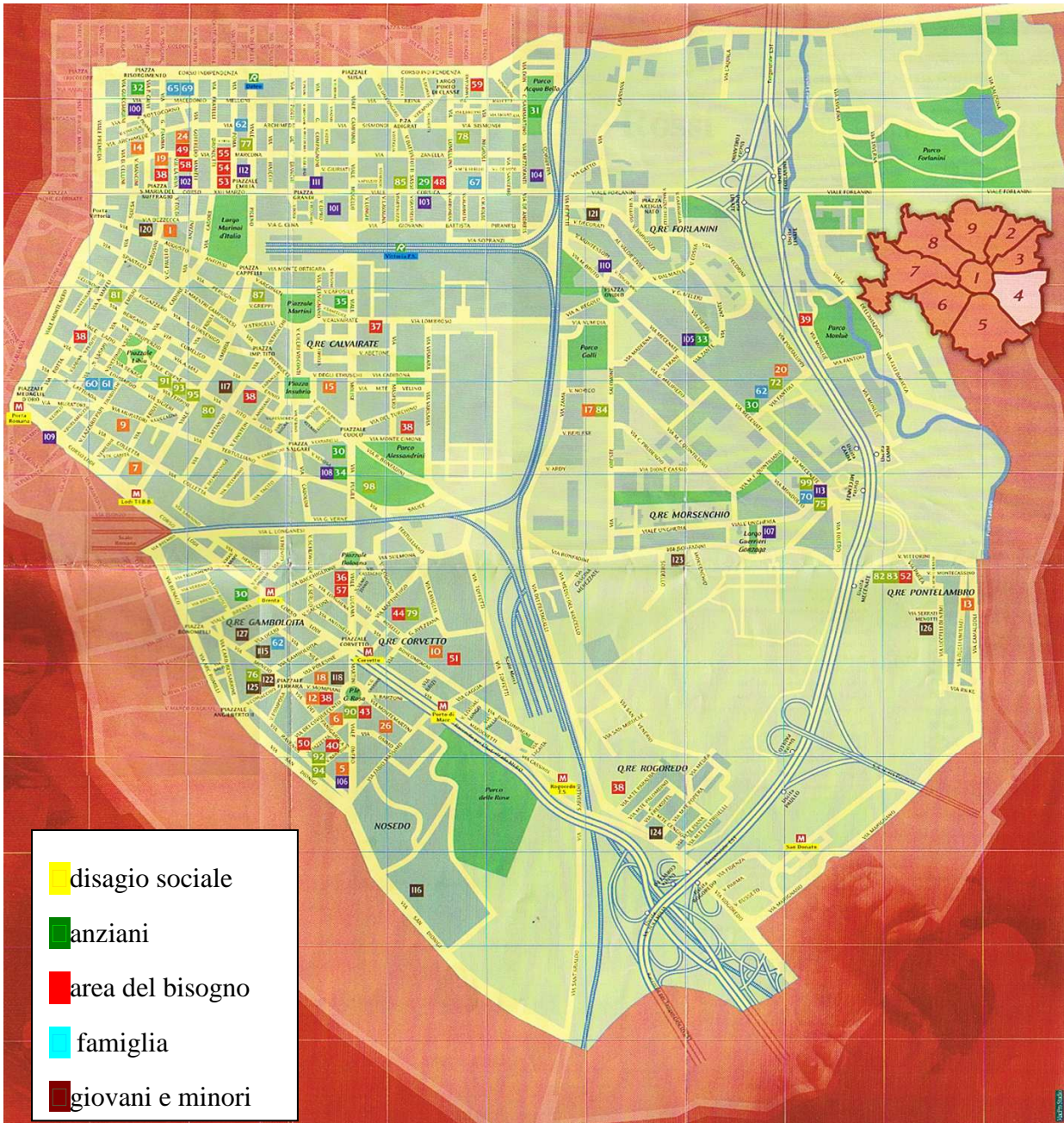
Figura 19. Spatial distribution of associations in Milan urban district 4[1].

This map is useful as starting point to overview the spatial distribution of third sectors subjects and associations working in Milan "Zone 4". Though, at first sight, associations are comprehensively and homogeneously distributed in this area, a closer look distinguish between urban portion in

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[1] Source and elaboration:"Guida ai Servizi Sociali della Zona 4".

which the intervention of associations in some specific domains appears to be weak and neighborhoods where there is a relevant concentration of associations. In particular, according to the classification proposed in the aforementioned map, third sector's activities and associations committed with respect to serious situation of "social discomfort" are concentrated in the neighborhoods of Corvetto and Gamboloita. The "minors and family" area of action is strongly present in the whole "Zone 4" and in particular in the parts close to Libia square and the neighborhood Mazzini; Forlanini and Molise-Calvairate neighborhoods feature a high concentration of initiatives for the elderly population. The small neighborhood of Calvairate is particularly interesting since it hosts at least ten different associations committed to manifold initiatives and operating in a neighborhood of about 3500 people. According to the map in figure 19, there are many associations working in the area of "need"[1], "family" and "the disabled" in the central part of Milan "Zone 4"[2]; Ponte Lambro is, among the peripheral neighborhoods of Milan "Zone 4", the one who most enjoys a wide range of non-profit associations, a finding that has been widely illustrated and articulated in previous researches (Pisano 2010; Magatti 2007; Salati 2007; Citroni 2006). An elevated number of local-based non-profit associations is also present in the peripheral neighborhood of Mazzini, which is now also home to "Mazzini Arcipelago", a partnership funded by the "Social Cohesion" project of "Regione Lombardia", and composed of 16 well trod non-profit subjects. On the contrary, the figure shows that the neighborhoods of Morsenchio, Rogoredo and the central/semi-central area around Porta Romana are relatively lacking associations. Thus, according to the information supplied by the map, the lack of socio-economic resources generally attributed to the most peripheral parts of Milan "Zone 4" doesn't correspond to a paucity of associations. Indeed, the most peripheral neighborhoods are filled with a variety of associations active in different domains. Finally, it is worth underling that it is relatively difficult to use administrative measures or previous researches to trace the presence of associations that correspond to the case studies of this research, both considering them according to the activities they carry out (that is to say as cultural associations) or on the basis of their purposes (establish public sociality).

THE LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD

As it has already been mentioned, the fact that Milan "Zone 4" is the main area of reference for the observed groups represents a relatively recent development of collective efforts that initially possessed a "situational embeddedness" (Ambrosini, Boccagni 2009) defined firstly with respect to the local neighborhood in which the associations were settled. In particular, the observed cultural associations – as many other nonprofit groups committed with cultural activities[3] –initially constituted themselves to contrast the lack of cultural and public sociality occasions their members perceived in the locale in which they lived. Also for this reason, it is necessary taking a closer look

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[1] According to the associations included in this group it is possible that this area include collective non profit subjects working to support socio-economic difficulties.

[2] Especially between Corso XXII Marzo and Corso Indipendenza.

[3] Such as revelead for example for Arci, at least according to the interviews I've carryed out with the leaders of this association.

at the local neighborhood in which the associations I observed were settled, using in particular analytical tools allowing a more textured analysis than what it has been done until now[1].

In general, the neighborhood represents a highly problematic object of study (Borlini, Memo 2008) which can be approached in a variety of ways. Here, I will limit myself to assess the presence of third sector subjects in the area surrounding the Cuccagna farm[2], and in particular in "Cuccagna neighborhood".

Firstly , this area enjoys a significant number of catholic sponsored associations, generally widely using volunteer workers, that supply services to a socio-economically fragile population (Barzanò 2010; Cattaneo, Citroni, Polizzi 2010). Instead, the empirical evidences that I've collected showed that there were uniquely two collective subjects that officially aimed at creating "public space of proximity" (Laville 1994).The first one was positioned at the border between the neighborhood of Porta Romana and that of Corvetto and it was the oratory of Saint Pius V. This oratory hosted a counseling centre sponsored by a catholic based organization, a food and clothing collection, the supplying of free Italian classes for foreign immigrants and, once a week, the so called "Friendship dinners", convivial diners offered to needy people. Besides, the oratory hosted also a theatre[3], with a regular theatrical and cinema program, a dance school, sports grounds, a recreational centre and a nursery school ran by nuns living there. The second place which aimed at representing a "public space of proximity" was the Vittoria Social Center, situated just next to the headquarter of the venue of the associations I have studied. Since 1995, this social center has been proposing meetings and debates mainly about political issues, as well as movie-projections, concerts and free Italian classes to foreign immigrants. Both the oratory of Saint Pius V and Vittoria Social Center, though official open to the widest public, actually succeeded in involving in most of their activities uniquely a specific type of people which were very similar in their cultural orientations and electoral identification to the subjects that were animated those collective subjects. As it has been written with specific reference to self-administereds but that in this case can be extended also to oratories, "what generally lacks from these places is the diversity. Formally open, they are often based on the defense of an identity that is searched in groups of pairs that are identical among themselves. Not very differently from what happens in the respectable middle-class suburbs, their ideologies is comprised between 'the exaltation of the metropolitan individualism and a nostalgia of a communitarian dimension of the small city' (Giovannini 1995)" (Sebastiani 2007 p. 134). Therefore, apparently in the neighborhoods where the associations observed in this research were physically settled there was a lack of spaces that could offer occasions for the development of inclusive social relationships.

FINAL REMARKS

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[1] Indeed, while data until now described are based on secondary sources or semi-structured interviews with local informants, empirical evidences introduced hereon have been directly collected.

[2] Which it is worth remembering is the venues of all the observed associations.

[3] Oscar Theatre.

As final remarks I would like to develop two specific consideration. The first one refers to the peripheral/center scheme as general model of distribution of the resources in Milan "Zone 4". With respect to this aspect we have seen in the first paragraph that the perceptions of those interviewees signaled in the most central area of Milan "Zone 4" the abundance of services and structures able to guarantee an elevated level of quality of life; in the semi-central and peripheral portions more often problems - linked to the cohabitation among elderly and immigrants, socio-economic difficulties and the lack of cultural opportunities - were mentioned by the interviewees. Further, the statistical observed data confirmed the importance of the central-periphery scheme in the spatial structuring of several indicators about socio-economic factors. Indeed, apart from those presented in the chapter, I've analyzed also other socio-economic broad variable and they generally uphold the validity of the center/periphery scheme. Not surprisingly this finding is consistent with what happens in the entire city, where "the territorial distribution of the risk confirms the rise of the population in difficulty moving from the center towards the periphery" (Mingione 2003 p. 10).

The second consideration is about the presence of common factors in the whole "Zone 4" especially concerning the changes that this area is experiencing. In fact, independently from the place of residence, it is a common perception amongst the interviewees that the area in which they reside, live and work is affected by rapid changes that they have an hard time in identifying but that they generally deem as important. Such perceptions were normally accompanied by concerns about sociality conditions often with respect to idealized images of past. Together with these anxieties, there was also - both in the centre and in the periphery- the recognition of infrastructural and services improvements that recently affected the locales where the interviewees lived. I've previously hinted at the important changes that are taking places in this part of the city. In some cases these are changes that refer to an extra urban scale in which "the centre and the periphery are both, though in different ways, affected by big challenges that situate the city at the crossroad of the contrasting path of the two main transnational actors that characterize contemporary mobility, the global capital and migrant working force" (Bovone, Ruggerone 2009 p. 4). In other cases, the transformations are more physically localizable, as those about public funded sponsorship (such as "Arcipelago Mazzini") or, especially, the private projects of urban qualification (such as Milano Santa Giulia). In fact, the consideration of these projects led in a previous research on peripheral portions of Milan "Zone 4" to talk about clear tendency towards the "fragmentation of the territory" (Salati 2007) which would make the centre-periphery model an outdated category for correctly reading contemporary urban changes. According to this viewpoint, the aforementioned projects of urban requalification exemplify a logic of transformation of the urban space in which urban innovation acquire their significance and economic value with respect to global scale connections of people and money. According to this logic projects of urban requalification transcend the area in which they are physically situated and became important in terms of attracting points of money (investments) and people[1]. Such transformations, therefore, do not necessarily affect the territory in which they are situated and the populations which inhabit them (Magatti 2007 p.24).With respect to this type of consideration, it is worth recognizing that the whole "Zone 4" is involved in all of its three portions by these type of changes, as it has been widely documented in previous research

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[1] Though, in these case urban changes are not meant to attract all types of people.

(Magatti 2007; Salati 2007; Bovone, Ruggerone 2009). Here, I would like to make a point about the importance of not overestimating the impact of these changes on the social organization of the observed area. Indeed, firstly these transformations are suffering continual delays and, in some cases, are struggling to even begin. Secondly, because it is opportune for each one of these changes to calibrate their implications, recognizing the specificity of the rationale that govern their unfolding, but without abstractly considering them "in one fell swoop" the cause of urban fragmentation which is, to a certain extent, the very component of the urban texture (Amin, Thirft 2002). In this sense, the fact that in this chapter the areas which have emerged as the most problematic are the same ones underlined in a previous investigation on the poverty in Milan (Zajczyk 2003), which drew mainly on data from the national census previous of ten years than the one I used, may be an indirect indication that the greater picture has not radically changed over the course of recent years as a result of the afore mentioned changes[1]. It may therefore be opportune to firstly read the ongoing changes with respect the specific space in which they take place. From this point of view this chapter has shown that Milan "Zone 4" remains in general unequally structured according to the classic central-periphery model. In particular in the semi-central and, especially, in the peripheral portions of the investigated area three types of ambivalences have emerged more clearly than in the central part.

1. The first one is about the relevant presence of commuting infrastructure– high speed rail links, the ringroad, the airport, many train stations and the urban public means of communication that are present in the rest of the city - in the most external parts of Milan "Zone 4" that was associated to local perceptions of these spaces that were devoid of reference to them. In fact, with the exception of aspects linked to the extension of line 3 of the Metro underground, the interviewed residents of the more external areas of "Zone 4" rarely cited the transport links present in the territory in which they live. This has occurred in spite of the fact that the interview's template included a specific part related to the means of transport. At this respect it is worth noting that we have been knowing for a long time that Milan is not only composed of a resident population, and that city-users are a significant part of Milan's population (Martinotti 1993; Nuvolati 2002). The perceptions gathered from the interviews give a sense of the distance between residents and city users who live their daily lives in the same territory but rarely come into contact.

2. Secondly, in the most peripheral parts of Milan "Zone 4" are concentrated the most densely populated areas and the biggest empty spaces alike. In both cases, the spaces were often run-down and derelict, such as the Erp buildings or the abandoned spaces, *terrain vague* used as open tip and shelters for homeless: "signs of the lack of local government's action in the area and of the abandonment of the council administration, a lack control and therefore at the same time, a lack of public services" (Cottino 2003 p.30).

3. The third ambivalence is about the fact that many of the new projects of private urban development, despite being oriented toward the middle-upper classes, were positioned in

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[1] Indeed, the data used in Zajczyk 2003 referred mainly to the statistical census carried out 1991, while I've uniquely used data from the 2001 census.

areas characterized by the presence of situations of diffused socio-economic difficulties, or nearby these areas. In most of the peripheral portion of Milan "Zone 4" this aspect was particularly evident and it has already been documented in previous researches (Magatti 2007; Salati 2007).

Therefore, on the one hand we have to acknowledge that the observed area has been going through important social and urban changes, which may contribute to fragment it, creating, both in the centre and the periphery, an ever growing number of "oasis" that differentiate themselves from the urban and social context in which they are physically situated. On the other hand, though, it is important to note that the ongoing transformations occur in territories that are unequal among themselves in terms infrastructures, services and social local textures. Indeed, we have seen that the central area included a variety of services and sociality occasions while other areas were characterized by social marginalization, micro-criminality, urban decay and lack of sociality or cultural services. This type of reasoning invite to be wary in dismissing the central-periphery model as a way of reading the spatial structuration of broad dimensions, because insofar it has proved to be useful and applicable for an overview of the observed area and the changes affecting it. Indeed, the three aforementioned remarks were meant to underline that some areas included in the peripheral portion of "Zone 4" represent better than those included in the central portion the territories in which conflict elements linkable to the two aspects of places and fluxes (Magatti 2007 p.17)

Finally, it is possible to say that the picture outlined in this chapter confirms the capacity third sectors and non profit groups possess of reading and intervene with respect to the most recognized areas of social exclusion (Ranci 1999). Indeed, association are most active in the most marginalized areas. It is worth précising that this is valuable exclusively for well recognized needs, especially those that can be linked to policy interventions, for example the social medical assistance. Instead, less recognized needs, such as those referring to the area of sociality officially remain widely not covered by the services offered by third sector groups. This can be observed both in peripheral neighborhoods (where according to the interviewees occasions of sociality and culture consumption are dramatically lacking) and in central ones (such as in the local neighborhood where the observed associations are physically settled). Another, more telling, contextualization of the observed associations is instead offered looking not at the space dimension but instead at the time one. This will be developed, among other things, in the next chapter.

3. A "NEW SOCIALITY" IN AN ANCIENT SPACE. INTRODUCTION TO THE OBSERVED CULTURAL ASSOCIATONS

The purpose of this chapter is that of introducing the associations selected as case study of my research. Thus, the contents introduced represent a further development of the operation of contextualization I started in the past chapter and they are equally not directly tied to the analytical inquire developed from chapter 4 to chapter 8 and summarized in chapter 9. While in the previous chapter I adopted a viewpoint that focused on Milan "Zone 4" as territory, locale and context of the observed groups, here I will take a different outlook. In particular, in the first paragraph I will hint very briefly at participation in associations in Italy from a broad historical viewpoint and I will use telling examples to outline some specific aspects of the contemporary context of association in Milan. In the rest of the chapter I will introduce the ten cultural associations I ethnographically observed, and the overall project to which they all participated in, illustrating and briefly analyzing the formal statements through which they described themselves.

1. THE ASSOCIATIVE CONTEXT

1.1 A VERY BRIEF DIACRONIC POINT OF VIEW

The associations taken as case studies of this research are situated in a region, the Lombardy, that possess a particularly rich associational life (La Valle 2004). Indeed, "citizens participation in associations in Lombardia outnumbers the national average, especially in social-assistance, cultural and educational areas" (Biorcio 2009). Further, in this region "participation has increased over the last seven years in all the associational sectors" (ibid) and especially in cultural associations (Forno, Polizzi 2010), the sector of activity to which the groups analyzed in this study belong. But, this is still not enough to contextualize the associations observed in this research. In order to have a widest overview on the association context I deem worth to give a hint about the historical development of associations in Italy in the last fifty years.

Firstly, it is necessary to specify that in this case associations are meant in their broadest definition of groupings of people independent from the State that form themselves on a voluntary basis and for shared purposes (Sills 1968). That is to say that associations are "groups of individuals that are not a political or economical subject in a strict sense and that, formally or informally, act collectively to pursue goals not directed at the redistribution of profit among the group members" (Cattaneo, Citroni, Polizzi 2010 p. 210). Adopting this very wide viewpoint the participation in associations in Italy can be divided into three broad phases (Biorcio 2003), which have been effectively described by Forno and Polizzi (2010): "the first phase is that started in the post-war period and that has gone on until the end of the Seventies. During this stage, associations have developed in a strict cultural and political relation with political parties, establishing with them a relationship that has been defined "collateral". In this phase associations grow possessing an organizational model based on a capillary territorial embeddedness, a wide non-sectorial membership composed of a multigenerational people [members] coming from a variety of backgrounds and entering associations on the basis of low-standard selection criteria. Associational activities were mainly of

sociality, cultural or recreational. A second phase goes from the first half of the Eighties to the second half of the Nineties. In this period it is possible to observe on the one hand the growing autonomy of collateral associations that more and more experiment strategies and cultural offers not tied to political parties' directives and, on the other hand the bloom of a new, more autonomous, type of associations that arise from the end of the long season of political movements that has characterized the 1970s in Italy. These 'new' associations focus on 'new' issues such as those about environment, peace and contrast to social exclusion. Within a short time these associations progressively acquired organizational and technical skills, often moving up to being fully professional non-profit organizations [...]. With the end of the Nineties and throughout the last years it is possible to outline a third phase, which is still taking shape. On the one hand the organizational forms and in some case the economic solidity of associations that supply services have consolidated [...] On the other hand , the associations' capacity of autonomous action at the level of politics and public sphere appears to have reduced [...]. In particular, in Lombardy a center-right wing political coalition established itself and consolidated its position since 1995, having been in power for 15 years. One of this administration's trademark attribute is to have adopted social policies based on subsidiary - a principle that, also on the basis of European Union pressures, establish that public interventions is best carried out by organizations who are closest to citizens (Vitale 2007) – which seem to have pushed some associations to undertake managerial tasks and supply public services, in a context of market competition among different associations"(Forno, Polizzi 2010 p. 2-3).

Ranci at the end of the 1990s depicted Italian third sector main outlines in terms of "identity" and "service", that is to say he conceived associations as characterized by the fact of "conjugate in their action a strong aggregative function with their capacity of supplying public service" (Ranci 1999 p.9). Identity and service have somehow characterized associations since long time and so also in their previous phases but, Ranci argued, these elements nowadays are differently shaped because of the development of two historical conditions: "on the one hand the essential financial and cultural autonomy of third sector organizations (that have freed associations from the need of activating political transactions to survive) and on the other hand a public sphere that is not hegemonyzed by ideological and operative subjects that are in open conflict among themselves (Ranci 1999 p. 150-151). To these two conditions, generally valid for the whole Italian contest, it is necessary to add a third one that is specific of the Lombardy context and which refers to the fact in this region the third sector has particularly "grown thank to the support offered by the public sector" (*ibidem*).

According to many sociological accounts these three very broad changes have contributed to make the contemporary general scene of associations less neat but also more vital than what it was roughly thirty years ago (Biorcio 2009; La Valle 2004; Ranci 1999). In particular, the general trend is often depicted through the description of a contemporary civil society context composed of "local initiatives, groups, associations that engage themselves in activities that do not aim at changing the whole society but to supply answers to specific needs which are identified with precision in the territory" (Ranci 1999 p. 150). I have already dwelt upon the aspects of service and identity in chapter 1. Here, therefore, it is enough to note that their development is tied to specific history of third sector groups in Italy. Nowadays, the needs that contemporary associations address with their actions are very specified (Ranci 1999) and this implies a neat distinction between service and

identity. Indeed, the services contemporary associations offer is normally clearly describable as separate from the dimensions related to their activities.

Therefore, it is with reference to this broad diachronic scenario of contemporary associations that it is possible to frame the associations I have observed in the research presented in these pages. In particular, in the first chapter I have outlined a theoretical aspect that characterize the observed cases that can be depicted as innovative with reference to the general context just described. This aspect refers to the peculiar combination of identity and service that characterize the observed associations and that I have described in terms of "the service of the identity".

THE ASSOCIATIVE CONTEX OF MILAN "ZONE 4"

In order to see similarities and differences between the associations of Milan "Zone 4" and those taken as case studies of my research I used the categories of identity and service. Indeed, these aspects characterize also the associations of the urban context with reference to which the observed groups defined their goals of public sociality. The specific articulation of identity and service that characterizes each one of the association that was present in this context should be observed in detail, through a perspective similar to the one I've dedicated to the case studies of my research. Given the impossibility of carrying out this type of operation, I've decided to use the categories of identity and service applying them uniquely to the official statements through which non-profit groups of Milan "Zone 4" described themselves.

The first operation I carried out to contextualize the observed associations consisted of a quantitative inquiry of all the associations settled or active in Milan "Zone 4". I've thus generated a database including 177 associations[1]. Then, the associations included in the database have been divided in two broad categories. Firstly, "traditional" associations, collective subjects with an history that could be somehow linked to aspects pertaining to one of the three, aforementioned, historical phases. This category included groups that carried out activities that could be framed in terms of identity or service or both of them, but anyway keeping these two elements strictly separated. Secondly, associations that somehow officially claimed of being committed to the "service of identity" or that described the activities they carried out in terms linkable to that concept.

These two groupings have been formed drawing on the official statements the associations gave about themselves in brochures, leaflets or web pages in which they described their goals and main activities[2]. The main finding of the analysis I carried out at this official level is that a small minority (8%) of the associations included in the database I've generated could be considered as part of the category of the "service of identity". It is worth underling that in general the associations included in this category were all recently born. But I don't deem useful to push the description of these

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[1] Of which just 44 were inscribed to the local administrative register of associations accredited by the local council or beneficiary of public funds for supplying services related to the local welfare system.

[2] These have been collected attending the fair of local associations that the urban district organize every year or directly going in the associations' venues.

associations further. Indeed, it is worth underling that the fact of forming the two groupings drawing exclusively on the official statements the associations gave about themselves make this distinction particularly fragile and approximate, and too conventionally related to the words groups choose to present themselves publicly. A more detailed assessment in this sense would require a textured analysis that was not possible to develop in this research for each one of the cases included in the database. Here I will limit myself to introduce the associative context of Milan "Zone 4" on the basis of the categories of identity and service through some examples that I've observed from closer and then develop some brief remarks in light of the presented cases. In particular, after having introduced "Arci clubs" as examples of associations that supply the "service of identity" I will briefly develop a remark on the importance of cultural events for these type of groups.

"TRADITIONAL" ASSOCIATION

In the first type of associations (those that keep separate identity and service) it is possible to include an historical association of Milan "Zone 4" such as the "Comitato Inquilini Molise Calvairate Ponti"[1] that is mainly active in contrasting dynamics of socio-economic exclusion, consistently with the dominant orientation characterizing the second of the aforementioned phases of Italian associative history. Or it is also possible to cite the still wide catholic area of associations that are active at the local level mainly through oratories[2] (11 in Milan "Zone 4") and the Caritas counseling centers (6 in Milan "Zone 4") that they often host. From a previous research that analyzed the activities of these organization it results that they were mainly engaged in answering to the primary needs of the poorest people and that they also played an important role of listening for many citizens in conditions of social exclusion (Salati 2004). A more recent study that have focused exclusively on Milan "Zone 4" has confirmed their role, specifying their utility especially in the area of social exclusion and in particular for elderly, children and foreign immigrants, toward which they increasingly exert a function of cultural mediation (Barzanò 2010). In these accounts clearly emerge the service function that these groups play with respect to the most socially and economically marginalized categories of the population. Beyond the catholic component of the non-profit sector, it exists another wide area of associations included in the data base that I've created. These are the associations that can be somehow linked to the other big political culture that dominated Italian social life until not very long time ago, the leftist political culture that can be linked to the legacy of the communist party. Arci clubs are the most relevant associative expressions of the legacy of that culture. In Milan "Zone 4" there are 11 Arci clubs (same number of the catholic oratories), they are engaged in a variety of activities including arts, music or dance workshops, restaurants, bars, the offer of sport facilities, or cultural initiatives such as concerts, movie projections or arts shows. Beyond the direct link to the two main past broad political cultures there are nowadays a variety of recent third sectors subjects offering specific services. At this respect, a telling example is that of "Radiomamma"[3], an association that in Milan "Zone 4" offered

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[1] http://www.bastaesclusione.it/ .

[2] "Oratory" stands for the Italian "oratorio" which is normally a place where kids and young gather for catechism classes but also place where they can simply meet, play and engaging themselves in a variety of activities.

[3] www.radiomamma.it

creative services of social utility which aim at helping children, parents and grandparents. Among these services, for example, the "seal of quality" given to shops who fulfill certain criteria of attention and availability towards families, or the supply of "maps of urban exploration" for mothers pushing baby-carriages in an hostile urban environment (such as it is deemed to be that of Milan). This non-profit group doesn't represent an isolated case in the panorama of associations active in Milan "Zone 4". Indeed, the collected data show that in Milan "Zone 4" associations are engaged in supplying highly specified services.

ASSOCIATIONS PROVIDING THE "SERVICE OF IDENTITY"

All the groups that I have included in the first category of associations were characterized by the fact that the elements of identity and service, though they could be co-present, were kept distinguished in the group's statement about themselves. In particular, according to the official statements collected, we could say that for "Comitato Inquilini Molise Calvairate", "Cartitas counseling centers", and "Radiomamma" the service aspect predominated over that one of the identity; things were the other way around for Arci clubs and Oratories, places that firstly represents for their members and association-goers a source of identity recognition, "a place where you go for the climate that you can breathe in it"[1], independently from the specific offered services. Differently, this second category is characterized by the overlap of identity and service according to the aforementioned combination of the "service of the identity". As example it is possible to cite the case of the association "Cento11 Impronte di Quartiere"[2]. This collective subject possessed the main goal of setting up occasions of open sociality, often through the proposal of collective experiences of cultural fruition. Examples of the activities that this association propose are five-a-side football games opposing teams composed by lodgers of the same building, excursions among strangers, diners involving residents of the same street, visits to arts shows, to the cinema, to the theatre or conversations with native speakers.

In any case, according to the associations' viewpoint these activities were meant to be way through which the association proposed "sociality occasions for the establishment of public spaces in a city [Milan] that strongly lack them"[3]. Indeed, the cultural offers this group proposed came always together with convivial occasions. For example, visits to shows or movie's projections were always preceded or followed by specific convivial moments –such as "happy hours"- that were meant to leave the conversational space for letting participants getting to know each other or simply exchange conversations and get in reciprocal contact. This association exemplifies the distance from the forms of associations introduced in the first point. Indeed, those collective subjects verbalized their purposes and their actions clearly distinguishing the services they supplied from the "identity function" (Ranci 1999) that they could exert. These two elements in those associations

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[1] From the interview with Servio Silvotti (Arci Lumbardy Presidency).

[2] Associazione attiva e radicata nella zona 4 che ha cambiato la propria sede, trasferendosi in un'altra zona di Milano, proprio nel periodo in cui si scrivono queste pagine. Ciò nonostante, viene citata come caso in quanto ancora molto presente e attiva nella zona quattro.

[3] From the website of www.111improntediquartiere.it

articulated themselves at different levels. For example often those groups official stated of supplying certain services but they, in practice, also offered identity resources to the users of those services, a combination observable in the case of Arci clubs for example[1]. Or they declared of enacting "public space of proximity" (Laville 1994) but they indeed offered also specific services to the people attending those places, such as in the case of oratories or also social centers. On the contrary, associations such as "Cento11 Impronte di Quartiere" - or the associations taken as case studies of this research - openly stated of offering a service consisting in including their "users" into network of relationships with other people, or simply in sociable spaces of face-to-face communication. It is worth précising that it would be misleading to read the "service of identity" through the categories of communitarianism (Etzioni 1993, 2004) because these relationships didn't claim of being natural or necessarily lasting over time. Instead they proposed themselves as a *service* to which possible users intentionally choose to adhere on a contractual basis.

At this point I deem necessary underling an important aspect of the proposed distinction between on the one hand those associations that keep separate the aspects of identity and service and, on the other hand, groups that overlap these elements in the aforementioned terms of the "service of identity". In particular, I would like to make the point of underling that this distinction is about the way associations described themselves publicly and not about the way they conducted their public activities or about their everyday group life. To support this argument it is possible to cite two elements. Firstly, not all the groups on which my comparative ethnography have focused underlined in their public description about themselves the fact that they were committed to the "service of the identity", though in practice "supplying" such a service. Secondly, looking at some associations of Milan "Zone 4" that were not part of the comparative ethnography I have conducted but that I have observed from a closer point of view than what their official description could have allowed to do, I noticed that identity and service were in general in a more problematic relation among themselves than what the aforementioned distinction would have allowed to think. To be clearer it is worth making an example. Through interviews I have conducted with leaders of Arci clubs[2] I realized that the variety of services these associations supplied were conceived as pretexts with respect to their priority function of offering a place of free aggregation. Here the point is not to underline that Arci clubs in their official description about themselves didn't always stress their aggregative function, but instead often they exclusively focused on the services they offered. The point here is about the fact that Arci clubs represented a place of aggregation and everyday socializations for many of its members[3] and they exerted this function *through* the services they supplied. In particular, in the interviews I have conducted it emerged the view that over time Arci was capable of re-inventing in new terms its traditional function of aggregative place, adapting itself to the changes that were

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[1] Both according to the official statements of this associations and on the basis of the interview mentioned shortly after in the text.

[2] In particular to Sergio Silvotti (presidency Arci Lombardy) and Flavio Mongelli (coordinator of the managing board), Emanuele Patti (president Arci Milano)

[3] It is worth underlying that in this case members possess a specific status deriving from the fact an Arci member is simply someone that attend as a member of the audience one of the many cultural initiatives that Arci club set up or that simply attend the bar of Arci club, without necessarily taking any part in the group life Arci.

taking place in the overall context where this association was settled. The changed circumstances made Arci clubs define in new terms their traditional function of aggregative place, offering services (mainly, but not exclusively, of cultural consumption) for a public of members/audience whose presence could not anymore be taken for granted. In particular, according in the perspective of Arci leaders, the context in which this association acted was deemed to have changed with reference to two main aspects: on the one hand the fact that "neighborhoods are not anymore stably organized around the work, typically in factories, with the typical sound of the horn that made the rhythm of the days"[1]; on the other hand, interviewees especially stressed the augmented competition of public occasions, normally of cultural fruition, with which the Arci clubs have to cope with. Milan is nowadays deemed not as a place lacking sociality occasions but as a city "full of possibilities of aggregation and cultural fruitions". As a consequence of this, Arci leaders stated that, "in Milan if you want to represent an aggregative open place you have necessarily to offer something appealing for attracting a potential public, otherwise they won't come"[2].

This conception is particularly relevant in this study because is something that seriously shape the repertoire of actions used by the observed groups and the outcomes associated to their actions. Indeed, this is significantly linked to the fact that the observed groups of my research pursued their goals through the setting up of cultural events. Indeed, the context of aggregative socializing places offered by associations was made of organizations offering cultural opportunities of consumption. Though, in the next chapter we will also that using events to pursue public sociality has its own limits and advantages and more generally it requires the respect of a specific grammar. This, in the observed cases, implied the re-definition of the meanings of the pursued social inclusion. This is also what I've been told by the "Arci" executive I've interviewed and the participant observation I've conducted in the case studies of this research will allow to specify and understand this argument in a more refined way than what an interview would allow. In particular I will see that it is the specific way in which each one of the ten observed groups used events what enable and constrain their possibilities of creating inclusive forms of relationships beyond the group.

In order to deepen my knowledge of specific traits of the organizing form of associations of Milan "Zone 4" I conducted a second, more detailed, survey. Methodological aspects and the main empirical findings of this survey are illustrated in the methodological appendix of this dissertation. Indeed, these empirical evidences have been use mainly with an explorative value during the field research. Also the fact the this survey was not statistically representative of all the associations of Milan "Zone 4" does not allow to use the finding to introduce further the context of the observed groups of my research.

2. GROUPS BELONGING TO A VAGUE PROJECT

In order to introduce the cultural groups taken as case study of my research and the overall project to which they all belonged (the Cuccagna project), I will start reporting how the observed subjects

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[1] From the interview with Sergio Silvotti (presidency Arci Lombardy).

[2] Ibidem.

have described themselves during a radio interview. The purpose of this section is to present the cultural associations I've taken as case studies of my research using their own official statements about themselves, their collective goals and activities. While other empirical chapters will pay a closer attention to the *practices* that structured the everyday lives of the observed groups, this chapter will focus mainly on the content of the oral and written communication they gave about themselves. However, specific reference to the settings in which this communication has been enacted will be made whenever necessary to better understand its meaning.

The following excerpt comes from a radio interview I directly listened to during a party-like event held on the 21 June 2008 in the setting of the Cuccagna farmhouse (Cf). I deem this interview as a good starting point to look at the observed groups of my research from the point of view of the overall project to which they all belonged. The conversation summarizes a variety of elements that will discussed and developed afterwards.

> RJ [Radio Journalist[1]]: Could you please tell us what the Cuccagna Alliance[2] is?
>
> Sergio B[3]: It is an association of associations, civic groups, cooperatives and cultural associations which has been set up to participate in the public concourse for the allocation of the farmhouse in which we are now [the Cuccagna farmhouse, Cf]. The association won the concourse and the right to manage this farmhouse for twenty years, and thus it constituted itself in an alliance, the Cuccagna Alliance [CA] which has the purpose of developing the Cuccagna Project [CP]
>
> R J: how did you manage to win the concourse for the allocation of this space?
>
> Sergio B: With a beautiful project on the use of the spaces of the farmhouse, a project that has been sustained by a reliable financial plan written to cover all the costs necessary in order to restructure the farm and then to economically manage it. The Milan council [owner of the farm] wanted to assign the place to someone who was available for, and capable of, financing the restructuring works of the eighteenth century farmhouse […]
>
> Rj: Who belongs to the Alliance?
>
> Ben[4]: a lot of people! fortunately an increasing numbers of subjects and the associations: "Esterni", "Smemoranda Cooperative", "ChiamaMilano", "Diapason Cooperative", "Comunità Progetto Cooperative", "S. Martino Cooperative" and the "Cuccagna Cooperative", the group who has started the Cuccagna Project.
>
> Rj: Could you tell us what is the main purpose of the Cuccagna Project?
>
> Sergio B: It is that of turning this ancient and crumbling farmhouse into a real public space, open to a new sociality, a place capable of fostering the creation of new social relationships, an inclusive place that contrast contemporary tendencies of social fragmentation and marginalization.

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[1] The radio is Radio Popolare (www.radiopopolare.it) , one of the main local radio station of Milan and its provinces, which is in network with several other local radio stations spread throughout Italy. The radio possesses a leftist orientation, but expresses a moderate rather than a radical leftist stance.

[2] English translation of the author for "Consorzio Cantiere Cuccagna" (www.cuccagna.org). For brevity's sake, from here on the alliance will be called CA, which stands for Cuccagna Alliance.

[3] Sergio Bonriposi, president of the administrative committee of the Cuccagna Alliance.

[4] Beniamino Saibene, leader of "Esterni", an association part of the CA and taken as case study of my research.

Rj: How do you manage the participation of private citizens in such a project?

Sergio D[1]: Not simply by offering events to citizens, but through the active responsible involvement of citizens for the generation of local solidarity, with an offer of spaces, opportunities, conditions allowing single citizens be the direct protagonists of what they do…

Rj: Something quite new for Milan: could you give us some concrete examples?

Sergio D: examples are what we have called the "Projectual Tables"[2] [PTs], which means that some members of our "Group for the Construction of Participation" [CGCP] through a variety of contacts came together with citizens to invent new projects in which they engage themselves with. This is a process that can always enlarge and then multiply in many directions. This is not about ourselves proposing specific activities, nor ordinary citizens proposing them, but coming together to cooperatively construct these activities in a creative way.

Rj: Do some projects exist which have already started ?

Sergio D: yes, we have four Projectual Tables at the moment: there is the "Green PT" who take care of this beautiful garden of the farmhouse, also including a vegetable garden, a very pleasant place; the "Open doors PT", a group who deal with elderly people; then the "Mothers and children" PT that today has set up the kite party; and an "Arts PT" that deal with inventing activities in the artistic field, always with a sense of responsibility toward this space

Rj: All this sounds very innovative…

Sergio B: this project has been set up and goes on with an absolutely innovative experience that consists in the participation of ordinary citizens, voluntary people, third sector subjects, business companies and public institutions

Rj: How is all this kept together?

Sergio B: Until now we have been set up an institutional support to the project called "Committee of supervision and control", and formed by the president of the urban district council[3], the local council authority for young people and leisure, the local provincial authority for culture, the "FAI" [Italian Environmental Fund].

Rj: Let's talk about the restructuring of the farmhouse: you are engaging in such activities thanks to the fact that you received some funds. This is also quite peculiar: How did you succeed? How is the project funded?

Sergio B.: We have received the recognition of the value of our project, the Cuccagna Project [CP], with a public competition in which the Cariplo Foundation assigned funds to social projects which intended to build cultural and local identity; we won the competition because the CP was deemed as a producer of culture and local cultural systems, and they gave us 750,000 euros; now the same is happening with a public society in Rome, which is directly affiliated to the governmental department of cultural resources, and then with the recognition from the Milan Popular Bank (BPM) of the value the CP possesses in intervening in the urban transformations of Milan. We are also committing ourselves in "fund-raising" activities.

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[1] Sergio De la Pierre, sociologist, leader of the association called "Group for the Construction of the Participation, CGCP".

[2] English tranlation of the author for "Tavoli della partecipazione progettuale".

[3] This is the author translation for "Consiglio di zona" (for the more information about the urban council district 4 see: http://www.comune.milano.it/portale/wps/portal/CDM?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/wps/wcm/connect/contentlibrary/In+Comune/In+Comune/I+Consigli+di+Zona/Zona+4/)

Rj: I can imagine that such a place [the farmhouse] will tempt many people: have you thought about how to manage this place making it a real participatory space?

Ben: Yes, certainly, this is our obsession! […]; we are thinking about how to manage it and the participation is a crucial point! Everyone is invited to participate in the planning of how to use the farmhouse when the restructuring works will be finished; there are many projects going on which need to be developed because the spaces are very big and many things still remain to be done…

Sergio B: to be more precise the farmhouse consists in 2000 covered square meters and another 2000 open air square meters

Rj: in the center of Milan!

Sergio B: yes, in the center of Milan. Such spaces will be partially devoted to some activities which will serve to finance the CP: for example there will be a restaurant, a café, a shop for the "conscious consumption", and so on and so forth; this will all be useful to finance the CP. The other 40 rooms are conceived as spaces at the disposal of groups or single people with projects, or even simply the desire to develop them, who can use these spaces for, for example, half a day a week to set up their own activities…

Ben: the CP is meant to be so inclusive that even the council is invited to participate in it

[…]

Rj: but the council will also fund the CP?

Rino[1]: for the moment it is worth noting that the only interest the council has is that of receiving the rent that we pay to it every year for the location of the farmhouse.

Rj: how much do you pay each year?

Sergio B: an average of 28,000 euros every year

Rj: How long, and how much money, will it take to restore the farmhouse?

Sergio B: a couple of years, the works are going to start very soon. We need 2,5 million euros just to restructure the farm and for the whole CP we need 3,5 million euros for the next two years.

Rj: Would you define this as a political project?

Sergio B: Everything is political [smiling]. But we are not the channel of any political subject or party, absolutely not.

Sergio D: political also means about the *polis*, the city, and in our case the requalification of the city through the direct responsibility of citizens. This is something which is at the very basis of the concept of participation in which we strongly believe and that we have also directly experienced. That is to say that we feel responsible towards citizens and we discovered that if we are able to involve them in the right way they also start to feel responsible towards the CP.

The last person who spoke was a sociologist (Sergio D) who had been hired by the Cuccagna Alliance to professionally manage the participation of citizens in the development of the CP. The other Sergio (Sergio B) was the president of the Cuccagna Alliance's administrative committee and

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[1] Rino Messina, representative of the association "Smemoranda cooperative", part of the CA but not a case study of my comparative research.

the former president of the Cuccagna Cooperative, the group who first, more than ten years ago, started the CP. Ben and Rino were the leaders and representatives of two of the associations which were a part of the CA: Esterni and Smemoranda Cooperative. Thus, the people who spoke in this interview clearly possessed different roles inside the organizational structure of the CP and their co-presence in the setting of the interview with the local radio journalist was a good occasion to see in a single spot the several stances that were at the same time present in the CP, and that ranged from the concerns about the money necessary to finance the project to the "obsession" toward making citizens participate in the project. For this reason the radio interview represents a good starting point to outline some important features about my case studies as they appeared at the beginning of my participant observation.

2.1 AN ASSOCIATIONS OF ASSOCIATION FOR A COMPLEX PROJECT

It is likely that the radio listener who paid attention to the aforementioned interview may have had a vague or confused idea about the specific subject of the afore-reported conversation. In short, the interventions spoke about an "association of associations"[1] – that is to say a partnership, the CA-devoted to the development of a complex project (the CP). Indeed, the CA was an association composed by 7 autonomous groups engaged in a collective action aiming at turning a crumbling eighteenth century farm (the Cuccagna farmhouse) into a "real public space, open to a new sociality, a place capable of fostering the creation of new social relations"[2]. In order to pursue such a goal, during the radio interview it was made clear that a variety of heterogeneous activities were required. Such an heterogeneity implied the simultaneous presence in the CP on the one hand of a relevant economic dimension and, on the other hand, of participatory and cooperative aspects aiming at actively involving citizens in the development of the project. The economic aspects were palpable in the short excerpt in the stress the speakers put on details about for example: the money necessary to restructure the farmhouse and to manage the project in the next two years, how the CA had been able to collect monetary funding until now, how much was the rent the CA was obliged to pay each year to the council of Milan for the location of the farm and how this money will be collected through the commercial activities that are going to take place in the restructured farmhouse. The participatory concerns of the subjects that animated the CP were visible in the fact that making the restructured farmhouse a "real participatory places" represented a "crucial point" and even their "obsession". Furthermore, the speakers made a point of specifying the conception of participation they adopted, indicating that this was not meant as an "offer of events" to citizens, but as an "offer of spaces, opportunities, conditions to let single citizens be the direct protagonists of what they do"; or that the Cuccagna Project was not "about ourselves proposing specific activities, nor ordinary citizens proposing them, but coming together to cooperatively construct these activities in a creative way". Also, the radio interview made clear the point that the restructuring of the Cuccagna farmhouse was functional to the construction of inclusive forms of face-to-face reciprocal recognition and more stable form social relationships, and that this was the broader goal of the CP

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[1] From the first sentence said by the interviewees in the radio interview reported in paragraph 2.1 of this chapter.

[2] From the radio interview cited at the opening of the chapter.

and of the subjects included in it. This goal summarizes in itself two important traits of the Cuccagna Project: on the one hand, the will of creating social relationships ("sociality") beyond the groups promoting the CP and, on the other hand, the fact of *using* a specific physical setting - the Cuccagna farmhouse- in order to pursue such a goal. In particular these two elements articulated themselves as follows: the restructuring of the farmhouse represented the instrumental aim - requiring relevant funds - with respect to the main goal of creating what in the interview was defined in terms of a "new sociality".

It is worth anticipating that the groups included in the CA were not the only ones that were committed to the attainment of CP's goals. Many other, usually less formal, groups were actively engaged in the development of the CP. A part of these groups form the cases studies of my research and they will be introduced in paragraph 3 of this chapter. In that part of the chapter I'll describe their specific goals and activities as these elements appeared at the beginning (February 2008) of my fieldwork in their written documents and formal statements. For the moment it is useful listening from closer to the aforementioned interview and analyzing some elements contained in it.

2.2 DISENTAGLING THE NOVELTY

On different occasions who spoke in the radio interview stressed the innovative character of the Cuccagna Project. In particular the innovative trait was mainly articulated by the interviewees underling four specific aspects:

1) The fact that it was a grassroots project that at the same time developed with the active participation of market and state actors.

2) The fact that on the one hand the Cuccagna Project involved significant economic dimensions (millions of euros) and at the same time possessed a strong accent on elusive aspects, such as a "new sociality" and the "active responsible involvement of citizens for the generation of local solidarity".

3) The fact that it included a partnership of associations devoted to develop a project that it was not simply elusive but that it also appeared to be still to be defined.

4) The fact of taking place in Milan and in particular in a vast area physically situated in the center of the city.

Let's briefly consider each one of this aspect in light of broader theoretical and empirical findings underlined in the literature on civic action and local participation in order to question the alleged novelty that they should represent.

A) BOTH IN THE MARKET AND IN THE STATE

Describing a civic project committed to "the creation of new sociality" with the support of economic groups (banks, foundations) and political subjects (local authorities) could appeared a

surprising and innovative trait to the ears of the radio listeners. Especially if such listeners possessed an idea of civil society as the "intermediate domain" between, and external to, the state and the market (Ranci 1999). The surprising effect would be even more marked if the radio listener knew many sociological accounts on the historical idea of civil society as a social sphere that emerged differentiating itself from the state (Biorcio 2001) and from the economic actors (Habermas 1997, Magatti 2005). Indeed, the interviewees didn't make anything to hide - but on the contrary they stressed- the fact that the Cuccagna Project was both involved in the market (see its relationships with banks or its fund-raising activities) and in the state (especially at the local level: see the participation of local authorities in the Committee of supervision and control of the CP). Though, paying a close attention to recent scholarship on civic associations the possible radio listeners' surprise would need to be revised. Indeed, studies on civic action are more and more getting rid of the traditional historical and tocquevillian image of civil society and volunteers groups according to which they would be external both the market and the state. At the empirical level recent researches indicate the tendency of civic groups to possess a mixed nature (Forno, Polizzi 2010), or an hybrid organizational form (Minkoff 2002) that make these collective subjects at the same time involved with the state and with economic subjects, providing private or public services and at the same time carrying out politically oriented activities. But it is especially in light of theoretical findings that the aforementioned image would need to be revised. Indeed, empirical researches on third sectors groups and civil society subjects are still widely based on minimalist theoretical definitions (Cefai, Eliasoph, Lichterman 2009). But, in the meanwhile the gap between theoretical elaborations and empirical researches has widened because theory has developed redefining its conception of civil society. At this respect it is worth citing a recent comparative analysis which explicitly call for a more pragmatist definition of civic action, that would consider "civic" simply an adverb qualifying a type of action of "people participating in collective problem-solving who actively devise the form of their collectivity" (ibid). In light of these recent empirical and especially theoretical findings, the stress on the innovative trait of CP contained in the interviewees' statements would be significantly downsized, and limited to the fact that the self description the speakers gave about the Cuccagna Project was not based on the tocquevillian conception of civic society but instead explicitly stressed its composite nature.

B)   MILLIONS OF EUROS FOR A "NEW SOCIALITY"?

The aforementioned conversation indicated that 7 associations had bound themselves together in an alliance that manage millions of euros and that aimed at developing a project whose main goal was that of creating a "new sociality". Devoting so many money to this type of goal could appear another striking aspect of the interview. Indeed, we know from researches on third sector groups active in Lombardy (Forno, Polizzi 2010) that the most structured and professionalized nonprofit organizations active in this region are cultural foundations or nonprofit groups acting in the health care and social care sector (*ibidem*). We know also that this is mainly due to the involvement of these groups in supplying services related to the local welfare system and, thus, to public funds.

The Cuccagna Alliance, instead, was not active in those sectors and it was not neither involved in the implementation of any local policy. Very differently, the CA was even obliged to pay a rent to

Milan council for developing its project in the Cuccagna farmhouse. Also, the CA was not a cultural foundation[1]. The millions of euros cited in the radio interview were said to be oriented to the pursue of elusive goals such as the generation of a "new sociality", consisting in the development of "conditions allowing single citizens be the direct protagonists of what they do". This appeared firstly as something difficult to be outlined and specified beyond the aforementioned appealing formulations. The radio listeners could have an hard time to understand such purposes (though the interviewer repeatedly called for examples) and especially how came that they were funded with so much money.

Looking more carefully at the nature of the associations composing the Cuccagna Alliance this seemingly puzzle appears less as such. Indeed, we note that even if the whole CA was not involved in any consolidated profitable non–profit sector, things differed for what concerned the groups included in the alliance. Indeed, among 7 subjects composing the alliance we note that 3 of them were cooperatives[2] active in the social care and educational sector and one[3] was a cultural foundation with a relevant economic patrimony at his disposal[4]. Thus, in light of this information the presence of such relevant amount of money in this project made more sense than what it could have appeared at first sight.

But still it remained to be ascertained how the CP could propose an "active responsible involvement" of citizens in a period of the "end of activists" (Ion 1997), in which a new model of collective action has been emerging ("l'engagment distancié", according to Ion) which is "flexible, informal and polyvalent" (Waters 2003 p.17), but not responsible. Indeed, the end of activists is described in terms of "the advent of an irregular militancy, that is fluid, volatile and made of individuals who engage and dis-engage according to specific circumstances, engage themselves for strictly limited periods of time, and stay often tied to everyday problems" (Cefai 2006 p. 11). These traits are for example exemplified in the aforementioned category of "plug-in volunteer" (Lichterman 2006). In general, literature on civic engagement and volunteering indicates the emergence of a new type of participation which is highly consistent with the "porosity" of contemporary institutions (Wuthnow 2002) or, more generally, with the fact that "the traditional relationships between the individual and society has undergone profound change" (Waters 2003 p.17). These new forms of being publicly involved contrast with the old and more demanding types of participation that used to take place in collective subjects such as political parties, working men's clubs, fraternal organizations, or labor unions (Wuthnow 2002). The puzzle about how the active and responsible participation of citizens in the development of the CP

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[1] Even though in the past the Alliance faced this possibility. Indeed, the foundation "Oltre venture" and its leader Luciano Balbo were going to became the funders of the CP, but then they changed their mind.

[2] In particular these were "Cooperativa Sociale Comunità Progetto"; "Cooperativa Sociale Diapason"; "Cooperativa Sociale S. Martino".

[3] Chiamamilano.

[4] It is worth underling that these groups are not part of the comparative ethnography I have conducted but, nevertheless were part of the overall project to which the observed groups belong.

could take place in such a general context will be addressed throughout the next chapters of the dissertation, specifying this general question in a variety of more detailed viewpoints.

C)   A COMPLEX PARTNERSHIP FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A *GENERIC* PROJECT?

According to Wuthnow (2002) and Lichterman (2009) the main difference between older and newer types of civic participation is that the first one developed in tightly bound groups while the latter takes place in loosely connected networks. At this respect, it appears hardly a coincidence the fact that the organizing form taken by the CP it was that of an alliance, the typical loose network characterized by the fact of addressing "public problems— urban decay, gang violence, homelessness, for instance— through […]coalitions of volunteers and paid, professional experts from nonprofit groups or state agencies" (Lichterman 2009). An heterogeneity of subjects and aspects that it was present in the CA and that was also observable even just listening to the aforementioned radio interview. But listening closely to that conversation it emerges also the inconsistency between the vagueness of Cuccagna's purposes and its organizing form of alliance. Indeed, a characterizing element that define an alliance is the specific purpose on the basis of which it is built, that is to say the fact that "people create loosely connected networks to serve particular purposes rather than to be community boosters in general" (Lichterman 2009). Instead, the Cuccagna Alliance appeared firstly as a network committed to develop a project with very general aims of enacting "a new sociality", with a vague orientation toward active cooperation[1] and self organization[2]. Going back to the opening interview and listening closely to the official aims of the CP, this project seemed more "a community booster in general" than as a task-oriented loose network of groups. Further, apart from the broad aim of creating a "place capable of fostering the creation of new social relations"[3], the Cuccagna Project was depicted to be so general that it was not even totally defined at the moment in which the radio interview was conducted: the interviewees explicitly stated, indeed, that "many things still need to be done"[4]. Indeed, many crucial aspects of the project remained extremely vague in the interview, such as the date of the start of the restructuring works or how the project will be managed once the restructuring works will be ended. The indefiniteness of the project was even documented in the written documents periodically produced to inform citizens about the ongoing activities of the CP during the events the CA set up[5].

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[1] The "coming together to cooperatively construct these activities in a creative way" (from the opening interview).

[2] "letting single citizens be the direct protagonists of what they" (ibidem).

[3] From the opening interview.

[4] Ibidem.

[5]   For example: "The CP has been detailed and defined in its purposes and general priorities, but in its lively and concrete realization remain something that still has to be developed and invented" (This excerpt come from a document dating the 24th September 2005 that has been distributed in the event held on that date in the Cuccagna farm to celebrate the winning of the public competition that assigned the management of the farm for the following 20 years).

But also this seemingly innovative trait of the CA has to be downsized. Indeed, paying a close attention to the interview we also learn that the alliance "has been set up to participate in the public concourse for the allocation of the farmhouse", that is to say for a quite specific purpose. Therefore, until now none of the three aspects on which the CP could have drawn its newness appear as innovative as at first sight they could have appeared: neither fact that the project was both linked to economic and institutional-political actors, nor the relevant amount of money that its development required and neither the organizational form that its development had undertaken. What may appear unusual is the way these aspects have been described in the aforementioned interview. Indeed, the interviewees didn't do anything to hide possible contradictions among aspects pertaining to different "orders of worth" (Lamont, Thévenot 2000), making the most evident the composite nature of the Alliance, of the project that this alliance committed itself to develop, and of the groups involved in that development. Let's now briefly consider the last of the possibly aforementioned innovative traits described in the radio interview.

D) A NEW PROJECT IN THE CENTER OF MILAN?

In various parts of the radio interview it was underlined the exceptionality of the CP not uniquely with respect to the idea of civil society it embodied but also with reference to the fact that it developed in Milan. Both the interviewees and the interviewer's interventions stressed this element. On the one hand the interviewees were particularly concerned to articulate the exceptionality of the project in terms of inclusiveness of several distinct types of subjects: "ordinary citizens, voluntary people, third sector subjects, business companies and public institutions". The inclusive character was deemed to be so important and innovative that the interviewees underlined it more times during the 7 minutes long interview: "the CP is meant to be so inclusive that even the council is invited to participate in it"[1]. On the other end, the interviewer appeared more interested in two aspects referring to the urban dimension: the fact that CP members claimed of involving citizens not through the offer of events, but according to a self-organizing conception of participation ("Something quite new for Milan"[2]), and the generousness of spaces that the CP had at its disposal in the city center ("in the center of Milan!"[3], she couldn't believe it)[4].

What tied the intentions of being inclusive on the part of the promoters the project to the fact that the CP took place in Milan and the Cuccagna farmhouse was settled in a central part of the city? Why the combination of such elements may come as a surprise in this conversation and it is expected to be something relevant for the radio listeners?

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[1] Ibidem.

[2] Ibidem.

[3] Ibidem.

[4] It may be at least partially true that in particular these last astonishments come from the widespread common idea that in Milan social life unfold through events and that in this city the building speculation has a long standing tradition. But I emphasize them, together with the inclusiveness trait, to make a broader point and taking them as the rhetorical expedients to introduce the associational context with the respect to which my cases define themselves.

In order to try to give an adequate answers to these questions, I will sketch from a specific viewpoint the context of Milan associations apparently similar to the CP with respect to their overall goals. The specific proposed point of view briefly summarize the process that lead me to choose the CP and the groups included in it as appropriate case studies for my inquiry. Indeed, during the first period of my fieldwork I had elaborated a typology of Milan associations setting up cultural initiatives for generating public spaces that I'm going to introduce now[1]. Initially, I outlined my starting typology focusing on two dimensions that grouped Milan associations aiming at generating inclusive forms of social relations in four types, resulting from the crossing of two dimensions, each one of them articulated through two ideal-typical categories.

The first dimension (homogeneity Vs diversity) referred to the type of ties the group aimed at creating. In some cases associations explicitly articulated their goal of creating new social ties stressing their will of being the most inclusive as possible in terms of overcoming differences of ages, culture or other relevant socio-economic dimensions. I have included this type of groups in the category of "diversity". Instead, the category of "homogeneity" included groups that wanted to create aggregative places of public sociality without making a point of specifying in their official statements that they aimed at overcoming difference of classes, ages, political cultures, working conditions or other characteristics.

The second dimension (bottom-up Vs Top-down) distinguished between grassroots organizations and more institutionalized groups. The first category included mainly informal grouping that had been originated from the initiatives of citizens and were not still highly structured; the second category referred to organizations whose setting up and management was supported by structured and well-established public or private subjects. In the following chart it is represented the typology that result from crossing these two dimensions and it is cited an example of a Milan group for each category[2].

	Homogeneity	Diversity
Top-down (Institutionalized)	*"Società Umanitaria"*	*"La Fabbrica del vapore"*
Bottom-up (Grassroots)	*"Leoncavallo" social center*	*"Cuccagna Project"*

Figure 1. Typology of sociality organizations and partnerships in Milan.

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[1] I elaborated this typology with the help of and cooperatively with Tommaso Vitale, whose precious support has been important for the overall shape of the dissertation and in particular on specific occasions, as this one.

[2] Example which will be not be introduced in this chapter.

This chart is extremely simplified and it includes collective subjects extremely heterogeneous among themselves for forms of actions, vocabulary of motives, organizational structures, political cultures of reference and other important aspects. Though very approximate, this chart represents a possibility to approach the context of Milan non-profit groups working to generate public sociality and it allows to take a look at the Cuccagna Project (CP) and at the groups included in it comparatively to other organizations with seemingly similar goals. Indeed, the categories contained in the chart have not to be taken literally but as ideal-types that form a rough orientation map that offer the reader elements of pre-comprehension that may be useful for understanding this research case studies. Let's consider in more detail the traits that define the CP according to this chart.

The bottom-up nature of the CP is the most evident in its "founding story" that I will introduce later on in this chapter and that will show the recent origins of the CP groups from the grassroots mobilization of private citizens. The "diversity" trait of the project was stressed during the radio interview and it was also explicitly underlined in the CP groups' official statements with reference to their will of "including local administrations, associations, business companies, single citizens of every type in the realization of a coordinated cultural action"[1]. Moreover, the group's written communication contained also an explicit reference to the associational context from which the CP aimed at distinguish itself:

> The new associative forms, even when they can accede to spaces that are adequate to the activities they propose, are often imprisoned in defensive and self-centered models; also, their cultural offer tend to create divisions on the basis of the age or the ideology; they tend to isolate rather than bounding together the social fabric.[2]

The CP clearly aimed at distinguish itself from these types of "new associative forms" for the inclusive nature of its efforts of generating public sociality. But, the CP didn't represent an absolute novelty in Milan area of organizations working to generate public sociality. Indeed, some of the general traits through which this project presented itself stressed the differences with other seemingly similar Milan project. In particular, the CP official statements stressed its inclusive nature with respect to the overall context in which it acted. Looking at the aforementioned chart it appears that a specific combination of "diversity" and "bottom-up" characterized –differentiating and at the same time making similar - the CP with reference to the context of Milan associations pursuing goals of public sociality. The radio journalist appeared to be mainly interested in stressing the "diversity" aspect of the CP. At this respect it is worth citing that a few meters from the Cuccagna farmhouse is settled one of Milan's most famous social center (Vittoria Social center). This type of associative project also aims at generating public aggregative spaces and it is

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[1] From document called "The Cuccagna project" included in the press material of the press conference held on the 28th of Jenuary 2009.

[2] P.2 of the document that illustrate the CP called "Una Cuccagna per Milano".

also a bottom-up project which do not have the support of any type of institutions[1]. But this political social center is also generally known in Milan for being the most radical leftist of all the social center spresent in the city, and thus though "formally open, actually closed in itself in an identity search in a group of pairs" (Sebastiani 2007 p. 129). The implicit reference of the radio journalist and of the CP promoters that have been interviewed may have been this organization. In any case, the stress on the exceptionality of the inclusive, bottom-up, nature of the city centered CP make more sense knowing this context element.

Before going on with the qualification of the observed project it is worth taking a look at the single groups that were included in the CP and that have been taken as case studies of my research. In particular, these groups will be introduced in the following paragraph drawing on the official written and oral statements that they made about themselves, while in the next chapters we will have the possibility of getting to know them from a closer point of view.

3.   CASE STUDY GROUPS

The chart presented in the past paragraph has been useful to "negatively" define the project I've decided to study hinting a comparison between the CP and other, apparently similar, cases, also working with the purpose of creating social ties in Milan. But at this point it is still necessary to positively qualify the associations included in the CP that I took as case studies. This is the content of this paragraph.

CASE STUDIES

It is necessary now to present the groups taken as case studies in this research. In particular, I will present their official purposes, a summary of their history and of the main activities carried out during the two years of my participant observation, and their organizing structure. I've decided to show the reciprocal differences among the observed groups using another typology that will focus in particular on two specific dimensions. Indeed, although all the groups I observed shared the will of creating sociality through the setting up of cultural events, each one of them articulated such a will in a specific way. Taken all the articulations together it is possible to group them with reference to two aspects.

The first one is a basic distinction in two broad categories of the repertoires of action used by the observed cases during my field research: on the one hand *ephemeral* forms of actions, exemplified by the event and, on the other hand, more settled actions that took place on a regular basis over time, usually in the same setting. The second dimension that I used to construct my typology referred to the main concrete short term purposes the groups pursued through the repertoire of actions they used. Indeed, the same form of action could be used according to different priority concerns. At this respect, for simplicity's sake I have distinguished two types of concerns: the setting up of sociable practices and the need of raising money functional to keep the group going

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[1] By the way, this association also has a wide space at his disposal, equally "in the center of Milan" as the Cuccagna Project.

on in its activities and especially for financing the restructuring of the farmhouse. In the first case (called "sociality for the sake of sociality") the groups directly pursued their goals while in the second case the group indirectly pursued them, being primarily concerned in equipping the group of the resources necessary at this respect. The crossing of the options scheduled for each one of the two aforementioned dimensions result in the following chart.

Concrete purposes of the activities carried out

		Equipping the group and the CP with the resources to pursue its goals	Sociality for the sake of sociality
Main repertoire of actions	Events		
	Settled forms of action		

Figure 2. Introductory chart to the observed cultural organizations

As we shall see through the next chapters this chart extremely simplify the empirical evidences collected through the field research. For example, we shall see for example in chapter 5 that events may be of several types (I've distinguished 4 forms) and each type entail specific dynamics and related tradeoffs. We will see also the observed groups shifted their repertoire of actions over time and that each group formal activity was a mix of different instances, including the necessity of raising money for funding future activities and the need to dwell on non-instrumental interactions among group members. Deciding upon the nature of a single activity, considering it outside the specific setting in which it unfolded, is an inevitably arbitrary operation. Though, at the outset of the analytical path proposed in this essay is useful to distinguish between forms of public actions that consist in ephemeral occasions (parties, showings, concerts, movie projections or other forms of cultural performances) and more stable forms of action that regularly repeated themselves over time in the same places (bar-restaurants, regular open meetings, recurrent events). The group activity I observed in general didn't *alternatively* possess the concrete purpose of generating relational spaces where "sociality for the sake of sociality" could unfold *or* through which the group could finance itself. Even though the chart may oversimplifies fieldwork observations, it is an useful tool to classify, reciprocally distinguish and introduce the observed groups according to the activities they carried out. For this reason I will use it to when introducing in the next pages the observed cultural associations. These charts will include also arrows that anticipate the trajectory each of the case study group has experienced during the two years of my participant observation in them. The move that each group experienced was shaped by the progressive deepening of the lack of money suffered by the CP and the fact that the observed groups more and more oriented their activities with reference to this aspect, though through the filter of their group styles. Indeed, this broad context factor affected all the observed groups but generated a variety of group behaviors. The details of such a variety and the argument proposed to account for them will be illustrated in

the next chapters, in particular from chapter 4 to chapter 8. For the moment it is important to have an overall vision that include all the groups in which I carried out a period of "theory-driven participant observation" (Lichterman 2002).

3.1 CUCCAGNA ALLIANCE (CA)

"The Cuccagna building site consortium' [formal name of the Cuccagna Allience, CA][1] […] started a project of environmental, structural, and functional recovery, to bring the Cascina Cuccagna [Cuccagna farmhouse] back to full functioning as soon as possible. The overall goal is that of organizing at the farmhouse activities that will promote acquaintances, culture, and solidarity among the people from the urban district and the whole city […] The 'Cuccagna building site consortium' is working to transform the site [the farmhouse] in a space where people can socialize and promote cultural activities" [2]

In this excerpt are concentrated two crucial elements that characterize the CP and all the groups working toward its development: the urban space as the reference area of action for the CA ["the urban district and the whole city"], and the recovery of the ancient farm as an instrumental goal to promote cultural and socializing activities.

The origin of the alliance were clearly described in one of the documents it produced over its existence:

[the CA is] an association of civic groups, cooperatives and cultural associations which has been set up to participate to the public concourse for the allocation of the Cuccagna farmhouse. The association won the concourse and the right to manage this farmhouse for twenty years, and thus it constituted itself in an alliance, the Cuccagna Alliance [CA], which as the purpose of developing the Cuccagna Project[3]

The CA has been set up at the begging of 2004 in order to win the public concourse with which the council of Milan – the owner of the Cuccagna farmhouse – had announced to assign for 20 years the right to run the spaces of the Cuccagna farmhouse. In 2004 the group promoter of the CP - the Cuccagna Cooperative - had already existed for 6 years but, at the moment of deciding to participate in the public concourse, this subject didn't deemed itself to be enough strong and, especially, enough financially reliable to hope to win the concourse. So, it was decided to formally involve other organizations that were already cooperating to the development of the CP and to set up a new association (the Cuccagna Alliance) that included them all. The fact that several organizations formally engaged themselves in the Cuccagna Project was seen as something that could guarantee a bigger stability.

The official purpose of the CA was that of developing the CP:

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[1] Here is not translated as "Cuccagna Alliance" because this text was in English in its original version, and who wrote this text decided to translate literally "Consorzio Cantiere Cuccagna", while I've decided to give a shorter non literale translation of this name.

[2] from the Esterni English web pages about the Cuccagna Alliance to which it is a member of (http://allariscossa.it/eng/progetti/view.php?action=retrieve&ref=cascina%20cuccagna).

[3] From the document called "Progetto Cuccagna. Partecipare alla costruzione di uno spazio pubblico", which was part of folder containing the press material that was distributed on the occasion of press conference held on the 28th of January 2009.

We rehabilitate the Cuccagna Farmhouse in order to publicly use its precious spaces and activate a network of competences, energies, resources, companies and associations that together work as multiplier of culture, relationships, exchanges, sharing. A small revolution that change a locale in an open air laboratory of a new sociality[1].

In this quotation we can find again all the recurring elements that define the overall aim of the CP: *change the locale* through the creation of *a new sociality, multiplication of exchanges and the instrumental* use of the spaces of the Cuccagna farmhouse at this respect.

The Cuccagna Alliance was formed by 7 groups that have been cited in the opening interview. Let's briefly consider them according to the official statements through which they presented themselves:

Associazione Esterni[2]: "Milan cultural association set up in 1995, it develop events and projects aiming at valorize public spaces and to promote culture in all its forms: cinema, design, arts, music, video art, architecture. At the vary basis of each of Esterni's project there is the will of creating opportunities of interaction, integration and exchange, stimulating in single people a sense of social responsibility and fostering the widest participation"[3].

Chiamamilano[4]: "It has been set up from the personal involvment that Milly and Massimo Moratti devote to the city of Milan. Its mission is that of actively contributing to make this city a better place, fostering new modes of communication among people, listening to the needs and ideas of citizens, and turning some of these ideas in sustainable and concrete ideas"[5].

Cuccagna Cooperative: "Set up in 1998 by some citizes of Milan urban council district 4 motivated by their shared needs of creating opportunities of gathering, sharing, solidarity and contrast isolation and exclusion. The specific purpose was that of re-habilitating the abandoned Cuccagna farmhouse to make it an active laboratory or urban sociality, an everyday point of reference, open to the cultural, artistic, leisure and convivial initiative of the territory"[6].

Cooperativa Sociale Comunità Progetto[7] : "It has been set up in 1991 from a reflection on which solutions to proposes to people affected by psychiatric problems. Educators of Comuità Progetto work where it is required, their venues is where the problems are located. Their purpose is that of producing cultural process of orientation to work, prevention of school abandoning, experimenting protective housing solutions. The group collaborate

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[1] From the document called "Cuccagna Project", part of folder containing the press material that was distributed on the occasion of press conference held on the 28th of January 2009.

[2] http://www.Esterni.org

[3] From the official description of the association given in the website of the CP: http://www.cuccagna.org/portal/IT/handle/?page=chisiamo_consorzio

[4] http://www.chiamamilano.it

[5] From the official description of the association given in the website of the CP: http://www.cuccagna.org/portal/IT/handle/?page=chisiamo_consorzio

[6] From the official description of the association given in the website of the CP: http://www.cuccagna.org/portal/IT/handle/?page=chisiamo_consorzio

[7] http://www.comunitaprogetto.org/

with the council of Milan, the province of Milan, Lombardy region, and psycho- self-administered social centersof Milan"[1].

Cooperativa Sociale Diapason[2] : "set up in 1985, occupy 70 workers-members and 20 not members workers; it recur also to the collaboration of volunteers of the National and international Civil service and interns from Milan universities. It promotes processes of social inclusion for underage people, with socio-educative solutions [...]. Intervenes with projects of social animation for the youngest of the communities, in the schools, in the territories. It carryes out formative activities of public organisms, organizations, groups of work. It works in tight collaboration with Territorial social services, foundations, local authorities, schools and civil society actors"[3].

Cooperativa Sociale S. Martino [4]: "Founded in 1919, it became Social cooperative in 1997. It addresses disadvantages contexts and people with socio-educative and formative interventions. It works in Milan and its province realizing several services directed mainly to minors of Italian and foreign families. It realizes interventions in schools in collaboration with public and private institutions and local communities"[5].

Smemoranda Cooperative[6]: "set up in Milan in 1980 with the purposes of managing and developping the omonym editorial project of a diary-book. Over time, thanks to the success of its main product [...] the Cooperative has became vehicle of sustainment and propulsion of solidarity cultural initiatives. It has succeeded in conjugate the sustainment to the active solidarity with the search for the most adequate tools to generate joy, serenity, amusement that have consolidated important relations with the worlds of music, satire and editor"[7].

It would be imprecise to say that the aforementioned 7 structured groups that were part of the CA were devoted to develop the CP. Even officially, each of the aforementioned groups didn't commit itself in carrying out any specific activities related to the unfolding of the CP. At this respect their involvement in the CP's activities was made through the inclusion of members of these groups in the organs of the CA or in CP associations. Instead, these organizations, mainly carried out their specific activities and didn't directly take part in the accomplishing of the CP. Nevertheless members of groups included in the CA contributed to the development of the CP, but through specific and *ad hoc* groups that had been created expressively for this reason. Let's see in detail these groups.

THE CA ORGANIZING STRUCTURE

[1]   From the official description of the association given in the website of the CP: http://www.cuccagna.org/portal/IT/handle/?page=chisiamo_consorzio.

[2] http://www.coopdiapason.it/

[3]   From the official description of the association given in the website of the CP: http://www.cuccagna.org/portal/IT/handle/?page=chisiamo_consorzio

[4] http://www.coopsmartino.it/

[5]   From the official description of the association given in the website of the CP: http://www.cuccagna.org/portal/IT/handle/?page=chisiamo_consorzio

[6] http://www.smemoranda.it/

[7]   From the official description of the association given in the website of the CP: http://www.cuccagna.org/portal/IT/handle/?page=chisiamo_consorzio

The organizing structure of the CA was complex and made by several groups. The alliance comprised a *president*, and a *management board*, which was composed by 5 members that were the leaders of some – not all - of the associations included in the CA[1]. The management board possessed a president and a vice-president and meet weekly to manage the ordinary ongoing activities with which the CP engaged itself with. This organ was deemed as the "executive power" of the CA and it formally possessed the power of taking decision affecting the development of the CP, such as the hiring of new professionals, the setting up of events, or the inclusion of new groups into the alliance.

The representatives of the groups that were part of the CA met every 2-3 months in a specific meetings, called the *CA meeting*. During these meetings general issues and short term practical activities were discussed. On the contrary of the *Managing board* meetings, the CA meetings couldn't take any compelling decisions.

There were roughly 30 volunteers that were members of groups informally included in the CP and that the CA could summon on specific occasions, such as the setting up of events. The organizing structure of the CP included also a certain numbers of members that worked as *staff members*. These were remunerated members that often were also parts of other CP groups. As it has been anticipated in the radio interview, the CP comprised also the *Committee of supervision and control*, the group that represented "the institutional support of the project"[2]. The committee was formed by several representatives of political or cultural local institutions[3], it met 4 times during the two years of my participant observation and possessed a generic function of orientation and the specific official goal of supervision on the ongoing developments of the CP, in order to see if they corresponded to the scheduled purposes and plans[4]. The Committee in itself didn't set up any type of initiatives, but their members were normally invited to take part into the activities promoted by other groups of the CP. The CA, in 2008, set up a specific group, the *Cuccagna farmhouse Onlus Committee,* that had the purpose of collecting money from single citizens and whose chairman was a well known reliable Milan lawyer.

Especially through the managing board, the CA took decisions that strongly affected the overall development of the CP and the way singles groups carried out their specific purpose. For example in 2006 the Management board decided to set up the Cuccagna Group for the Construction of the Participation (CGCP) and hired a sociologist – Sergio D – to run this group for the following 3 years. The very first act the CA did, short after it won the legal right to manage the ancient

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[1] Indeed, the *Managing board* was not a representative organ and thus it didn't include members of all the associations that composed the alliance.

[2] From the interview cited at the opening of the chapter.

[3] For the composition of the committee see also the same interview.

[4] Declared in the official documents presenting the CP.These documents were had been written to illustrate the Cuccagna Project to possible funders. The most extensive presentation of the project was the document the CA had written to participate to the funds of Cariplo foundations. I will cite the contents of this document and throughout the chapter while introducing specific aspects of the CP.

farmhouse, it was the setting up of the *Secretariat*. This was initially composed by 2 volunteers that occupied in the afternoons the first room at the entrance of Cuccagna Farmhouse[1]. The *Secretariat* first activities consisted mainly in keeping the farm open in the afternoons, showing it to passing people that wanted to take a guided tour inside the accessible parts of it. The *Secretariat* also prepared official documents that the CA required. Over the period of my fieldwork experience, in parallel with the increasing structuration of the organizing form of the Cuccagna Alliance, the Secretariat grew the number of its paid staff members: from 1, at the beginning, to 3 paid members and 4 interns at the end of the fieldwork experience. In parallel to this growth of staff members, they specialized their tasks with reference to the area of fund-raising, marketing and press office. Also, over time the secretariat organized an increasingly number of activity: while during the first period of my fieldwork its activities were limited to running the administrative tasks that were necessary to the CA, then it started to set up specific initiatives such as the press conference held on the 28th January 2009, or the local farmers market that took place in the streets nearby the farm during May 2009, and that in the last period of my participant observation became a regular initiative of every Tuesday afternoon.

Apart from the official groups, the CA decided to set up a recurrent periodic meeting with all the people that, at different titles, were actively engaged in the development of the CP: activists, volunteers, professional or various type of collaborators. This meeting was called "*the active*" because it comprised everyone that was *active* in the development of the Cuccagna Project. The official purpose of the meeting was that of reporting and updating about the latest news that had occurred since the last meeting and the ongoing activities in which each CP group was engaged with. As I've partially anticipated, the organizing structure of the CA changed over the period of my participant observation and over time, it became more and more structured and professionalized because of the worsen of the lack of money suffered by the CA. Indeed, the CA has always ended its financial year with a loss, and when I finished my fieldwork it lacked 1,3 million of euros for funding the development of the CP (especially for financing the restructuring of the farmhouse). The CA covered its costs and tried to lessen its loss collecting money in several ways: from single citizens (with its Cuccagna Onlus Committee), participating in public concourses, with fund-raising campaigns, technical or financial sponsorship from business companies.

Summarizing what has been said about the CA, and anticipating the evolution it experienced during the two years of my participant observation, the following chart represent the starting position of the CA[2] and its move from embedded and stable forms of action (at the beginning of my participant observation) towards more ephemeral repertoires of action (mainly events).

Concrete purposes of the activities carried out

	Equipping the group and the CP with the	Sociality for the sake of sociality

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[1] When the restructuring works begun it moved into a provisional container-like structure that had been settled in the open space of the farmhouse.

[2] In particular of the Secretariat, the Committee of supervision and control and the *Managing board*.

Main repertoire of actions		resources to pursue its goals	
	Events	CA[1] ↑	
	Settled forms of action	CA[2]	

Figure 3. Cuccagna Alliance's activities over time

3.2 CUCCAGNA COOPERATIVE

This is the organization that firstly started the CP: it was "born in 1998 from the initiative of some citizens of Milan "Zone 4" motivated by their shared need of creating opportunities of meetings, sharing, solidarity and to contrast isolation and social exclusion. It has been set up with the specific purpose of recuperating the abandoned Cuccagna Farmhouse to make this structure became an active laboratory of urban sociality, an everyday point of reference, open to the cultural, artistic, leisure, and convivial initiatives of the locale"[3]. The first bulk of CC's members had been initially mobilized on the basis of their deep concern for the decline of urban culture and the lack of an adequate cultural offer in the urban district in which they lived in:

> "In the last decades of the XX century, urban changes produced the **decomposition**[4] of an urban culture of reference, which has been changed in, on the one hand, many cultural initiatives that are not coordinated among themselves and, on the other hand, the still urgent request of occasions of meeting, gathering, cultural exchange and participation. In order to foster the meeting and the integration among these realities it has been individuated in the Cuccagna farmhouse: a physical and symbolic place adequate to realize such integration. An ensemble of citizens at the end of the 90s decided to give themselves this purpose: the Cuccagna Cooperative is born."[5]

Also in this case the group official statements reproduced the subordinate and instrumental - even though fundamental - role assigned to the physical spaces of the farmhouse with respect to their potential as adequate containers of the group 's action to revitalize the decomposed urban culture. The CC official goal is that of

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[1] I'm referring here in particular to the secretariat, Managing board, Committee of supervision and control.

[2] Ibidem.

[3] From the CP website http://www.cuccagna.org/portal/IT/handle/?page=chisiamo_consorzio

[4] Bolding in the original.

[5] From the third page of the leaflet produce d in 2007 called "Progetto Cuccagna".

> Set free and foster the circulation of energies, competencies, professional skills with the purpose of setting up open, complex, generative organizations that will produce sociality and services, will communicate among different cultures, intentions and projects.[1]

Often in the group official statements it was said that the specific purpose of CC is that of rehabilitating the Cuccagna farmhouse to build a *new sociality:*

> The abandonment and the degrade of many places of this city are visible to everyone and these processes go in parallel with the several signs of deterioration of the civic cohabitation and crumbling away of the social fabric. We deem necessary and urgent, besides than reasonable, rehabilitate the places the collectivity dispose of and dedicate them to the possible reconstruction of a new sociality"[2]

In particular, the CC official statements about its goals stressed the face-to-face level of the social relationships that they aimed fostering, in particular with reference to the physical arrangements of the Cuccagna farm:

> We have a space in which we can look at each other and reciprocally recognize ourselves, where it is allowed more time to think, speak and understand each other[3]

The very first activities in which CC engaged itself were the collecting of signatures in the neighborhood and the urban district in which the Cuccagna Farmhouse was settled in order to ask the council the allocation of those abandoned spaces. From 2004 the CC was officially a member of the CA, and from that period the group witnessed a dramatic drop in the number of its members, that passed from 128 in 1998 to 54 in 2008[4], with an active number of members that participated at the group meetings that never overcame 25 members during the period of my fieldwork. The evolution in the activities the CC has carried out from 1998 to 2008 has been described by this group as follows:

> "CC did a systematic work of involvement of the local realities and neighborhood citizens around the idea of the Cuccagna Project. This work has been carried out through cultural and aggregative meetings in the spaces of the farmhouse, street parties, petitions and public initiatives set up in cooperation with cultural associations and institutions. Over the years several other social and cultural subjects have gathered around this experience, having in common the same idea and giving birth to the first aggregative bulk of territorial experiences"[5].

The organizing structure of the CC was formed by the general meeting of all its members, convened at least once a year to approve the economic balance. This was about 1,5 thousand of euros, represented by the costs required for budget fulfillments. The budget was totally covered with the

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[1] P. 2 of the document called "Uno spazio pubblico per una nuova socialità. Progetto di riabilitazione e utilizzo sociale polifunzionale della proprietà demaniale denominata Cascina Cuccagna (Milano, zona 4).

[2] *Ibidem*.

[3] From the CC internal document called "Una cuccagna per Milano"

[4] This number contrast with what it has been written in the website of the CA, where it is said that the CC "currently possess 96 members". The source of my date is an interview I conducted with the president of the CC in march 2008.

[5] From the third page of the leaflet produce d in 2007 called "Progetto Cuccagna".

membership fees. Over the course of my field work the group didn't innovate its repertoire of actions, neither re-oriented the concerns that animated such actions.

Concrete purposes of the activities carried out

		Equipping the group and the CP with the resources to pursue its goals	Sociality for the sake of sociality
Repertoire of actions	Events		
	Settled forms of action		Cuccagna Cooperative

Figure 4. Cuccagna Cooperative's activities over time.

3.3 ESTERNI

Esterni was the only organization that is officially part of the CA that has been taken as a research case study. This exception was motivated by the fact that this group - on the contrary of the other associations composing the CA- actively engaged itself in carrying out specific initiatives for the development of the CP. This made this group different from all the other that were formally part of the CA and very similar to all the other groups taken as case study of my inquiry.

Sociality and cultural activities conflated in the definition Esterni gaves about itself on the English page of its website:

> The upgrading of public areas and the centrality of people are the driving force of all Esterni activities; socialization, cultural exchange, the city as a place where people meet and get together, social responsibility and broadened participation are the motive behind each and every project of Esterni.

In particular, for Esterni as for all the other case study groups, sociality was the sphere that most qualified the group's field of action according to its official statements:

> socialization and cultural exchange, the improvement of the public space, the city as a meeting and socializing area, and an enlarged participation: these are the values expressed in all ideas, projects, and interventions carried on by Esterni since 1995[1]

This group was born in 1995 as a cultural association with the name of "April" whose first activities consisted in the setting up the Milan Film festival and other cultural initiatives[2]. The association's website include a FAQ part in which the question "What does Esterni do?" is answered as follows:

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[1] http://www.esterni.org/eng/consulting/content.php?ref=consulting

[2] The source of this information is the speech a core member of Esterni gave on the occasion of the workshops the group set up in may 2008 title "How to set up a cultural association" . In particular, part of the first workshop session was dedicated to illustrate the history or Esterni.

It develops cultural projects in the fields of films, design, art, and music, always keeping a keen eye on the upgrading and transformation of urban spaces, and on the city as a place where people meet and get to know each other[1]

In this and other very similar statements, the group's cultural activities were defined with specific reference to the sociable value of the city. The group broad purpose of "upgrading public areas" was articulated in several ways with respect to the specific activities the group engaged itself with. In the following chapters, when for analytical purpose I will consider in detail some of the group's initiatives, I will illustrate these specific articulations. For the moment it is worth underlying that what these articulations have in common is the fact of conceiving the setting up of cultural initiative as ways to enact an urban public dimension, which was conceived as made of sociable occasions that reinforced the social fabric of the whole city. Indeed, Milan was normally the reference area of Esterni's action in its official statements. A clear delimitation of smaller urban portions (areas, neighborhoods) in which Esterni acted was detailed uniquely with respect to specific projects carried out by the group[2]. Otherwise, Milan remained the dominant context of reference for making sense of Esterni action of re-generating public spaces.

In Milan public spaces are more and more disappearing. Esterni aims at regenerating them through sociality occasions that wants to be inclusive for the widest public[3]

Very often, Milan "Zone 4" was the local privileged interlocutor for Esterni's action, especially for addressing request of funding[4]. Over 15 years long history the group grew more and more the number of activities it carried out, equipped itself with a more professionalized and structured organizing form[5] and augmented significantly the number of its staff members[6]. The English section of the associational website specify that in these days "16 people work full time in the different sectors involved in the designing and development of projects and events"[7], but the organizational

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the president of the association by sociologists that have asked also about the origin of the group.

[1] http://www.Esterni.org/ita/Esterni/

[2] As for example in the case of the project called "Centrifugal movement" which will be illustrated in chapter 5 of this essay.

[3] From the press material documents Esterni prepared on the occasion of its project called "Public Design festival" 2008.

[4] Indeed, even though Esterni's venue during my empirical research was at the boundaries between Milan district 4 and 3 (To be precise Esterni's venue it was collocated a few meters beyond Milan district 4, in Milan district 3) requests of funding addressed always Milan district 4 and no other public local interlocutor.

[5] Formally the group acquired a double identity: on the hand it formally remained a cultural association inscribed to the regional register with the name of "Aprile", on the other hand it constituted itself in a business company (Ltd firm) with the name of "Esterni."

[6] Esterni actual members are uniquely staff members. Indeed, because of legal reasons everyone who participate in some of Esterni public initiatives, even if as mere audience, is obliged to formally became a member of the association. This happen through the payment of a limited amount of money (roughly 5 euros in the latest years) and the possession of a specific membership card. But this is done exclusively for legal reasons and don't involve any type of active participation in the group formal or informal life.

[7] www.esterni.org

structure of this group was far more complex than what this sentence could allowed to guess. Indeed, the website added also that "every phase of the projects, from their planning to the very end, is entirely carried out by Esterni, in collaboration with its international network of professionals and advisors (artists, musicians, handicraftsmen, critics, journalists, intellectuals, graphic designers, technicians)."[1] On the basis of my fieldwork experience I reconstructed Esterni organizational chart as composed of various levels which were hierarchically structured among themselves. At the top of the hierarchy there was the *Managing board*, which was composed by 6 members, with at least a 5 years experience as Esterni staff members. Among these people there were the president and the vice-president of the association, which were the only members that were included in the original group of people that15 years ago founded the association. Then there were the members who, on a regular basis, worked in Esterni's venue[2]: the *Managing board*'s members, 5-6 Esterni stable workers, and roughly 10 interns. The latter were normally young graduated in communication, marketing, cinema or sociology that worked in the "palazzina" (the name of Esterni's headquarter) for free during three months, after which they could be hired (or not) as paid Esterni staff members depending on Esterni's needs in that moment. In the periods in which Esterni events were approaching the number of interns in the "palazzina" grew significantly[3].

Among all the groups taken as case studies, Esterni was the most structured and professionalized one. The economic balance of this group was the highest among all the groups of my research. Indeed, Esterni's balance sheet during the two years of my empirical research was of roughly 80.000 euro. Though, it is worth specifying that the group remained a non-profit association, whose main economical concern was of not ending the financial year with a loss[4]. Esterni covered its financial needs through three main channels: 1) earnings made through events in which the group did a bar service and sold self-produced goods (such as t-shirts); 2) sponsorship of specific projects on the part of business companies; 3) public funds Esterni was able to get from the local, the national or the European government level.

The elevated economic turnover possessed by the group allowed Esterni to engage itself in several activities, which were quite diversified among themselves. Indeed, these included:

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[1] http://www.Esterni.org/eng/Esterni/

[2] Esterni venue during my first period was called "palazzina". The Palazzina was a three-level building almost in the outskirts of Milan. The basement was devoted interchangingly to work or to the public events Esterni used to set up: a restaurant once a week and cultural initiatives (concerts, readings, arts shows). The first level was a space hosting offices. Nowadays Esterni has changed his venue.

[3] Many professional collaborators (such as website developers, graphics, artists that produce specific products) also worked for Esterni; they did not work in the "palazzina" but they used to pass by quite frequently for meetings or simply to greet. Indeed, in most of the cases they were also personal friends with Esterni core members.

[4] Naturally, the group didn't aim at making profit. this, as all the other groups of my research, remained a non profit group, though with a very high economic turnover.

- cultural events, and in particular music or video festivals that lasted from 3 to 10 days and took place in several places – such as theaters, cinema, squares, streets, churches or museum - at the same time;

- small cultural initiatives - such as readings, book presentations or concerts- which used to take place also in Esterni venue;

- a restaurant activity which took place at the basement level of Esterni's venue every Tuesday night;

- a consulting activity, "a division of esterni dedicated to people – both from profit and non-profit organizations – who act in the public space with communication campaigns, events, cultural and experimental projects, social responsibility interventions, public art, and more generally activities to improve and enhance urban areas"[1];

- the TV's viewer strike: a day long occasion in which the group promoted a variety of cultural initiatives in coordination with more recognized cultural institutions[2].

- The running of the association in 2006 as a candidate in the local mayor political election of Milan.

The variety of activities Esterni carried out made the analysis of this association particularly interesting because such a variety called forth many *tensions* among "institutional logics" (Friedland, Alford 1991) that in the everyday group life. For this reason the empirical evidences shown in the next part will often refer to this association and a whole chapter (the number 7) will be devoted to inquiry how tensions were managed in the group life of this association.

With respect to the aforementioned chart, a broad perspective on this group make it suitable to fit all the scheduled boxes because of its large repertoire of actions and the many priorities of goals possessed by the group activities.

Concrete purposes of the activities carried out

	Equipping the group and the CP with the resources to pursue its goals	Sociality for the sake of sociality
Events	Esterni	Esterni

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[1] http://www.esterni.org/eng/consulting/content.php?ref=consulting

[2] An example of these activities was the discount on the cost of museum tickets during the day of the strike if the public would show a remote control at the cash desks.

Main repertoire	Settled forms of action	Esterni	Esterni

Of action

Figure 5. Esterni's activities over time

The chart in figure 9 shows that on the one hand Esterni recurred both to the setting up initiatives that took the shape of events and to stable forms of action that took place on a regular basis in its venue. On the other hand, with respect to CP's priorities, the public activities Esterni carried out aimed at the same time at enacting sociality occasions that fostered the emergence of urban public spaces and to raise the money required to fund the CP. Finally, it is worth noting that the chart is devoid of arrows to indicate the fact that the (varied) repertoires of action Esterni used and the different short term goals the group pursued through them didn't experience significant changes over the period of my field research.

3.4 CUCCAGNA GROUP FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF PARTICIPATION (CGCP)

The Cuccagna Group for the Construction of the Participation (CGCP) was settled in May 2006 with the CA's managing board decision to assign a professional sociologist (Sergio D) the burden of forming a group working with the specific purpose of "building the tools, the manners, and opportunities to foster the widest active participation in the Cuccagna Project"[1]. The group's accent on the *active* nature of the participation it aimed at fostering was cited by its leader also in the radio interview in terms of "offer of spaces, opportunities, conditions to let single citizens be the direct protagonist of what they do"[2]. The CGCP was asked by the CA to make citizens participate in the CP and the group, in its official statements, made a point of distinguishing various type of participation:

> The real challenge that the CGPC is facing - a challenge that has also the flavour of a pleasant adventure – is that of being capable of going from the old idea of "project on" to the new one of "project with": with citizens, associations, giving to everyone rooms to express. Our listening of local society will be a mutual one in order to "give value" but also "feeling valued" by the subjects encountered during the development of the overall Cuccagna project[3].

The concept was then illustrated on several public occasions by Sergio D, the group's leader, with reference to the territorial value of the action promoted by the group:

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[1] From the internal document of the CGCP written by Sergio D and called "The adventure of participation" (original title "L'avventura Della partecipazione. Primo report sulle attività del gruppo 'Costruzione della Partecipazione' dentro il progetto 'Cascina Cuccagna').

[2] *Ibidem*.

[3] Ibidem.

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> "Given that Milan is more and more lacking public places, where it is possible to freely go and meet people, the idea of the CP was that of creating a place in which citizens could not simply feel as "guests" but they could became direct protagonists, according the modality that we may define of the *protagonist participation*"[1]

This excerpt was part of the speech *Sergio D* pronounced with a megaphone during an event held on the 10th of July 2008 in the Cuccagna farmhouse. The excerpt reveals that, as for the other cases, also the CGCP defined its purpose with reference to Milan, conceived as a context in lack of sociable and public spaces. Compared to the other groups I observed, the CGCP stressed more the local neighborhood as reference area for the action of the group. For example, in the following excerpt the reference to the idea of protagonist participation is articulated with respect the local neighborhood in which the Cuccagna farmhouse was settled:

> The group aims at creating occasions and rites of reciprocal hail between the neighborhood and the Cuccagna farmhouse, made   of reciprocal listening, tales, images and imaginaries[2]

This is just one of the many example where it is clear that the group aims firstly at fostering the active participation of local residents that live in the neighborhood where the Cuccagna farmhouse was settled.

When I started my fieldwork the group was formed by 15 members and the group leader. In that period the group's main tasks had been summarized in another document by Sergio D as follows:

> 1. Listening/mapping cale, of the needs, desires and projects of local subjects from the neighbourhood and that have expressed their will to interact with the CP;
>
> 2. Construction of 'participatory events', meant as experimentation of occasions of 'co-protagonism' between the CGCP and 'pieces' of the citizenship drawing on ideas, needs, imaginaries emerged in the first phase;
>
> 3. Definition of the 'Participation guidelines', an ensemble of dynamic rules, shared ways of managing the future participatory moments, activities, events, which will serve also to orient the style of work that will be developed in the restructured farmhouse[3]

Similarly to what we have observed for the other cases, also this group stressed the value of the space settings of the Cuccagna farmhouse for pursuing its goals. The farmhouse was defined as follows:

> a place that can regenerate on the one hand moments of sociality/conviviality that have been lost since long time and, on the other hand, stimulate the desire of a more active participation, making feel citizens protagonist of a new project, that is based on the self organization[4]

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[1] From the internal document of the CGCP written by Sergio D and called "Gruppo Costruzione della partecipazione".

[2] Ibidem

[3] From the internal document of the group called "Group Construction of the participation".

[4] Ibidem.

In this last excerpt it is also clearly evident the implicit conception of regenerating a sociality "that has been lost since long time", with an accent on the loss that – as we shall see later on in this chapter- is typical of many case study groups of this research. Various elements present in this group official statements clearly resonated with the languages and the sensibilities emerged from the experiences of deliberative democracy begun with the Social Forum of Porto Alegre. In particular the accent on the active and cooperative nature of the participation the group wanted to foster, the emphasis on the local level defined at the micro scale, the accent on desires and expressivity are all elements present in the model of local direct democracy carried out by the season of local participation tied – at least ideally- to the experience of the world social forum (Montagnini 2002)[1].

The history of the CGCP can be divided in three phases, according to the point of view of its leader:

1. The first phase - the "phase of learning" - started in April 2006, when the group was set up, and lasted until September 2007. During this period the group was formed by roughly 15 members, with an high turnover rate of the members that attended the group's meetings and actively participated in the group life. In this phase the group members committed themselves in learning theoretical concepts about local participation and specific interactive techniques for the management of small participatory groups. Exemples of such techniques were focus groups, brainstorming meetings, or the "creative management of conflicts" (Sclavi 2005). Learning implied readings written essays, listening to Sergio's speeches and practice groups exercises. These exercises included also interviews with local residents from the neighbourhoods aiming at improving group members relational and communicative skills.

2. The second phase – the "Participatory tables" phase - started in September 2007 and lasted until November 2008. In this phase the group mainly engaged in setting up and manage new civic self-organizing groups, called the Participatory Tables (PTs). These were groupings of citizens formed during "Participatory events", occasions in which CGCP members used their relational competences and techniques to facilitate local citizens to come together and act collectively on the basis of their own shared interests, with a strong self-organizing orientation. Some of these groupings are introduced in the analytical chapters of the dissertation (from chapter 4 to chapter 8), in particular those that became case studies of my research.

3. The third phases - started in November 2008 and lasted until December 2009, the "open Saturdays" phase - and was characterized by a drastic drop in the number of members that passed from roughly 10 individuals of the previous phase to 5 people, the group leader included. During this phase the group definitely dismissed its learning activities to entirely dedicate itself to set up sociality occasions open in particular to neighbourhood

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[1] Hardly by chance Sergio D (the leader of the CGCP) and Sergio B (president of the CA's *Managing board*) have been already knowing each other for long time but met for the first time after more than 20 years on the occasion of their participation in 2002 in the local groups of Milan Social forum.

residents. These occasions were called "Open Saturdays" because they used to take place on Saturdays in the spaces of the Cuccagna farmhouse's garden. These occasions represented at the same time possibilities of new self-organizing groups could form or simply sociable moments for the widest public. During the very last period of my participant observation the CGCP set up a new specific group oriented at managing the problem of figuring out solutions to the lack of money suffered by the CP.

The formal organizing structure of the group remained the same over its three phases, though the number of its members varied significantly over its life. All the members of this group were volunteers that in most of the cases were also members of the CC. The group leader had been formally hired by the CA's *Managing board*, and didn't previously belong to any other CP groups. The group official structure remained over time that of an informal group and this didn't require members to pay any fee or the group to prepare any official documents for legal fulfillments (such as the balance sheet, observed for other case study groups)

At the begging of my participant observation the group used to held regularly every two weeks its meetings. In its first phase the group devoted itself to study theoretical and pragmatic techniques, on the base of the assumption that an effective deliberative democracy (envisioned with the implicit reference to the World Social forum) required the knowledge of specific ways of organizing the group's activities. From its second phase the CGCP started to set up events that were meant as sociality occasions, initially oriented toward the setting up of new groups (the Participatory Events) and then more as convivial moments good in themselves (the Open Saturdays). In the last period of my participant observation the group started to set up events that were oriented at raising money for financing the development of the CP, but these events failed their goal and were soon dismissed from the repertoire of action of the group.

Concrete purposes of the activities carried out

	Equipping the group and the CP with the resources to pursue its goals	Sociality for the sake of sociality
Main repertoire of Action — Events	←	CGCP ↑
Settled forms of action		CGCP

Figure 6. Cuccagna Group for the Construction of the Participation's activities over time

The fact that one of the flash in the chart didn't indicate the group's name mean that the group uniquely tended toward the setting up of events that could furnish more resources for the CP, but never succeeded in that.

3.5 THE GREEN PARTICIPATORY TABLE (GREEN PT)

The Green PT (or Green group, as it was also called) represented the most successful case of Participatory Table set up by the CGCP in terms of numbers of participant, variety of repertoire of actions, capacity of attaining the goals it gave itself and contribution to the development of the general CP. Also, this group was the only ones among those observed that succeeded in creating new social relationships both among group members with subjects beyond the group.

The group was born as a result of the Participatory event held in July 2008. The formation of the group drew on the shared interest of some of the people that attended that Participatory Event in taking care and cultivate the green areas inside the Cuccagna farmhouse

. Rapidly the group detached itself from the CGCP – through a partially conflictual process described in the next chapter - and entirely dedicate itself to the cultivation of a vegetable garden inside the farmhouse. The group conceived its purpose in terms of "creating a sociality space through the proposal of a concrete activity [cultivating] that was open to everyone"[1]. In the internal documents produced by the group and through the interviews I conducted with its group members, cultivating the garden was defined as a "learning by doing activities that offered everyone the possibility engaging oneself in a sociable ambience"[2]. During my first period of empirical research in this group, one of the group's core members used to repeat that the group's purpose was "the enactment of sociality" and that "gardening was a tool", that is to say gardening was taken as a pretext to cooperate or simply engage in face-to-face interactions with other people. The reference area for the action of this group was described in its internal documents with reference to the boundaries of the local neighborhood. Indeed, as we shall see in the next chapters, the actions this group carried out involved almost exclusively local organizations, such as for example the local elementary school whose young students attended some of the workshops organized by the group.

Gardening and the related green issues were topics that raised a relevant interest in the widest public of urban context, especially in a place such as Milan where the air pollution and other environmental related topics had become an increasingly collective concern[3]. Indeed, over time the group rapidly increased the number of its members over time. Especially, it grew the numbers of members that engaged themselves in the cultivation of the earth of the Cuccagna farmhouse,

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[1] From the internal document of the group called "Open letter to the managing board of the CA" written on the 28/02/2009

[2] From the internal document of the group called "Report on the Green group" written on the 30 January 2008.

[3] Apart from being one of the biggest Italian (ex) industrial urban area, the city's pollution was often an issue covered by the media during the period of my research because Milan repeatedly overcome the legal limits fixed by the EU for the air pollution.

passing from the initial 7 members to roughly 17 members. These members didn't came exclusively from the local neighborhood but, on the contrary, most of them came from other parts of the city.

Though increasing the number of its members, the group continued to keep an informal structure that didn't comprise any official roles, or any paid member. The Green PT gathered monthly to discuss about the ongoing activities in which the group engaged itself. Over time the group added to its gardening activities also more structured initiatives, especially workshops, that aimed at collecting money to sustain the development of the overall CP. The group described this shift in the activities it carried out in another internal document as follows: "the move from small interventions (such as the creation of flower beds and a vegetable garden) toward a more structured intervention"[1] .

Concrete purposes of the activities carried out

Main repertoire of Action

	Equipping the group and the CP with the resources to pursue its goals	Sociality for the sake of sociality
Events	Green PT ←	Green PT ↑
Settled forms of action		Green PT

Figure 7. Green PT's activities over time

This chart represents the move the group did over the period of my participant observation in it. The group has started by taking care of the Cuccagna farmhouse and gardening its green spaces: a very settled form of actions (tied to stable spaces and regular timing) that was firstly meant as a tool for creating sociality occasions. Then the group passed to set up activities such as workshops that were meant as good sociality occasions and at the same time as ways to contribute to fund the development of the CP. The group succeeded in raising money for the CP and this type of events became over time a structured part of the groups repertoire of action.

Though this group did an apparently very similar path than that described for the CGCP, we shall see in the next chapters that the processes involved in such a path were very different and especially that the two groups' actions resulted in very different outcomes with respect to their purpose of creating social relationships beyond the group.

3.6 THE ART PT

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[1] P. 2 of the internal document called "Relazione del Gruppo Verde" 30/07/'08.

The Art PT was set up during the same "Participatory event" when the Green PT had been set up. In this case the group gathered all the attendees of that event that expressed the vague will to actively engage themselves in the CP through artistic activities. The group was initially formed by seven members and it didn't give itself any clearly defined purpose a part from that of realizing some sort of artistic activity for socializing purposes and contribute to the development of the CP[1]. One of the main group's activities during my empirical research was that of engaging in long discussions that aimed at figuring out what concrete activity the group members could possibly have promoted. One of the main idea the group tried to realize consisted in the sewing of a big patchwork to cover the Cuccagna farm during the restructuring works. But this idea never turned in a stable activity in which the group engaged itself and the Art PT never succeed in sewing its patchwork. After almost an year and a half from its set up the group dissolved because all its members gradually left the group by stopping to attend its meetings[2].

During the group meetings the members of the Art PT defined the group's purpose in terms of "using arts to create a public space, allowing people to meet each other", thus giving the Arts an instrumental role with respect to the creation of sociality occasions. This was similar to what we have seen the Green PT did with respect to gardening activities. The reference area for the action of this group remained vague during the meetings setting and it could alternatively be the neighborhood (in most of the cases), often Milan "Zone 4" or, on some occasions, even the city.

The Art Pt remained always a very informal group, without any structured roles inside of it. During certain periods, especially at the beginning of its life, when the group meetings were attended by a larger number of people, it was not even possible to exactly distinguish the members of the group from the occasional attendees.

The main repertoire of actions of this group included group meetings publicly open in which group members discussed about how to use arts to create public spaces, and specific initiatives set up during events organized by other CP groups that took place in the setting of the Cuccagna farmhouse. Though short, the life of the Art PT experienced a shift in its main repertoire of actions used to attain its goal. Indeed, from its begging the Art PT struggled to pass from the setting up of meetings toward the organization of events, or specific initiatives during other groups' events, as a ways to pursue its goals. As we shall see in particular in the next chapter, the group failed in its purpose of setting up events that enacted public spaces and also events never became a part of its structured repertoire of action, as it is indicated in the following chart by the fact that the arrow doesn't point to the name of the group.

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[1] Also, this group didn't produce any internal document. So, what I'm saying on members oral statements pronounced during group meetings.

[2] To be more precise after a few months after its dissolving, the group tried to re-establish itself with other members on the occasion of a specific event that was going to be held in the Cuccagna farm, but it didn't succeed to last any more after that event.

Concrete purposes of the activities carried out
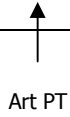
	Equipping the group and the CP with the resources to pursue its goals	Sociality for the sake of sociality
Events		
Settled forms of action		↑ Art PT

Main repertoire of

Action

Figure 8. Art PT's activities over time

3.7 THE OPEN DOORS PT

In the same occasion that the other two PTs were born (which was the participatory event held in February 2008), it was settled also another group formed exclusively by elderly and retired people that wished to spend their time together during their afternoons. The main premise of this group – called Open doors PT - can be summarized with the starting sentence of the handout the group wrote to publicize one of its initiatives:

> For the people who are not young anymore, but that feel as still young…For the many among us that still feel the need to gather, speak, get to know each other, spend their time together, contribute to make this a lively neighborhood[1]

This short excerpt summarizes both the group purpose and the reference area of the group's activities. The first element is represented by the fact of spending their time together, that is to say enacting sociality through occasion that were meant to be inclusive especially toward retired people, but more generally to anyone who wished to participate in making the neighborhood more lively. Secondly, this level of urban scale - the local neighborhood – represented the reference area for the group actions in its official statements. At this respect it is worth specifying that just a part, and not even the majority, of the members of this group lived or worked in the neighborhood where the Cuccagna farmhouse was settled. It is difficult to distinguish between the repertoire of public actions and initiatives of this group and its internal life. Indeed, the Open Doors PT used to gather every Thursday afternoon in a room of the Cuccagna farmhouse to engage in "chatting, listening to music, commenting a recent movie, exchange or reading books, play cards or bowls"[2]. During spring 2008 the group set up 4 conferences where some of the group members spoke about topics related to their past professional experiences. The conference had the following titles:

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[1] From the leaflet the group prepared to publicize the conferences it had set up during spring 2008 and invite the audience to attend them.

[2] *Ibidem.*

- 'The 60 years of the Constitution. To start a discussion'

- 'Monotheistic religions. Similarities and differences'

- 'The 60 years of the Constitution. Elaboration on the topics emerged during the last conference'

- 'Shiatsu (as energy equilibrium) and wellbeing'

The conferences, as the activities promoted during the afternoons, were normally attended uniquely by the group's members or, at best, personal acquaintances of them. The members of Open doors PT were 10 and the majority of them was also part of other CP groups. The group didn't possess any type of formal structure.

When the restructuring works of the farmhouse begun this group was forced to physically move its activities from the Cuccagna farmhouse into the houses that alternatively group members made available for the group initiatives. This simply restricted the possibility of attracting massive audience in the events the group set up. Thus, in spite of this shift of context the purposes and the repertoire of actions of Open doors PT remained stable over the time of my empirical research.

Concrete purposes of the activities carried out

		Equipping the group and the CP with the resources to pursue its goals	Sociality for the sake of sociality
Main repertoire of Action	Events		
	Settled forms of action		Open doors PT

Figure 9. Open doors PT's activities over time

3.8 MOTHER AND CHILDREN PT

The CP has always attracted the interest of parents from the local neighborhood because the farmhouse was generally considered as a good place where activities involving children could have taken place. Indeed, the farmhouse, even if crumbling, included a big garden and many other pleasant spaces that were repaired from the city traffic. So, during a Participatory Events held in march 2008 the attendees sharing this type of interest gathered and formed a group (a Participatory Table, PT) that aimed at organizing activities for children and teenagers inside the spaces of the Cuccagna farmhouse. This group called itself Mother and children Pt because it included mainly

mothers that had come together to enable sociality occasions for their children. Indeed, examples of the activities set up by this group included several parties for children of local schools, workshops for children (such as kite building workshop or drawing workshop) during parties held in the Cuccagna farmhouse[1].

Over the period of my fieldwork, even though the group experienced various crisis that changed the composition of most of its members, Mother and children PT continued to exist and kept organizing small activities that aimed mainly at involving families with their young children from the local neighborhood. The initiatives promoted by this group assumed more and more the form of events over the period of my participant observation, though they remained focused on representing moments of informal sociality and never explicitly aimed at raising money.

Concrete purposes of the activities carried out

Main repertoire of Action		Equipping the group and the CP with the resources to pursue its goals	Sociality for the sake of sociality
	Events		Mother and children PT
	Settled forms of action		Mother and children PT

Figure 10. Mother and children PT's activities over time

3.9 CICLOFFICINA CUCCAGNA

Inside the spaces of the Cuccagna farmhouse a room was occupied from 2005 by an association called "Cuccagna ciclofficina", whose main activity was that of repairing of bicycles and especially helping other to repair their own bikes, thus promoting a culture of self-organization that was meant to foster the use of bikes for commuting in Milan. In the group venue, inside the farmhouse, bike repairing was not the only activity that was carried out: concerts, arts performances or parties were occasionally also held. The group official communication emphasized the sociality dimension of the activities carried out by this group:

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[1] During one of this workshops, children drew faces on the walls that surrounded the Cuccagna farmhouse and these remained permanently and are even nowadays visible passing by the Cuccagna Farmhouse.

> Every activity promoted by the group, both at the level of its internal life and at the level of public activities involving an audience, is characterized by its participatory and inclusive dimension that is evident in its sociality nature[1]

This group also stressed the sociality dimension of its activity and considered it a fundamental aspect that tied group members and that characterized their relation with the audience that attended its venue.

When the restructuring worked started the "ciclofficina cuccagna" moved into a provisional container-like structure that had been settled just beside the farmhouse. Also after this move the group kept setting up the same type of activities with an equal orientation toward sociality. On the contrary of what I have shown for the Participatory Tables (that were simple informal groups), this organization was also legally an association[2] and thus possessed a statute, a membership fee, official roles (president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer), and a financial balance that needed to be approved by group members. Though, as we shall see in the next chapters, this group was particularly affected by conflicting internal tensions, the Ciclofficina Cuccagna didn't radically change over the course of my fieldwork the priority of its official goals or its repertoire of actions, which consisted mainly in running its venue with bike repairing and cultural activities. In the last period of my participant observation the group recurred more and more to the setting up of cultural events, though this type of initiative never became a stable part of the group's repertoire of action, as the chart below shows.

Concrete purposes of the activities carried out

		Equipping the group and the CP with the resources to pursue its goals	Sociality for the sake of sociality
Main repertoire of Action	Events		↑
	Settled forms of action		Ciclofficina Cuccagna

Figure 11. Ciclofficina Cuccagna's activities over time

3.10 CUCCAGNA CINEFORUM GROUP

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[1] From the group internal document called 'The Cuccagna ciclofficina'.

[2] In particular it was an Association of social promotion.

The Cuccagna Cineforum Group (CCG) was mainly formed by members of other CP groups that outside any planned occasion - such as that of the Participatory events - decided to gather on the basis of their shared interest on movies. Indeed, the group main activities consisted in movie projections that used to take place inside the Cuccagna Farmhouse and that when the restructuring works begun moved in the venue of a cultural association situated nor far away from the Cuccagna farmhouse. This group also strongly emphasized sociality dimensions in its official statements about itself and in its repertoire of actions. Movie projections represented a "regeneration of the urban culture of the neighborhood from the bottom- up"[1], they were good occasions to "not unlock themselves in front of the TV", as I often heard them saying. These occasions were meant to be the most inclusive as possible and for this reason the audience of the projections didn't pay any entrance ticket. The sociality nature of the Cuccagna Cineforum Group's activities was also evident in the fact that the group used to accompany movie projections by convivial moments. In particular, the audience used to be invited to show up a couple of hours before the scheduled time of the movie projection and bring food they had previously prepared to share it with the other people in a big collective potluck; after the projection the audience was invited to stay to discuss and exchange opinions with the other attendees about the movie they had just seen.

The organizing form of this group has remained always very loose and informal. The group used to gather every month to decide about the schedule of the projections for the next month and to prepare the organizing activities that were required for each projection. When the restructuring works begun the group simply moved in another venue, maintaining its main traits. The group didn't change the activities it promoted during the period of my participant observation and their main purpose of enacting sociality occasions where people could contribute to regenerate the urban culture.

Main orientation of groups' everyday activities

		Raising money to restructure the farmhouse	Sociality activities
Main repertoire of Action	Events		
	Settled forms of action		Cuccagna Cineforum Group

Figure 12. Cuccagna Cineforum Group's activities over time

4. THE PROPOSAL OF A *NEW* SOCIALITY

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[1] From the content of the handout the Cuccagna Cineforum attached in the neighborhood to publicize the movie projections the group set up.

In the past paragraph I've described the groups taken as case studies focusing in particular on their official goals (illustrated through their formal statements), on the activities they carried out, on some general traits of their organizing structures and hinting also at their evolution over time. Looking at the overall description of all the groups taken as case studies, it emerges a significant evidence. This is the fact that the general collective representation that is at the basis of CP's official communication is articulated in a limited number of ways in the formal statements of the case study groups of this research. In particular, the CP's purpose of generating inclusive forms of reciprocal face-to-face communication and more stable social ties was recurrently defined by the observed groups with respect to three elements: 1) the availability of the physical settings of the (restructured) farmhouse; 2) the regeneration an urban local cultural in decay; 3) the purpose of creating a "new sociality".

The first aspect (the physical spaces of the Cuccagna Farm) will be separately treated in the next paragraph of this chapter. The second aspect (the regeneration of the local urban cultural in decay) invest most of the cultural initiatives set up by CP groups and, thus, it will be widely detailed with empirical examples of such initiatives throughout the next chapters. This paragraph is devoted to develop the third aspect that is widely recurrent in the official statements of the case study groups, that is the overall purpose of creating a "new sociality".

Firstly, the fact the CP associations constantly tried to recall in their official statements about the lack of sociality is strongly consistent with the broadest process according to which "the small group […] represent the answer to the needs of intimate solidarities that are the denied to the individual in its everyday life" (Lodi, Grazioli 1984 p. 109). In particular, previous researches on Milan have documented that the topic of the lack of adequate sociality is a collective representation particularly widespread in the collective imaginary of this city, to the point that it has shaped a nostalgic idea of the recent past of the city, especially in its ex-industrial outskirt areas (Foot 2003 p. 37). Previous analysis have underlined that "it is out of doubt that the contemporary situation in Milan is characterized by the lack of socialization" (Foot 2003 p. 40). But, it is not the aim of this research that of inquiring the empirical foundations of such a representation. Instead, I underline that the CP, and all the groups included in it, represented mobilizations that conceive their actions as trying to contrast the content of this collective representation. At this respect, the CP insert itself in a specific historical tradition of mobilizations aiming at generating sociality at the local level that has been outlined by Membretti (2005) and that has been briefly summarized in chapter 1. With respect to that tradition, it is worth underling an analogy between the last phase of local participation in Italy and the CP. The analogy consists in the fact that in both cases this participation was expressed mainly through "bottom-up and very local promotion of a multidimensional quality of life which rhymes with community construction" (Membretti 2005 p. 8). Indeed, the CP's goals contained also the proposal of a model of sustainable development particularly attentive to environmental protection, a topic that became more and more relevant over the period of my fieldwork experience. This element increasingly informed the repertoire of actions of the CP[1], also because it was deemed as appealing for sponsorship investments of private companies. But this

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[1] For example with the setting up of the local farmers market.

element, though important for the public discourse of the CP, is marginal for the analytical purposes of this research and therefore I will not paid an analytical attention to it.

The topic of lack of sociality also resonates with arguments proposed by contemporary sociologists. Indeed, in the groups' official statements sociality was often raised with explicit reference to the more general concerns for the weakening of local communities (Putnam 1994), the fraying of social ties at the local level. Often this argument is associated to collective mobilizations that aim at contrasting the weakening local communities through "supportive actions" [1], that is to say actions that aimed at "reconstructing a fragile or lacerate social texture on the basis of some forms of direct engagement" (Ambrosini 2005 p.15). In the aforementioned official statements the perceived lack sociality represent a specific articulation of the "weakening of local communities", and the accent on the generation of a "new sociality" was the specific expression the observed groups give to their supportive actions. Little sociological analysis take as their subject the "supportive actions" (Ambrosini 2005) and even fewer studies empirically address the crisis of sociality and the collective mobilizations aiming at contrasting it (*ibidem*).

Considering the topic of sociality as the overriding frame in which the CP articulated its concerns for building inclusive forms of social relationships, it is worth noting that this frame was shared by all the groups taken as case studies. In particularly such a frame stressed the importance of sociality. A few examples may be useful: in the radio interview it was said that the restructuring of the farmhouse it was meant to turn it into a "place open to a new sociality; the Cuccagna Cooperative aimed at representing a "laboratory or urban sociality"; Esterni claimed that "the motives behind each and every project are socialization, cultural exchange, the city as a place where people meet and get together"; the CGCP was set up to generate "moments of a new sociality" defined in terms of an "active engagement of citizens" and not in a mere offer of events; the Green PT stressed "the enactment of sociality" as the important dimension of the gardening activities it carried out; the Mother and Children PT was founded to set moments of safe sociality for children in a green environment and at the shelter of car traffic; the Open doors PT only activities consisted in setting up moments of sociality and conviviality addressing particularly elderly and retired people; the Cuccagna Cineforum and Ciclofficina conceived their passion for movies in the first case, and bicycles in the second one, as pretexts for setting up moments of sociality and conviviality.

Further, as it has been described in the past paragraphs, the frame used by the observed groups to described themselves and their activities often stressed that the sociality they aimed at generating was as a *new* sociality. As we have seen in chapter one while tracing sociality in the history of local participation in Italy, the proposal to develop a sociality that is meant to be new is not something innovative in itself. Nevertheless, this trait deserve further reflections because it is linked to another element that was also part of the frame the CP and its groups used to define themselves. This other element is that of the "loss", implicitly present in the fact that a "new sociality" has to be generated because old ones have been lost.

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[1] "Supportive" here stands for the italian "solidale" and especially for how Ambrosini meant this term, as it has been specified in the following part of the sentence.

Indeed, in various part of CP's official statements was explicitly stated that old forms of sociality have disappeared because of the changes that have occurred in the contemporary context:

> With the diffusion of industrial plants, sub-central, peripheral and nearby urban zones have firstly witnessed a fray of the social relationships that characterized these areas when agricultural production was the main form of economy. Then, the same occurred with the decline of industrial factories and their deep ties in the […] locale and in a shared culture. The old buildings passed to the inevitably urban requalification, but with those demolished walls has gone also the memory, the history, the organization and the sense of the neighborhood[1]

In this new context "the city is impoverished in its own essence of ensemble of organized and equipped public and collective spaces" [2]. This message is repeated on several occasions:

> In all the big cities, and in particular in Milan, traditional spaces of collective life, the places of urban sociality are disappearing or survive as marginal realities. The square, the street, the court, the green spaces have became a place to pass through, of motorized traffic or, even worse, of urban design. The venues of old associations, working's man clubs, leisure, cultural and social clubs have nearly vanished.[3]

The assumption is that the social organization of city has changed and old, traditional, places of urban sociality have disappeared. The restructured farmhouse can replace the function these places served by re-inventing a "new sociality" that is adequate to the cotemporary social urban organization. The assumption here is that sociality has been lost and for this reason it needs to be re-invented. One of the observed groups describe its own activities in an internal group document in terms of "generating moments of sociality/conviviality that have been lost since long time"[4]. In the groups' statements it is not said why the forms of sociality they propose should be more adequate to the contemporary social organization than old ones. Certainly the fact that they are set up on the basis of an intentioned effort and the fact that they use cultural initiatives as pretext for the construction of inclusive relational spaces make these forms of sociality more tied to the contemporary social context. Indeed, in chapter 1 I have said about the growing "industry of restoring of the social tie" (Levy 1994 p. 51) and in this chapter we have seen that the setting up of aggregative space of public sociality has necessary to confront with the offer of specific services, in the observed cases consisting in cultural opportunities of consumption. But throughout the next chapters we will see also that the generating social relationships in this way cannot be taken for granted but instead it possess its own specific tradeoffs and difficulties. Indeed, the comparative analysis carried out in this research has its main finding in the fact that among 10 observed groups, just one has been capable of reaching its goals of creating social relationships according to its own viewpoint.

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[1] From document called "The Cuccagna project" included in the press material of the press conference held on the 28th of Jenuary 2009

[2] From the 2005 booklet called "Sometimes to meet it is not necessary to demolish walls, but to keep them" (in the orginal: "A volte per incontrarsi non bisogna abbattere I muri ma salvarli")

[3] From the internal document of the Cuccagna Cooperative called "Cooperiamo ad una Cuccagna per Milano".

[4] From p. 1 of the internal document of CGCP group called "Gruppo 'Costruzione Della Partecipazione".

Finally, it is worth to remark that the assumption about the "loss of sociality" is common to many arguments that sociologists have been formulated to account for the changes that the forms of social relationships have experienced over time. Indeed, as Bagnasco remarked "it is significant that some of the most influential proposals have been introduced with reference to a loss. This is evident in the image of the *bowling alone* with which R. Putnam has triggered a wide debate on the crisis of the associative culture in the US. But this was just an eco of topic posed some years before by Coleman: how can we replace the *primordial social capital*" (Bagnasco 2003 p. 25). Thus, sociality approach and apparently overlap the broader topic of the fray of social ties in contemporary local societies because they both are based on an underlying assumption that depict them as lost. But this is a common perspective on two topics that analytically is necessary to keep separated, having clear in mind that sociality is the way the observed cases articulate the broader idea of constructing inclusive forms of social relationships beyond the group.

5. "A *SPACE* FOR A NEW SOCIALITY". SPACE AND SOCIALITY ENTWINED

In the CP official statement sociality was tightly interweaved with the space dimension. Firstly, both these aspects were used to define the overall context in which the action of the CP took place

> The city […] becomes stranger to the citizens and the citizens are stranger to the city, they are marginalized - especially the poorest ones – from the fundamental civil conditions of sharing, reciprocity, participation and solidarity[1]

A quotation from a very popular anthropologist was often cited in the official documents of the CP and it is also periodically shown in the Internet homepage of the CP:

> "There is a tendency toward the triumph of a fake urban sociality made of non-places, stations, means of transport, commercial spaces, discos and so on and so forth, that is to say of spaces that do not create identity, or relationship, but uniquely imitation and loneliness" (Augé 1994).

This quotation, and especially the metaphor it carries with it, was particularly useful for the CP because it concentrates the idea of revitalizing urban sociality with a strong reference to the spatial organization of the contemporary city. The spatial dimension was particularly stressed in one of the most complete document the Cuccagna Alliance produced to illustrate the CP, which was the manuscript written on the occasion of the participation in the public council concourse for the assignment of the legal right to manage the Cuccagna farm. For example, the reference to the space was present in most of the PC's official goals described in that document:

- "Give space and visibility to creative local resources;

- create systems and services of connection among local associations, committees, and institutions;

- supporting the self organization on initiatives and projects that arise from the locale;

- recuperating the local identity and foster the growing of a sense of belonging to the territory[1]

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[1] From the official document of presentation of the CP written to win the competition to get the funds from the Cariplo foundation.

But the remind to spatial arrangement was widely recurrent also in the official statements of single groups included in the CP. For example, this was the most evident in the title of a document produced in 2003 by the Cuccagna Cooperative: "A public space for a new sociality"[2]. Furthermore, the reference to the space dimension involved not only sociality aspects but the broadest articulation of the action of CP groups. For example we can read in one of the documents written by the CC before the official assignment of the Cuccagna farmhouse:

> If we had a space in which we could look at each other and reciprocally recognize ourselves, where it was allowed more time to think, speak and understand each other. A space where we could cultivate shared projects, where we could find things to do, once again, together, cooperatively[3]

This quotation may represents simply a confirmation of the instrumental role assigned to the space – and in particular the space of the farmhouse – with respect to the attainment of the broadest social goals of the CP of creating inclusive forms of social relations. This is certainly true but it would be a reductive argument on the way the space was framed in the official statements of CP groups. This paragraph aims, indeed, also at showing other aspects. Firstly the fact that the space and the physical arrangements of the CP were articulated in a twofold way: firstly with respect to the reference area (usually the neighborhood, the urban district or the city) of the group's actions and secondly with respect to the spatial arrangements of the farmhouse in which the everyday life of the CP groups unfolded.

5.1 CUCCAGNA FARMHOUSE

"Sometimes to meet it is not necessary to demolish walls, but to keep them"[4] was the title of a booklet printed in 2005, short after the CA had won the public competition for the funds of the Cariplo foundation and it is interesting because it clearly indicates the relation between space and sociality, where the first element is instrumental to the latter one. That is to say that the main purpose of the CP was that of creating a new sociality and in order to do that it is necessary to possess adequate spaces, such as are those of the farmhouse. Generally, the spatial arrangements of the farmhouse were widely emphasized in the official statements of the CP groups with reference to both its physical and symbolic value. With respect to the first aspect it was often underlined the centrality the farm had assumed over time with the progressive urban extension of Milan. In this case the farmhouse's spaces were usually specified in great details in the CP's official communication. For example we have seen this element in the radio interview, where Sergio B., unprompted, specified that the farmhouse consisted in 2000 square meters of covered spaces and other 2000 square meters of uncovered spaces, for a total of roughly 40 rooms (once the

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[1] P. 12 of the official document called "Progetto Cuccagna"

[2] Original title of "Uno spazio pubblico per una nuova soicalità. Progetto di riabilitazione e utilizzo polifunzionale della proprietà demaniale denominata Cascina Cuccagna"

[3] From the 2005 booklet called "Sometimes to meet it is not necessary to demolish walls, but to keep them" (in the orginal: "A volte per incontrarsi non bisogna abbattere I muri ma salvarli")

[4] In the orginal versio: "A volte per incontrarsi non bisogna abbattere I muri ma salvarli"

restructuring works will be ended). Also, a specific element used to characterize the ways space was framed in CP groups official statements:

"We want to rehabilitate the unused and crumbling Cuccagna farmhouse, to make it a place of meeting, sociality, conviviality, culture, participation and services, open to all the residents of the neighborhood"[1]

In this projections of the future, the spaces of the farmhouse would open themselves to the other, aforementioned, element through which it passed the conception of space aspects in the CP groups official statements. This element referred to the space of reference of the action of CP groups, that in this quotation was articulated in terms of the neighborhood.

5.2 THE SPACE OF REFERENCE FOR THE ACTION OF CP GROUPS

The space outside the farmhouse represented the reference area for the action of CP groups and it was widely present in their official statements in different scales: for example the local neighborhood, the urban district, the metropolitan area. The point developed in this part of the chapter is to highlight some assumptions that shaped the way the CP groups defined the area of reference for its action, especially its nature, main traits and limits.

In CP official statements it was assumed the following idea about widest contest in which the CP developed: such a context has changed, nowadays social relationships are much less territorialized than in the past, especially social ties tied to the spatial organization of work. In this context the traditional working's men clubs make no more sense but it still remains the need for sociable space where people can gather, meet and interact among themselves, thus corroborating the local social fabric.

5.2.1 A LOST SPACE TO BE VALORIZED

Milan possesses an urgent need of places of civic participation, of attention among generations and cultures, of occasions of solidarity to contrast the exclusion and learn again, together, how to be a city, a community that feed itself[2]

In CP official communication the concern for the "community that is weakening" was expressed with a direct reference to the urban space in which the CP was settled, in the case of the last quotation articulated at the city level (Milan). As in the case of sociality, such a space has *lost* its own identity and the CP aims at regenerating it. This trait is the most evident considering the folding leaflet that the CA prepared in 2008 for the upcoming press conference of January 2009. In particular, this document was made of four pages, each one corresponding to a specific section: the "Project", the "Farmhouse", the "Alliance" and the last one called "a Farmhouse, a neighborhood, a city". In this page the neighborhood and the city were described as it follows:

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[1] From the 2005 booklet called "Sometimes to meet it is not necessary to demolish walls, but to keep them" (in the orginal: "A volte per incontrarsi non bisogna abbattere I muri ma salvarli").

[2] From the Cuccagna Project website homepage.

A neighborhood: lively and noisy during the day, lazy and dozing at night, it re-becomes part of the immense kingdom of the television remote control.

A city: in constant research of a new identity, it possesses a thousand of identities and none of them belong to it. The city doesn't perceive of loosing over the course of the years many, too many, identities that made it great. The culture, the sociality, the passion.

In this last quotation is present another import trait of the way the space of reference for the action of the CP was defined in its official communication: the space of Milan needs to be valorized and the CP represents a suitable tool at this respect. This assumption was articulated in the first page of the most complete document illustrating the CP[1]:

the desire of operating in order to make the peripheral neighborhoods in which we live overcome their crisis - begging from the re-habilitation and re-use of significant spaces, from *the valorization of an existing patrimony*[2] – and reconstruct a shared cultural fabric, on the basis of our complex and contradictory present, on the basis of our productive, historical, cultural and environmental resources[3].

I can also cite another quotation from a different document that in this case illustrates the mission of the Cuccagna cooperative:

The regeneration of energies and of the image of a city such as Milan implies also project like this one [the CP], projected toward the future, but, at the same time embedded to the roots of the territory, *capable of recuperating its material and cultural patrimony.*

Or again, in another document it was said that "the CP is born from the desire to *valorize* an existent patrimony, a common and shared cultural fabric". It is worth noting that this valorization of *local* resources is promoted by citizens that are not residents in that locale. Indeed, if we take a look at CP's volunteers and activists we can see that just a small minority of them lived in the neighborhood or in the urban district where the Cuccagna farmhouse was settled. In particular, among the 46 people that were members of at least one of the aforementioned groups of the CP and that participated in their everyday life on a regular basis, just 3 of them lived in the local neighborhood and 5 of them in the local urban district (Milan "Zone 4"). All the other activists that participated in the CP came from other parts of the city. With respect to this element, the CP strongly resonates with the experiences of "re-territorialization" (Magnaghi 2000) that, at the begging of the 90's, have represented the signal of a slow recover of a bottom-up local participation. Indeed, those experiences carried a trait that was typical also of the CP: the fact that they both "convey an acquired, rather than ascribed, vision of the locale where the local space […] is here intended as a resource – more and more scarce in the postfordist metropolis - to be activated on the part of subjects that may also live or work elsewhere, but have chosen that specific local context and physical dimension to develop their sociality and participating in the cultural and

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[1] The reference here is to the document written for participating in the aforementioned public concourse.

[2] *Italics mine.*

[3] P. 1 of the official document that illustrate the CP.

political life of the city" (Membretti 2005 p. 6). Thus, the strong emphasis on the locale - especially at the level of Milan "Zone 4", – was more linked to the fact that the farmhouse was settled in that specific physical position of the city than to the local embeddedness of the members of CP groups.

5.2.2 BETWEEN THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND THE CITY: MILAN URBAN "ZONE 4"

In the official document of presentation of the CP there was a specific section called "The territory of reference" in which it was specified that "the territorial cultural and social action of the CP has in the limits of Milan "Zone 4" its main urban area of reference"[1]. This element has been taken particularly seriously in my analysis because it has elicited the inquiry on the spatial distribution of some broad socio-economic dimension illustrated in the past chapter. What needs to be still clarified is why the CP has chosen to focus predominantly at the level of Milan "Zone 4" to define the territory of reference of its action, instead of taking a smaller scale (the neighborhood) or a larger one (the whole city or even the metropolitan area). Indeed, the area of reference for the action of the CP was not simply evoked or emotionally imagined, but it was, in many official documents, delimited in detail, often with maps reporting the urban area in which the Cuccagna farmhouse is settled[2].

If we look uniquely at the CP's official statements it is difficult to understand why the area of reference to its action was defined with reference the limits of the council urban district. A possible explanation was revealed to me during an informal conversation with Sergio B, the president of the CA managing board:

> The new administrative urban districts had just been traced when we won the assignment of the Cuccagna farmhouse and we knew that the urban local authorities at this level could be a privileged interlocutor for our action, both in terms of institutional legitimation and of funding. What, indeed, is now happening, thanks also to our personal contacts with the local representative of Milan "Zone 4".

Therefore, the choice of officially delimiting the reference area for the action of the CP with the limits of Milan "Zone 4" could mainly derive from a strategic orientation. Further, it is worth citing the character of compromise that Milan "Zone 4" possessed during the period of my field research. Indeed, more than ten years ago the CC initially animated the Cuccagna Project mainly in reference to the local neighborhood where the Cuccagna farmhouse was settled. At the outset, the CP took off from a "situational and relational embeddedness" (Ambrosini, Boccagni 2008), that is to say that it widely drew on a common network of relationships with a strong local basis that defined a shared starting condition- the need of generating public sociality - with respect to which the groups mobilized themselves.

Then, over time the CP changed its internal organizing structure, started to set up bigger initiatives and established important ties with political institutions, mainly at the level of Milan "Zone 4".

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[1] P.12 of the official document called "Progetto Cuccagna",

[2] I was asked by the CP to further develop such detailed description of Milan Zone 4, as introduced in this chapter.

Thus, the CP increasingly defined its territory of reference making it coinciding with the boundaries of this area, and it is during this phase that mostly my field research took place. But in last period of my field research I remarked than the territory of reference of the CP was tending to increase in scale and to coincide with the boundaries of Milan or even beyond of it. At this respect it is hardly a coincidence that during my field research I was asked to conduct a research on some sociological aspects of Milan "Zone 4"[1], but during the last month of my empirical research I've been known that the CP managing board was planning a research on the piedmont area comprised between Milan and the Alps.

More than the origins of the choice of using Milan "Zone 4" as reference area for the CP, it is worth outlining the outcomes linked to this choice in terms of generation of inclusive sociality. At this respect, it is possible to note that the wide boundaries of this area suits well with the inclusive orientation the CP groups emphasized in their official statements. Indeed, the choice of the urban administrative level of Milan district 4 allowed to go beyond the small limits of the neighborhood in which the farmhouse was settled (Porta Romana) without losing the local reference of the project that would imply a generic reference to the whole city. Such a reference to the locale will characterize the official statements of the observed groups during the two years of my field research, but It will not be useful in understanding the observed efforts of generating social relationships beyond the group. Indeed, such efforts will be more and more detached from a strictly defined local spatial reference because they will dominantly take the shape of events. These form of action will be in general set up establishing relationships with a variety of, not always local, subjects and involving attendees limited uniquely from the physical possibility of getting in the settings where those events took place.

Finally, it is possible to note that the way Milan "Zone 4" was depicted in the CP official statements could seem at first sight ambivalent or even contradictory. Indeed, on some occasions it was stressed the peripheral nature of this portion of Milan, especially with reference to the closure of many industrial factories from the '70s in this area and the subsequent shrinking of aggregative spaces of sociality. Some other times it was stressed the centrality of Milan "Zone 4" and its proximity to Milan city center[2]. On other occasions the peripheral and the central connotation of the area were at the same time present in a unique sentence that referred to Milan "Zone 4" in terms of

> an area that involves mainly the urban peripheral south-east parts of the city but, at the same time, it has acquired a definitely central position in contemporary Milan that allows to easily access to many fundamental urban central services[3].

This statement historically ties the two apparently contradictory connotations of Milan "Zone 4", specifying that what once was a peripheral space over time became a central area. This historical perspective allow the two connotations (periphery and central) to not contradict each other. The

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[1] Citroni S., *forthcoming,* Sogni e bisogni a Milano. Risorse e vissuti nella "Zona 4", Ledizioni, Milano.

[2] For example during the aforementioned radio interview.

[3] P. 3 of the official document that illustrate the CP.

historical view on Milan "Zone 4" summarized by the aforementioned excerpt was variable articulated in many other CP official statements, especially with reference to the agricultural past that the building of the farmhouse represented. Such an historical account of Milan "Zone 4" possessed a pragmatic function that was crucial for CP communication. Indeed, it reinforced the aforementioned collective representations about the *loss* of sociality that used to take place in the past. This historical foundation complements the frame of the loss and it is common to other articulations of this "tòpos" (that of the loss). Indeed, "the nostalgia for an intense community life, in which the group naturally take charge of sustaining its members, look at the historical neighborhood (in particular at that of peripheries of industrial city, but also to the popular central areas) as model of reference" (Conti 2009 p. 104).

FINAL REMARKS. TOWARD A SITUATED PERSPECTIVE

Drawing on the definition of the city as a cultural phenomenon given firstly by Hannerz (1992) and then articulated by Basgnasco (1994), we can consider the CP a very urban phenomenon. Indeed, according to this perspective the city is characterized by the fact that it offers to its dwellers the possibility of making a variety of experiences. Such a variety make possible the creation of "new cultural synthesis", which find in the urban setting the privileged conditions for being recognized and reinforced by a wide public of citizens (Bagnasco 1994 p. 85). Following this perspective we can deem the CP as including elements that represent "new cultural synthesis" with respect to their context of origin. Overt the history of CP, such elements have then been more and more recognized and cultivated by a growing number of people[1].

Throughout this chapter I've tried to "de-construct" the character of newness allegedly possessed by the elements of cultural synthesis included in the CP according to its promoters[2]. I've developed this operation trying to contextualize these elements as these were depicted in the official statements of the CP. The broader frame used in these statements to depict the CP articulated its goals of generating inclusive forms of social relationships through the restoring of the ancient farmhouse in order to make it an open space of public sociality. Also, the groups taken as case study made a cause of creating a new sociality and this did not represent something totally new. Indeed, the historical account of local participation in Italy that I have summarized in chapter 1 contained aspects that were implicitly or explicitly present in the official group statements I have analyzed in this chapter. In particular it is possible to hint at elements pertaining to all the three phases of model of local participation that Membretti (2005) depicted:

- the stress on the self-organizing orientation was something present in the "conflict model" of local participation.

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[1] Indeed, over the two years of my empirical research the number of groups included and citizens involved in the CP has constantly grew.

[2] I'm referring in this case to the novelties stressed in the radio interview, of the emphasis on building a "new sociality".

- The fact that CP explicitly depicted its action in terms of replacing the sociable function that was once of local working man clubs, leisure or cultural clubs and other traditional forms of associational life associate it to the "reformist model" of local participation;

- The repertoire of action of CP groups included aspects that are typical of the "consensus model" of local participation, such as the use of the professional work of a sociologist to manage participatory processes or to analyze the context in which the groups intervened.

It is worth noting that, even though it is identifiable an overall frame the CP groups used to speak about themselves, their specific use of such a frame varied significantly. Indeed, each group that has been taken as case study articulated it in a specific way through its official statements. For example the CC was more closer than any other group inside the CP to a *political* language and repertoire of action; the CGCP shaped its action and official statements drawing mainly on academic reflections about *deliberative democracy*; Esterni deemed more important to stress its interaction with the market in order to set up impressive and effective events that could enter the media public sphere; Ciclofficina and Cineforum groups emphasized their drawing on a model of autonomy and self-organizing for shaping their cultural initiatives.

Though looking at the observed groups' official communication is important to introduce them, it is not enough to analyze their action and qualify their sociality outcomes. Indeed, formal statements do not illustrate in themselves how the groups strived to pursue their public goals, and which outcomes they produced. Also the variety of groups' official statements do not account for the differences among associations that made a difference in their capacity or reaching sociality goals. Indeed, at this respect we shall see in the next chapters that the distances from one group to the other ones are wider than what their similar official communication would have allowed to suppose. Also, we will see that such differences can be grasped only through a perspective that is attentive to the situated meanings that the groups' practices (acts or talks alike) acquired in the concrete contexts where they took place. Through this type of perspective we will see that the differences that counted for making the groups create social relationships (beyond them and among group members) were not those about different use in the group official statements of the same communicative frame. Indeed, in the next chapters I will use a situated perspective that will allow to see the observed groups differently facing the same context constrains (firstly the need of funding the CP), and we will see that such differences mattered in enabling and constraining the groups' capacity to reach their goals. Especially, we will see that such differences were not random, but linked to the patterns of actions emerging from recurrent communication in groups' lives.

OPENING. NEIGHBORS PETITIONING AGAINST THE "CONSTRUCTION OF THE PARTICIPATION"

A sunny afternoon in Milan at the begging of the summer, inside a humid roughly blue painted room in the Cuccagna farm, seven middle aged people gather to attend the meeting of CGCP (Cuccagna Group for the Construction of Participation), the association to which they are a part of. The collective discussion to which they participate focus on the main activity the group is devoting his energies in that period to, that is carrying out in-depth interviews with people from the neighborhood[1]. Being the ultimate goal of the group that of fostering common citizens' active public involvement and participation in the Cuccagna Project (CP), conducting in-depth interviews is meant to be a first step to go out publicly, starting from the neighborhood. Indeed, according to the sociologist group leader (Sergio D), interviews allow the development of a relational dimension between the interviewer and the interviewed and this on the one hand is a means for the development of reciprocal knowledge between CGCP's members and the neighborhood and, on the other hand, entails an improvement of communicational competences in CGCP's members.

During this meeting the group leader mentioned the group the fact that until that moment just 5 of the 30 scheduled interviews had been conducted and he invited members to put more efforts in reaching the goal the group had previously decided and that each of one of his member had accepted. After having listened to Sergio's arguments, members argued back that there was a bigger problem to discuss, which was strictly correlated to the fact they didn't carry out the planned number of interviews. The problem consisted in the fact that they had not really understood the utility of doing interviews, the meaning of this activity as a civic action and the ultimate goal that they were trying to attain doing interviews.

Sergio, as a sociologist and one particularly keen of qualitative techniques, was perfectly aware that interviewing implied the establishment of a relationship between the interviewer and the interviewed. So, making GCP's members doing interviews had been thought by Sergio as a good task to develop basic relational competences that could be then used also in other civic activities. CGCP's members were not sociologists and even if they were told about the relational competences acquisition they had an hard time in clearly seeing what doing interviews was for and why they should spend time on such an activity instead of more urgent ones. Indeed, they were thinking and saying in that meeting, that especially in that period other activities and tasks should have had the priority instead of wasting time making in-depth interviews. For example, many members were more worried about the issue raised by Marco with the following words:

> Marco: It seems like we are doing something wrong because the participation we want to foster is not working at all. On the contrary, we have specific negative signs from our neighborhood: 195 signatures have been collected in this neighborhood and taken to the local council to ask to stop the Cuccagna Project because they are not happy with the way we are developing the project, they don't want us to go on in this way, and we

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[1] I'm talking about the neighborhood where the Cuccagna Project has his venue, the Cuccagna farm.

should consider this fact as a serious problem and give to it all the attention it deserves. Interviews could help us in understand this problem? It doesn't seem like to be so at least according to what it has been done until now. For this reason we should think about something different, interviewing differently or not interviewing and instead proposing another type of activity. Anyway, here we have these 195 people that form part of the people we want to reach out to and that instead are not happy with what we are doing, and that want us to stop going on. Considering our main purpose as a group I think we should face this problem instead of ignoring it, because it seems to be quite important..

After this quite long intervention, Sergio D (the group leader) took an emphatic pause and asked other members to express their opinions about the issue raised by Marco and listened to them. Most of group's members interventions expressed deep worries about the collecting of signatures, which came as a surprise in many cases. Sergio D listened quietly and when everybody had said something spoke:

> Sergio D: I think it is necessary to remember that this group has the ambitious goal of fostering a specific kind of participation into the CP, a participation that implies direct responsibility into the activities in which we engage ourselves. Therefore is of no utility at this stage of the group to stop in every external problem we run into! [*with an higher voice and acquiring agitation by speaking*] I want to make clear the point that CGCP is not responsible for the problem of the signatures' collection! The CGCP cannot be responsible for everything, otherwise we should be responsible also for the fundraising problems the Cuccagna Project is facing, for the internal organizational tasks or whatever else… Interviews are useful!? They are a means to acquire specific relational skills, they are a first step to approach people living in this locale and a way to prepare to the following steps of the group, consisting in fostering the building up of other civic groups, called Projectual tables (PT) based on what we listened to through the interviews. I'm sorry to say this, but interviews should have started on the 2nd of February and we are at the end of June with just 5 interviews carried out. Being volunteers doesn't mean necessarily being amateurs, so please let's focus us on doing interviews instead of spending more time discussing about the neighborhood signatures issue, which represents something important, of course, but it is also a very complex problem that we cannot face now. And I also add that I promise to dismiss from my role of leading and moderating this group if it happens again that we have to stop our scheduled activities to face once again issues that are external to this group"

In this last part of intervention, Sergio D's tone of voice became quite resolute and in all his speech he clearly showed of being tired and disappointed for the situation they were living. Sergio D's words and the way he expressed them set the tone for a quite tense development of the group's meeting. The other members expressed with frowned faces and agitated expressions of not agreeing with what Sergio D had said. Indeed, most of them repeated of sharing Marco's concerns about the neighborhood's collection of signatures. At least a couple of people openly declared their doubts about going on to participate in the group's activities.

INTRODUCTION. UNDERSTANDING ASSOCIATIONS' EFFORTS TO CRATE SOCIAL TIES BEYOND THE BONDE/BRIDGE DISTINCTION

I've decided outlining this short episode because I deem it as useful to show two aspects that are central for the argument proposed in this chapter. Firstly, it shows that "*interpersonal ties* or relations do not necessarily translate into *intergroup* relations that are essential to the attainment of public goals" (Smith, Kulynych 2002 p. 178). Secondly, the episode suggests that the type of interpersonal ties among group members may matter in shaping the outcomes of associations that try to create relationships beyond the group. According to Putnam the presence of "bonding social

capital" is a condition that foster the possibility of establishing "bridging social capital" (Putnam et al. 1994, pp. 23, 136, 144, 145, 175). The argument has been repeated by many social capital scholars saying that bonding social capital stimulate the development of bridges (Ferguson, Dickens 1999; Warren et al. 2001; Larsen et al. 2004). The argument I'm proposing draw on this relation but it is meant to improve it by specifying it. In particular, throughout this chapter I will try to show that it is not sufficient to say that "bonding social capital is a necessary antecedent for the development of the more powerful form of bridging social capital" (Larsen 2004 et al. p.65). In particular, I would like to show that it wouldn't be precise to interpret this argument in terms of the more bonding social capital a group possess, the more likely its efforts of reaching out will be successful, as social capital scholars often assume following thus the example of Putnam. To use Putnam's categories, the focus of this chapter is on the relation between bonding and bridging social capital and the argument I'm proposing state that *there exists different types of bonding social capital" that shape differently the collective endeavors of creating social relationships beyond the group. Certain types of bonding social capital make particularly hard for associations to create relationships beyond the group, while other type make it easier*. With reference to the categories used in this study, different bonding social capital will be framed in terms of different *group bonds*. The aim of the chapter is to show how differences among group bonds matter in shaping the collective efforts of creating relationships beyond the group. This is the specific way in which this chapter address the overall dissertation's subject and in particular how internal relationships to civic groups can extend to other subjects, at which condition this passage is more favorable and at which it is less so. Further, this chapter stresses the capacity a civic group possess of establishing relations with other subjects (individual or collective) and develop those relations according to the way the civic group wish to develop them. Indeed, some of the observed associations didn't simply aim at creating generic relationships with subjects external to the group but they aimed at establishing relationships with specific actors or groups and they aimed at giving a certain shape to those relationships. The main hypothesis adopted by this study focuses on the dimension of group bonds to understand how and in what terms the observed associations reached their own purposes.

In particular, this chapter will paid attention to "structured" efforts to create sociality, that is to say to endeavors of generate new social relationships that do not take the form of ephemeral events[1], but that instead unfold over a period of time that goes beyond a single occasion. The research question of this study is in this chapter framed with reference also to the social capital approach, in particular as it has been developed by Putnam (1994, 2000). Indeed, the general research issue is articulated in this chapter with specific reference to a group's "social ability to collaborate for shared interests" (Putnam et al. 1994 p. 182) and in particular his effectiveness in establishing and institutionalizing new relationships. The capacity a group possess of controlling his relations with other groups and institutionalize those relations through intentional communication (Lichterman 2006) is not something to be taken for granted, even in one of the most civic regions, at least according to Putnam picture of civicness and social capital in Italy (Putnam et al. 1994). This

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[1] Events as form of action through which the observed groups reach out will be analyzed in the next two chapters.

capacity will be analyzed in relation to the way a group coordinate itself and its internal parts to act as a single subject. I will pay attention to the customized way in which a group structured its everyday life, with specific reference to the dimension of group bonds, that is to say the institutionalized way in which group members relate to each other as group members and the reciprocal obligation that tie them as such. The analytical focus is meant to observe if, how and when interpersonal relationships, internal to a civic group, can translate themselves, in broader social relations.

Over the two years of my field research, CP'groups established and institutionalized different type of relationships. Some relationships developed almost "spontaneously" working and organizing common activities, such as public events, participating to public meetings or in the everyday group settings. Some relationships were based within the local neighborhood, some other with urban groups situated in other parts of Milan, or even based in other cities. Some social ties had been developed since the very origin of the Cuccagna project, and they had represented the organizational context in which the idea of forming a new collective subject - the Cuccagna Alliance - had developed[1]. Other relationship were less "spontaneous" in the sense that they could be seen as outcomes of intentional efforts at establishing them, sometimes from scratch. The chapter's focus is on this last type of relationships and in particular on the process through which they unfolded, on how such relationships developed. The focus, thus, is on collective efforts of creating relationships beyond the group that develop over time, and in particular on the processual nature of such efforts, and on the patterns of actions that shaped them. The argument proposed states that the nature of groups bonds matter in shaping the possibility the group have of reaching its purposes of establishing new relationships with single or collective subjects. In particular, three comparisons among collective efforts of creating relationships beyond the group will outline different type of patterns of interactions among group members (group bonds) that shape differently such collective efforts and thus their results.

1. ART AND GREEN PT REACHING OUT

According to what has been said in the previous chapter, the second phase of CGCP possessed the main goal the fostering the development of new civic groups, called Projectual Tables (PTs heron). Also the CGCP's program included also the development of specific type of relationships with these new groups, relations characterized by reciprocal autonomy and the sharing of the same common "Participation guidelines", that is to say the rules the group had given itself for structuring its internal life and public activities[2].

PTs had to be formed with the support of CGCP, but after the start-up phase PTs should have began to work autonomously, according to the self-organizing principles that characterized the

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[1] Indeed, once the Cuccagna Alliance was settled , the previous groups that now are part of the alliance maintained their original identities, activities and contact's net.

[2] See the introductionof this group in the previous chapter for more detail.

"Participation guidelines". Indeed, the new groups had been called "Projectual Tables" precisely to stress their self-organizing and issue-oriented dimension: "table" evoked a small group of people working on an issue according to the "project" they gave themselves. The set up of such new civic groups was meant to be a structured way to attain a major tocquevillian task, that is to say *doing things together with a wider circle of citizens*, instead of waiting for other to do them. But such a task required a minimum organization according to CGCP, and especially in the opinion of its leader, that it is worth to remember was a sociologist. The relation between CGCP and the new established PTs will be the subject of the third comparison of this chapter, in which in particular I will use a time perspective to confront how the relation developed and changed over time. The first comparison, instead, look at how different PTs pursued their efforts of creating social relationships with third parts, and at the different type of group bonds that shaped such collective efforts. In particular I will compare the Art PT and the Green PT because both groups wanted to establish new significant relationships with other groups/subjects active in their same neighborhood and both groups aimed at somehow involving them in the development of the overall Cuccagna Project. During my field work I've participated in both the Art and the Green PT and thus I've had the possibility of observing from close the development of their collective efforts and linking over time, in different occasions, the patterns of interactions that shaped such efforts to their outcomes. Let's firstly observe a couple of examples of different developments of such efforts and then I'll try to account for them stressing the different patterns of interactions of the different observed groups and thus applying the argument proposed by this chapter.

1.1 USING ARTS TO CREATE RELATIONSHIPS, WITHOUT RESULTS

The Art PT was one of the most numerous among all the PTs and it was formed by quite similar people: about 15 urban young people, working in creative sectors of the Milanese economy (design, advertising, organization of events). The purpose of the group was vaguely defined in terms of using "arts as a good means to make people come together and overcome their social isolation"[1], that is to say using arts for generating social relationships in what was perceived as an urban socially fragmented context. I participated to this group life from his beginnings: the group started in a very enthusiastic climate with meetings in which group members spent most of the time introducing themselves and presenting to other members their specific artistic fields of interest. From the beginning we also started to think about what concrete activities we could develop in order to foster the participation of new members into the group and so using arts to build bridges in the city, starting from the local neighborhood. The group wanted to settle some kind of artistic activities that could be intriguing and accessible for everyone, even he/she was not an artist, or a person competent in some artistic sector. Over a few meetings the group realized that among the many things that had been discussed during the first meetings, no one was really "concrete" and understandable for every one that was not inside some artistic field. The group kept to focus his meeting in trying to figure out something that was enough accessible for everyone and not just for arts professionals.

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[1] From field notes of group meetings.

What started to seem as a real puzzle for the group took a more concrete shape when the group decided to participate in the "Cuccagna autumn party", a day-long party that was going to be held the first day of the autumn 2008 and during which the party's attendees had the possibility of participating in different kind of activities, getting in contact with CP groups or just came to hang out in the Cuccagna farm. Now the group's quest became more focused on what the group could possibly do on that specific occasion to present itself and to attract new members. The purpose was to involve as much as new people as possible into the group's activities: making them join the group or establish with them a relationship or a simple contact were equally good goals for the group in that occasion:

> Marta (Art PT' member): This is such a good occasion to us we shouldn't waste it! There are going to come many people in this garden: artists, civic groups, local residents or ordinary citizens and we have the possibility of showing the Art PT to all of them and get to know them, establish with them a collaborative relationship that could maybe lead us at organizing something together.

The social map that Art PT participants had in mind was extremely vague because they didn't know exactly who they wanted to reach out to. They knew they didn't just want to involve new members into the group's activities, but they wanted also to interact with other associations and establish with them a partnership relationship. In both cases these represented collective efforts of creating new social relationships.

In the meetings held before the party the group discussed about possible ways to present itself at the "Cuccagna autumn party". Many ideas were brought in by members and among these, someone came up with the idea of starting a big patchwork that was going to be continued by the audience attending the party and that at the end, if it had resulted big enough, would have gone to cover the Cuccagna farm during the works. Everyone agreed on this idea: it represented something enough "concrete" that everyone could participate in, just by sewing a rag he/she would have brought from home or that he/she would have found at the party. The activity possessed to Art PT's members also the advantage of presenting the group as task-oriented artistic people open to ordinary citizens and not as a group of snob people dealing with cryptic art performance understandable just by few people. The group also decided to write a leaflet inviting the public to come to the party with colored rags to be attached at the patchwork that was going to be sewed on that occasion, but we never started to sew the first part of the patchwork for the party, as the group, instead, had decided to do. Most of the time in the meetings approaching the date of the party was spent speaking about our personal artistic tastes, as if the idea of the patchwork was something that didn't need to be organized and prepared in detail. Just the meeting held a week before the party the patchwork issue come up and someone offered, without being asked to do that, to bring the sewing machine and the rags to make party's attendees sewing the patchwork.

The day of the party three of us (including me) came earlier than the planned party starting hour to settle the site of the Cuccagna farmhouse the group had decided to occupy for presenting itself to the coming attendees. The three of us put in a corner of the Cuccagna farm a big sheet with the writing "Cuccagna art PT " and, behind it an old sewing machine and many colored rags to be sewed in the patchwork. During the party I took turns to stay at the entrance in a banquet,

welcoming attendees, collecting their e-mails and asking them if they wanted to be informed about the next CP public activities. My position at the entrance banquet was a good one because it was just next to the Art PT site and from it I could clearly see and listen to what was happening there.

Other members of the Art PT came later, looked at the small choreography, appreciated it and then hanged out at the party. During the whole party the Art PT corner was most of the time occupied just by the two people that with me had settled the corner. Indeed the other group members came at the party but they didn't spend too much time at the Art PT's site. Here not a big deal actually happened during the whole day of the party: the two Art PT members just stranded or sat next to the sewing machine, most of the time speaking among themselves without really paying too much attention to passing people. I had the impression they were more worried about the sewing machine (and the possibility that this had gone stolen or broken) than by the opportunity of getting in contact with other groups or involving new people into the group. Indeed, some passing people stopped, approached the machine pushed by curiosity and sometimes asked to the people standing next to it what was that object for or how old it was. Art PT answered politely to questions, explaining in detail the functioning of the sewing machine and just sometimes telling them also about their idea of sewing a big patchwork with their help. From my privileged point of view I noticed that the other Art PT members rarely approached the site where the sewing machine was, preferring to spend time chatting with other people at the party. This was quite surprising to me considered the fact that the party was conceived by the group's members as a "good occasion" for their goals of establishing new relationships. It was as if what happened to pursue that goal was left to the personal initiatives of Art PT members that, for example, started to sew the patchwork or spent time with the attendees telling them about the group. Indeed, these kind of activities in any case were left to the personal initiative of members that played from time to time solo performances to gain the interest of passing people. In a moment of freedom from my turns at the entrance banquet I joined the two people that were standing next to the sewing machine and, after a short while, I asked them:

> Researcher: "What can I do here? Do you need help for something?"

> Mario (smiling): "I don't know... I don't think so, just do whatever you feel like to do and it will be ok!"

My question came clearly as a surprise to Mario, an Art PT member who was astonished by the fact that I thought that he was responsible for the organization of the activities and that he could know what I could have been useful at on that occasion. He himself didn't know exactly what to do, he was not accomplishing a specific task but he was not worried about this as I appeared to be. He was taking for granted the fact that everything we could do was left to our own initiative and didn't require any kind of coordination with other members.

Looking at his reactions to my question I realized that I was assuming that going public at the party meant doing something together among Art PT's members, showing the audience they could join us in our interdependent activity. I realized that my assumption was not shared by Mario. My idea of the *widening circle of people doing things together* implied a tight interdependence with other members. Mario's and other members' idea of "doing things together" consisted more in "doing along" than "doing with" other people. My idea of "doing things together" implied a certain degree of coordination among members, other people's idea of coordination did not include other members

and consisted, in that specific setting of the party, in acting *spontaneously* according to their own whishes, without feeling obliged towards other people.

During the all day long party 20 people approached the Art PT and interacted with its members. I was told that some of these people were some sort of artists that appreciated the idea of sewing a patchwork, some other people were not artists and they seemed more interested in the old sewing machine than in the idea of the patchwork. No attendees sewed or added anything to the patchwork, that was started anyway during the party by Art PT members but that at the end of the day was far from being big enough to cover all the farm. Some passing people left his/her contact, wishing to be contacted on future occasions even just for internal meetings of the group. A couple of artists also approached the group and expressed their wishes to be contacted for future activities of the group.

Who had left his contact started to attend the group's meetings but all of them stopped to come after a few ones. In other party-events Art PT tried to reach out with similar loose choreographies and similar outcomes where produced. In the meetings that followed the first party and other ones the group decided to keep on its efforts, in particular trying through informal ways to contact people who had expressed interest toward the group, attending some of his meetings or leaving his/her contacts. Art PT used also previous personal knowledge to try to involve into the group's activities other people or new groups but every attempt failed at this respect. Art PT was not able neither to attract new members nor to establish with other groups any kind of relationship and this was frustrating for his members.

After some period of the autumn party, the Art PT re-proposed his idea of the patchwork, specifying his previously vague goals of creating social relationships with respect to all immigrant women of the local neighborhood and of Milan. Art PT wanted to establish new relationships with all the immigrant women of the neighborhood and tried to involve them in the sewing of the patchwork. Art PT thought that this could have been a good idea to include immigrants people and establish with them a reciprocal relation in which non immigrants members of the group could have learned traditional sewing techniques from other countries all over the world. Formal and informal contacts were tried but all the efforts didn't produce any outcome. Immigrants women were not interested in participating in the sewing of the patchwork, as many Arts PT members had assumed.

Frustrations about these failures became more and more bigger but they were never expressed in group meetings. I had been knowing these frustrations listening to and taking part in settings that represented "backstage" with respect to the "front stage" meeting's settings. In the front stage simply the participation started to shrink more and more and, after two years of frustrating attempts to reach out, the few remaining members decided to dissolve the group. Let's consider a comparative example before coming back on this one and try to account for the group's outcomes.

1.2. THE GREEN PT AND LOCAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The Green PT was set up in the same occasion[1] that the Art PT but it experienced a very different development. Indeed, during the period of my participant observation I've seen the Green PT rapidly growing in number of participants and activities carried out. This group proved also capable of establishing and develop new relationships with groups and single citizens of the local neighborhood where the Cuccagna farmhouse was physically settled. Let's see how this happened focusing on an example about the relationship the group established with children, their parents and families of the local primary schools.

As I have outlined in the past chapter, the Green PT main activity consisted in taking care and cultivating the garden of the Cuccagna farmhouse as "learning by doing activities that offered to anyone the possibility of engaging in a sociable ambience"[2]. Indeed, the main group's purpose was that of creating spaces of sociality and it used gardening as means to pursue this goal.

The number of members of this group rapidly grown, passing from 7 to 17 in a few months from its establishment. In particular as a result of the Green PT's participation in the same "autumn Cuccagna party" I've talked about in the previous paragraph, new comers started to actively attend the group meetings and to propose new ideas for the Cuccagna farmhouse's garden. Among such ideas there was that of establishing a relationship with the neighborhood's primary schools and their young students to promote their participation in "Green workshops" organized by Green PT and devote to make children more close and interested in the nature. The Green PT wanted not only to gain the necessary trust to make the children come to the workshops, but it wanted to directly involve teachers and parents of the children in the organization of such workshops, establishing with them an active partnership –like relationships.

This clearly represented a purpose of creating social relationships that the group openly gave itself and not an easy one considered that in the past there had been other attempts to approach local primary schools to the Cuccagna Project but these attempts had failed mainly because the farm was considered to be an unsafe ambience for children, a place in which there were too many dangerous spatial arrangements to let children freely play. Green PT members were aware of such difficulties but nevertheless tried to pursue the group goals. Members of the Green PT started to send formal letters or to call teachers of the local primary schools and the families of the little students to inform them about the Cuccagna Project and their intention to involve them in the organization of green workshops. In autumn 2008 the Green PT decided autonomously to start a workshop about traditional techniques of cultivating the earth and this workshops was immediately attended by many children of the local schools, their families and some teachers. Also, after the beginning of this first workshop, some primary school teachers of the neighborhood started to attend the Green PT meetings and after a few meetings they became directly involved in organizing the following workshops that had been held. The following workshop was about the process of making bread, from the earth to the bakery, and it was a success even bigger than the first one. Through these

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[1] This was the "Participatory event" held on July 19th, 2008. For more details on this event see paragraph 3 of this chapter.

[2] From the internal document of the group called "Report on the Green group" written on the 30 January 2008.

workshops the Green PT developed over time a stable relationship with primary school teachers and also with some children's parents that started to actively attend internal meetings and propose new activities. In a relative short time (not even a year from the group formation) Green PT had reached its goals of establishing a partnership relation with the teachers of the schools, the children attending them and their families. This was not the only goal of creating social relationships that the group attained. For example, it established also a partnership-like relationship with various farmers of the south area of Milan, involving them in the setting up of other workshops. Significantly, the Green PT was often cited in other groups' meetings and informal conversations as an example of success because it had been able of setting up new ties with many type of different subjects, while other groups had notoriously failed in reaching apparently similar purposes. .

1.3 LOOKING FOR EXPLANATIONS

In order to better understand the differences of outcomes of Arts and Green PT's efforts of reaching out, I will now discuss some possible interpretative hypothesis. Indeed, it is worth noting that the effectiveness of the Green PT is particularly striking when compared to the fact that the Art PT was incapable of reaching far less ambitious goals of creating social relationships, such as simply attracting new members into the group. Art PT frustrating efforts and Green PT developing relationships with other subjects make a good comparison case because these groups possess very similar informal organizational structures that allow to focus on differences in their group styles. Indeed, the presence of this type of similarities allow us to exclude that the group's outcomes may be referred to hypothesis about formal dimension of group's structure. In particular, the two observed groups were very similar for composition (a very similar number of members, all volunteers), for age (the group was formed during the same "Participatory event" set up by CGCP) and for resources at disposal (being based mainly on volunteer efforts with just occasionally the possibility to ask CP money for specific activity). Also they used to meet with the same frequency (normally once every two week), they acted in the same socio-economic and cultural context as well as in the same organizing environment (being both part of CP) and their group life unfolded in the same physical settings.

Borzaga and Fazzi (2008) underlined the central role of the consistency between the way organizations structure their internal resources and practices – "internal fit" - and they way organizations develop relationships with external actors – "external fit" - (Siggelkow 2002). This hypothesis may be considered a specific declination of the broader contingency theory in organizational analysis (Woodward 1965), that it has been recently expanded also to non- profit organizations (Borzaga, Fazzi 2008 p. 201). This remains a broad hypothesis to be specified according to different possibilities of defining the subject of the consistency we are talking about. It may for example refers to the content of the issue on which groups base their activities. In our comparative case this means considering the fact that issues on environment and nature are more likely to be accepted and gain interest in this socio-historical general climate of general concerns on environmental health than what arts may be. Environmental issues and the promotion of a closer contact with nature are presumably issues more broadly shared than what artistic and creative activities may be in an urban context because they represent basic resources - like for example the

clean air or the water - that urban life makes, for its own character, rare to access (Baudrillard 1969). But, arts topics are not perceived by local residents as marginal activities in the urban district and in the neighborhood where the Cucccagna farmhouse is settled. Indeed, according to a recent empirical research about the perceptions of collective needs of the of the local residents of Milan "Zone 4", arts related activities are among the main desires and wishes expressed by the interviewees (De la Pierre 2010), at least with the same importance than green-related concerns (Pisano 2010). Therefore, the difference in the two PTs' outcomes cannot be related uniquely or mainly to the different social relevance of the topics on which they based their activities.

The consistency between the group and his context may just not be referred to broad issues and contents on which groups base their activities, but it could be referred also to the way groups operates into their local communities. At this respect the presence of "border's roles" (Ambrosini, Boccagni 2008) among members of the Green TP represented a positive factor that could have allowed a special adherence of the group to his context. Indeed, as it is stated by non profit literature, the fact of involving into the group people from the locale where the group act is a dimension capable of making the group more likely an "interpret of the community needs" (Ambrosini, Boccagni 2008 p. 296). The "border's role" in Green PT was impersonated by Sandra, a member living in the local neighborhood and also a teacher of a primary local school that the group contacted to organize the green workshop. In this case Sandra double presence as a member of the Green PT and as school teacher clearly facilitated the collaboration in organizing the workshop. In the same way, the lack of a similar "border's role" in the Art PT was something that didn't facilitate his reaching out. Indeed, a part from the specific key role that Sandra played in the above cited episode, the inclusion of a local resident into the group allows more generally the emergence of a reputation about the group into the locale in which the group act (Ambrosini Bocccagni 2008 p. 309), an important factor for a group that want to be legitimized as good and reliable partners of a possible relationship. A reputation that for example in the case of activities including children is a crucial condition to guarantee the unproblematic development of the activities.

But this account arise another, more complex, puzzle. This is about the reasons why no local residents were among the members of the Arts PT, even though I've already mentioned that the results of a recent empirical research said that arts-related activities were among the main lacks the local residents mentioned. Besides, the first two meetings of the Arts PT had been attended also by local residents that in the constituting "Participatory events"'s clearly expressed the desire of engaging themselves in the CP and in particular in an activity vaguely related to the Arts. Why the two local residents stopped their engagement in this group?

As I will illustrated short after, group bonds among Arts PT members didn't include reciprocal obligations characterized by their personal or a local character and this made more difficult the engagement into the group life of someone wishing to participate in it as a local resident or on a personal basis. The situated way in which the Arts PT defined the participation in its group life made difficult for the group to establish local connections that could have been useful in carrying out its activities and attaining its sociality goals.

Another related aspect that is underlined in non profit literature on the effectiveness of civic groups refers to the knowledge of the public to reach and of the organizing ambience in which the group acted (Ambrosini, Boccagni 2008). At this respect it is worth noting that in our comparative case this kind of knowledge varied significantly in the two groups. In the case of Arts PT, this group wanted to establish new relationships with other subjects that were generically defined not with specific subjects. Members of Art PT didn't even know or asked themselves if someone could have been interested in the arts activities they were proposing. They simply assumed that there must have been outside the group someone interested in arts or some artistic group wishing to establish a contact with them. So, the problem group members posed themselves was simply just how to reach these people/groups.

To use the organizational vocabularies we could say that the Arts PT didn't questioned about its "organizational environment": his members didn't discussed in meetings if there was some possible "competitors" or "partner" that in the same local area was working with a similar goals as they were doing. This kind of discussion and the knowledge that could have resulted from it, could have be something relevant to know. Indeed, not far from the Cuccagna farm (where Art PT gathered) there was the venue of an important potential "competitor": a 45 years old socio-cultural association, named "Milanese cultural artistic center" whose purpose was to approach people to arts in a friendly way, a goal clearly similar to the one the Art PT had.

Further, it is useful mentioning that the Green PT focused his social efforts of reaching out on one specific category of public – the children and their families- not to the whole local public generally defined. This group spent most of the time during its meetings in discussing what public could want from a "green workshop" and articulating to one another why schools and children should be interested in their proposals, instead of assuming they would be in any case interested in them. The Green PT possessed a much more deep and refined knowledge of its o*rganizational environment* than the one possessed by the Art PT. For instance Green PT's members considered the fact that local primary schools also had workshops on issues related to nature and decided to contact the professors responsible for such workshops as possible partners of their activities. So, the differences in the knowledge of the subjects to reach, of the "organizational environment" and in the level of imagination about such issues expressed in ordinary meetings was a difference that may have mattered in shaping the observed outcomes. But, again, this difference raises another important question for the researcher: why the groups acted in such a different way? *Why just in one of the two cases group members overtly engaged themselves in conversations about the larger world that included reflexive talks on the potential utility of the group's activity?*

The answers I propose to these questions is that this derive from the different group styles possessed by the two Participatory Tables. The argument I'm proposing in particular states that it is the group bonds dimension what can help understanding why group members could engage themselves in reflexive conversations about the group's action in the larger social world. To be more precise, it is the fact that Green PT members defined their participation in the everyday group life on a personal and local basis what allowed them to reflexively discuss about the meaning of the

group action in its locale. So, it is now time to consider from closer the group styles, and especially, the group bonds that structured the everyday life of the observed PTs.

1.4 THE EVERYDAY DEFINITION OF GROUP BONDS

Let's now turn our interpretive attention toward the nature of group's bonds that structured everyday group life of the two observed PTs. Indeed, participating to both groups and attending their meetings I realized that the two groups possessed different group styles. In this chapter I won't describe entirely the group styles through which the Art and the Green PT acted in the different settings where their group life unfolded[1]. I will limit myself to illustrate the specific dimension of their group styles that, according to my hypothesis, can shed light on the dynamics that led to so different sociality outcomes. This dimension is represented by their group bonds: to understand the reasons why two very similar groups produced so different outcomes in terms of creation of new relations I propose to take a closer look at the nature of group bonds tying the members of the two groups[2].

1.4.1 ART PT'S GROUP BONDS: PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION TO GROUP LIFE WITHOUT PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Participating over time to the Arts PT meetings I realized that every member was encouraged to give a *personalized* contribution to the group's activities or to the group discussion. Everyone was invited to *personally* express him/herself in the group life, according the vocabulary typical of the collective representation of "expressive individualism" (Bellah et al. 1985). For example when, during an Art PT meeting, a group member proposed to engage the group in sewing bags. The member (an old woman) brought a bag that she had made and told the other members that she made that bag and similar ones

> "during a very difficult time of my life, when I retired from work and I entered a deep depression. In that period sewing bags was something that really helped me to get out of that mood and go back to life; maybe with our group we can aspire to do something similar for other needy people" (Maria, Art PT member)

This proposal was extraordinarily well accepted in that meeting because it represented specifically what most of the members wanted to use arts for. For example another member replied to the proposal as follows:

> Alessandra [Arts PT member]: Yes, great idea! I think we all should take Maria example as a very good one, because it is somehow arts, an artistic or artisanal activity not for the sake of it, but useful in concrete life, to overcome tough times expressing our talents. This is my idea about how we could be useful to a broader public than ourselves, helping people to get out of real problems, but with their own forces

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[1] In chapter 8 I will focus my attention on the group styles through which the Green PT acted, in particular to focus on its evolution over the period of my participant observation.

[2] I remember here what I've already stated in another part of the dissertation, that is to say that group bonds " put into practice a group's assumptions about what members' mutual responsibilities should be while in the group context." (Eliasoph, Lichterman 2003 p. 739).

What was particularly appreciated by everyone about this proposal was the fact that it was such a personal contribution to the group life and at the same time possessed a significant, at least potential, socially useful dimension. Indeed, the personal dimension was an aspect generally taken into great account in the contribution of the members to the group's life and activities. This dimension for example was clearly part of the group speech norms: when people firstly introduced themselves, they frequently expressed also their personal tastes on arts. They verbalized this point not in an abstract or general way but in a personal way, for example telling about personal experiences members did in the past. Being personal meant something quite specific in the group contexts where the group life unfolded. When the group act collectively in public, being personal meant especially improvising, not planning the activities to be carried out as a "cold organization" would do. This was for example the most evident in the group's behavior during the aforementioned episode of the "autumn Cuccagna party", in which the group let as much room as possible to the personal, improvised, contribution of Art PT members.

Though everyone was required to give a personal contribution to the group's life, reciprocal knowledge among members were not very personal: people didn't know basic aspects of other members' life, such as the work they did, the families they had or the place in which they lived. Art PT members seemed to me more like strangers than personal acquaintances to one another. This was an aspect clearly visible to me attending their meetings. For example, no one really asked me who I was, what was my research about or which was the university where I was studying. Even when it occurred that I brought other people with me to attend the Art PT meetings, no one asked nothing to new comers or at maximum they asked them which was their main artistic domain in the case they had said they were artists. On one special occasion, during a meeting held in the garden in summer time, it happened that a stranger came and joined the group: he didn't enter the open circle we had made but he kept standing just next to the circle, clearly listening to what we were saying. After about half an hour he just went away without saying nothing to the meeting participants. At the end of that meeting I asked the other Art PT members if they knew who that guy was and no one could really tell me who he was; no one knew him or had seem him before but no one seemed concerned to know more about him as I was. Apart from me, according to the other members of the group it was ok to not know who that stranger was or why he stood there for a while and then suddenly left the group. I confronted this little episode with a similar one, when during a CGCP meeting the same person approached the group's discussion but he was asked to introduce himself to participate in the meeting. The different group reaction was something that described the kind of loose bonds that sustained Art PT members.

1.4.2 GREEN PT'S GROUP BONDS. SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS LEADING TO RESPONSIBILITY

If in the Art PT members were asked to give a personal contribution to the group's activities, but group's bonds didn't possess a personal significant trait, in the Green PT members were not asked to give a personal contribution to the group's activities but ties among members possessed a relevant personal dimension. The good members of the Green PT was firstly someone who cultivated, hoed or sowed the earth, an activity to be carried out without the necessity of adding any

personal aspect to it. I experienced what exactly meant doing things together in the Green PT working the earth during a spring sunny Saturday afternoon, coordinating my activity in interdependence with other members that where gardening or pursuing other specific tasks next to me. Even though I had already participated in several group meetings, during my engagement in that physical activity for the first time group members addressed me through the personal and confidential type of interactions that was typical among themselves while they were sowing the earth. It was concretely taking care of the garden that people created the sociality spaces to which they committed themselves in their official statements. While sowing, people used to get to know each better and used to engage in conversations about a variety of topics in duos, trios or also involving the entire group. Conversations were often centered on aspects of members personal life but not necessarily, because I've also heard group members commenting political facts or simply collective concerns not centered on political aspects strictly defined. Over time, ties among members came to be much more personalized than in the Art PT in spite of the fact the Green PT members were more heterogeneous among themselves than members of Art Pt. Indeed, in the first case they didn't necessarily share the fact of working in the same field of activity or having done similar artistic experiences. In the settings of gardening being personal meant firstly to group members letting each other room to express themselves on whatever type of topic. But also in other group settings the personal element that characterized group bonds was present, though it was articulated in different terms. Let's take as example the case of group meetings' settings.

Meetings often used to unfold in the very same room where the Arts PT's meetings used to take place, but the atmosphere in this case was more relaxed. For example it was likely that during meetings a member brought some sort of appetizers and put them in the middle of the table during the discussion letting everyone interested to take them. Also, the meeting could be also quite lively: people spoke freely and arguments raised not infrequently. For example in winter 2009 a new member started to attend the meetings, but he remained completely silent during his first 4 meetings, paing a close attention to what other people were saying. At its 5th meeting, a member directly asked him what was his opinion on the subject of the discussion, that was how to improve the relationship between the Greeen PT and the CP board meeting, that were having some problems in that period. After an emphatic pause the silent new-comer started to speak:

> New-comer: "Look, I don't know what the CP is, I don't know what have you been talking about during the last 5 meetings and I haven't even understood who the hell you are and what this group exactly is about".

Though the silent new-comer had not yet grasp the main group's activities, he had learnt and already enacted the group style that shaped the meetings of this group. Indeed, the cited excerpt of conversation did not sound at all out of place in the context where it had been said. Indeed, directness of interventions and in the way members related to each other during meetings was accepted and encouraged. Indeed, no one of the members participating at that meeting took the new-comer's intervention as personal offensive given that it was consistent with the way members spoke among themselves during meetings. Thus, when the silent new-comers had finished to speak they simply smiled and tried to explain him what the Green PT was about and what exactly the Cuccagna Project was. Both in the settings of gardening and in the contexts where group meetings used to take place, the group bonds tying group members implied a direct and personal

responsibility in the group life and in its public activities alike. Further, the activities carried out by this group implied a strict interconnection between its internal life and its public activities. Indeed, gardening meant at the same time participating in the main setting where the group life unfolded but also doing something public, because the garden was the main way in which the group and the overall CP presented itself publicly: the passing stranger that wanted to know more about the CP, for example, was firstly brought to see the garden. In this sense, while gardening group members implied themselves at the same time with respect to the other group members but also publicly as part of the whole Cuccagna Project: the Green PT was clearly responsible for the results of their gardening work. But the personal responsibility was present a variety of aspects of the members' involvement in the Green PT and the general CP. For example, all the gardening members of the group had a key to access the Cuccagna farm whenever they wanted to take care of the garden, and this was something important: very few people in the Cuccagna project had the keys, and possessing the keys was something clearly relevant for the responsibilities that loosing them or giving them to the wrong people[1] implied.

On the contrary in the case of the Art PT, participation in the group didn't went with any personal responsibility in front of other group members or subjects beyond the group. This was quite visible on the above cited occasion of presenting publicly the group in the Autumn party: no one of the Art PT member felt of being responsible engaged in front of the other group members and thus no one did anything to try to present the group publicly. *Taking part in the two PTs everyday life implied a different level of members' personal responsibility.* Art PT members expressive participation in the group life implied the obligation of verbalizing personal arts tastes in front of other members and feel free of improvising an active commitment in the group activities without pressuring other members to do that. In this case being expressive implied actively improvising the participation in group life and this made particularly hard for group members take responsibility for their group even if they wished. Indeed, this would have threaten the obligation of not pressuring anyone but instead let them feel free of improvising according to their personal tastes.

The attainment of certain group's goals, such as those that the two PTs gave themselves, is more likely to occur when group members' participation in the group life implies a certain level of personal responsibility. Indeed, this element is what facilitate in group members the fact of autonomously deciding to take on activities that are not strictly required by the group. But, *different reciprocal obligations among group members in the group life[2] differently enable members to responsibly commit themselves in the group life*. In the observed cases, expressive participation in Art PT group life made particularly hard for group members responsibly engage themselves in the group activities.

Further, the fact that group bonds in the Green PT were built on a personal basis, while this didn't happen in the Art PT was a significant difference in shaping their different sociality, and in

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[1] Wrong people may mean in this case some one tha could enter the farm to steal for example.

[2] That is to say different group bonds. See chapter 1 of this dissertation or Eliasoph and Lichterman (2003) for more details on group bonds.

particular in encouraging different type of potential participants in taking an active part in group life. In particular, participation in Art PT required a very personal contribution to the group activities but not a personal significant reciprocal knowledge with other group's members, which could be simply acquaintances. Instead, group bonds of the Green PT implied an higher level of mutual responsibility, more straightforward and personal ties among group members, though being a good member of the group didn't require any kind of personal contribution to the group's activity.

In light of this findings the fact that the presence of a "border's role" between the group and its local neighborhood emerged in the Green PT and not in the Arts PT appears as clearly linked to the situated ways in which group members' reciprocal obligations were defined in the specific settings in which group life unfolded. Indeed, in the case of the Green PT, group bonds explicitly included and fostered members - especially while sawing- to let each other room for different types of conversations which could include the local origins of members. The fact that members of the Green PT defined their reciprocal relationships on a personal basis, which may include their local embeddedness, allowed to bring into the group's everyday life also conversation on the meaning of the group's action in the locale. Indeed, such a type of conversations would have been out of place in the context of the Arts PT, where the personal and local dimension was not part of what defined group members as such and thus didn't have to necessarily be part of the everyday life of the group. Thus, this perspective allowed to see how different group bonds differently enabled groups to develop through their everyday group life that type of local embeddedness that articulated itself through the presence of members' "border's roles".

2. GROUP BONDS ALLOWING TO REINVENT THE GROUP. THE NETWORKS OF CASG AND PISCINELLA

This second comparison is about two alliances of several groups that pursued two different types of efforts of creating relationships with subjects external to the alliances. As we have also noted in the past chapter, alliances represent typical network subject, a relative new type of group that is increasingly part of civil society (Wuthnow 1999 p. 33), especially with reference to the attainment of very delimited goals (Lichterman 2009). The comparison will show that groups part of an alliance can be tied together differently and that such differences matter in shaping their outcomes of reaching out. Bonds sustaining groups reciprocal obligations in the two observed alliences were apparently very similar because referred to equal level of bonding social capacity. In spite of this, the capacity of the two groups to reach their goals of creating relationships differed significantly. In order to shed light on the origins such differences I propose a detailed focus on the group bonds sustaining the observed networks.

2.1 PISCINELLA TRIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE REGENERATION OF MILAN'S CULTURE

In December 2008 Milan council launched a new project to "regenerate and liberate the culture of Milan"[1]. The project consisted in the creation by the cultural councilor of Milan - Finazzer Flory -of a committee of thirty "wise man": intellectuals from different domains (cinema, architecture,

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[1] Extract from the official council press release about this project.

photograph and music) called by the councilor and asked to write new projects to regenerate the cultural life of Milan.

Esterni (an association taken as case study of this research) noted that all the thirty "wise man" were elderly people and find the fact unfair for all the young subjects of Milan that could have positively contributed to "regenerate its culture" (such as Esterni) but that hadn't been invited to take part in the committee. Thus, Esterni decided to promote the formation of another committee of "wise man" - called "Piscinella", young people in Milanese dialect - composed just by people under 40 years old. The counter group of young "wise man" (Piscinella) was soon formed with representatives of many cultural associations acting in Milan. It was a network of associations and it had the same purpose as the one formed by the older intellectuals, that is to say proposing new cultural projects to be developed in Milan. But Piscinella also wanted to establish a partnership relationship with the original committee, working in collaboration with it to regenerate collaboratively the cultural life of Milan. Creating consensus around the new group was the first purpose the new alliance (Piscinella) gave itself. For this reason the alliance decided not to overtly fight the council or delegitimize the committee it had created but to establish with it a relationship of reciprocal recognition and mutual respect. This was the type of social relationship Piscinella wanted to develop with the official committee and it represented the specific goal on which the alliance focused all its efforts. In order to clearly show his intentions, all Piscinella public communication explicitly avoided to assume any polemic tone[1], even if the option tempted may groups part of the alliance, especially the radical – leftist oriented groups active in Milan cultural scene and openly opposing the contemporary right-wing council governing Milan.

Piscinella tried very hard and in different ways of becoming a partner of the council committee. In order to attain such a goal, Piscinella's members met a few times and then decided it was more efficient to work separately, each one of his member, or small group of them, on specific tasks. This was perfectly consistent with the "networker style" (Lichterman 2005) that I observed from the very first meeting of the alliance and about which I'm going to talk later on. I participated to smaller groups of Piscinella members in order to promote various kind of specific actions, including informal efforts to contact the official committee members and artistic events to publicize and give credibility to the Piscinella committee in the media public sphere. Piscinella assumed his starting position was a subordinate one and his purpose was to achieve the necessary legitimization to be conceived as a peer of a the official committee.

Partipating to Piscinella formal and informal activities I realized I knew most of Piscinela members because they were representatives or members of associations with a reputation in the non profit socio-cultural sector of Milan. Participating in informal chatting with other members, I soon realized I was not the only one that knew the other people, as also most of Piscinella's members knew each other from previous collaborations or for other reasons. At least they knew the reputation associated to the associations people represented and this reciprocal knowledge allowed what

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[1] For example in the official press-release for the first meeting of the committee it was clearly specified the that: "the committee is *open to everybody* [..]. Cultural councilor of Milan is invited to participate at the first meeting" (bold not mine).

Putnam would have name "social trust and norms of reciprocity" (Putnam et al. 1994) to emerge. In particular, this was what Putnam would have termed as "bonding social capital" because it involved trust and reciprocity among "homogenous members of the same group" (Putnam 2000 p. 22). This stock of bonding social capital among the Milanese cultural operators allowed to readily equip the new-born group of Piscinella with a relevant organizational apparatus, similar to the one possessed by a well-trod professional civic organization. Indeed, the groups part of the alliance made at disposal of Piscinella the most of the organizing structure and equipment they possessed as single associations. Thus, in this scenario dilemmas of collective action were rapidly overtaken thanks to the high level of bonding social capital among the alliance members.

Equipped with a good stock of social capital and organizational resources, Piscinella efforts developed through various ways that were meant to reach the official committee and establish with it a partnership relationship. But, nevertheless, all the Piscinella efforts failed at this respect. Even though some Piscinella members spoke personally with the cultural councilor of Milan, this didn't lead to any advancement in establishing the relationship they wanted to establish. Informal contacts seemed to be the more promising way to get in contact with the official committee, but even informal efforts were not enough to establish any kind of relationship with it. Official committee members were not interested in establishing any kind of relation or even contact with Piscinella and its members. After about a year of unfruitful attempts, Piscinella stopped its efforts and dissolved. This outcome occurred in spite of the fact that several members of the alliance expressed their will of keeping Piscinella active by using the alliance for other purposes. In particular Esterni, the promoter group, was among those that whished the alliance kept going on, though carrying out other types of activities. Indeed, Esterni set up other two meetings in its venue in an effort of keeping the alliance alive but they were attended by very few people which decided to dissolve the network after the second meeting.

2.2 CASG REINVENTING ITSELF

As we have seen in chapter 3, Cuccagna Project formal structure was firstly composed by an alliance of 7 different associations that decided to form a new legal subject. Also, we already observed that, apart from the formal groups, the CP comprised also a variety of informal groupings. Some of them had been formed during the period of my participant observation. Among these, it had been formed also an informal alliance with the representatives of most of the CP groups. This network possessed a very similar purpose than the one of Piscinella, consisting in being recognized and establish a partnership relation with the Milan's council. Indeed, this type of relation was especially precious for the CP because it would have allowed to acquire credibility and reputation at the eyes of private companies that could have more easily sponsored the Cuccagna Project. The new informal alliance was called Cuccagna Alliance Saturday Group (CASG in short) simply because it was set up as a result of a meeting that had been held on a Saturday in the Cuccagna Farmhaouse. All the participants to this network were leaders or active members of groups included in the CP and thus they already knew each other. At this respect, we can consider the alliance as "naturally" equipped with a relevant amount of social capital, at least equal to the one possessed by the Piscinella network.

Also, similarly to Piscinella, also CASG interpreted its purpose in terms of gaining the necessary legitimization at the eyes of Milan's council and tried to accomplish such a goal both in formal and informal ways. Also similarly to the previous case, CASG similarly failed in his efforts of establishing any kind of relationship with Milan's official authorities at least over the two years of my participant observation. But, on the contrary of Piscinella, CASG didn't dissolve but instead it decided to re-orient his efforts toward other type of goals, succeeding in some case in establishing institutionalized relations with other subject. For example, CASG decided to bridge toward an important association, named "Slow Food", and succeeded in established a fruitful relation with this subject, a relation that is now leading to the formal inclusion of "Slow food" among the groups officially forming the Cuccagna Alliance. Or, to cite another example, CASG decided to focus its efforts in making the CP more open and inclusive toward the locale where the Cuccagna was settled through the organization of a local farmers market every week. The experience was widely considered as a success in the perception of all formal and informal groups part of the CP, because it has been a means to open regularly the farm to the attendees, making the Cuccagna Project and some of its neighborhood's residents interact on a regular basis. The "Slow Food" and the local farmers market cases are just two examples of the capacity of CASG of reinventing itself by giving itself new purposes once the scheduled ones had not been reached.

Looking comparatively at Piscinella and at the CASG we firstly see a coalition equipped with a relevant dimension of social capital (Piscinella) but incapable of coordinating itself to reach his purpose and to last once it failed in reaching it, even if willing to do that. Then, we have another alliance of subjects (the CASG) possessing an equal, or even superior, degree of bonding social capital, failing in its efforts of reaching the specific goal for which it had been set up but capable of re-inventing itself over time. The comparison raises the following questions: *Why Piscinella was not capable of lasting after the failure of reaching the purposes of which it had been set up, even if some of its members desired it? Why, instead, the CASG succeeded in lasting and setting up other activities?*

In order to answer to these questions I propose to see the differences among the two observed alliances not in terms of more or less bonding social capital, but instead in terms of different group bonds sustaining groups members reciprocal obligations while they were in group context. Indeed, looking at group bonds allows to see how the CA's Saturday group was capable of giving itself new purposes while Piscinella alliance had been incapable of doing that.

2.3 LOOKING FOR EXPLANATIONS

Before applying the main proposed argument to the two networks I will briefly see what insights I would get from alternative hypothesis that would look at the observed differences from different perspectives than the one proposed focused on group bonds.

Firstly, *material resources* don't seem to have mattered in this last comparative case. Apparently, the CASG possessed bigger material resources – such as venues, volunteers, money- than Piscinella because it could dispose of the organizational structure of the CA, which included paid staff members. But if you consider not just the material resources possessed by the groups but also the

ones at their disposal we see that Piscinella could dispose of a much larger amount of organizational assets. Indeed, we have to consider that Piscinella was capable of disposing of the organizational resources of all the associations that the alliance comprised[1]. Thus, both associations had wide resources at their disposal. Another possible alternative hypothesis to account for the observed differences refer to the *socio-economic status* of the members of the groups. According to the social centrality model (Milbrath 1965), civic and political participation is more likely to develop when individuals possess an high cultural and socio-economic level. Following and stretching this argument, we may think that the capacity to attain goals relating to the establishment of new social ties is more likely to develop in groups with this type of members. In this case, indeed, it is more likely that they possess the competencies to run effectively a civic group and thus to attain its scheduled goals. If we want to apply this hypothesis to our comparative case we have firstly to see in detail which kind of members were comprised in the observed networks. CASG members included different types of members: young professionals, consultant specialists, volunteers, inexperienced internships (often undergraduate students), former political militants and also ordinary citizens. Piscinella's members were all well-trod leaders or co-leaders of already established civic groups, thus presumably more competent people than the heterogeneous CASG members. The outcomes of the two groups' collective efforts revealed that the hypothesis derived from the social centrality model of Milbrath is of any help for understanding the observed outcomes. Instruction and socio-economic status of the participants of the two networks were quite similar and civic competencies were presumably even stronger for the group with less social capacity.

Elements pertaining to the *organizational structure strictly defined,* such as organizational charts, were slightly different between CASG and Piscinella. In the latter case there was no formal organizational chart, every kind of initiative depended on volunteer action and spontaneous collaboration among group members, without any kind of formal roles. For CASG things differed because even though no real organizational chart was present, internal positions reproduced the hierarchy that was present at the level of the CA, to which all CASG members belonged[2]. Every relevant decision depended on this chart and no significant decision was taken without the approval of the superior level of the hierarchy. At this respect it is worth noting that Putnam explicitly stated that vertical relations implied less social capital - and so less ability of doing things together – than horizontal relations of reciprocity (Putnam et al. 1994 pp. 23, 136, 144, 145, 175). But in our comparative case the informal alliance with more vertical relations (CASG) was the one that showed more capacity of doing things together over time[3]. But, as for the case of the distinction

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[1] The only resource that the Cuccagna Alliance could dispose of and Piscinella didn't have was represented by his big venue (the cuccagna farm): a factor that may have played a role in shaping the positive bridging outcomes of the Alliance toward the wider public of single citizens. Anyway, because we have seen that Piscinella was not interested in bridging toward the wide public of single citizens, this factor doesn't seem to have been important in shaping the different observed bridging capacity of the two groups.

[2] In particular the CASG included the director, the vice-director, all the managing board meeting member, two staff members, an internship workers and volunteers that were also part of the CA.

[3] It is true that Putnam's argument is about social contexts, while my analysis here is carried out at the level of single civic group. But these two aspects are strictly interweaved according to Putnam formulation. Indeed, according to this,

between bridging and bonding social capital, also the division between vertical and horizontal types of relationships seems to be unsatisfactory for understanding the different ways in which the two observed cases reacted to their failures of attaining their goals of becoming a legitimized member at the eyes of Milan council.

Knowledge of the context in which groups were operating was present in both cases, though it was of a different type and it possessed a different nature. Piscinella members assumed to know the context in which they operated because it was roughly the same context they had been knowing from their past experiences of cultural associations acting in MIlan. CASG members conceived the alliance's action as taking place in a context they didn't know and, thus, that they had to know from scratch. CASG members assumed in the group meetings an explorative attitude that aimed at getting to know better the context in which they operated, without assuming of already knowing it. This explorative attitude was present when CASG's members in informal conversations speaked with curiosity about the neighborhood in which they acted.

> Participant observation: Are you from the neighborhood?
>
> Giacomo (Cuccagna member): No, I'm not, actually I don't know anything about this neighborhood, even if my group's action officially address it [laughing], we take care of the local problems as our main focus. Seriously, I realize this is a major lack from our part, and I'm trying to do my best to overcome it.

These type of conversations were particularly striking to me because they came from the same people that, as members participating to the group life of other CP groups, expressed quite opposite attitude toward the local context in which they operated. Over time the explorative conversations that took place in CASG group life allowed group members to acquire a more in depth, updated and detailed knowledge of the context in which it acted and this could have been important in re-addressing the alliance' efforts toward new goals once the network failed its scheduled purposes. Indeed, Piscinella group life never included exploratory conversation about the context in which it acted. According to my argument the different attitudes of Piscinella and CASG expressed in group life when they addressed the wider contexts in which they acted didn't came from scratch and neither they were tied to group members "real knowledge" of the context in which they acted. Indeed, CASG members were also members of other groups of the CP and as such they were constanly trying, through different group engagement, of reaching out toward the same locale. Looking at the situated meanings acquired by group bonds it will be possible to assess what exactly meant this explorative attitude in the specific contexts where the group life took shape.

DIFFERENT SITUATED MEANINGS OF PARTICIPATING IN GROUP LIFE

Let's consider in this section the nature of the bonds among group members in the two alliances in order to see if and, especially, how the differences in the reciprocal obligations tying group members of the two alliances can account for the observed differences of their collective efforts to

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in the social context possessing more interpersonal trust, networks of reciprocity made of horizontal ties (and not vertical ones) it is more likely that that group will possess higher level of social capital, approaching the ideal of the civic community.

create social relationships. In particular, let's see if the dimension group can shed light on the fact that CASG had been able of realizing its will of lasting after it had failed in reaching its scheduled purpose.

Piscinella could be defined as a loose network, whose members were tied by the fact of being able of acting as autonomous people, capable of forming smaller task-oriented groups to pursue specific goals. Observing task-oriented group meetings held in different venues, I realized that everything the group made was left to the autonomous initiative of single members that acted by themselves, or in small groups, to pursue specific tasks they had been given themselves. Exactly as the decision of participating in this small task-oriented groups was left to personal initiatives, the same was for a pro-active participation inside the activities of such groups. What people did for the group was always made on a spontaneous base, without any kind of obligation toward other members or third parts. The non obligation dimension was an important aspect of the reciprocal obligations members could expect from one another in the setting of group's meetings. Even if among many members there were significant relationships (sometimes friendship relationships), and people felt proudly his membership in Piscinella, the main trait that characterized the fact of being a members of Piscinella was the obligation of not-obligation in internal group life.

Instead, what *positively* qualified members of Piscinella in the everyday life of the group was the fact that they were all *young* participants that had come together to challenge the overriding presence of old people in the power's structure of Milan cultural life. Indeed, the everyday life of the group was rich of conversations in which it was projected the idea that all the social spheres of Italian society were overtly dominated by old people. For example the age of the national and local political ruling class was repeatedly stressed and compared with the ages of the ruling politicians of other countries, with a climax of this type of conversation in the occasion of the election of the new US president in November 2008. But the dominance of elderly people was underlined in many other social domains (business, university, industry, television and so on and so for). This type of conversation were not simple chatting among members but served to affirm the identity of group members as young people that were fighting the old ruling class with specific reference to the cultural offer of Milan. Indeed, this was the meaning the group gave to its action while in the group settings[1]. This type of group bonds represented something that complemented, or at least didn't contradict, the seemingly loose obligations among group members. Indeed, being a member of Piscinella required not uniquely of being young but also of affirming in the style of dressing and in everyday conversation its own youngness in opposition to the old dominating class.

But this adversarial style of defining group bonds had important implications in terms of the group capacity of attaining its goals of being recognized as a partner of Milan council. Indeed, this didn't allow any alternative way of formulating the meaning of the group's action apart from that of striving to oppose the old ruling class. Especially, *this type of group bonds didn't allow any conversational inquiry on the nature of the ruling political class to which the group wished to*

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[1] The adversarial way of defining group bonds that prevailed in Piscinella everyday settings is something that we will see again in this dissertation (chapter 8) when discussing more thoroughly the partisanship group style present in some of the groups included in the CP.

bridge. For example it didn't allow to discuss alternative ways of framing the group's action or who were the members of the official committee of "wise men", apart from being old people. Indeed, in group settings challenging the fact that the group was opposing the dominance of the old ruling class would have meant to put into the question the participation into the group and the meaning of the ties among its members. The way group bonds in Piscinella were structured could lead to the attainment of its goal of being recognized by the "committee of wise men" or not attaining such a goal and dissolving, (as it happened) because of its group bonds. Further, the fact that internal bonds didn't imply any responsibility toward other members of the group had implications in the relationships the group established with external parts. Firstly, because the partnership purpose Piscinella gave itself required a kind of interdependence and sense of reciprocal responsibility among group's members that was not present: piscinella failed firstly to present itself as a group of people and not just the sum of single associations' leaders. That is not to say that Piscinella was not a "real" group[1]. Piscinella was a group with its own organizational culture and its members clearly shared the meanings about the group purposes and the way to pursue them. Every member implicitly agreed on the fact that the group had, more than anything else, to gain the necessary legitimacy to be a partner of the official committee. No one ever challenged in any way this, for example trying to imagine different ways of relating to the official committee. Defining group membership in terms of young people opposing old ruling politicians didn't require any particular responsibility among group members apart from affirming its youngness in group settings. But this type of reciprocal responsibility among group members didn't facilitate to reach the goal the group had given to itself. Indeed, Piscinella, in order to attain its goal, needed to rethink its action and its overall meaning through a type of social reflexivity that the group bonds couldn't allow to emerge, if not at the very cost of breaking the very meaning of the group existence.

Similarly to Piscinella, also in the CASG's meetings prevailed a seemingly networker group style that left the initiative more to single member or to small groups than to collectively coordinated action. Many of the CASG's meetings that I've attended represented occasions to report and being updated about the latest actions that CP members had carried out. *This was important because cued me in understanding that what tied CASG members was the fact that they were all members of the CP. This was the reason why so much time it was spent during the group's meeting to report and discuss the ongoing development of the CP. For example one CASG meeting was entirely devoted to report about the fact that some spaces of the Cuccagna farmhouse had been assigned to commercial activities. Being a members of the CP was what defined the reciprocal obligations among CASG's members.* This had relevant implications for the capacity possessed by the group of attaining its goal of establishing a partnership relationship with local council authorities, and especially for the reactions deriving from the fact that this goal had not been attained. Indeed, firstly this goal was not part of the way CASG members defined their reciprocal relationships and mutual obligations as members of the same groups. These relationships implied that members were tied together as part of the same overall project and as such they shared its goals and felt obliged of informing each other about its ongoing developments. Thus, once the group realized that its original goal couldn't be attained it simply founded another reason to keep its existence, finding another

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[1] And therefore it was not a suitable case for comparative purposes.

way of contributing to the development of the Cuccagna Project. The way group bonds were defined in group contexts allowed its members to repeatedly engage in explorative conversations about the traits of the widest local context in which the group acted and on the nature of the local council authorities towards which they wanted to bridge. This type of reflexive conversations were useful in letting the group find and pursue the other purposes the group, after having failed its initial goals, gave itself.

To sum up the argument proposed with this second comparison, we have started noting that the *two observed alliances were governed by a similar networker, task-oriented, style. But a closer look at the everyday functioning of these groups revealed that things differed and that these differences mattered - though not in a direct casual way- in shaping the observed outcomes. In particular, not the simple distinction between bonding and bridging type of capital but a close observation of the way group bonds were defined in the everyday life of the group allowed to see something interesting for better understanding the observed outcomes. What I have tried to show was that that an oppositional type of group bonds made particularly hard for the group re-inventing itself once its scheduled goal had not been attained.*

The next and final comparative case will be devoted to further develop the proposed argument, applying it to a single group, observing as it over time changed its way of defining group bonds.

3. RESPONSIBLE COMMITMENT IN GROUP LIFE. CGCP AND PARTICIPATORY TABLES OVER TIME

As I have mentioned in chapter 3, the second phase of CGCP's life was characterized by the purpose of creating new groups (called Participatory Tables, PTs) by supporting ordinary citizens to self organize themselves on shared topics and act collectively as a single subjects[1]. In this paragraph I will look at the relation between CGCP and new-born PTs and at its development over time as good case to specify the argument proposed in this chapter about the importance of group bonds in shaping the associations' efforts to create social relationships with third subjects.

In order to set up new PTs, CGCP organized "Participatory events" to gather new people in the Cuccagna farm and group them according to similar shared interests that could be translated in activities doable on a regular basis in the Cuccagna farm's spaces. During "Participatory Events" the attendees were initially briefly told about the general purpose of CP, and about the CGCP. Then they were asked to write in small post-its what they wished to do with other people in the restructured space of the Cuccagna farmhouse. Post-its were then collected and aggregated according to similarities among them. The people who had written the post-its were asked to gather in groups around different tables[2] and start to discuss about how to organize themselves *civically*, that is to say as a group of citizens acting pro-actively and collectively. During this last phase of the

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[1] For more details see the division in phases of GCP's life presented in chapter 3.

[2] The name of *Participatory Table* comes precisely from the fact that people had to gather around tables.

"Participatory events", CGCP members passed and stopped in the tables in order to facilitate the ongoing collective discussions and helping them to coordinate themselves as a single group.

The "Participatory event" held on July 19th 2008 had been particularly fruitful because it was attended by 36 people and 4 new civic groups were formed as a result of the event: the *Green PT,* devoted to maintain the garden and all the green spaces of Cuccagna farm; the *Mothers and children PT,* to organize activities involving local children and their families in the Cuccagna farm; the *Arts PT,* including artists and citizens wishing to be active in generic arts practices that needed to be defined over the time; the *Open doors* PT formed by retired citizens willing to share their afternoons playing cards or doing other leisure or cultural activities together. The new born groups had to carry out their own activities autonomously and at the same time keep a specific type of relationship with the CGCP. Let's focus our attention on two cases of these relationship to observe how group bonds mattered in shaping the observed group's outcomes.

3.1 PROBLEMS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CGCP AND GREEN PT

As I have already said, the Green PT soon became one of the most active group inside the CP, a group capable of rooting itself in the neighborhood by including many local residents or involving a large audiences in the initiatives the group used to set up. But these activities, and how they developed, will be observed later on[1]. For the moment I will focus on the group's first period, during which its activities consisted mainly in gardening the green spaces of the Cuccagna farm.

From his very beginning the Green PT had showed an high degree of autonomy and self-organizing ability: indeed, the group didn't limited itself to carry out his gardening activities, but it also started to establish fruitful relationships with local subjects, such as the local primary schools (according to what has been previously illustrated in this chapter) or local farmers of the south area of Milan.

The green PT had taken very seriously CGCP's invitation of acting autonomously, even too much seriously according to CGCP's members and especially its leader. Indeed, CGCP was not happy with the way the Green PT acted, especially with respect to the relationship the two subjects had developed and with the way the Green PT managed its internal life. In particular, CGCP reproached the Green TP of not participating enough in CGCP meetings, of not informing about the program of their activities and, more generally, of not using the "Participation guidelines" the CGCP had adopted for structuring its internal life. "Participation guidelines" were principles formally written in internal documents, inspired by deliberative democracy procedures, that CGCP had intentionally decided to adopt for shaping its internal formal and informal organization. "Participation guidelines" in concrete required the group to carry out specific tasks, the most important of whom was the writing of notes (verbal or minutes) during group official meetings to keep trace of what people had said.

The green PT didn't use to verbalize its internal meeting and this was considered a serious problem according to CGCP (especially according to its sociologist leader), because it diminished the

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[1] In particular in chapter 8.

possibility of letting self-reflexivity talks to emerge as re-elaboration of what people had said in previous meetings. CGCP's members used to repeat to Green PT members that

> "keeping a verbal, though apparently unimportant, was crucial for letting the group having awareness of itself as a group"[1].

But despite the advices, the Green PT never took the habit of taking notes, except on the occasions in which some CGCP members were present in its meetings and he/she took direct responsibility of doing that. After a period of conflict - that included also some arguing- between the two groups about the usefulness of "Participation guidelines" 's procedures, CGCP gave up its efforts of convincing the Green PT about the guidelines and about the necessity of keeping a more tight relationship among the groups. As a result the Green PT went on acting more and more autonomously from CGCP. The members of this group kept not being happy with that but accepted it, being aware of their incapability of changing it. Over time the two groups' lives divided more and more, to the point that informal conversations with new Green PT members that entered the group when the conflict had ended, revealed to me that they didn't even know who CGCP was or what the "Participation guidelines" were. The Green PT assumed an ever growing level of autonomy that led this group to developments that no other CP group experienced[2].

3.2 COMPARING RELATIONSHIPS OF CGCP WITH THE GREEN PT AND THE MOTHER AND CHILDREN PT

Thus CGCP failed its goal of establishing a fruitful relationship with the Green PT. But, things differed if we consider the relationships CGCP established and developed with other PTs during other period of its life. Indeed, as a result of the "Participatory event" held on the 8th of November 2008, new PTs were set up. The CGCP was much happier about the new relationships that had been established with the new PTs, because they corresponded much more to those that CGCP wished to establish. During CGCP internal meetings the new relationships were rarely the subject of collective conversations, and when this happened they were never discussed in terms of problems to be solved, as it used to happen regularly in the previous period with respect to the Green PT. Indeed, the new PTs had assumed some of the "Participation guidelines" to manage its internal life - such as the habit of keeping notes of what people said in meetings - without any pressure from CGCP for doing so. Also, new PT's members were aware of the presence of CGCP and some of them also took part to the group life of other CP groups. The relations between CGCP and *Mother and Children* PT can be presented as a good example to show the difference among this relationship and the one CGCP had established with the Green PT in its previous period.

Mother and Children PT was a group devoted to organize workshops and parties inside the Cuccagna farm devoted mainly to attract local families with their little kids. In the setting up of these activities, *Mother and Children* PT constantly participated in CGCP meetings, it was involved

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[1] Excerpt of informal conversation among Sandra (members o CGCP) and Umberto (member of the Green PT) from field notes.

[2] As we shall see later on in the dissertation, In particular in chapter 8.

in his internal group life and decisions and showed high level of interest toward the general Cuccagna Project and the other groups that were involved in it. This never happened in the past in the relationship with the Green PT and it represented a cause of discussion and conflict in their relation. CGCP's members also showed interest in *Mother and children* PT and often participated with their families in the events promoted by the group. Over time reciprocal respect and interest turned in significant relations between the two groups and their members, in both cases something that never happened for the Green TP even if I had been observing his relation with CGCP for a longer period of time.

The argument proposed in this chapter to account for such differences states that the different way the two relationships unfolded were shaped by the different group bonds that sustained CGCP's everyday life in the two observed periods. Indeed, the group style of CGCP experienced a shift that significantly diminished the number of its members and, especially, changed the way this group defined its group bonds. Let's see in more detail how group bonds changed over time and how this affected the possibility of building new relationships with subjects beyond the group.

3.2.1 SOCIAL TIES MATTER

CGCP was formed in April 2006 and up until November 2008 was made up of around 20 members, many of whom had been knowing each other for a long time and shared previous associational or political experiences. During the CGCP meetings I've participated in, I've seen these people sharing the same vocabularies, repertoires of actions and the same taken for granted assumptions about the wider society in which they implicitly positioned themselves. They all considered themselves to be left-wing people but not radicals, acting together in the CGCP to create sociality opportunities in Milan, a city assumed to be in a serious lack of them. CGCP members also shared the same implicit assumptions about what tied themselves as members of the same group. In its first period to be a good member of CGCP meant to be a *good student*, respectful of other members privacy. Members recognized themselves as old acquaintances with the same broad political vocabulary that represented the shared ground for their everyday interactions in the group settings. But this was not what defined their group bonds. Observing the process of becoming a new active member of the group cued me in understanding which reciprocal obligations routinely tied groups members in CGCP everyday settings. In particular, observing from close the way I entered and I was accepted by the rest of the group suggested me what, beyond formal rules, sustained group bonds. Formally, according to the "Participation guidelines" that the group claimed to follow, the entrance of a new member into the group was supposed to be accepted unanimously by all the members of the group. So, when, after a short period of observation, I asked to enter officially the group, a specific meeting was held to discuss and decide about my entrance. But, just two of the 20 participants of the group attended that meeting, and these were the oldest members of the group. The meeting to decide upon my entrance into the group lasted about 15 minutes and it was open by this short introduction of the moderator:

> Sergio D: "As you know, we are this evening with the specific purpose of deciding about the entrance of a new member into the group. Unfortunately most of the members didn't came but we are here anyway to decide, so if you wish to ask the applicant who he is and why he wants to enter the group you are free to do it"

This intervention caused astonished responses by the two members who had came to that meeting:

> Betty: "I know Sebastiano [the researcher] quite well and I know also what he is here for... Why should I ask him now something? This is absurd, of course I agree with his entrance and is not even necessary to ask my opinion at this respect: who am I to say that he cannot enter this group ?"

Carmelo - the other member who had came that night - agreed totally with Betty's intervention, so the meeting was soon ended. Though very short, this meeting revealed to be useful to me to see how official norms didn't correspond to the situated meanings about ties among group members in the group settings. According to Carmelo and Betty there was nothing that differentiated a good acquaintance from a member of the same group they participated in.

Indeed, as for relationships with acquaintances, it was possible to not complete trust what other people were saying or not believing what they declared to be their real intensions. Indeed, not rarely it occurred verbal exchanges revealing reciprocal mistrust, during quite lively and tense CGCP meetings. We have seen what I mean with this point with the opening example of the chapter: it is possible to cite at this respect another excerpt from that conversation:

> Matteo: We have been doing interviews to local residents for more than 5 months and I'm still wandering what we are exactly doing this for.. I don't know, it seems like the real purposes is not shared..

> Sergio D: I'm tired of listening to these kind of critics [..] this conspiracy climate is not at all favorable to the group's work. You, as many other people of the group, are always thinking   that here we are doing this but the real purpose is that of doing something else…

Regular meetings resulted often in this kind of arguing that could engage group members for long time in reciprocal accusations. Suspect in internal reciprocal relations was particularly visible on other occasions. For example when, asked by the Cuccagna managing board, I took the work of conducting a social research in the neighborhood of the Cuccagna farm. It was a paid work[1] and this raised many polemic discussions in CGCP's meetings because someone overtly questioned the real intentions of my entrance into the group and, more generally, in the CP. They directly and indirectly accused me of using the CP for my own purposes of making money, and someone even said in a meeting that was the only reason why I entered the Cuccagna Project. The accusations were useful to see how CGCP members related to me as a member: someone who could have had cheating intentions and could have used its membership into the group for other purposes, that were not the ones he declared to have. But it is worth underlining that this type of accusations and reciprocal suspicions didn't affect what it meant being a good member in this phase of the group's life. Indeed, this meant firstly being a *good student* of "Participation guidelines" while in group meetings' context, showing interest in reading documents with theories and examples of participatory practices that the group leader distributed. In group contexts members qualified their interventions referring constantly to the "Participation guidelines", and deemed their reciprocal obligations in terms of knowledge of the "Participation guidelines". The more an intervention in group meetings showed of knowing the principles of these guidelines, the more members felt qualified to intervene while in meeting's context.

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[1] Even if It was a sum deeply inferior to market prices for this kind of job.

But after about a year and a half members started to stop considering themselves as student and thought they had began masters and so they could spread the participatory principles to all the other CP groups. They started to consider themselves as the only competent people inside the CP in terms of participation principles and for this reason they felt the right of teaching other CP members to became as they had became after having studied. In the cases of student and master alike, being a good member didn't require any significant knowledge or relationships with other members. The relation that mattered the most was the one with Sergio D, the group leader. From time to time sociability occasions - such as diners at restaurant or excursion to the mountains – were proposed by some members, but none of such proposal had actually been realized. Apart from previous acquaintances, people didn't know each other personal aspects of life such as what was their job, their families or in which neighborhood they lived. In the settings of CGCP's meetings, no one never asked me anything about my personal or professional life but many of them showed deep interest on my research activities by asking me many questions about it during informal conversations in backstage settings[1]. But these conversations never took place in the front-stage settings of group life and especially during group discussions. When I asked a member what he did for a living, while waiting for a group meeting to start, this was taken with big surprise by all the other group members, that looked astonished at me as if I had said something wrong. I realized I had provoked a breach in the customized rules that governed the way group members related to each other.

Though the group style of the CGCP remained the same over time[2], the way group bonds defined their reciprocal relationships as group members changed over time. In particular, when CGCP members passed from conceiving themselves as *students* (of "Participation guidelines) to (participation) *masters* the way they defined their reciprocal relationships started to include a responsibility element that they didn't possess before. This mattered in shaping the group capacity of establishing the relationships it wanted to establish with the new PTs. Let's see how the change happened and which implications it entailed for the group capacity of reaching its purposes.

3.2.2   A CHANGE IN GROUP COMPOSITION AND GROUP BONDS

In November 2008 the group changed many of its members and, especially, the way it structured its everyday life. This didn't have any more to necessarily follow the "Participation guidelines" as it used to happen before. The turning point of this shift was symbolized by the decision taken by the group leader after a particularly lively meeting held on the 5th of November 2008. But the change was actually slower and it consisted in the emergence of a new way of defining group bonds while group members where in the everyday group life. This new type of group bonds already existed in the way some of the group members participated into the group life, but after the decision taken by Sergio D of asking to leave the group to some members this type of group bonds became the

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[1] With respect to group official, front-stage, discussions.

[2] I chapter 8 such a group style well be defined in terms of disciple/master relationship.

dominant ones. Indeed, after the aforementioned November 2008 meeting, Sergio D decided to significantly diminish the number of the group members. Sergio D thought that in order to keep the group going on in carrying out its activities in a more smoothly way it was necessary to leave some of the actual members of the group outside of it in the future. So he started a series of private conversations with the members he thought should leave, inviting them to participate in other groups of the Cuccagna Project. All the people involved in these conversations listened to him, understood his reasons, and accepted to leave the group. In the CGCP remained just four people plus its leader. They kept doing about the same activities they did before but bonds sustaining members' relationship changed, becoming more intimate, acquiring reciprocal trust, confidence and an higher degree of personal responsibility into the group life: all things that contributed to the capacity of the group to manage its relationships with the new PTs that were being set up in that period.

The change was visible attending the groups meetings and it can be illustrated comparing the way CGCP members managed two "Participatory events", one before the turning point decision and the other one after it. In the "Participatory event" held in July 2008, I played the facilitator role, helping to collect the post-its in which the event's attendees had written their desires and coordinating the discussion among a group of six people that wished to be active in the Cuccagna farmhouse working on "environmental sustainability". No one had previously told me how to properly carry out this task. At the discussing table I limited myself to maintain the focus on how to translate general intentions expressed by the attendees in specific activities doable in the Cuccagna farm: I thought maintaining the discussion focused, instead of continuously wandering on different issues, was what Sergio D meant by "facilitating" and what is was expected from my role. When Sergio D said that the time for the discussion was over and it was time to fix a next meeting, I invited the people around the table to decide a date comfortable for every one for a next meeting. I did this in a loose way, often leaving the people around the table to discuss by themselves and going around other tables to observe what was happening there. In doing so I had the opportunity to note that there were different styles of facilitating the discussion and not everyone had taken the "maintain the focus" style I had assumed as the best way to facilitate the discussion. I also noticed that I was the only one to worry about so many things, because while I asked the other CGCP members how they were conducting their collective discussions, no one asked anything to me.

I understood that this derived from an important aspect, which was the fact all the other members were assuming that Sergio D would have taken care of all the important aspects that were required for the management of the event. This included for example managing the time for each part of the Participatory event, but also giving the new comers information about the CP: indeed, every time someone asked something about the CP, CGCP members send him/her to ask Sergio D. Giving the right information about the CP was something that required members to responsibly implicate themselves, and this was left to the group leader. CGCP members' presence in the discussing group simply signified showing their presence, without risking any particular efforts that could have affected the likelihood of turning that gathering in a stable civic group. For this reason the other members were not worried as I was while managing the discussion as facilitators of the new

Participatory Tables. In this phase being a CGCP member didn't require any responsibility because this was entirely left to the group's leader.

In a similar "Participatory event" held about 10 months later on (after the turning point decision), I played the same facilitating role but things differed significantly. Firstly, I noticed that all the other 4 members of CGCP shared a particular style of facilitating and coordinating the discussion among the event's attendees and I noticed they were anxious about not behaving in the proper way. The dominant way of being a facilitator was made of a discrete presence at the discussing table, generally without intervening in the flow of the discussion a part from saying which kind of activities could be developed inside the Cuccagna farm and which couldn't because of the construction works that were going on in that period. This role required a relevant effort on the part of group members in coordinating themselves cooperatively. Indeed, from time to time the facilitators left their table to meet in the middle of the room to discuss what to do, for example if leaving more time to people for discussing or stop the discussion and pass on to a different activity. There was something new compared to the other "Participatory events" I had attended. This was the fact the group members engagement in the event implied a direct responsibility in shaping the unfolding of the Participatory Event and thus the likelihood that new PTs would have resulted from it.

The coordination among group members is not an important aspect in itself but because it implied group members to responsibly involve themselves in coordination with each other. Indeed, in this new scenario the role of the group leader was limited to the one possessed by any other group members. He was not anymore the only one that could inform about the ongoing development of the overall CP or about its general purposes. Reciprocal obligations sustaining group bonds among CGCP's members were not characterized anymore by the assumption that someone else (the group leader, Sergio D) would have taken responsibility of giving the right information but all members, as a part of CGCP, had now to know exactly the information to give to new comers and give it even if this was outside the narrow definition of their facilitator roles in the discussing tables. CGCP's members were asked to take direct responsibility for the whole group in every moment, counting on the fact that all the others would have done the same. The fact that in a second "Participatory event", CGCP members gathered periodically in the middle of the room to decide what to do and the fact that they were not expecting anymore Sergio D to take that decision was a clear sign of a direct responsibility to be taken personally by themselves. This meant clearly a different collective way of being involved in the group.

Also, the homogeneity of the behavior of CGCP's members in the different discussing tables gave new comers a specific and clear meaning of what CGCP meant concretely by "Participation guidelines", showing with actions and attitudes how these guidelines translated in the activities carried out. This gave immediately the new TP tables the idea they could relate to a well-trod civic group equipped with a specific program they could refer to. Previously, attendees of Participatory events used to get confused and contradictory ideas about CGCP and the "Participation guidelines" the group claimed to follow. Previously, new comers often complained about the lack of institutional support they suffered participating in the new formed PTs because this was seen as the

main source of the difficulties encountered in the start-up phase of new groups. During informal conversations a new member once told me that the "CP was a real mess", meaning that its group had to face an organizational ambience with a too elevated degree of uncertainty. This member lamented that no one really knew the important things the group needed to know, such as for example which room of the old farm were at disposal for which period. When the group bonds sustaining the participation in the CGCP started to include broader responsibility on the part of group members, things partially changed because CGCP members started to assume direct responsibility in the group meetings about finding the answers that the members of the new-born PTs needed to know.

The new CGCP group bonds were more suited to foster the setting up of new PTs and, also for this reason, CGCP started to appear a more reliable partner during the life of PTs, not simply a burden to be managed, as we have seen it was perceived in the case of the Green PT. Indeed, the PTs created in the second phase established with CGCP the kind of relationship CGCP wanted them to establish: acting autonomously but feeling as a part of CGCP and the overall CP, attending CGCP meetings and even taking spontaneously notes in their meetings.

Because in this case the comparison has been developed observing the same group in its evolution over time, alternative or complementary interpretative hypothesis – for example about the organizing form possessed or the type of social relationships the group wanted to create – are not worth to be taken into account. But for example we could think that the two observed outcomes have to be related to the fact that the CGCP in his second phase was formed by an inferior number of people than in his first phase and thus it was easier for group members to responsibly engage themselves in group life. The argument I'm proposing here is different and it says that is not a matter of numbers of members but it is the nature of the bonds tying one member to the other while in group context that partially shape the different observed outcomes. This is because different group bonds differently enable and constrain the ways groups reach out. In particular, we have observed in the last comparison that when a responsibility aspect shaped internal reciprocal ties among members, the group was eased in its work of establishing and keeping a relationship with new formed civic subjects. Also, the autonomous responsible CGCP group bonds worked in this case in giving the new PTs a reliable institutional support that decreased the level of uncertainty new members had to face.

FINAL REMARKS

The function exerted by associations of building new relationships among single or collective subjects is a dimension that is often taken for granted in normative accounts of civic participation (Donati, Colozzi 2004 p. 124; Bidussa 1994 p. 98; Barbetta 2008 p. 91; Caltabiano 2002 p. 19; Ambrosini 2005 p.46; Caselli 2005 p. 171; Borghi 2001 p. 168). The observed cases have firstly shown that such assumption needs to be revised. The construction of satisfying new relationships among previously separated subjects is just a possible outcome of group efforts of reaching

outward. Such a result seemed to develop independently from the intentions of the observed associations, but in relations to the 'nature' of group bonds tying group members while in group settings.

Summarizing the analytical journey made in this chapter, we have seen through the first comparative case that the presence of "borders roles" between the group and the locale in which it acts is something important when the group's efforts of creating social relationships are oriented toward local actors. The sharing of the same locale represented a positive element for the success of the associations' efforts when there are members that, thanks to their local embeddedness, act as mediating role with the subjects group want to reach. This is consistent with findings from non-profit studies about the relation between non-profit organizations and the local communities in which they act. In particular Ambrosini and Boccagni (2008) stated that mediating roles are crucial in shaping the capacities of non profit groups to became "interprets of the community" (Ambrosini, Boccagni 2008 p. 295) in which they act. What I've tried to stress with the first comparative case is how the local character mattered in shaping sociality efforts. In particular, I've tried to underline that *is not the local origins of group members to matter in itself, but the fact that the local character became part of the way group members defined their reciprocal obligations while in group settings*. In the first observed case the local dimension entered group life because reciprocal obligations defining group bonds included personal aspects and thus could comprise the local embeddedness of members. This was just a possibility among others to include the local trait of members in the everyday life of the group, but it was important because it showed *how* "borders roles" where included in the settings where the group life unfolded.

The second analytical case has compared two loose and task-oriented alliances and it had supplied some relevant findings on the relations between social capital and collective outcomes resulting from collective attempts of intentionally create new social relationships. We have seen that social capital was not necessarily associated to successful outcomes, despite the fact that Portes and Sensenbrener (1993) defined social capital as "those expectations for action within a collectivity that affect the [..] goal-seeking behavior of its members" (Portes and Sensenbrener 1993 p.132). This indicates that doesn't necessarily prove to be true what was discovered in other, apparently similar, domains: for example in neighborhood studies when it is stated that "violent crime was less frequent in neighborhoods with higher levels of social capital, because those residents had higher levels of collective efficacy" (Larsen et al. 2004 p. 66). We have seen that group bonds among subjects of similar networks may vary significantly and that such variations matter in shaping the groups' outcomes. The differences that mattered were independent of both the distinctions proposed by social capital scholars between on the one hand vertical/horizontal ties (Putnam 1993) and, on the other one, bridging and bonding type of social capital. Firstly, the distinction proposed by Putnam (1993) among vertical ties and horizontal ones, and his argument that the latter ones are supposed to foster civic groups' capacity of reaching out (Putnam et al. 1994, p. p. 23, 136, 144, 145, 175) didn't prove to be of any utility for tracing the observed outcomes. Indeed, we have seen quite opposite outcomes from the one Putnam's argument would have allowed to predict, with higher level of capacity of creating social ties associated more to groups with vertical ties (CAGS) than to group with horizontal ones (Piscinella). Social capital theories doesn't prove to be of any utility even when using the more refined distinction between bridging and bonding type of social

capital (Putnam 2000). Instead, the perspective on group bonds has been useful in observing that Piscinella' bonds, based on the reciprocal obligations of not obligating each other in doing anything, didn't facilitate the emergence of self reflexive talks in the everyday conversations of the group. The lack of this type of conversation in the group life was something important because it made particularly difficult for the group to keep existing when its initial scheduled purpose had failed, in spite of the fact that many of its members desired to keep the group going on. In the case of CAGS group bonds were defined by the fact of being part of an overall project (the CP) that tied members beyond the concrete task for which the alliance had been set up. This type of bonds allowed the alliance to easily continuing its existence after it had failed in reaching its purpose, re-inventing its role through self reflexive talks that could go also to question the meaning of the group action.

In the last comparative case we have seen how group bonds sustaining participant's commitment in the CGCP changed over time and how this shaped the capacity possessed by the group of establishing new relationships with new-born Participatory Tables. The attainment of these goals has proved to be shaped by group bonds including member's personal responsibility in their everyday involvement into group's life, and especially in the way members defined their reciprocal relationships. Autonomous and responsible members represented a sort of "institutional support" for new born groups that strived to reduce the level of complexity and uncertainty of the organizational context in which they acted.

Local embeddedness, social reflexivity and a responsible engagement in group life can be considered as three traits that proved to be important in shaping the observed group's capacity of reaching out. What it is worth underling is that in the three cases *these traits were not important in themselves, or in abstract, but because they were part of the situated meanings group members gave to their participation in group life. In particular, those aspects entered the group life through the way group members reciprocally defined their obligations while in group settings.* The finding of this chapter contribute to the formulation of provisional mechanism that tie the way group bonds are defined to the type of sociality outcomes that this allow to reach. Other elements that can be considered important for shaping other types of outcomes could be added to the ones signaled in this chapter and the inquiry developed in the next chapters represent a further step in this direction. In particular the next two chapters will be devoted to explore the pursue of public sociality through "ephemeral practices", that is to say through the events the observed associations used to set up during my two year participant observation. The underlying hypothesis remains the same, that is looking at the situated way groups coordinate its internal parts to understand the outcomes of their actions.

Though not definitive, we can use the findings of this chapter to go back to the opening example of the CGCP failing in reaching out toward the local neighborhood (symbolized by the formal collect of signature to stop the Cuccagna project) to see if they can shed light on that episode. It is useful remembering that when the failure occurred, CGCP was in his first period, the one characterized by very loose groups bonds that didn't imply any kind of personal responsibility on the part of group members while in group context[1]. The way CGCP members defined their reciprocal obligations in

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[1] For further argument on the nature of bonds of this group see chapter 8.

that period didn't include any type of personal aspects, as we have seen noting that conversations about personal issues (living, place of residence, family) were not required to define the membership into the group. Group bonds didn't include personal responsible commitment into the group life or in carrying out the group activities, as we have seen with the last comparison. Also, group bonds of CGCP in that period could not sustain any type of self-reflexive conversations[1] that we have seen were important in the second comparative case. Indeed, in the short conversation's extract put at the begging of the chapter it is as if Sergio D[2] knew that CGCP in that period didn't possess the kind of bonds necessary to sustain the goal of facing the problem of the signatures' collection and for establishing a relationship with his neighbors. Indeed, Sergio D, instead of thinking about some kind of initiatives to establish a relationship with the neighborhood residents that had collected the signatures, decided to develop the group's civic action working on his internal relational dimension of the group, conducting interviews and then discussing them as a means to develop reflexive talks among group members.

While this chapter has focused on the associations' efforts of pursuing their goals that unfolded over time, the next two ones will move to analyze a different type of efforts of creating new social relationships. These efforts are characterized by the fact that deploy themselves through the setting up of ephemeral occasions of face-to-face encounters and in particular through events. The next chapter will inquiry aspects of the *grammar of events* when these are used by associations as a means to produce public sociality. After the next two chapters the focus will came back on the patterns of interactions that shape group life. In particular, I will try to link such patterns to the way events were used by the observed associations. The choice of entirely dedicating the two next chapters to efforts of creating social ties that take the form of events is worth to be explained. Indeed, previously in this dissertation I already underlined the highly controversial aspects of using events to generate public sociality. Indeed, on the one hand events guarantee specific advantages to the groups that set them up in particular in terms of visibility, legitimation, and possibilities of "building a shared interest" (Vitale 2004); on the other events may imply relevant drawbacks for creating social relationships beyond the group for example in terms of possibility of actively involving the attendees, of going beyond the *immediacy* that characterize them to enact a sociality that refers to a "generalized other". In spite of their controversial nature, this study needs to take seriously the fact that events represent a relevant part of the repertoire of action the research case studies use to reach their purposes.

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[1] See the initial excerpt of the conversation with Marco at this respect.

[2] Which, by the way, is a sociologist and therefore may presumably be more oriented than ordinary people to see the role of social ties in shaping collective life.

5. "IT IS NOT FOR EVERYBODY EVEN IF IT'S FOR FREE"[1]. EVENTS AS ARTICULATATION OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE

OPENING. EXCLUSIVE OUTCOME OF EFFORTS OF INCLUSION

> Simona: I'm sorry to say it, but while living abroad I realized how difficult is to develop social relations in Milan. Maybe it is something related to the frenetic rhythm of life that people conduct in this city, but I've lived in other big cities where there are also a lot of frenetic people but it is not like this, in Milan people don't integrate to each other, people remain in its own isolation. I think that from this comes many other problems and conflicts […] We should all feel more like part of something common

Simona is a 32 years woman resident in Milan "Zone 4" and this excerpt come from a series of interviews I conducted with attendees of the events set up by the observed groups[2]. Thanks to these interviews I've listened to plenty of statements that, similarly to the aforementioned one, complained about the frustrations and predicaments deriving from "the lack of a truly public life in Milan". But I especially consider Simona's statements particularly telling for another reason that is linked to the detailed knowledge about Esterni (one of the associations taken as research case-studies[3]) she expressed in our conversation.

> Simona: I do know Esterni, I often attend their events …though I'm quite critical about this association, I don't especially like it to be honest: I cannot stand that kind of very cool atmosphere that there is at their events: they are the *cool* [with emphasis] guys that do the *cool* things…they are just a very specific, very "Milanese", hipster community, and I'm out of that, but I don't even want to be part of that…
>
> Interviewer: I see, but why? Esterni at least try to organize sociable activities in this city…
>
> Simona: I know! I have previously also thought about it, they try to do something good, I know, but then when I go to their events I notice that there is a unique kind of people, which are the cool people like them, *it's not for everybody even if it is for free*[4], so I don't think that what they do is of any utility for this city. I also think they know this, but they don't care about it.

The official statements Esterni used to describe its goals and activities (described in chapter 3) are strikingly consistent with Simona's concerns about the lack of public life in Milan. We could even say that this type of concerns represented Esterni's official raison d'être. Indeed, the formal communication of this association underlined that its main goals were "the upgrading of public spaces" and making "the city a meeting and socializing area"[5]. Through the web pages of this association we can learn that

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[1] Quotation from the excerpt of interview cited at the opening of the chapter.

[2] For further details about the status of the conducted interview see the methodological appendix at the end of the dissertation.

[3] See chapter 3 for more details about this cultural organization and the other ones.

[4] Italic because of the remind to the title of the chapter.

[5] From the English page of the association's website.

> "for fourteen years, Esterni has been working to highlight public spaces as the place where cities develop"[1]

or that

> "The upgrading of public areas and the centrality of people are the driving force of all Esterni activities; socialization, cultural exchange, the city as a place where people meet and get together, social responsibility and broadened participation are the motive behind each and every project."[2]

This self description, and many other similar ones I could cite[3], are clearly resonates with Simona's concerns for social isolation. Indeed, both viewpoints consider Milan as a city in lack of public spaces and both recognize the urgency of acting in order to give social relations a more central role in the social organization of this city. The opening puzzle of this chapter refers to the fact that, in spite of the evident similarities, Simona clearly said of not appreciating Esterni's efforts of making Milan sociable. In particular, Simona addressed Esterni critics of parochialism, she accused Esterni of setting up occasions that are for a very specific, quite homogenous, public who is in all very similar the Esterni's members. She stated of feeling excluded from the "public spaces of proximity" (Laville 1994) that Esterni generated through the cultural events this group used to set up.

INTRODUCTION. WHEN EVENTS ARTICULATE THE PUBLIC SPHERE?

This and the following chapter widely use concepts offered by Hamerbas' model of the public sphere (Habermas), though integrating such a perspective with other analytical tools allowing a more situated outlook on the observed processes. Given the *constitutive* relation of the observed groups' activities with the public sphere (outlined in chapter 1), I deem useful Habermas' model for the inquiry carried out in this and the following chapter. In particular, I will try in this paragraph to outline the specific motives at the basis of my choice of using Habermas' perspective.

Habermas normative model of the public sphere, especially in the famous chapter 8 of its "Between facts and norms" ( ), assign a specific function to civil society subjects. Such a function is often summarized with the metaphor of the "infrastructure", according to which civil society is the *infrastructure* of the public sphere: in "the associative fabric actors elaborate topics that became part of the public sphere" (Privitera 2001 p. 43).Using Habermas own words "the public sphere is communicative structure drawing on civil society and embedded through it in the lifeworld" (Habermas 1997 p. 393).

According to my field research the civil society association I have studied are connected to the wider "worldlife" (and to the wider society in even a more general meaning) and "elaborate topics" mainly through cultural events. Here I will not criticize the "logo-centric approach" (Berger 2009 p. 254) implied by Habermas' viewpoint noting that events include mainly highly symbolic and emotionally-laden practices rather than rational communicative acts. Instead, my interest here is in

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[1] http://www.publicdesignfestival.org/publicdesignfestival/it/home/

[2] From Esterni English web page: http://www.Esterni.org/eng/Esterni/

[3] See chapter 3 for a wider introduction about this association.

underling that (Esterni's) *events* (according to Simona's experience) *are not only far away from the "worldlife" of actors, but they may also fail in including actors that wished to take an active part in them* (such as Simona). The reader could think that this is not of great importance and that it may be related to the ambiguity of proximity, an aspect widely discussed in sociology since its beginnings (Simmel 1997) up to the most recent scholarships (de Leonardis 1999, Marzorati 2009, Osti 2010). This aspect may at least partially accounts for Simona's statements but anyway such statements are something that deserve more consideration. Indeed, her claims problematizes the capacity of an event of representing "an articulation of the public sphere" (Sebastiani 1997 p. 231). What is put into open analytical question in this and the following chapter is the capacity of civil society subjects of acting as "infrastructure of the public sphere"; something that – taken in its broadest meaning - is particularly important for the observed groups considered that they aim at generating a *public* sociality that overcomes the limits of private sociability and thus turns the "interpersonal dimension" into the "intersubjective" one, that "intermediate level between objective and subjective, personal and collective" (de Leonardis 1997 p. 190). The tools offered by Habermas' model of the public sphere are particularly useful for addressing the tension between the "interpersonal" and the "intersubjective" dimension of the togetherness enacted through the events set up by the observed cultural associations. Indeed, firstly, on the contrary of the liberal and the neo-corporativist accounts (Ranci 1999), Habermas model of the public sphere give civil society and "status of autonomy as regulating principle" (*ibidm*). Secondly, and especially, Habermas' model, in spite of its normativity and logo-centredness, possess the relevant advantage of dedicating specific explicit attention to events in the articulation among the private and the public sphere. Indeed, Habermas has defined them as "the physically played[1] public sphere of theater representations, familiar evenings, rock concerts, party meetings, religious celebrations" (Habermas 1997 p.443) and has also outlined two specific requirements to be fulfilled in order to consider events as "articulation of the public sphere" (Sebastiani 1997). Let's briefly introduce such requirements.

The first of these requirements prescribe that events should be connected with the most abstract level of the public sphere, the one that is "independent from the physical presence of a public" (Sebastiani 2007, p. 230). Indeed, the second Habermas formulation of the model of the public sphere articulate it three levels according to their communicative density, their organizational complexity and the scale of the action that take place in them (Habermas 1997 p. 443). The first basic level is represented by the face-to-face, simple and episodic, meetings that happen in cafés, restaurants, street platforms or other informal gatherings of people (Sebastiani 2007 p. 230). The second level is the "organized public sphere", so called in opposition to the episodic, and not organized, first level of the public sphere. This level is "the physically represented public sphere" (Habermas 1997 p.443), where the events set up by the observed groups of my research fit[2]. The

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[1] The verb "to play" is the author's translation for the Italian "mettere in scena". Indeed, the orginal quotation would defined events as "la sfera pubblica fisicamente messa in scena".

[2] In order to avoid misunderstandings, it is worth to precise that though the events have been previously described as episodic and ephemeral practices, they cannot be ascribed to the first level of the public sphere model, which is also called as "episodic" and "ephemeral"

third level is the more abstract and it refers to the media scenes were messages are produced through communicative reciprocal actions - or that have been shaped in the same way in the other two levels – and they can reach a wide potential audience, gain the public attention and in this way may influence the political powers. The first requirement that make events as articulation of the public sphere require that they should be connected the third, media, level of Habermas' model.

The second requirement prescribe that the social settings where events unfold should be open and accessible to everyone that wished to participate in them. With reference to the aforementioned threefold division of Habermas' model of the public sphere, this means that the second level of events should be connected to the first one[1], and more generally to the widest local society in which events take place.

The findings and arguments proposed in this chapter have been outlined integrating Habermas' concepts with other analytical tools more suited to grasp the situated meanings of the practices actors enacted during events. On the one hand, the model of the public sphere has allowed to empirically studying the conditions allowing to fulfill the requirements Habermas outlined for considering events as "articulation of the public sphere". On the other hand, this model has been complemented in this chapter with other analytical tools that offered a situated perspective on the observed togetherness and on their power of enabling and constraining processes of "communizing" (Thévenot 2007).

1. MASSIVE AUDIENCES AND THE COMMUNICATIVE POWER OF EVENTS

"Whether or not community results from the gathering up of people into proximate face-to-face interactions depends – sociologists routinely say – on their number" (Gieryn 2000 p. 477). Certainly, number is not the only factor that according to some sociologists make "community" results from the gathering up of people, but it is often citied among those factors. This paragraph aims firstly at outlining what results in terms of "articulation of the public sphere" from the face-to-face gatherings of relevant numbers of people in the events set up by the observed cultural associations.

Assuming a pragmatic stance (Silber 2003), the number of attendees to these events is something worth to be taken seriously by the researcher firstly because it was taken seriously by the observed groups. Secondly, massive audience made the events I analyzed fulfill the first requirement they are asked to possess in order to be deemed as "articulation of the public sphere" according to Habermas' normative model. Indeed, massive participation connect the concrete settings where events unfold – mainly through face to face communication- to the most abstract level of the public sphere, the *media* communicative dimension.

WHAT TO COUNT THE EVENTS' ATTENDEES FOR?

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[1] In Habermas' second formulation all of the three levels of its model must be connected to each other and that every level must be equally open and accessible as the other ones (Sebastiani 1997).

During my fieldwork I was repeatedly stroke noting how important it was for the members of the observed groups the number of attendees that came to the events they set up. On different occasions, while events were taking place, I observed group members keeping the count of the attendees. Often, it was even informally asked my opinion about the number of attendees that came to certain events I had observed. After the events, if the number of the audience had been particularly higher or lower than groups' previous expectations, collective discussions and informal commentaries used to unfold among group members in the settings of everyday group life. All the groups I observed seemed at first sight to be *less concerned with the quality - for example their internal diverseness - rather than the quantity of attendees' participation to the events they used to set up*. Such a concern was an interesting puzzle to me considered that the observed groups' official goals widely stressed the inclusive and public nature of their efforts of making Milan sociable[1]. This represented an interesting quandary to me that called for more close observation to be accounted for[2].

I soon realized that the fact that events with massive audiences may represent a source of economic entrance for the observed groups could not justify completely all the attention they paid to the size of events' attendees. Indeed, economic sources deriving from events[3] covered little of the general costs of the observed groups, arriving at maximum at one third of their economic budget[4]. The reason for such an interest was another one and in particular consisted in the specific link between events with massive audience and the media coverage they receive. Such a link was implicitly assumed in the groups' practices I observed such as the extensive collective discussions about the reasons why an event had failed in attracting a relevant number of attendees[5]. In particular, in the group life the massive attendees' participation in the events was related in a twofold way to the media coverage of them. Firstly, when events were announced through the media, group members expected a massive audience's participation in them; secondly, when events succeeded in including elevated number of attendees, group members expected wide media coverage of them. These type of expectations were rarely frustrated and thus reinforced themselves over time.

At this respect, it is hardly a chance if the expectations were consistent with some findings from social movements studies. In particular, it is worth citing the Oliver and Myers (1999)'s paper whose title eloquently announced "*How events enter the public sphere*". In this paper the two scholars reported the result of the research they conducted in Madison (Winscosin, US) and stated that, among all the protest events they observed, those who reached the media coverage were the

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[1] For details see chapter 3 of this dissertation.

[2] This quandary was thus in the fourth column of my field notes, according to the method of participant observation outlined in the methodological appendix of the dissertation.

[3] These source were not normally deriving from the fact of making people pay the entrance to the events but instead from sales of beverage or food.

[4] In the case of Esterni, the group that profit the most from the organization of events.

[5] An example of this type of discussion has been reported in chapter 7, in the paragraph named "informal autonomy" speech norms.

most violent ones, those who took place in the most central areas of the city and the events that had been attended by large number of attendees.

Though the events I observed did not possess a contentious orientation, apart from violence[1] the findings Oliver and Myers (1999) outlined are valid also for the events organized by the observed groups of my research. In particular, given that the events I observed rarely took place in very central or very peripheral areas of Milan[2], the audience's size that participated in them represented the condition that mostly guaranteed events a media resonance. Indeed, among the 32 events that I've directly observed and participated in during my field research just 14 of them reached some media coverage, normally in the local pages of newspapers and websites about local news. None of these 14 events was devoid of a massive audience (that in some case reached thousands of people) while the non covered events had normally very small audiences. Further, comparing among events it emerged that the bigger their audience, the wider their media coverage.

But it is possible to think also that media coverage on the events I have observed varied according to the media campaign through which the observed groups had promoted their events. For example, if we consider the case of Esterni we note that this group – differently from most of the rest of this research's case studies - possessed a press office that included three remunerated members that worked on a regular basis to publicizes Esterni's events on a variety of medias of mass communication. The work of this press office included also writing press releases about the group's ongoing events and sending them to journalists. Thus, it is possible to think that media discourses on the observed events varied according to possibility of making pressures on journalists through press releases. Indeed, confronting the associations' press release and the journalists' articles it was often the most evident that the articles had written widely drawing on the contents of the press releases, probably without attending the reported events. But considering in more depth the case of Esterni it became clear that press releases couldn't by themselves predict the media coverage events would have received. Indeed, this association used his press office for all the events the group set up but then the media coverage events received varied considerably, and these variations followed the size of events' audiences. For example, the opening party of "Out of fashion", the 2008 edition of Audiovisiva festival and the "open source"[3] evenings of February and March 2008 attracted little audiences and they received little press coverage even if these events had been accompanied by the press releases' campaigns that the association used to set up for all its events[4].

It is plausible to think that using a press office to publicize events through the media contribute to bring attendees to the initiatives an organization set up, and thus this indirectly affect the media

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[1] Which was not part of the repertoires of action of the observed groups.

[2] This is the case of the opening conference and the related party that accompanied the first edition of the "Out of fashion" project. Indeed, the party and the conference took place in Milan, piazza Affari that is the stock exchange square, situated in the center of the city.

[3] These were cultural events hosted once or twice a week in the association's venue.

[4] With respect to the argument of Oliver and Myers (1999) it is worth noting that the opening party of "Out of fashion" took place in a very central square of Milan.

coverage the events receive. But at this respect the size of the audience that actually and physically attend events seem to remain a more important factor. This is the most evident comparing for example a single event, such as the CP party, that repeated itself over time with a variety of results in terms of number of attendees. For example the CP party held the 19 of April 2008 was attended by 23 people, most of whom were part of the CP and it was just cited in the local newspaper of the area where the Cuccagna farm is settled[1]. Instead another CP party, that was in all similar to the first one but held a couple of months later on – and precisely the 21 of June 2008 – was attended by 300 people and received a wide media coverage that comprised websites, radio and also the local pages of the major national newspapers.

A well-trod association, as it was Esterni, seemed to have embodied in its practices the knowledge that I'm trying to verbalize and articulate in these pages. Indeed, the link between media communication and massive participation in the events was more part of the way the group life of this association unfolded than the subject of explicit accounts[2]. Hardly by chance, the observed groups that were less concerned with the number of attendees their events were able to attract, were at the same time less interested in the media discourse about themselves. This link was part of the different patterned ways in which the observed groups used events to pursue their goals, as it will be articulated in the next chapters. We will see also that in some cases the number of attendees could represent, in the viewpoint of some groups, something interesting and valuable in itself, apart from the media communication. But when the massive audience participation in events is associated to media discourses about those events or the group that set them up, this aspect took a specific relevance with respect to the Habermas normative model of the public sphere. Indeed, media discourses can connect single events to the most abstract level of the public sphere and thus they allow to fulfill the first requirement that cultural events are asked to possess in order to be deemed as "articulation of the public sphere". Media communication make face-to-face gatherings overcome the organizational and institutional level of the group that set them up and reach the most abstract level in which Habermas internally articulated the public sphere.

Scholars underlines that the public sphere that not long time ago Habermas named as "abstract" is now the fundamental one because it possess the power to transform virtual reality into factual reality. Also, accounts about the "spectacularization of the public" stress that "not everything equally lend itself to be treated in the form of spectacle" (Turnaturi 1988 p. 175). Massive audiences represent an event's attribute that appear to facilitate such "spectacularization". Indeed, a spectacle – that it to say a show - in order to be defined as such always need an adequate audience.

Beyond allowing the fulfillment of the first requirement necessary to consider a public space an "articulation of the public sphere", it is worth underling that media discourses represented for the observed groups something important for the development of a public sociality. Indeed, media studies illustrated how media communication is not just able of selecting certain news among many other ones, but instead it operates transforming something that is not necessarily a news in itself

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[1] I'm referring here to the local free newspaper titled "Quattro".

[2] This aspect will be evident for example in chapter 7, when the group life of Esterni will be analyzed in detail.

into a news. Put It in other words, the medias not only exert an high level of framing and agenda setting power but they also possess a relevant *power of naming reality*. For the observed groups this means the possibility of diffusing the contents of events beyond the attendees that were physically present in the settings where events unfolded. It means having the possibility of defining sociality as a public concern, which affect not just certain, socially isolated, individuals but the whole collectivity. Accessing this "power of naming reality" and propose new frames to a vast public through events require to adequate them to certain grammars and formats that are most suited to be treated by the media. A massive audience represents an event's attribute particularly suited for such a treatment.

ACCOUNTING FOR THE EVENTS' AUDIENCES

Given that a massive participation was so important in contributing to make events as "articulations of the public sphere" and for empowering the groups that set them up of the possibility of naming reality, it is worth taking a closer look at what aspects of group life can account for it. That is to say, to consider the conditions of group life that facilitate the attraction of relevant number of attendees in the events the groups set up.

Firstly, an element that facilitated the gathering of massive attendees in the observed events was represented by the fact of repeating events on a regular basis in the same setting. Indeed, this allowed to give events a certain stability that made them something different from merely episodic occasions made of "ephemeral practices" (Cognetti 2009). Regular events were more easily recognizable by the public and created a space of sociality where attendees could overcome their reciprocal conditions of strangers to each other on the basis of interactions that routinized themselves over time. Especially when they took place in the venues of the associations that set them up, these type of events created the premises for process of institutionalization of relationships that involved group members and attendees alike. This is what I observed happening for example in the Cuccagna Farmhouse before the restructuring works begun and rendered not available many of its spaces. Also, this was the most evident in the case of Esterni, whose headquarter used to host events every Tuesday and Thursday night. In these occasions, Esterni's venue turned into a sort of down-home neighborhood bar where the attendees, though not from the same neighborhood, shared with group members a sense of continuity made of relationships that developed over time.

But massive audiences were not garanteed in these occasions: sometimes regular events gathered significant attendees but some other times very few people showed up. Regular events were important for turning sociality among strangers into something that could approach processes of institutionalization but they didn't guarantee massive audience and thus the possibility of linking face-to-face gatherings to the more abstract levels of the public sphere articulated by Habermas.

Observing from close how Esterni organized its collective activities to set up its events, it results that specific aspects of the – strictly defined - organizing form mattered in attracting massive attendees in the events. Indeed, among all the groups taken as case studies of this research, Esterni was the most able in the organization of events attended by large publics. Esterni's members were often called by other CP groups for supporting them in the organization events that wanted to attract

massive audience. So, it is worth taking a closer look at this association to assess which elements of his way of working contributed to bring big audiences to its events.

Comparing Esterni with more informal groups that were also included among the case studies of my research but possessed a significant smaller amount of resources - like the CGCP for example- , it was evident that the differences in the size of audiences attending their events were linked to the different amount of organizational resources at disposal. In particular, it was the possibility of making known to large publics the upcoming events what seemed most important in making massive attendees participate in them. Esterni, indeed, was the group that most used to advertise through a variety of channels (including mass media) its upcoming events. When the scheduled date of an event was approaching, Esterni launched a press release to the main local and national newspapers, publicized it through its website and newsletter and usually prepared leaflets and distributed them in the main public places of collective gatherings - such as disco, bars, or schools - in Milan[1]. Communication through these channels didn't limit itself to give "neutral" information about the upcoming events, such as place, date, timing. This communication proposed a frame for the events it publicized, it was something that aimed at constituting the contents and shape of the events. Also, given that any sharing of identities between Esterni and its potential audience could not be taken for granted, the purpose and meaning of events ware named each time through communication. Anyway, apart from the frame proposed through it, communication represented a crucial resource for attracting new participants and encouraging them to take part in the events.

Thus, possessing an adequate organizing form seemed to represent the main circumstance that made events attended by a wide number of attendees. This probably doesn't look as a big surprise, especially for scholars of "events studies" (Getz 2007), for sociologists that have studied city-marketing and mega events (Guala 2007) or for anyone professionally engaged in the growing sector of events' organization. But if the same finding is part of a study on the empirical articulations of the normative model of the public sphere this could appear differently. Indeed, I haven't found in previous scholarship any note about the fact that elements of the organizing form of associations, such as the presence of a press office, contribute to the fulfillment of one of the two conditions that according to Habermas make events articulations of the public sphere. Evoking aspects of the strictly defined organizing forms of groups is definitely different than seeing in the lack of civility (Sennett 1978) the main cause of the shrinking of public civil space in contemporary urban societies. Therefore, the finding here outlined needs to be for further detailed. In particular, it still remains to be ascertained why certain of the observed groups strongly recurred to big campaigns of advertisement to promote their events, while certain other groups limited themselves to make known their initiatives by word of mouth. Indeed, saying that the first type of groups could attract massive attendees to their events because they possessed the necessary organizational

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[1] If we take for example the case of "Out of target", an event about which we are going to talk later on in this chapter, the official press launching message that we can find in the website is the following one: "A festival entirely dedicated to videos made and created by young people, to their visual imagination, and to their stories. An open workshop dedicated to the vision of works (documentaries, video clips, fiction works, and animations) and to discussion, debate, and provocation. A place where young people are no longer the oblivious target of the media, but instead become protagonists and have the chance to tell about themselves" (from the English page of Esterni web site: ttp://www.Esterni.org/eng/progetti/view.php?action=retrieve&ref=fuori%20target)2

resources, while the second ones couldn't it is not enough because it doesn't shed light on the reasons *why some groups possessed and used such resources while other didn't deem necessary to possess them to carry out their associational activities.*

According to the perspective adopted in this study, in order to find an adequate answer to this question it is necessary to use *a situated perspective that can shed light on the patterned ways in which events were used by the observed groups.* Indeed, there are not simply different ways of framing the meaning of events but also *different ways of using events to create relationships beyond the group. These ways are not necessarily intentioned and they are linked, though not according to a type of causal relation, to the patterns that enable and constrain interactions among group members in the every contexts where group life unfold.* This is probably the main theoretical argument of the analysis I carried out and it will articulated in chapter 9. In the chapters before I illustrate the empirical evidence supporting it. Such evidences will be especially present in chapters 7 and 8 when I will dwell on the differences among the group styles of the organizations taken as case studies of my research. But the aforementioned argument benefit also from the empirical evidence shown through the following example that illustrates how the same association differently related to the events it set up in phases of its life characterized by different group styles.

Indeed, the CGCP organized the same event, called "open Saturday", in periods of its group life characterized by different group bonds[1]. "Open Saturday's" consisted in Saturdays afternoon in the cuccagna farm – and garden, during the good season – in which CGCP's members welcomed new members, offering them snacks and organizing small discussions in which people sit in circles and presented themselves and their interests. The number of attendees of these events varied significantly: in some occasions these events had been attended by roughly twenty people, but in a few occasions no one showed up. I've described in the past chapter that the CGCP was characterized by different types of group bonds during different period of its life and in particular I showed how over time group members got more responsibly involved in the group life. At first sight, observing the number of attendees to "Open Saturdays" during different phases of its group life, they didn't appear to be significantly linked to the changes in group bonds. But the nature of group bonds and the number of attendees coming in the events this group set up were two linked aspects, though not in a direct causal way. Indeed, when group members started to relate to each other reciprocally attributing an higher level of personal responsibility for the management of "Open Saturdays" events[2], they also started to be more concerned in creating conditions allowing an *active* involvement[3] of the attendees in the CP. We have seen that generating an active involvement for this group meant making the attendees the protagonists of new groups, self-organizingly promoted by themselves on the basis of their own interests

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[1] For more details see the previous chapter.

[2] This shift has been illustrated in the past chapter.

[3] We have seen that generating an active involvement for this group meant making the attendees the protagonists of new groups, self-organizingly promoted by themselves on the basis of their own interests

The shift in the group bonds was expressed in the management of "Open Saturdays" very similarly to what was exemplified in the past chapter with reference to the management of the "participatory events". CGCP members passed from letting attendees freely self-organize themselves to actively and responsible support their self-organization for the setting up of new groups. Given that this shift was accompanied by a significant shrinking in the number of group members, it was clear that such an active and responsible support was best carried out with small groups rather than with bigger ones. Implicitly, the new way group in which CGCP members managed their events assumed it was more important to create the conditions for actively supporting the attendees in their self organization, rather than having simply massive quantities of attendees. This didn't directly imply the fact that a smaller audience would have started to come to the events set up by the CGCP after its internal group bonds had changed. Indeed, nothing guaranteed this type of outcome. But the shift in the group bonds made group members less concerned in attracting many attendees in the group events and this in the long run contributed to diminish the number of attendees. Such a mechanism was articulated for example in the fact that over time group members lessen their efforts in diffusing the upcoming events by word of mouth as they did previously.

At the same time it is worth noting another aspect of this shift. This was the fact that the new groups bonds did not enable as the previous ones the group in making its events enter the media public sphere. Indeed, this type of upshot was particularly elicited by events with massive audiences. Here it starts to emerge a tradeoff that will be the subject of the next chapter. This tradeoff is that between the active involvement of the attendees in the events in which they participated in and the capacity of those events of affecting the media public sphere.

I deem now necessary not to dwell further on the enabling and constraining power of different group styles for the ways the observed organizations related to the events they set up[1]. Indeed, it is time to turn the attention to the second requirement that events are asked to possess in order to be deemed as articulation of the public sphere.

2. "IT'S NOT FOR EVERYBODY EVEN IF IT IS FREE"[2]. A DIVERSIFIED PUBLIC AND THE OPEN ACCESS TO EVENTS

The second condition that according to Habermas make an event an "articulation of the public sphere" is represented by its *openness*. That is to say that events should be open enough to not exclude anyone that would like to participate in them. Indeed, "from a normative point of view a public sphere exists if it is open to all potential participants" (Sebastiani 2009 p. 22). But defined as such, this a too broad condition, which partially overlaps with the research question of the whole study presented in this dissertation. Luckily, scholars of the public sphere detailed it and explicitly associated this second condition to the internal diversification of the audience attending an event. Indeed, at this respect Sebastiani's stated that "it does exist real access only where there is enough internal diversification of the actors engaged" (Sebastiani 1997 p. 232). This specific articulation of

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[1] For a theoretical summary of this argument see chapter 9.

[2] This is a quotation taken from the opening conversation with Simona and reperorted in the first page of the chapter.

the second requirement of by Habermas's normative argument allows to address the opening example of this chapter[1] and, more generally, the conditions for the generation of inclusive sociable space through the setting up of events. Indeed, all the observed cases of this research were devoted to create public spaces and occasions for social relationships to develop that wanted to be inclusive and as much public as possible[2] but, as the opening conversation with Simona clearly indicated, this not always was what they built. Also, assessing the diversification of the "relational spaces" (Tronca 2004 p. 165) created by civic group allows to empirically observe one of the normative outcomes attributed to associations, that is their contribution in raising the level of social mix (mixité) in local contexts (Cefai 2006 p. 4).

Taking seriously and empirically inquiring Simona's complaint we will see that the fact that the observed events were free and public was not a sufficient condition to define them as open. I will in particular outline a specific mechanism - illustrated through empirical evidences – about how different *styles of sociality* enacted during events make them differently inclusive. Indeed, such styles of sociality[3] drew on different "regimes of engagements which the world" (Thévenot 2006a) that do not equally allow communication "in the broad sense of taking part in a common matter" (Thévenot 2007 p. 409). Most of the events Esterni set up resulted exclusive for people like Simona because they called their attendees for "commonizing" (Thévenot 2007 p. 411) on the basis of an highly personal, local experience of the world that drew on a familiar type of engagement.

But, in order to define if an event was capable of including *different* types of publics or, instead, if it was more likely to exclude certain people it is necessary to briefly outline the criterions I have adopted to define the issue of diversity. We know that "the concept of diversification is quite complex and partially it express a 'potential', on the basis of which a gay association may be more internally diversified and less exclusive than a bar attended by only men" (Sebastiani 1997 p. 232). But I will take a different path to assess the inclusiveness of the observed events, assuming a more situated perspective that for example would look for evidence showing if and how a "gay association" is actually more less exclusive than a "bar attended by only men". In particular I will refer to the diversity in terms of repertoires of sociability *differently* at disposal of social actors along a variety of situations. A diversified audience is that who has the possibility of using a varied repertoire of styles of sociality, which may also differ from those scheduled for an event or from those by the organizing group members through the "work of sociability" (Daniels 1985).

Assuming for a moment the conception of culture as a "tool kit" from which actors can draw (Swidler 1986), it is possible to see that within the same common cultural repertoire there exists a variety of style of sociality. For example Potts (2009) in its review of previous studies on sociability outlined for example a "lodge sociability" (Hoffmann's 2001) or a "fraternity-pledging-like style of

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[1] Simona's complaints about the exclusiveness of Esterni's events.

[2] See chapter 3 at this respect, in the part dedicated to the presentation of the case studied.

[3] The concept of *styles of sociality* is different from that of group style. I've elaborated the notion of style of sociality drawing on the concept of "work of sociability" (Daniels 1985), later on introduced in the chapter.

sociability" (Levine, Sussman 1960). Drawing on these previous studies[1], my perspective tries to show how different styles of sociality are differently at disposal of actors in specific settings, which in this case are the cultural events set up by the observed groups. The point is to assess how some styles of sociality are more likely to be excluded from certain settings while other are encouraged and what this imply in terms of events' capacity of inclusion of a variety of actors.

Before illustrating this argument it is useful briefly developing a short consideration about the potential inclusiveness of events. Indeed, from an abstract, non situated point of view, events may appear as a more suitable form of action than past forms of civic involvement for producing mix of diversified publics. Indeed, participating or simply attending public events represent a very loose, not costly, way of being publicly engaged, a way that doesn't require any sharing of political ideologies, or not even of values, with the association that organizes the events. At this respect it is presumably easier that "different" people from the association's members would be included in events than in other, more exigent, forms of associational involvement. Indeed, events are a very loose way of engaging publicly oneself with other people: they are temporarily and spatially narrowly limited and its attendees are usually in every moment free of leaving them. Despite the fact that theoretically this form of action should presumably be more easily accessible than other ones, the conversation reported at the opening of the chapter tell us something different: the fact that events may be inclusive of just a certain public, that - in the opening case – was said to be formed uniquely by people similar to the organizers. Indeed, Simona used to attend Esterni's events but her experiences of them were not comfortable ones, because she felt excluded from the situated meanings that were shared by the attendees. In particular, Simona felt that her not being *cool,* as most of the audience appeared to be, was *a difference that made a difference* in the settings where took place the events she attended. What I deem worth noting is the contrast between, on the one hand, Simona's situated perspective and her *feeling* excluded and, on the other hand, the abstract viewpoint according to which events *should* be more inclusive than past forms of engagement. This second perspective is not enough to account for the fact that events are not yet enough inclusive for everyone, and in particular for someone, such as Simona, that wished to *take part in* them. Let's thus turn to a first example that may be useful for looking from a situated perspective at events capable of including a diversified public.

CUCCAGNA CINEFORUM GROUP AND POLITICAL SPEECHES

This example refers to the activities proposed by the Cuccagna Cineforum Group (CCG), a CP association that used set up free movie projections in the Cuccagna farm accompanied by sociality moments. These developed mainly before the projections with potlucks in which everyone was invited to bring his own food and share it with everybody and after the projections through collective discussions that could be based on the movie's contents but also on whatever other topic the people came up with.

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[1] Other analysis of sociability have been summarized in chapter 1.

I participated in different occasions to sociable moments and movie projections organized by the CCG, and over time I learned to note some regularities that generally characterized the way these events used to unfold. Firstly, participation in the potlucks before the movie projections was limited to the CCG's members, who showed to enjoy such moments to chat among themselves but also to discuss and organize the group activities. The attendees normally came just a few minutes before the projections started and in most of the cases they stayed after the projections hanging out in the spaces of the Cuccagna farm, chatting in little groups and sometimes engaging themselves in the ongoing collective discussions. These discussions were normally introduced by very brief talks by a CCG member that gave normally some information about the movie that had been projected or about its director, often also added some personal, not technical, opinions and comments. These short talks had the main pragmatic purpose to break the ice and stimulate the audience in engaging into the collective discussion. Indeed, this very often happened and the topics of the interventions normally took the movie's contents just as a pretext to speak about wider topics, which varied significantly over time and included for example music or customs of eating and drinking in different national contexts.

A specific episode that differed significantly from how events normally unfolded cued me on the importance of the "work of sociability" (Daniels 1985) and revealed to me that, even if not immediately visible to me during these situation, a specific style of sociality was present in these occasions. Indeed, the episode consists in the fact that on one occasion a CCG's member, named Marco, while making his public intervention after the projection didn't limit himself to a few short comments that could start the collective discussion but added other long general statements that expressed his political opinions with respect to many topics. Marco was a communist militant that during his intervention spoke about the

> politically decadent contemporary context of Milan in which neo-fascist people that have been running the Lombardy for the last 15 years" in front of the shame of our national government

He also defined with wide emphasis the Cuccagna farmhouse as

> the last piece of green in Milan, that we are defending with our nails and teeth

This language was new for those occasions and clearly contrasted with the style of sociality that was normally dominant during those events. Marco enacted a style of sociality that could suits maybe political gatherings, particularly when these involved radical leftist militants. Probably, in this type of setting his talk. and the type of relationships among attendees that his enactment implicitly assumed, would have been taken as normal. But this was a different setting and his way of behaving, the words he used and the dramatic emphasis with which he pronounced them were clearly out of tone according to the surprising faces of the audience that listened to them. Marco had proposed a style of sociality that implied an engagement in the situation that was based on a partisanship definition of the common good. His long intervention implicitly invited everyone to take a stance with respect to what he had said. Instead, the intervention elicited awkward silences from the attendees that were dropped just with the intervention of another group member about the sound-track of the movie it had just been projected. I noticed that when the collective conversation took this political content and tone a few people left the room. Also, I noticed that in the following

events the people who had left the room on that occasion never came back to the events organized by the Cuccagna Cineforum Group, even if I had noticed that they previously had been among the most assiduous attendees of them.

We could see the aforementioned interaction as consistent with the findings outlined by previous researches. In particular, Eliasoph (1996) studied with the concept of "civic practices" the implicit understanding of a situation - what Goffman (1979) termed "footing" – of interaction that "make it clear that such interaction both register and create the everyday settings of public life" (Eliasoph 1996 p. 268). Eliasoph analyzed patterns of discourse-shifting between contexts, and she finded out that citizens diminish their public-spirited talks when they are in front-stage settings: the more collective the context the less likely people engage in public spirited interactions, preferring to leave these type of exchanges to intimate, backstage settings. This finding was confirmed observing interactions taking place in a variety of settings and among group members of different type of associations. We can use this finding to see that in our example happened something very similar. Indeed, Marco's intervention expressed in a front-stage setting public-spirited remarks through a clear identifiable partisanship identity. This clearly "scared" the event's attendees in a similar way of what would have happened in the settings observed by Eliasoph. Indeed, I've also observed scenes of back-stage interactions where members of Cuccagna Cineforum Group engaged in partisan public-spirited talks similar to the one made by Marco in front of the attendees, and soon avoided by the group member that took the word after him. But here I'm trying to answer different questions from those Eliasoph posed herself in her study. In particular, I'm trying to identify patterns of "footings" (Goffman 1979) enacted by the observed associations in events that are intentionally aiming at generating sociality and including subjects beyond the group. In the aforementioned example, Marco had breached the "work of sociability" (Daniels 1985) his group was carrying out, that it to say he breached the pattern of action and interactions that group members enacted to generate sociality capable of including the attendees of their movie-projection events. The breach had been soon repaired with the intervention of the other group member, but nevertheless it had been capable of producing the outcome of making some of the attendees not at ease and leave the event. This first episode was just an example to show a specific way of organizing sociality in events that aim at generating sociality, underlining its patterned nature by showing a breach in such a pattern. I will briefly describe two other episodes and compare their different patterned ways of organizing sociality to show the outcomes of inclusion associated to such ways. But before introducing the episodes it is necessary to outline in more detail the tools I will use to analyze different ways of organizing sociality.

STUDING THE ORGANIZATION OF SOCIALITY

Previous researches have been devoted to study different styles of sociability in the institutionalized settings where interactions occur on a regular basis among the same people[1]. But analysis of sociality occasions set up to *intentionally* include individuals that are not group members are less numerous. Especially, there is a lack of studies on the conditions allowing sociality to *"go public"*

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[1] Such studies have been summarized in chapter 1. For a review see Potts 2009.

and being capable of including a growing number of individuals in an intersubjective dimension[1]. The study of Daniels (1985) is particularly valuable at this respect. Indeed, this scholar underlined the women volunteer's work required, but not recognized, in order to create sociability, "party-like ambience" (Daniels 1985 p. 363) and a welcoming atmosphere during events set up by community development organizations. One of the main argument of this research is that "the production of a context that may develop sociability require preparation" (Daniels 1985 p. 364). Such a preparation is the focus of the analysis of the next two episodes, and it will be named in terms of *organization of sociality*, or sociality's organization. This concept draws on the notion of "work of sociability" (Daniels 1985), which is the intentioned "creation of an ambience by those who provide some kind of hospitality. The notion of hospitality implies taking responsibility to welcome guests, putting them at their ease so they are ready to be interested or amused through some kind of refreshment and entertainment. […] the conscious production of the ambience to elicit sociability requires preparation. Organizing a setting, providing refreshments, and guaranteeing the appearance of participants all take planning. This work can be found in families, work places, and other associations or institutional settings like schools, professional or church groups, and even prisons" (Daniels 1985 p. 363). The underlying assumption of my analysis is that this work involve broader aspect than simply "planning". The "work of sociability" can be differently carried out and such differences matter in producing sociality outcomes or, as Daiels said, in "producing sociability, when guests respond to such overtures with animation and friendly gestures of their own" (*ibid*). I will in particular focus on the different types of engagements with the world (Thévenot 2006a, 2007) that are implicitly assumed by different style of sociality. Indeed, the different articulations of this element differently allow commonizing processes that include subjects beyond the groups.

TWO EXAMPLES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF SOCIALITY IN EVENTS

In the following examples I will show very similar events, organized by two associations through different way of organizing sociality to welcome attendees. The purpose is to show *how an ethnographic perspective focused on the way sociality is organized in concrete settings may be useful in shedding light on different inclusive outcomes*. Both the examples refer to events that have taken place in the venues of the associations that have set them up and both events aimed at encouraging the development of networks and possible collaborations among the invited subjects. These were individual and collective non-profit actors, such as cultural associations or cooperatives active with cultural activities in Milan and especially in the specific urban area where the observed events took place. The events differed for their official contents, the way the organization of sociality was carried out in them and, especially, for their outcomes. In particular, one event has already been introduced in the past chapter and the other one has been chosen for similarity with the first one. In the following paragraph I will comparatively observe the events' contents, they were events were set up and their different developments.

EVENTS' CONTENTS

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[1] See chapter 1 for details at this respect.

The Cuccagna Project organized an event named "Cultural resources, a space, a project" with the purpose of "understanding and further develop networks of subjects in Milan "Zone 4". The event was meant to gather in the wide venue of the Cuccagna farm a relevant number of non-profit groups and subjects, in order to try to make them connect with each other in Milan "Zone 4" and elicit the development of networks among themselves.

In the same period, Esterni in response to a cultural project of Milan's council perceived as too elitist, activated to the network project called "Piscinella" about which I've spoken in the previous chapter[1]. We have seen that the main purpose of the project was to create a sort of "counter-committee" for the elaboration of cultural projects to present to Milan's council. We have also seen the process that led to the failure of the project and the consequent dissolution of the group. The focus of this paragraph is to look at how the "work of sociability" was carried out in the event set up by Esterni that represented the first gathering of the new born network of groups. This episode for Esterni represented a valuable occasion *in itself* independently from further developments of the Piscinella project. Indeed, it represented an occasion to develop the reciprocal knowledge among Piscinella's members, to allow networking activities that could lead to possibilities of new collaborations and projects. The event was, indeed, open to the general public and everyone that wished to participate in it. Esterni hosted the event and had the burden of carrying out the "organization of sociality" in order to welcome guests and make them feel at ease in its venue.

THE SETTING UP

Cuccagna's event was scheduled for a Saturday morning, and its advertisement unfolded through mail and press release communication. The content of the message clearly indicated that the event would have taken place according to a conference model with his typical phases of "accreditation", "begin of the works", "order of speeches" and "conclusions". The invitation to the event was sent to all cultural associations active in Milan "Zone 4". The morning of the event just a few of CP's members were present and they prepared the room that should host the event setting up a big table in front of 5 lines of chairs, putting on the table bottles of water and plastic glasses for the speakers. The setting resulted to be very sober and it was animated just by a bunch of flowers put on the table by a group member on the basis of her own spontaneous initiative.

Esterni's event didn't have any official title and it was also publicized through internet and the press. The invitation sent by e-mail to the participants talked about a

> first gathering, a public encounter to meet and discuss, an occasion open to everybody to collect all the cultural projects and to have new interesting face-to-face contact

and it also added that

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[1] Piscinella Project represent a response to another project promoted by the Milan's council. This consist in the creation of a pool of "wise man" with the task of formulating projects to "regenerate the culture of Milan". Esterni's critics to the project are based on the fact that the pool of "wise men" is formed by people that are at least over 60 and thus young intellectuals and artists are excluded and cannot give their contribution to the "regeneration of Milan" (words in quotation marks are from the official council communication on his project).

after the encounter the evening will go on for the ones that would like to dwell in Esterni's venue[1]

The content's message in this case didn't lead the reader to think of a conference, but instead to an informal meeting among similar subjects (non profit groups setting up cultural events), very open to different possible developments on the basis of the contribution of the invited people. Indeed, the message stressed that "the participants are invited to give their own contribution to the development of the project" and they were asked to "present cultural proposals that can regenerate the city".

The evening when the event took place almost all Esterni's members were present, they had came in advance to prepare the room that hosted the event in a "welcoming way": low lights and new spatial arrangements (such as the moving of furniture) had given to the site a sense of cleaness and elegance that usually it didn't possess. Besides, appetizers and bottles of red wine had been prepared in two big tables put in the room's corners and an Esterni's member stayed behind a little table welcoming the invited people offering them a glass of red wine. Usually he also indulged in discussing with the new-comers, greeting them warmly and in the numerous cases he personally knew them from previous occasions, spending often also some time chatting with them.

DEVELOPMENTS

The Cuccagna's event begun with a short introductory speech followed by speakers' interventions according to the pre-fixed order. The public was initially formed just by a few people but then many people came and participated more and more actively in the ongoing discussions, at the point that interventions of the attendees made increasingly difficult for the scheduled speakers to reach the end of their interventions. Indeed, some speakers' interventions were interrupted by the attendees that more and more wanted to express their own opinions on the discussed subjects. Besides, some interventions from the public shifted the subject of discussion into something different from what it had been scheduled. After a short while from its begging, it was clear to everybody that the conference format was not anymore adequate to frame the situation they were participating in and contributing to create.

Public's interventions contributed to not just shift the subject discussed but also to change the tone of the general discussion. For example, an intervention of the public underlined the necessity of "overcoming the rhetorical level" prevailing into the speakers' interventions, and to give "a more concrete dimension to the meeting". This proposal was taken seriously and it boosted a collective effort to plan a calendar of future's meeting devoted to "concretely" develop, and "turn into facts" the speeches and intentions expressed in that occasion. Then, another intervention from another attendee set a new tone for the collective discussion, shifting it toward a personal and passionate confession of the various reasons that had pushed him to engage himself to work with cultural activities in Milan:

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[1] Esterni's event take place on a Tuesday night, when usually cultural events such as concerts, or books' presentation are held in Esterni's venue (see chapter 3 at this respect).

> I've been dealing with culture in Milan in various type of activities for more than 10 years, and the main reason that push me to continue to work in this domain, whit all the difficulties that you also certainly know, is that I'm convinced that this city is in need of a truly cultural life, and that this doesn't exist even now

This intervention was clearly out of the context of the scheduled interventions, both in terms of contents and tone. Also, it had been pronounced when the speakers had not yet concluded their interventions. Nevertheless, the talk was taken seriously by the other attendees, who in some cases proposed their own versions of the reasons for their volunteer or professional engagement with cultural initiatives, such as street theater, music festival or poetry competitions. Someone said that he had been motivated by the desire "to share with other people significant experiences", some other made a point of saying that they wanted "to create culture". From this moment on, the scheduled order of the official interventions was definitely broken, someone from the public also got up from his chair and start wandering into the room. After a short while almost everyone was standing and three groups had been formed by people that talked among themselves quite freely, mainly about the personal trajectories that had lead them to be culturally engaged in Milan today. After about twenty minutes also these three groups of people had changed most of its components and other groups had been formed. I freely wondered from one group to the other ones, listening to a big variety of subjects of discussion: possible collaboration on future projects, developments and remarks on the subjects earlier presented by the conference speakers, to simple networking and reciprocal interpersonal knowledge. Despite the fact that the situation was visibly changed from the format of the scheduled conference, one of the Cuccagna's member felt obliged of at least formally respect the initial program and declared with an high voice that the "conference's work is over" and that he wanted to "thank everybody for coming". Just a few of the people present in the room had been able to listen to this sentence and no one apart from me seemed to remark that the scheduled conclusive speech announced in the conference's program had not been pronounced. Indeed, after the short final intervention, conversations in the room continued to go on as they were doing before it, and the attendees started to leave the room just after about an hour from the official end of the conference. During the whole event, Cuccagna's members mixed with conference's attendees and participated to the different way of being together (conference, intimate confession among strangers or networking) that had developed in the same setting.

Some months earlier, in Esterni's venue, the evening scheduled for the meeting, at 7 p.m., the room was crowded with the invited people and the space seemed too small to contain everyone. From an external point of view what was happening seemed to be close to a gathering of friends: the public, often drinking glasses of red wine taken at the entrance, took pieces of salami as if they were in an ordinary Milanese aperitif bar[1]. After about half an hour from the scheduled starting time, one of Esterni's organizer announced in an high voice:

> Welcome to the "palazzina"[2] of Esterni, we are very happy that so many of you accepted our invitation and come here tonight and for this reason we really thank you all. I think that this is going to be a fruitful meeting and I wish to all of you a good and fun evening!

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[1] In Milanese aperit bar people are free of taking food from tables while drinking something paid before.

[2] The informal name used to indicate Esterni's venue.

At the end of this short opening intervention nothing special really happened and the situation went on as it was doing before the small talk, with a variety of groups of two or three people chatting among themselves about different topics, which included in most of the cases personal issues related to the fact that many of the event's attendees knew each other from previous occasions. At a certain point it happened something that to me was extremely important because it represented a breach of the symbolic order that organized the situation I was participating in. Let's see in detail what happened.

The benches and chairs disposed along one of the two tables were occupied by people that didn't previously know each other. After a short while that I was sitting next to these people, a young man proposed with an high voice to all the other attendees

> a short round of the table, with everyone introducing himself to the other people, to get to know each other, maybe just introducing our main domain of activity and whatever you want to add

The proposal prompted skepticism in the faces of the people sit at the table, but it attracted other people that were standing nearby and that now had approached the table. The person who did the proposal, short after having done it, started to speak about himself and his university research activity in the domain of design and architecture. The intervention raised the interest of all the present and was shortly followed by a second presentation, by a person that was standing next to the table, and not by the people who sit next to the first speaker, as it should have been according to the proposed order. After this second intervention, some embarrassing moments of silence followed and they were overcame just by the slow growing of the same general chatting's noise that was present before the two short talks. The attempt to change the style of sociality enacted by the young man' intervention had failed and the situation soon come back to the previous style with which all the present people seemed to be more familiar with. The gathering developed with duos, trios or more numerous groupings engaging in chatting among themselves, forming a general picture that was in all similar to the one observable in a Milan aperitif- bar during happy hour time. After about 2 and half hour some of the attendees left the room and many other stayed in Esterni's venue for dining in its bar-trattoria and to listening to the acoustic concert that was going to be performed that evening afterward.

During the whole event Esterni members had actively engaged themselves in personal chatting with the attendees that had contributed to create that informal and loose climate of conviviality similar to an aperitif among friend above described. They didn't just prepare the informal choreography with appetizers and red wine but they also engaged themselves directly in the situation and firstly gave the example of performing that loose way of being together in the situation that was then easily recognizable by all the other members and that soon imposed itself as the dominant one. On the contrary, in the case of the attempt to change the style of interaction with the "round table presentation", Esterni's members didn't do anything in order to avoid its failure, for example by presenting themselves, and thus they contributed in this way to restore the previous style of interaction. In the Cuccagna's event different styles of sociability were at the same time present, with different attendees taking part in interactions that differed among themselves. On the contrary, in Esterni's event a specific unique "aperitif-like" style of sociability imposed soon itself as the

dominant one, allowing to include in the situation just attendees that could familarly engage themselves in the concrete settings where the event took place.

ORGANIZATIONS OF SOCIALITY THAT IMPLY DIFFERENT REGIMES OF ENGAGMENT

From an external point, both the events could potentially constitute social spaces where "the physically represented public sphere" (Habermas 1997 p.443) was enacted. Indeed, both settings elaborated public concerns that could have then been "transmitted in the political system the conflicts of the periphery" (Habermas 1997 p. 393). But looking at them from a closer point of view they differ significantly at this respect, because these events differently fulfilled the second condition that Habermas model required for articulating the public sphere. Indeed, events possessed different openness toward third parts. In particular, they differently allowed a diversified audience to take part in them. According to my argument the way the organization of sociality was carried out shaped the possibility of including a diversified audience. In particular, it was the type of engagement with the world (Thévenot 2006a) that each organization of sociality assumed what shaped the possibility of including a diversified public, enacting different styles of sociality. To see in detail this argument I will now go back to the afore described events, underling their differences in terms of *organization of sociality*.

Cuccagna's events included different heterogeneous styles of sociality, not initially scheduled. Especially, the conference frame initially programmed for the event soon turned into a variety of sociability styles, that allowed different people to act drawing on different repertoires of sociability. This event was capable of including a diversified public, that could take part in it according to a variety of styles of sociality. In the case of this event the organization of sociality seemed to be particularly invisible, because group members didn't seem to have engaged themselves in any type of specific practice to welcome new members and making them feeling at ease. Sociality was apparently organized according to the possibilities offered by the space arrangements of the concrete setting in which the event took place. Also, we noticed that this setting was initially arranged according to a *loose* choreography, that somehow looked like that of a conference setting. This choreography represented an implicit and not forcing invitation for the attendees to play the style of sociality that is normally related to that type of setting. The invitation was a very loose and an open one, because the same space was also capable of hosting a variety of style of sociality, as it actually happened. Just a few of the Cuccagna's members were present at the event and their behaviors didn't coordinate among themselves in any "work of sociability" (Daniels 1985), that is to say in the proposal to the attendees of a specific and clearly identifiable way of staying together. Indeed, Cuccagna members present at the event didn't play any relational or emotional work (Hoschild 1979) to welcome new-comers and create a party-like ambiance. The conference frame had been proposed but it was then easily shifted in other ways of staying together, with which the attendees were presumably more familiar with. The seemingly absence of a specific "work of sociability" that proposed a unique dominant style of sociality resulted in the emergence of a variety of styles of sociability in the same setting. These included for example a very task oriented way of

staying together that prompted the planning of a calendar of future's meetings to develop the intentions and the ideas emerged during the discussion.

In the case of Esterni the event was characterized by a unique dominant style of sociality. The "work of sociality" carried out by Esterni members was more clearly visible. It required the use of specific relational competences and it resulted in the creation of the aperitif - like climate above outlined. This style of sociality implied a "familiar engagement" both with the other attendees and with the spatial arrangement in which the events took place. Indeed, the chatting about personal topics that was going on in the many small groups during the event didn't represent any *backstage settings*. Instead, personal interaction represented in that event what was going on in the main *front stage setting*. Attendees not only discussed about personal issues, but they also enacted such discussions through an familiar engagement with the world, made of discursive references to very local elements, such as people that only the discussants could know, or implicit reference to past personal experiences that they shared. For someone that was not also intimate with these elements it was particularly difficult to take part in these interactions. Further, apart from the discursive references, it was especially the way attendees related to each other and to Esterni members what made clear that they shared a very local and familiar engagement among themselves. Indeed, most of them were old acquaintances or even friends, and they showed to have been knowing already the spatial arrangements of Esterni's venue. Indeed, they moved with ease in them and helped themselves in the spaces of the kitchen, a setting that was usually reserved not to the events' attendees but only to group members.

In the episode I reported, when someone tried to start a round-table self presentation, he at the same time enacted - and proposed the other members - a different, more public, regime of engagement with the world. This would have make easier for strangers to interact among themselves. But such a proposal didn't succeed in challenging the many localized goods that were enacted in that moment by the event attendees.

Comparing the dominant style of sociality in Esterni's events with the many styles that were at the same time present in the Cuccagna's event, it is possible to think that in the latter setting it was easier for third parts to engage themselves in the collective interactions that were taking place in the front stage setting. The styles of sociability that developed in the Cuccagna setting and the same way of staying together associated to the "conference frame" evoked by the official communication implied a much more public engagement, which by definition make easier than a familiar one to involve other people (Thévenot 2007). Indeed, different type engagement into the world are not equally ready to be commonized (ibidem) and familiar type of involvements are the least prepared among all to commonize (Thévenot 2006b). Considering the high personal content of the conversation heard during the gathering and also the high familiar way in which participants moved in the spaces of Esterni's venue, it became clear that all contributed to the attainment of a very personalized and localized good, consisting in feeling at ease in that setting. In such a context "information hardly lends itself to extended communication" (Thévenot 2007 p. 416). The inclusion, in an event, into a style of sociality characterized by a familiar regime of engagement

with the world is particularly difficult for subjects beyond the group that cannot already share such engagement before the event's unfolding.

The fact that through informal conversations with group members I've been told that both Cuccagna and Esterni's members were satisfied with the events they organized is not sufficient to consider the two events as equal. Indeed, there exists relevant differences in the observed outcomes of the two events in terms of the attainment of the purposes the group gave to those events, and in terms of "proliferation of associative publics" (Cefai 2006 p.4) according to the argument of the civic spiral (*ibidem*). Both events generated their own publics, but these qualitatively differed in terms of internal diversification, meant as styles of sociality that it was possible to enact in the settings of those events. Indeed, Cuccagna's event was more capable than Esterni's events of including styles of sociality different from those enacted by who had set the events up. In particular, in the case of Esterni, its event unfolded through a dominant style of sociality that eased the participation of only a certain public, formed of people that not only were personal acquaintances among themselves or with the group members by that also could share some type of familiar engagement with them. The dominant style of sociality made of personal chatting implicitly assumed and familiar engagement that diminished the possibility for many attendees of being involved in the sociable practices that were taking place. Later on in the dissertation we will consider further elements that are crucial for accounting for the empirical evidences showed in this chapter because such elements link the observed styles of sociality to the institutional properties that shaped the everyday group life of the observed organizations. In particular, in chapter 8 and 9 we will see that the styles of sociality enacted during events by group members were not improvised from scratch, but instead they *were enabled and constrained by the group styles* of the observed cultural associations.

Indeed, at this point the reader could think that my analysis is hardly extendable to other episodes, and in particular to other events set up by the same groups. Instead, the proposed argument states that the styles of sociality through which the group members have carried out their "work of sociability" (Daniels 1985) in the observed events are patterned. These patterns are represented by the group styles through which group members acted in the every group life. In particular, in the case of Esterni, the situated patterns that shaped the group life of this association in the variety of settings where these unfolded will be widely illustrated in chapter 7. For the moment it is worth citing that the familiar type of engagement I have observed in the style of sociality described in the aforementioned episode was not an *unicum*. Indeed, repeating my observations over time in a variety of events Esterni has set up during my two-years field research I've noted that, though the observed events comprised a variety of styles of sociality and not always with a dominating one, they all generally implied a familiar type of engagement with the world. This was especially true for the small scale events organized by this group in its venue. Indeed, these occasions comprised a smaller and more stable public than the other events this group used to set up. Especially, in this setting the "work of sociability" enacted by group members, and their very involvement in the situation, had more possibility of affecting the sociable interactions that unfolded in these situations.

It is useful to precise that sociability outcomes in terms of degrees of inclusions are obviously shaped by a plurality of possible factors. It was not the purpose of the analysis carried out in the

second part of the chapter to control them all. The analysis has focused just on the dimension of the organization of sociality as this unfold in the concrete settings where the events took place because this was an aspect widely neglected in the literature on civic associations and community development groups (Daniels 1985). What I tried to show is that "sociality is a more complex phenomenon than what it is implied by the straightforward question about how people get things done in society" (Edmondson 2001 p. 60). In general, sociality is considered with respect to civic processes in two main ways: or as a *premise* or as a *consequenc*e of civic participation. In the first case (sociality as premise) it represents the desire to meet new people, and share significant time with them, that push individuals to engage themselves in civic associations or volunteer groups. In the second case (sociality as consequence) sociality is meant in its broadest meaning, and include elements such as trust or sense of community and it *spontaneously* result from the participation in civic groups. In both cases what we cannot know is how the process evoked take place and under which conditions they are more likely to happen: daily associational life remain a sort of black box in these accounts. The analysis proposed in this paragraph has shown that the *organization of sociality* and the different regimes of engagement that such an organization implies may represent sensitizing tools to observe sociable processes that aim at including subjects beyond the group. This analysis will be complemented with that of chapters 7 and 8, which in particular try to open the black box of group life[1].

In this paragraph I've tried to illustrate the relevance of analyzing different styles of sociality used to carry out the "work of sociability", the intentioned "creation of an ambience by those who provide some kind of hospitality" (Daniels 1985) and that aim at including "guests" in specific sociable activities. Different styles of sociality differently enable to commonize themselves by including subject beyond the group because of the different regimes of engagement that they imply. Looking at the work of sociability enacted by Esterni's members we have seen that the "aperitif-like" style of sociality implied a familiar engagement that was particularly hard to be accessed for who could not enact from scratch an familiar and very local relationship with the setting of Esterni's venue, with the group members and with the other attendees.

The analysis I've carried out in this part of the paragraph has uphold the aforementioned argument of Sebastiani (1997) according to which the openness of spaces of face-to-face interactions is strictly tied to the internal diversification of the people animating them. Further, we have had the possibility of articulating this argument, showing that such a diversification should have the possibility of being enacted through a variety of styles of sociality that don't necessarily imply the same intimate type of engagement in the situation. Comparatively observing the events set up by the CP and Esterni we can note that in the first case the plurality of styles of sociality and especially the fact that not all of them required a familiar engagement to be enacted made easier for subjects beyond the organizing group to take part in that event than to the one set up by Esterni.

The critic of exclusiveness that Simona addressed to Esterni make more sense in light of the analysis carried out in this paragraph. Indeed, Simona's viewpoint could exemplify the experiences

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[1] Of Esterni in the case of chapter 7 and of different group in the case of chapter 8.

of those attendees that in the aforementioned event could not participate in the interactions that were going on, even if they wanted[1].

FINAL REMARKS

This chapter aimed at understanding which conditions fulfilled the requirements Habermas depicted in order to consider an event as an "articulation of the public sphere". The inquiry carried out underlined the importance of two dimensions of associations' group life that are not very often considered in studies on public sphere and civic participation alike.

The first requirement Habermas depicted stated that events should be connected with more abstract levels of the public sphere. At this respect it has emerged the importance of organizational resources that can attract massive participation of audience in the events the group set up. Indeed, this type of participation represents a condition that facilitate the connection of situated episodes with the most abstract level of Habermas model of the public sphere represented by media communication. The second requirement depicted in Habermas model stated that events have to be open to everyone that whish take part in them. The analysis I carried out has shown that the openness of events is based on a definition of inclusiveness that is always situated and develop trough the interactions that take place in the specific settings where events unfold. Though situated, such inclusiveness is tied to the styles of sociality enacted by events' attendees. Indeed, such styles differently enable process of commonizing, according to the regimes of engagement with the world that they imply. Intimate type of involvements make particularly hard commonizing, while more public engagements make this possibility more plausible. Later on in the dissertation I will try to show that styles of sociality are patterned by the institutional properties that shape group life. For the moment it is worth highlighting that the empirical evidences illustrated in this chapter (starting from its opening example) cannot be taken for granted for groups that intentionally aim at generating it through sociable activities that are scheduled to involve subjects beyond the organizing group. Even when group members actively and intentionally engage themselves in a "sociability work" (Daniels 1985) that aims at welcome "guests" of an event, inclusion can still not be taken as a guaranteed outcome because it has to be each time assessed though a situated perspective on the organization of sociality.

According to previous researches the two requirements Habermas outlined for depicting an event as an articulation of the public sphere are strictly tied among themselves, especially in terms of their fulfillment. Indeed, Sebastiani stated that the communicative action free from any constraint take place […] where there is the awareness about the connection among the different level of the public sphere" (Sebastiani 1997 p. 232). But my analysis didn't comprise any element that could uphold the argument about the tie among the two requirements. On the contrary, I have outlined that both

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[1] Indeed, I've already cited in the dissertation the fact that events set up by Esterni, especially when small and taking place in the association's venues, often implied intimate type of engagement with the other attendees and the physical arrangements present in the context.

the conditions that satisfy the requirements that Habermas depicted are tied to the group styles of the group setting up the events. In particular, *group styles enable and constrain the patterned ways in which groups conceive and use events*, and thus the concrete practices through which these are set up: for example the fact of publicizing events through media campaigns (that could imply even press offices), the scale of events, or the fact that they may include an active conscious "work of sociability" (Daniels 1985). Finally, the viewpoint adopted in this chapter - centered on Habermas normative model of the public sphere - represented just a possible specific perspective on to analyze and qualify the sociality produced by the events set up by the observed group with respect to the argument of events as "articulation of the public sphere". In the next chapter, such a perspective will be further developed to inquiry the grammar of events in particular with respect to the specific tradeoffs associated to different uses of events.

FROM SOCIABILITY TO SOCIALITY THROUGH EVENTS

Taylor recall us that "Rousseau in his letter to D'alambert argues that the groupings of persons in public spaces are the purest articulation of political equality and by extension of democracy (Taylor 1994 p. 47-48)" (Goodwin et al. 2001 p. 94). Obviously, the general social context the groups observed in this research must face when they set up events is clearly different from the one Rousseau had fresh in his mind. We have elements to think that the latter included public places, such as cafes and saloons, where people of different class and culture gathered to discuss issues reof public interest, enacting a model of public sphere that was much less abstract than its contemporary relative. Further, Rousseau was speaking about public spaces that were less clearly differentiated from community projections and political spaces tout court because the society in which the Swiss philosopher lived possessed an inferior degree of socio-cultural complexity and internal differentiation than contemporary societies. Today, we know that the public spaces cannot coincide with the political community and that the overlap between these two spheres of actions is increasingly problematic (Joseph 1998). Nevertheless, events as those I observed in my field research represent "groupings of persons in public spaces" that are attracting more and more analytical attention in recent sociological analytical contributions (Conti 2009). We can think that the tendency is going to increase both because of the augmenting relevance of events in the repertoire of actions of civic groups and because of they still widely unexplored potential contribution to civic life (Cognetti 2009). Indeed, in contemporary urban life events represent a possibility for making "strangers meet strangers" (Bauman 1999 p. 18) and thus they may be capable of recreating those "civil public spaces" (*ibidem*) that were typical of past urban life according to many sociological accounts, such as those of Sennett (1978, 1990).

In my study events are important not just because they are main repertoire of action used by the observed groups and to which they devote their - often small - resources. Events are important because they are the means the observed cultural associations used for creating social relationships beyond the group - through the inclusion of attendees in the sociable practices events comprised- and thus generate a *public* sociality. Because events played such an important part they deserve a wider analytical attention than the one deployed in the past chapter. Indeed, even making exclusively reference to Habermas' normative model of the public sphere to analyze events, the inquiry can be developed much further[1]. Indeed, in this sense in the past chapter I limited my analysis at inquiring the empirical conditions that fulfill the two main requirements that according to Habermas make events "articulations of the public sphere" (Sebastiani 1997).

The analysis proposed in this chapter will continue that work, further detailing Habermas' conception of the relation between public spheres and civil society subjects using events to *"go*

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[1] In chapters 1 and 5 I've tried to outline the reasons at the basis of my choice of using Habermas' model of the public sphere in my analysis. Such reasons refer to the *constitutive* relation of the observed groups with the public sphere and to the fact that Habermas' model supplies a perspective that give conceptual autonomy both to civil society subjects and to events.

public". In order to carry out this analysis it is firstly necessary to deepen a specific aspect of Habermas' theoretical argument.

AN INFRASTRUCTURE EMBEDDED IN THE "LIFEWORLD"

I've already stressed in the past chapter the fact that according to Habermas civil society subjects may represent the "infrastructure" of the public sphere. Here it is worth adding a specific attribute that characterizes such an infrastructure according to Habermas' imagination. This is the fact that the "infrastructure" is connected with the "lifeworld" of the widest public, and this is what makes this infrastructure particularly valuable. Indeed, Privitera said that public spaces of face-to-face interaction still remain important in the functioning of the public sphere because "thanks to their informal character they are more receptive for individuating new problems, needs and topic" (Privitera 2001 p. 43) that are part of the everyday "lifeworld". Using Habermas's own words we learn that the public sphere's "institutional bulk is represented by alliances, and volunteer associations - neither of the State nor economic – through which the communicative structure of the public sphere anchor themselves to the dimension of lifeworld of the society. The civil society is composed by those associations, organizations and movements that more or less on a spontaneous basis intercept and intensify the resonance elicited in the private spheres of life by problematic social situations for then transmit such resonance – amplified – to the political public sphere" (Habermas 1997 p. 435).

Habermas specified various elements of its model[1] but the embeddedness of the "infrastructure" of civil society in the "lifeworld" is not further detailed. Though such embeddedness deserve wider attention. In particular, in this chapter I will try to specify the embeddedness of the events set up by the observed groups to pursue their public goals. In order to carry out this type of operation I will adopt a situated perspective that will allow to see a specific tradeoff that wouldn't be predictable drawing exclusively on Habermas' theoretical account. Such a tradeoff articulate the tension between two aspects that are both present in Habermas' model of the public sphere. Indeed, it is possible to introduce both aspect using Habermas' own words:

- on the one hand, that fact that the public sphere is "an alarms system, equipped with non specialized sensors, but sensors that are spread in the entire social body" (Habermas 1997 p. 426) and that for this reason are particularly sensitive to the "lifeworld" of citizens;

- on the other hand, the fact that the public sphere "must not uniquely perceive concerns and topics but also formulate them in the most effective way […] its scarce capacity of solving problems in his own field must be used to control as much as possible the way they are going to be treated in the political system" (Habermas 1997 p. 427).

The empirical evidence illustrated in this chapter will show that these two aspects are in a tradeoff relation among themselves. Indeed, in the events I observed the more the "sensors" were receptive of the attendees' commitment in the events, the less those events were capable of "formulating" the

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[1] Included the generic civil society, such as in the last excerpt

topics they brought to the public attention in "effective ways". In particular, I will outline this tradeoff using a typology that distinguishes among different types of events on the basis of the audience's involvement in them that is scheduled by the events' official cast or program. The description and the use I will make of this typology will be widely outlined in the next paragraph, and for the moment it may be of some utility précising that it will be accompanied by another type of outlook, more focused on the practices unfolding during events independently from their official casts. Thus, the chapter will alternate a double point of view: a situated perspective centered on the practices that unfolded during the observed events and a more external viewpoint based on the official cast and defining content of those events. In any case, the concept of group styles and the related notions will not be treated in this chapter. Indeed, in the next two chapters I will carry out the efforts of linking the empirical evidence previously illustrated to the group life of the observed groups according to the proposed argument that the way cultural associations used events was enabled and constrained by the institutional properties that shaped their group life.

The aforementioned tradeoff will be thus described underling two parallel processes:

- One about the level of the practices that unfold during the events: for example the emergence of spaces of face-to-face interactions and reciprocal recognition among the attendees. With respect to this level, the event's official cast will prove important because it can leave more or less spaces to attendees willing to bring their own concerns and topics (and the specific definition of these) into the event's unfolding. In particular we will see that the more the event's cast approach the pole that I've called of "production of sociality", the more room events' official cast let to the participants' active involvement.

- The other process is about the media resonance given to events, which bring to the public attention the specific topics on which events were based. In particular I will focus my attention on the gap between the meanings brought into the events by its attendees and the official meanings given to the events by its organizers and on which normally drew the media communication.

The analysis thus will show that the tradeoff I outlined is due to the very logics according to which these two distinctive processes unfolded.

Finally, it is worth citing that the analysis carried out in this chapter represents also an effort of developing Habermas' argument on the autonomy of the public sphere. Indeed, according to the German philosopher this is uniquely based on the nature of the subjects animating the public sphere, which can be totally external both to the market and the state or, instead, more or less tied to powerful political and economic subjects. Instead, according to the analysis I carried out the autonomy of civil society varied significantly also according to the way the observed associations used events for attaining their purpose of creating social ties. The main tradeoff I've outlined at this respect states that the more groups used events to enter the media public sphere, the more those events ignored the "lifeworld" meanings of their attendees. On the contrary, if the observed groups used events with a strong concern in generating an active involvement on the part of their attendees, this lessened the possibilities that events entered the media public sphere.

1. FROM AN "ECONOMIC" MODEL OF SOCIALITY TO AN OPEN TYPOLOGY OF EVENTS' OFFICIAL CASTS

BORGHI'S DISTINCTION BETWEEN *CONSUMPTION* AND *PRODUCTION* OF *SOCIALITY* EVENTS

A previous research conducted by Borghi (2001) has analyzed associations' efforts to create or regenerate social relationships through the setting up of events. I take this analysis as a good starting point of my own inquiry. Borghi's analytical apparatus was based on a twofold typology that I've named as the "*economic model of sociality*". Indeed, the typology comprises two ideal-typical categories of events:

- *"consumption of sociality" events,* where sociality may be represented as a "commodity" (Borghi 2001) that is produced by someone (who set up the events) for the consumption of someone else (the event's attendees);

- *"production of sociality" events*, where the unfolding of the event result in the symbolic blurring of the distinction between who set up the event and its attendees because they take an active part in the unfolding of the event.

The difference between the two categories is basically the accent that is given to the processual dimension in "production of sociality" events, which stresses that their unfolding implies a pro-active involvement on the part of their attendees. The typology refers to events official designs (or casts) which may include two qualitative different types of audience's involvement. In particular, in "production of sociality" events the audience's involvement is aimed at changing their "passive" condition, turning the attendees into pro-active subjects. "Consumption of sociality" events do not include this type of aims and thus, according to Borghi (2001) they lack any reference to the broader context in which the event take place.

Borghi exemplifies its two ideal-types showing the difference between a children birthday party ("*consumption* of sociality" event) and theatre performances involving socially problematic individuals as characters of dramas ("*production of sociality*" event). These examples were used by Borghi to shed light on the substantial differences in the outcomes produced by the two types of events. Indeed, on the basis of such examples Borghi outlined that "consumption of sociality" events satisfied specific needs on the basis of a market oriented exchange but reproduced the social conditions that prompted the emergence of that need. Instead, in "production of sociality" events the active involvement of the audience resulted in a valorization of the attendees' own competences, increased their agency and thus turned them in empowered individuals, challenging the duality of the producers-audience relation (Borghi 2001). In the case of "production of sociality" events, their casts included a reference to the broader context that defined the initial duality of positions of organizers of events and attendees of them. "Production of sociality" events were equipped with an official cast that aimed at turning the audience in active producers in order to intervene on the broader conditions that defined the attendees as such (Borghi 2001). This argument significantly resonates with the Cuccagna Project's official communication - articulate in chapter 3- which

strongly stressed the importance of making everyday citizens pro-actively and responsibly engaged in the CP and not simply consumers of its services[1]. This element was particularly stressed by the CGCP which used to set up specific events (the "Participatory Events") with the official purpose of making its attendees the pro-active protagonists of new civic groups promoted directly by themselves. Thus, Borghi's typology is particularly useful to analyze and qualify the sociality produced by the observed groups.

A NEW OPEN FOURFOLD TYPOLOGY OF SOCIALITY EVENTS

A limit of using Borghi's typology is that it risks overlooking many important processes that took place during the events I've observed. Indeed, Borghi typology didn't limit itself to describe two type of attendees' participation in events with respect to broader conditions, but it also associated specific processes and outcomes to such participations. I needed a closer point of view on these processes but still I wanted to look if they could be somehow related to different types of events, similarly to what had proposed Borghi with its typology. Thus, I decided to specify Borghi's distinction in two specific directions.

Firstly, I developed his twofold typology in a fourfold one, with two more categories that articulated the possibilities of attendees' participation in events set up by the cultural associations included in my study. Indeed, with two more categories Borghi's typology resulted to be more nuanced and capable of letting more room to the variety of practices I had observed in my field research. Thus, the initial distinction between production and "consumption of sociality" was developed in the following fourfold typology of events:

a. *"Consumption of sociality" events*: this category remained from the original Borghi's distinction and in my study it could be exemplified by a type of attendees' participation that is typical of a large party-like event.

b. *Events with interactive audience's participation*: when events required some kind of attendees' interventions that may took different forms but that was normally scheduled by the organizers of the events.

c. *Events implying the ephemeral production of new groups*: when events' unfolding required the formation of new groupings, but these were meant to last just for the duration of the events.

d. *"Production of sociality" events:* a category that also remained from Borghi's original distinction; in particular in my study this type of events had the purpose of resulting in the establishment of new stable groups formed by the attendees of this type of events[2].

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[1] For detail see for example the radio interview cited in chapter 3.

[2] This represents an elaboration of Borghi's typology that is based on the fact that the deliberate overcoming of the duality of position of producer and audience of sociable event in the observed take the shape of the formation of new groups.

Then, the second - and most important – way in which I changed Borghi's original distinction consisted in the fact that I limited its use to the events' official format or program. That is it say that I used the fourfold typology I elaborated drawing on Borghi's distinction uniquely to describe the observed events as these were scheduled to unfold not as they "actually" unfolded. This still represented an important heuristic function because possibilities for involvement on the part of the audience, and especially the room let to events' attendees for defining the events' contents, depended also on the event's official program (or cast). But then the observation of the events required a more situated and close perspective that allowed to see the practices that the events included and, especially, the meanings attached to them by its participants. Thus, while Borghi used his twofold typology to describe both the processes and the outcomes associated to certain events, I took my fourfold typology as a tool to describe uniquely the event's official cast.

The distinction between the event's official cast and the situated meanings that they included will prove useful because the empirical analysis, among other things, will show that:

- On the one hand, the scheduled involvement of the audience in an event may be relevant in shaping part of the practices that unfold during the events but not in defining the situated meanings attached to such practices.

- On the other hand, the scheduled involvement of the audience in the observed events will prove important in the process of making events enter the media public sphere. In particular, the typology will allow to observe the tradeoff that refers to the fact that the more an event was capable of including in its official content the situated meanings generated in its unfolding the less likely that event entered the media public sphere. Such a finding will make evident strengths and constraints of events as a specific *form of action* used by associations to define sociality as a public concern.

In the rest of the chapter I will use empirical evidences to show different examples of events that may represent the intermediate level of the public sphere and that are set up by the observed associations to create social relationships. The order of presentation of the typology of these events will differ from the order with which I presented it above. I'll start from "consumption of sociality" events to pass directly to "production of sociality" in order to see if the difference between these two diverse – and somehow opposite- forms of events' designs can be somehow associated to different outcomes with respect to the argument of civil society as "infrastructure of the public sphere". With the same purpose I will then pass to analyze intermediate forms of events' design presented in the typology.

2. "CONSUMPTION OF SOCIALITY" EVENTS

EXAMPLES: PARTY-LIKE EVENTS AND BEYOND

Events whose cast was closest to the category of "consumption of sociality" were the party-like occasions the observed groups used to set up during my field research. Indeed, the official communication that accompanied these "ephemeral practices" (Cognetti 2009) did not claim at all of being occasions to set apart the distinction between who set these events up and its attendees. Among all the observed groups I analyzed during my field research the one who recurred the most to this type of events was Esterni. Examples of Esterni's party-like activities were the "giant bed's party" or the "Everybody's diner". In the first case a group of artists set up a giant bed of the size of an entire square of Milan, and invited the event's attendees to use it as they wished. In the "Everybody's diner" Esterni set many long tables in a square in front of one of the biggest train station of Milan and invited all urban dwellers to bring food and come to eat together in a massive potluck. In both cases, during these parties music was played by deejays or live bands, people danced, drunk and chat among themselves, as it may be observed in whatever big parties held in private or public spaces.

Though "consumption of sociality" events consisted mostly, but not exclusively[1], of party-like occasions that didn't explicitly aimed at changing the initial positions of their attendees, the associations who set up these events didn't frame them as simple parties or occasion to have fun. Instead, the "consumption of sociality" events I've observed were conceived by their organizing groups as a means for "upgrading public spaces"[2], good occasions for enacting an urban sociality made of interactions among strangers and create favorable conditions for the generation of new social relationships that could contrast social isolation. In particular Esterni, the group who most set up this type of events, considered them as concrete occasions to "live the city differently"[3], turning non places into public spaces and allowing citizens to "appropriate their city in a non instrumental way"[4]. The rest of CP's groups deemed "consumption of sociality" events they set up underling the fact that the public opening of the Cuccagna farmhouse created a public space for the development of face-to-face communication that was lacking in Milan. Indeed, in such occasions the farm was described as "a place of meeting and aggregation, an active workshop of culture, a point of reference for the shared search of social goods and quality of life"[5]. Thus, practices that could have been framed simply as convivial and sociable activities were turned in the official communication

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[1] For example Esterni's festivals can be considered as consumption of sociality events, because they reinforce a dual relationship in which the audience and the producers are not meant to change their initial roles. Or another example may be an event called "Centrifuge movement" consisting in movies projections and other arts performances that took place in 7 publics squares of 7 Milan outskirt neighborhoods. The name of the event derive from the fact that it is meant "bring the center in the outskirt", "making peripheral squares lively and attractive for the urban tourists, turning them into the fulcrum of the city".

(http://www.esterni.org/ita/progetti/view.php?action=retrieve&ref=Movimento%20Centrifugo).   Consumption   of sociality events that were not party-like events have been organized also by CP's groups, such as the movie projections of Cuccagna cineforum group, or the book readings of Open doors PT.

[2] From Esterni English webpage.

[3] From Esterni official communication. See the introduction of this group made in chapter 3 for further details.

[4] From esterni' official communication on his website: www.esterni.org

[5] From CA communication about the spring party held in 2008 taken in its website (www.cuccagna.org)

in ideal contexts for the development of social relationships. This represented a shift from the convivial order of worth to the civic solidarity one (Boltanski, Thévenot 1991) that didn't raise any critical tensions because it developed mainly at the level of the events' official communication, without requiring any type of collaboration on the part of the events' attendees. Indeed, the audience of this first type of events was not required to take any active part in the unfolding of events. Looking at the level the attendees' practices that these events included, they were made of a variety of meanings. Let's see in more detail this aspect.

A VARIETY OF MEANINGS ATTACCHED TO THE PARTICIPATON IN PARTY-LIKE EVENTS

I started my inquiry on the meanings attendees' attached to their participation in "consumption of sociality" events trying to figuring out what was the audience information and awareness about events official contents and purposes. This, indeed, represented to me a first step in order to assess if the events' attendees shared the same meanings the organizers attached them in their official communication.

By taking part in "consumption of sociality" events and carrying out informal interviews with their attendees I soon realized that most of the people I was speaking with possessed just a very vague idea or that they even ignored what the event to which they were participating in was set for or why it had been set up. To be more precise I noted also that among who said to know the specific events' contents to which he/she was participating in, there was big variety of meanings: among the informed people of the audience it was possible to identify very different ways in which the official content of a single event had been interpreted and all these ways were just loosely connected to the official meaning the event possessed for the group that had set it up. For example if we consider the aforementioned event called "Giant's bed party", among its attendees there was who considered it as "a way to color such a grey city", an occasion "to fight the dominance of cars and give the city back to pedestrians and cyclists", "in innovative fruition of an experimental artistic practice", a possibility "to approach the art to the wider public", another occasion "Esterni offered to live the city differently", a "convivial party that change a public space". These excerpts come from the fielf notes I took of the informal conversation I conducted during my participation in the event and represent different, if compatible, ways in which the audience framed the event. I noted similar varieties of meanings among the attendees of other "consumption of sociality" events and drawing on these empirical evidences I propose to consider "consumption of sociality" events as sort of collective very loose choreographies that could include also very different attendees' meanings. As we shall see later on in this chapter[1], these type of loose choreographies may be important for identity-related dynamics. Indeed, they also represented symbolic resources for individuation and identification processes that represent what Arendt called "non-identity forms of subjectification" (Joseph 1998). Besides, "consumption of sociality" events were also important resources that the observed associations used to identify and constitute themselves as subjects.

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[1] In particular when talking about "events with interactive audience participation".

But, with respect to the argument of "civil subjects as infrastructure of the public sphere" it is worth noting that the meanings the attendees attached to their participation in these events and the closeness of these meanings to their "worldlife" didn't matter in shaping the events' official casts. Also, it still needs to be understood how the variety of meanings that I observed in "consumption of sociality" events composed to form the "infrastructure of the public sphere".

A GENERATION OF PUBLIC SPHERE FAR FROM THE "LIFEWORLD" OF ATTENDEES

In other observations of I carried out during "consumption of sociality" events I shifted the focus of my attention from individuals' meanings to the outcomes of these events in terms of contribution to the public discourse through the media public sphere. My observations contributed to give shape to the findings underlined in the previous chapter according to which the bigger the audience of an event it was, the more likely that event entered the media public sphere. Also, I noticed that the bigger and more attended the events were, the more their audience attached to them a variety of meanings that were just loosely connected with the events' official meanings[1]. So I started to reason upon a tradeoff that was emerging from my repeated field observations: the more an event was successful in terms of audience's attendance, and thus the more it had chances to enter the media public sphere and bring new topics to the widest attention, but the more these topics were far from the variety of meanings with which the audience participated in the event. This was a finding not consistent with the closeness to the "lifeworld" assumed in the argument of the civil society as "infrastructure of the public sphere". Indeed, the potential to enter a media sphere through events in my observations went to the detriment of the event's closeness to the meanings of who participated in such events.

Such mechanism needed more observations because it could give an important contribution to Habermas conception on the autonomous nature of the public sphere. Indeed, according to Habermas the quality of a public sphere (its "autonomy" or "manipulated" nature) depended on the types of civil society subjects that animated it. In particular, the more close these subjects were to the concerns of citizens' viewpoint, the more autonomous the public sphere these subjects may generate; on the contrary the more these subject were structured subjects that represented specific interests of a constituted group, the more the public sphere they could generate was a manipulative public sphere (Privitera 2001). But I was observing in my fieldwork that events, though widely used by all the observed groups to pursue their official goals, were not a good way to turn citizens' concerns into topics at the center of the media public spheres stimulated by those same events.

I deem useful observing other three examples of "consumption of sociality" events that can shed light on the relation between, on the one hand, the practices unfolding during this type of events and the meanings attached to them by its attendees and, on the other hand, the contents about these events that entered the media public sphere.

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[1] This was clear for example comparing the events set up by Esterni which were attended by massive audiences with those set up by the Projectual Tables that included a small group of attendees which usually all knew the event's official contents.

"Centrifuge Movement" project, consisted in a variety of cultural events (especially movie projections and street theatre performances) and it had the official purpose of "bringing the center in the outskirts", that is to say to reverse the spatial organization of cultural life in Milan that normally concentrates itself in the city center and became more and more rarefied in the outskirts[1]. The project represented, in the viewpoint of the organizing group, another possibility Esterni offered everyday users of Milan to live the city differently, because it was meant to activate a sort of "urban tourism" that would bring habitants from the whole city into peripheral neighborhoods, thus turning upside down the usual mobility pattern of citizens from outskirt areas moving to the city center to take advantage of the rich cultural life that unfold in it. The purpose was ambitious, because it aimed at redefine the boundaries of cultural life in Milan, giving more weight to peripheral areas with respect to central ones.

Free open-air movie projections represented the main part of the "Centrifugal Movement", but this included also other activities that took place during the afternoon preceding the evening movie projection. Example of such activities were street theater performances, workshops for children, and aperitifs. Though the cultural events proposed with the "Centrifuge Movement" included a variety of activities, the events included very small audiences and they were rarely attended by people that were not inhabitants of the peripheral neighborhoods in which the events took place. Indeed, generally the audience of the events was scarce and formed uniquely by local residents. The events used to start in the afternoon, with the first street entertainment show at 4.30 p.m., which was normally attended by a significant audience of young mothers with their little kids. Then the shows went on to stop at dinner time and continue at 8.30 p.m. with the movie projections, which were attended by roughly an audience of the same size than the afternoon shows, composed usually by the same mothers of the afternoon that had brought also the rest of their families. Thus, both in the afternoons shows and the evening movie projections the small audience was mainly made of local residents and families[2]. After seven editions in seven different peripheral areas of Milan, the project didn't seem to have reach its ambitious purpose of bridging the gap in the cultural life of peripheral and central areas of Milan because it had failed in bringing an outsider audience in outskirt areas of the city. As a confirm of such a failure the following year the project was moved in one of the most lively neighborhoods of Milan[3], not far away from the city center, changing thus completely his main content. Thus, we can say that the symbolic boundaries separating the neighborhoods where "Centrifuge movement" took place from the more central parts of the city had remained the same or

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[1] For a context account of cultural life in Milan see chapter 3.

[2] This was the most evident on two specific occasions, when the "centrifuge movement" took place in two small peripheral neighborhoods that I deeply knew, in one case because the year before I had conducted a sociological research that included in depth interviews and ethnographic field work (The research resulted in the publication Magatti M., (edited by), 2007, *La città abbandonata. Dove sono e come cambiano le periferie in Italia*, Bruno Mondadori, Milano) and the other because I've been living in that neighborhood. On the two occasions I noticed that the audience of street theater spectacles and the evening movie projection was composed of local residents, most of whom I personally knew.

[3] This is the part of the city normally called "Collone di San Lorenzo".

we could even think that they had even been reinforced because of this project. Indeed, the very assumption on which the project was based on -bringing cultural events in peripheral neighborhoods that lack them - indicated that the neighborhoods where the events took place were peripheral areas of the city that needed to be culturally revitalized. At this respect we can consider that such an implicit assumption is what created, or at least reinforced, the idea the there was a cultural inequality between the city center and its outskirts that needed to be diminished.

But at this respect it is also worth noting that the fact that the event resulted in failing to reach its scheduled goals had nothing to do with the generation of public sphere that the event has anyway prompted through the media action:

Figure 1. News article on "Centrifuge movement" [1]

I've decided to report a picture of the entire article because the wide image that it contains is important to understand the frame the event took in the media communication. This article was taken from the local pages of the second national newspaper and it talks about "the hard challenge of inverting the flux of the amusement", of how "beautiful can be Milan's outskirts". This media communication brought to the widest attention a quite unusual way of framing the topic of outskirt urban areas because it stressed cultural inequalities more than social ones. This re-naming power the group exerted giving resonance to its event through the media is an outcome consistent with the role Habermas assigned to civil society in his model of the public sphere. What is important to underline here is the fact that such an outcome unfolded independently from the the attendees' practices that the "Centrifugal movement" included and that determined its failure and its definitive abandonment on the part of its organizers.

II EXAMPLE. "EVERYBODY PARTY": RE-DEFINING THE MEANING OF URBAN SPACES?

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[1] La repubblica, 2 July 2008

Another "consumption of sociality" event consisted simply in a party to celebrate the end of a cultural festival. In spite of its official content, the party resulted in a temporary restructuring of the meanings of the urban setting in which it took place. The event I'm talking about is the closure party of Esterni's "Public Design festival", which took place for three consequent years under a large railway tunnel near the main train station of Milan. This place, while normally crowded with traffic, cars' noise and high levels of air pollution, was transformed for three times in the venue of big parties that lasted all night long and that included more than 5000 people each time[1]. Such a setting had been chosen by Esterni because it represented another place of Milan that the organization had chosen to "live differently" and because its unfamiliarity in being a party-venue represented a good feature to contribute to make Esterni's parties an extraordinary experience for its attendees. The idea revealed successful beyond its intentions. The success of the event in terms of audience participation fostered its replication during the subsequent two years. The event transformed the meaning attached to this place, from an anonymous setting for passing cars into the setting of a successful party that represented an occasion to "live the city in a different way".

"Everybody's party" comprised practices very similar to those of a big party involving stranger people: loud music was played by a deejay while people were dancing, chatting or drinking at the bars in the low light lights atmosphere created under the tunnel. What gave these expressive and playful practices a potentially critical stance was the contrast with the anonymous and instrumental behaviors that normally the same place hosted. Indeed, the massive participation in the "Everybody party" had changed the meaning attached to the railway tunnel in which it took place at least for the lasting of the event. This, though it was an ephemeral outcome, deserves attention because it represented an important symbolic resources used both by the organizing group and by the party's audience to identify themselves. For example in many informal conversations I've heard in Esterni everyday life in his headquarter I noticed that such an event was repeatedly used as an unambiguous sign of the capacity Esterni possessed of transforming the meanings of specific urban settings through the mobilization of massive audiences[2]. For example, during a group meeting where members discussed about another event, the leader of the association (Beniamino) to convince the skeptical participants said:

> "Do you remember about the everybody's party? We didn't even wander about our capacities and did something that went much beyond our expectations and the expectations of our public; Why can't we do now the same thing but openly declaring such ?"

Also, "Everybody party" could have represented for its attendees a resource for processes of identifying ("I'm the one who participated in Esterni's events") and identification ("I'm part of the

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[1] Information from an interview with the Esterni's members.

[2] For example during a meeting to discuss about "out of fashion" a part of Esterni members openly expresses his skepticism about the capacity Esterni possessed of carrying out such an ambitious purpose of bridging the city to the "fashion world". Beniamino, to convince the skeptical participants said: "Do you remember about the everybody's party? We didn't even wander about our capacities and did something that went much beyond our expectations and the excepctions of our public; Why can't we do now the same thing but openly declaring such ?"

audience that participated in that event"). We will consider later on in this chapter this type of processes. For the moment it is worth noting that on other occasions the change the group produced was not so ephemeral and it could have been more directly related to the group's capacity of attaining his goals. Let's consider at this respect the parties organized by the CP in the Cuccagna's farm.

III EXAMPLE. CUCCAGNA'S PARTY: PUBLIC SPACE AND SHIFTING OF LOCALE PERCEPTIONS

The party-like events that the CP organized sporadically over time hosted collective practices that changed the perception of the Cuccagna farm in a less ephemeral way than what it has been just seen about Esterni's "Everybody pary". But to show this process it is previously necessary to spend some words on the perceptions of the Cuccagna farmhouse in the neighborhood where it was located.

Thanks to interviews with local residents (Citroni 2010), I discovered at my surprise that the farm represented for many local residents a physical obstacle more than an historical resource to preserve against possible new speculative building constructions, as the CP promoterss usually depicted it[1]. I had not yet noticed by myself that the building of the decadent farm was positioned in a way that one of his wall invaded the street, forcing cars to slow down and fostering the formation of traffic jam at that point of the street. During the last 30 years local residents had even drawn up two petitions to the local representative of Milan's council to ask the demolition of the farm's building in order to widen the street. This was quite telling of how the Cuccagna farm was perceive by at least a part of local residents.

During my two years of field research 12 party-like events had been set up by the CP and during such occasions many people, from the neighborhood and beyond it, physically entered the farm for their first time. CP party–like events unfolded in a variety of leisure activities that included also cultural events, such as music concerts or theatre performances. Besides, during the parties the attendees had also the possibility to take guided tours of the farm with CP's members. For who entered for the first time the farm in these occasions, events represented good possibilities to experience from inside the "physical obstacle", taking advantage of the decadently fascinating site and, during the good season, also of his wide garden. When I interviewed some of these people after or during their attendance to CP parties they revealed to me of having realized that

> "the farm could really became something we all should take care of, something that can certainly enrich our neighborhood and our life"[2].

In this excerpt the farmhouse had became something more than a mere "physical obstacle" to be deleted. Beyond making the overall CP known to local residents and more generally to the whole city and contributing to the shifting of perceptions from a potential obstacle into a possible local resource, the CP party-like events produced other outcomes. To focus them it is necessary to look

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[1] See chapter 3 for futher details at this respect.

[2] From field notes.

from a closer point of view at the practices that unfolded during the event. For example it is worth mentioning that certain CP groups took these occasions as good public scenes to sponsor the activities promoted by the group and try to attract new members into their groups. This for example happened when during the spring CP party of 21th June 2008 at a certain moment Sergio (the leader of the CGCP) took a megaphone and announced to a crowd of about 100 people that was hanging out in the garden the following message:

> "I just want to make a short announcement to say that who would like to take an active part and participate with his own ideas in the Cuccagna Project can come the 10th of July here in the farm, for a first meeting; this project doesn't consist in the offer of events, it includes the efforts of many people that have been engaging themselves for a long time. We would like to involve you in building together this shared project"

As a consequence of this announcement the following 10th of July roughly 30 people came in the Cuccagna farm to attend the "*Participatory Event*" described in the previous chapter and, as an upshot of this event, some of them started to actively engage themselves in the development of the CP. Such an outcome[1] referred to a process that unfolded outside and independently from the official event's content and from the media communication that surrounded the spring CP party of 21th June 2008. Indeed, on the one hand the official content of the event was that of communicating the state of advancement of the restructuring works and especially bring the general attention towards the CP and the necessity to collect other money for financing the project. On the other hand, the media resonance given to the event draw widely on the official contents of the event. For example during the party a short interview was given by the main animators of the CP to a local radio and the contents of the interview stressed, among other things[2], the necessity of finding the money that were still needed to finance the restructuring works.

We have enough evidence now to see the development of two process from a same event and to underline the distance among themselves. On the one hand, bringing to the attention of the radio listeners the necessity of adequately funding the CP represents a process tied to the functioning of the media public sphere. This process may have developed independently from the meanings the attendees attached to their involvement in the event. On the other hand, raising an interest in the attendees that were present at the event was directly tied to Sergio's situated action and to the attendees' reactions. In this case the meanings the audience attached to their participation in the event was maximally important and these meanings - which I underline developed outside the generation public sphere - may actually represent the premises to bring "lifeworld" concerns in the social spaces created by civil society. Indeed, as we saw in the last chapter the "Participatory Event" lead to creation of Participatory Tables on the basis of the attendees pro-active involvement.

Even without assuming the rational-centered orientation of the original Habermas' model of the public sphere, it was evident that the attendees' meaning-making activities that took place during events were not taken into account in the events' official contents. This was something interesting with respect to the original formulation of Habermas' model of the public sphere. Indeed, it

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[1] Which has been widely presented through the examples given in the previous two chapters.

[2] For more details on that interview see chapter 3.

suggested that a social space that may represent an articulation of the public sphere could move away from citizens' "worldlife" meanings not because of the non autonomous nature of the subjects animating it but because of the very logic of functioning of events[1] used as form of action to define sociality as a public concern. According to such a logic, on the one hand, massive audience was required to make events enter the media public sphere but, on the other hand, this went to the detriment of the possibility event' attendees had of defining the event's contents and thus of affecting the media public sphere.

Let's take a short last example that may further illustrate my argument. Considering the aforementioned event called "Giant's bed party" we note that the communicative power associated to this event transcended the variety of meanings through which the event was lived by its audience. Indeed, this event received wide social resonance through the action of traditional media - the press especially - and this allowed to bring to the widest attention new problems and topics that were normally outside of public debates. In particular, the contents brought to the general attention through this event referred to alternative possible uses of a public square. More generally, the contents of the official communication that accompanied the promotion of this event contributed to define the lack of sociable occasions for everyone in Milan as a public issue. Indeed, the event was defined as a "moment of collective creation and of re-appropriation of the spaces of community life"[2]. But what it is important to note is that such a content didn't draw on the variety of meanings attached to the event's attendees, but they were based uniquely on the official press release written by the group who set up the event. For example newspaper articles spoke about "an innovative idea to transform the square in a big opportunity for meetings and interpersonal exchange for the whole city"[3], or about "a concrete project for a human-oriented city and community "[4] or again about "a relational space of interaction that change through simple interventions the discomforts tied to traffic jam in aggregative opportunities"[5]. These sentences are extracts of newspaper's articles and they represent re-elaboration of the official press release Esterni sent to the newspaper's editorial units. With this I do not want to claim that the event's attendees own experiences and the meanings they attached to these experiences were not important for them. As we shall see in other parts of this chapter, they will reveal their importance in a variety of aspects. But, the point here is that *in terms of generation of the public sphere they did not seem primarily important*. It is now time to proceed analyzing "production of sociality" events to further inquiry the relation between the process of entering the public media sphere through events and the attendees' practices and meaning-making activities that the same events included.

3. PRODUCTION OF SOCIALITY EVENTS

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[1] This reasoning is limited to the generation of media public sphere through events.

[2] From the website of the organization who set it up (http://www.publicdesignfestival.org/progetti/show.php?id=35)

[3] Source: La Repubblica Milano 12/03/2008

[4] Source: Corriere Milano 12/03/2008

[5] Source: Interni 14/03/2008

As examples of events designed according to the cast of "production of sociality" we consider in this paragraph the "*Participatory Events*", the "Open Saturdays" or other occasions set up by the Cuccagna Group for the Construction of the Participation (CGCP). Indeed, such events scheduled a pro-active audience's involvement into their unfolding that was meant to result in the blurring of the distinction between the events' organizers and their attendees. All the organizing efforts to set up these events were concentrated in making the audience's as much protagonist as possible in the unfolding of the events, and no real effort was deployed to give resonance to the event in the media public sphere. "Production of sociality" events were conceived as a sort of "empty box" to be fulfilled with topics brought directly by the audience and not offered them by the organizers[1]. At this respect, the difference between such events and the ones depicted in the previous paragraph is striking because in the "consumption of sociality" events a big amount of efforts were concentrated to give a media resonance to the events and the involvement of the audience was often limited to practices similar to the ones present in large parties among strangers. The analysis of the previous paragraph considered two types of processes: one that unfolded through media communication and related to the entering of events (and the contents on which they were based) in the media public sphere, while the other relative the practices that took place during the event's unfolding and to the meanings the attendees attached them. While the past paragraph underlined the distance between the topics raised to the public attention through media communication and the attendees' meanings and practices, this paragraph concentrate his analytical efforts uniquely on the processes that unfolded independently from the functioning of the media public sphere.

PARTICIPATORY EVENTS AS EXAMPLES OF "PRODUCTION OF SOCIALITY" EVENT

Events that probably exemplify the most the "production of sociality" category were the *Participatory Events*. These events gathered people who were generically willing to take part into the CP in a setting (inside the Cuccagna farm, normally) in which CGCP's members played the "moderator role" in a discursive process aiming at creating new autonomous groups. In particular, with the help of the moderator the attendees of a "Participatory Event" were split in smaller groupings, formed by people with similar interests, in order to start topic-focused discussions that should have resulted in the creation of new stable civic groups[2]. In these occasions, events' attendees pro-actively participated in the definition of the contents discussed during the events, engaging themselves in focused collective conversations.

I've included these events in the category of "production of sociality" because they were meant to blur the distinction between "producers" and "consumers" of the event, given that their official aim was to make their attendees active promoters of new groups. These events represented the way CP's promoters actively included new members in its development, not offering them to "consume" anything but, instead, making them became active promoters of their participation[3]. Moreover, the

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[1] This corresponds more generally the logic of action adopted by the CGCP and exemplified in this chapter by the declaration made with a megaphone by his leader, Sergio de La Pierre, and reported in paragraph 2 of this chapter.

[2] For a more detailed description of such event see chapter 4.

[3] On this aspect see the official communication that the CP produced about itself, analyzed in chapter 3.

events' official design included specific moments where strangers confronted among themselves on the basis of a rational communicative action and thus enacted those micro discursive arenas that mostly approached the idea of civil society as "infrastructure" of an autonomous public sphere, according to Habermas' normative model. Certainly, scenes from my field observation revealed that such discursive arenas were not exactly those egalitarian and democratic spaces depicted in scholarship. Indeed, I've often participated in discussions where the speakers didn't listen to each other, but instead performed solo talks on subjects out of the topic collectively discussed. Also the discursive communicative skills possessed by each participants seemed to vary significantly and this gave them clear different powers of bringing new topics and new ways to define them in the discussion, a condition of inequality that has been widely underlined in previous studies that analyzed discursive settings adopting the public sphere model (Berger 2009).

Despite such limits, the discursive arenas created by *Participatory Events* represented spaces for discursive elaboration of concerns and topics coming directly from the "lifeworld" of the events' attendees. Indeed, groupings were defined on the basis of issues proposed directly by the audience. Besides, the *Participatory Events* were able of creating "discursive arenas" that were particularly open to new comers. Indeed, pragmatic constraints to the communicative actions of the participants (*ibidem*) started to emerge just as the group institutionalized itself through subsequent meetings. If we focus our attention uniquely on the unfolding of single *Participatory Event* which represented the first encounter with the CP for many new comers attendees, specific restrictions were absent from the discursive scenes I've observed because real "groups styles" had not yet emerged as institutionalized properties, and this allowed many possibilities of style of speeches, ways of defining group's members reciprocal obligations and group's boundaries. Also, he topics the attendees could refer to were widely diversified among themselves, including in a single *Participatory Event* issues such as "environmental sustainability", "arts", "games", "urban and local politics", "multiculturalism", "conditions of life of elderly in Milan", "local associations"[1]. The ways speakers could address such topics were also varied: they may represent issues on which the participants expressed their opinions ("environmental sustainability" was dominantly treated in such a way) or general concerns that had to be translated in concrete activities that the group could commit itself to (as in the case of *arts*[2]). These modes varied significantly from one group of discussion to the another ones, but also inside the discussion carried out by each group no formal or informal sanctions occurred when a member violated the dominant way participants related to the topic discussed.

Beyond the enactment of micro discursive arena, a second process can be referred to the *Participatory Events*, one that developed beyond the specific settings in which the events unfolded. This process refers to the fact that the repetition of meetings of the discussing groups formed during the *Participatory Events* resulted in the formation of new stable groups of citizens that autonomously started to engage themselves in a variety of activities. The process of forming of new groups has been depicted in the previous chapter, where comparison among the new groups

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[1] These topics were at the same time present in particular at the *Participatory Event* of 8 of July 2008.

[2] For more detail at this respect see what I wrote in chapter 4 about the Arts PT.

(Participatory Tables) revealed that their group styles may vary significantly and this had implications for their capacity of bridge-building[1]. In any case, new groups were formed as outcomes of the *Participatory Events* through processes that included practices and meanings that were relative to the specific settings where the events unfolded and did not include dynamics affecting the media public sphere.

"PRODUCING SOCIALITY" OUTSIDE THE MEDIA PUBLIC SPHERE. A TRADEOFF IN THE USE ASSOCIATIONS CAN MAKE OF EVENTS TO PURSUE PUBLIC SOCIALITY

In the past paragraph, we have seen that "consumption of sociality" events included practices that reproduced a dual relationship that implied a corroboration of the separation of the roles of producers of the event and consumers of it. But through the media resonance, the contents' on which these events were based reached a wide a public and brought concerns about the lack of sociable space in Milan to the public attention. In the case of "production of sociality" events exemplified by the Participatory Events no concerns were brought to the wider public attention: indeed, all the organizing efforts to set up these events were concentrated in involving in the most effective and active way the event's attendees. Bu, the dynamics that developed during these "production of sociality" events were able of fostering processes, such as the formation of new groupings, that were the most important for the groups' capacity to attain his goals of creating social relationships. These dynamics unfolded transcending the functioning of the public sphere according to Habermas' normative model. Indeed, with reference to the two conditions (considered in the previous chapter) that according to Habermas make a space of interaction an articulation of the public sphere, "Participatory Events" were quite open to everyone who wished to participate in them but they were completely disconnected from other levels of the public sphere and especially from the media arena[2].

On the contrary of what we have seen in the case of "consumption of sociality" events, the practices that took place inside the "production of sociality" 's events resulted in the long run in the blurring of the distinction between the roles of "producers" and "consumers", because who initially was an event' attendee in some cases turned in being the promoter of a new group. The point I would like to stress here is that *the events who succeed in "producing sociality"* – that in this case means who succeed in blurring the distinction between events' organizers and attendees - *necessarily unfolded outside the public sphere because their very purpose was incompatible with the functioning of the contemporary public sphere*. Indeed, the contemporary public sphere is a media sphere, defined on the basis of the very distinction between producers and receivers of contents, where these roles are

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[1] These processes have been mainly depicted in chapter 4, where for example I have shown that the way these groups defined their boundaries varied significantly from the *Green PT* specific focus on children and their parents of the local primary schools to the vague "people maybe interest in Arts" of the *Art PT*.

[2] Indeed, the discursive arena created by the event were connected to the organizational level represented by the CGCP but not to any form of mediated communication that could bring the discussions that unfolded in the micro-arenas in to the wider public agenda and discourse.

strictly separated and this separation cannot be put into question. In saying this I'm not stating that processes of creation of new social relationships in urban areas promoted by civic groups unfold necessarily outside the contemporary public sphere. The comparative perspective adopted by this study illustrates that the setting up of events and the purpose of blurring the distinction between the producers and the consumers of such events is just *one among the possible strategies used by the observed groups to create new social relationships. Such strategy has its own features, which make that its development must necessarily take place outside the functioning of the contemporary media public sphere. It is a strategy with its own potentials and limits, with respect to other possible strategies.* For example I've observed during my field research that when the promises of this strategy of forming new self-directed groups are publicly announced but then cannot be attained[1] the deceptions can be so strong to significantly lessen the credibility of the association that promoted this strategy[2]. Considering these type of outcomes we may also think that "consumption of sociality" events are preferable to "production of sociality" ones in order to attain purposes of creating social ties. For example the summer party depicted in the first paragraph proved to be better in shifting negative perceptions about the farm (physical obstacle for the traffic) into good ones (as potential resource for the neighborhood) and thus to legitimize the association that promoted the event and especially to bring to the local attention the possibilities related to the unfolding of the Cuccagna Project. What I want to underline in this paragraph anyway is not which strategy is abstractly better for producing inclusive outcomes in general, but instead the fact that *each strategy possess its own specific tradeoffs.* In this paragraph in particular I'm showing that "production of sociality" events are better suited in eliciting process of direct inclusion of new members into existing groups but they have an harder time in entering the media public sphere, and thus bring to the public attention new topics or on new ways of formulating old ones. For this processes, "consumption of sociality" events proved to be better suited.

Thus, these two paragraphs have shown findings that are consistent among themselves. Indeed, in paragraph 1 we have seen that "consumption of sociality" events may be important element of a wider process that generate public sphere by bringing - through the media action - to the widest attention topics that are not necessarily tied to the attendees' practices taking place during the event's unfolding. In this paragraph we have seen that "production of sociality" events are closer to the attendees' own practices meanings and – in particular in the example observed - can make topics raised by them the subjects of collective discussions. But the very purposes of these type of events, that is to say *the blurring the distinction between producers and audience, cannot be pursued through the contemporary public sphere.* These findings converge in underlining a tradeoff

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[1] As for example when a *Participatory Event* cannot be followed by other meetings.

[2] Such possible outcome occurred for example for the CGCP and it was repeatedly signaled by its members during the group meeting that I've observed For example during one of these meetings a group members made this long intervention: "I know people from my block, who I had personally invited to the CP parties and that came to the Cuccagna Spring party and then participated enthusiastically to the *Participatory Event*. Then nothing more happened for them, and this left this people completely disappointed; we have created expectations in the neighborhood that have gone frustrated and this represent a negative outcome for the CP, it would have been better to not do anything I even think" .

in the use associations can make of events to pursue public sociality. Such a tradeoff consists in the fact that *the more an event is defined by problems, concerns, or simply topics raised by attendees[1], the less such an event will have possibility of entering the media public sphere, bringing to the general attention such topics and concerns*. It is worth underling that this is not because of the limitedness of the resources a group can count on and thus has necessarily to *alternatively* focus its organizing efforts *or* on creating the most suitable conditions encouraging the active involvement of attendees *or* on media campaigns about its events through means of communication that can reach wide publics. Instead, according to the argument I'm proposing the tradeoff I've outlined is due to the very logic through which events most likely enter the media public sphere, which require a clear distinction between the attendees and events' producers.

In the rest of the chapter I will consider residual cases in order to further analyze such a tradeoff and in particular to see if intermediate forms of events designs correspond to events that are capable of including the attendees own concerns and at the same time able of entering the media public sphere. It is now necessary to introduce the other two categories of events' design that have been formulated to develop Borghi's distinction[2].

4. EVENTS ENGAGING EPHIMERAL GROUPINGS

In this paragraph I would like to introduce the category of events whose cast include the engagement of their attendees through the forming of ephemeral groupings, which last for the duration of the event in which they participate in. The category will serve to explore the audience's commitment in the unfolding of the event and how this involvement configure the event as "infrastructure of the public sphere". Let's firstly make some examples that may clarify the nature of the audience' involvement in these type of events.

"OUT OF TARGET"

Firstly let's consider a three day long event called "Out of target" consisting in a variety of cultural performances for teenager attendees which were meant to became "the protagonist and not anymore the target"[3] of a variety of activities. The events included movie projections, concerts, workshops about comics, music, skateboarding or other typical teenager activities. The events took place in a

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[1] Using Habermas' vocabulary we could reformulate this first part of my argument saying: the more an event has possibilities to approach the "lifeworld" of its attendees.

[2] Indeed, his twofold typology was easy to apply observing Esterni party-like events and CGCP *Participatory Events* because of the sharp differences between these two types of events, but the typology has more difficulties in accounting for more nuanced forms of events. In particular, the typology is less easy applicable to other events I've observed in the field because of their ambivalence with respect to the category of production and consumption of sociality. Therefore in the rest of the chapter I will develop Borghi's distinction proposing other two categories of events that have been constructed taking into account more nuanced ways in which the event's audience may be involved in the unfolding of the events.

[3] From the official press release communiction on this event.

variety of places of Milan, spread in the whole city. The spirit of the event was summarized through his title ("Out of target"): let's stop considering teenagers just as targets for commercial purposes, as companies treat them when they launch new products specifically designed to be as much appealing as possible for these niche of public; instead let's consider teenagers as persons, with their own interests and desires which may not directly relate to commodities or commercial experiences. To sum up the spirit of the event with a sentence, this could have been: "let's give voice to teenager and stop to consider them as target to be hit".

During the first edition of the event (2007), these principles ware mainly translated into giving teenagers the possibility to choose which workshop they wanted to participated to and organizing the unfolding of the workshop not in a lecture format[1] but structuring them on topics raised by the young workshops' participants, and then developed by famous experts hired on purpose by the organizing group. The second edition of "Out of target" - held in may 2008[2] – included also workshops consisting in discussions among participants with the help of adult moderators. This new way of structuring the workshops was meant to give even more voice to the teenager attendees, assigning them a more pro-active role than in the previous edition. For the same purpose it was held a special workshop to discuss ideas and proposals for the next year edition of the event, in order to make teenagers even more "the protagonist" of the event.

"LET'S RECOVERY!"

Another event that generated a similar involvement on the part of their audience but with different contents was "Let's recovery!"[3], where the object to "recover" was Milan and the means to do it a massive team game[4]. "Let's recovery!" took place the 6 and 7 of June 2009, it lasted 19 hours and it consisted in 231 teams formed by the attendees – and comprising roughly 1000 people - competing among themselves in a variety of playful, not really competitive, tests. Indeed, these consisted in unusual practices that took place in different parts of the city and often required players to interact with strangers, with about 6000 people generally involved in the whole unfolding of the game according to the organizers[5]. The nature of these tests was not seriously competitive because they represented firstly collective practices to make participants of "Let's recovery!" experience Milan in another way, different -and in particular more playful - than what presumably was their everyday experience of it[6]. In the website of the event it was possible to read that tests were meant to "invade

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[1] In opposition to the way are normally structured school classes for teenagers in the Italian school system.

[2] to which I participated helping Esterni in his organization and acting also as public during his development.

[3] This the author translation for "Alla riscossa".

[4] As all the events Esterni organized, the event was covered with a complete media coverage: there is a specific website (www.allariscossa.it), with audios, pictures and videos of all the event and his different tests.

[5] Source: www.allariscossa.it

[6] "Live the city differently" was the broader goal of many events set up by Esterni, the association that organized "Let's recovery".

Milan and re-conquer forgotten and abandoned places". An example of test's description may clarify this point:

> Once upon time Milan was know also for his lively night – time life. At every hour of the night the city was full of parties and social exchange occasions, not uniquely tied to commercial activities. From such a lively ambience many artistic and cultural movements took off and became widely known later on. Today, instead, after midnight you have an hard time in finding open and welcoming places. To demonstrate their attachment to culture and to pass this test, the players must gather at 2 a.m. in Vittorio Emanuele Gallery[1] equipped with guitars to sing and play *O mia bella madunina*[2].

Other tests consisted in similar unusual playful practices such as: recite a famous dialogue from and old movie in the exact place[3] where it had originally been shot, cross one of the main Milan's commercial street (Corso Buons Aires) with the legs tied in a bag, look for a person by asking his name (Ambrogio, typical name of Milan) to strangers in public transports, make Japanese tourists pronounce dialect Milanese sentences with the correct accent, or picnic in a public park. The meaning of such practices for the organizers was summarized in the way they had been reported on the event's website. Here it was written that teams' games

> involves young and elderly, families and singles for two days that have changed Milan!

According to the association that set up this event, though playful and ephemeral, the collective practices in which the event consisted had involved a wide varied audience and they "changed Milan!", at least for the duration of the event.

LOOSE ENGAGMENT IN LOOSE GROUPS

Both the events of "Let's Recovery!" and "Out of target" possessed an official casts that scheduled the formation of new ephemeral groupings on the part of their attendees. The involvement in such groupings didn't include the possibility of a direct responsible engagement as the one projected by the groups that *Participatory Events* wished to create. Social ties inside such ephemeral groups were provisional because the "membership" lasted uniquely for the duration of the event. Even if these groupings engaged their members with collective actions, this engagement possessed a very loose nature: while in "Let's recover!" it was sufficient to play the role required by the different tests, in "Out of target" it was not even necessary to speak in workshop discussions; it was enough to seat and listen to other members to be publicly considered as a group's member. Boundaries defining groups involved in such events were also maximally loose: the audience of "Out of target" were defined just as teenagers and "Let's recover!" players were urban dwellers anxious to "live the city differently" from their everyday experience of it. Nevertheless, such loose engagements could have let the possibility that attendees' meaning making activities shaped the events and/or that this entered the media public sphere. Indeed, the cast of these events represented an intermediate form

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[1] One of the most central and known touristic attraction of Milan, situated just some meters from the Duomo.

[2] The most nationally know typical dialect song of Milan.

[3] Piazza del Duomo, the main city square.

between the "consumption" and the "production of sociality". On the one hand, events' unfolding was meant to reinforce the dual relation of "producers" and "consumers" of events. On the other hand, events were designed to create spaces for collective discussions or playful engagement that differentiate them from mere "consumption of sociality" events. In such spaces events' participants did engage in doing things together, established a collaboration among themselves, even if not for very "serious" purposes but uniquely to win a team game or to start a teenager discussion about, for example, musical tastes.

A SPACE FOR INTERACTIONS AMONG STRANGERS

A trait that these two events shared and that, more generally, was widely common for the majority of events I observed in my field observation was the fact that they aimed at setting up favorable conditions for interactions among strangers. Let's consider from a closer point of view such interactions to see which room they left to the attendees' initiatives and, especially, if and how these interactions acquired a public status in the media public sphere.

The superficial and not very critical contents of the practices included in the events represented expedients that made strangers interact among themselves, which could represent already a result in itself. Indeed, more than a century ago Simmel described in his essay "Philosophy of money" (Simmel 2004) the novelty represented by the fact that at a certain point of human history strangers started to interact among themselves on the basis of money and that money made possible this type of new, quantifiable, interaction. Simmel recognized the novelty and the specificities of this type of interaction. Similarly, we could question events that in their official casts included the formation of new ephemeral groups and take a closer look at the type of interactions entailed by the playful or discursive practices the events consisted of. Indeed, according to the organizer groups' points of view the creation of new ephemeral groups was a means for enacting new relationships and thus to pursue their aim of making Milan sociable. Therefore, in order to analyze the quality of relational spaces created through the observed events, specific attention will be given to the interactions that unfolded in these events.

"OUT OF TARGET" INTERACTIONS

In "Out of target" we can identify two type of interactions involving the audience. The first one is the collective exchange of point of views that took place in workshops where teenagers were invited to freely discuss among themselves and to make new proposals for the next edition of the event. In these settings on the one hand the forms of the interactions among teenagers seemed to repeat a relational model that saw the silencing function on the part of more pro-active students toward the more shy ones. At this respect, teenagers seemed to live these settings not very differently from school classes[1] because their participation in them was often characterized by the same wariness

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[1] Even though it's not possible to state with certainty this because I had not previously observed the development of interactions among the same teenagers in a school setting.

that characterize teenagers students[1]. The contents of these interactions were based on topics that were raised directly by the young workshop participants. Examples of these contents were: "how do you became a stuntman", "how do you do a videoclip", "how do you start up a web radio", "how to make your film out of nothing", "street arts", "video game" or "Linux and Open Source programs". The second type of interactions were the ones involving teenagers and notorious experts invited to take participate in the workshops. The forms of these interactions normally replicated the fun model and their contents were based on the domains of activities of the invited experts, even though inside these broad themes teenagers could raise a variety of specific topics. So, "Out of target" created a relational space that allowed the raising of topics and ways of addressing them that were next to the meaning-making activities and the *"lifeworld"* of teenagers because they had been raised directly by them. Let's consider now if and how such interactions acquired a public value through media communication, extending beyond the concrete settings in which they had taken place.

"Out of target" was well connected to the media sphere because the organizing group had sponsored and promoted it through newspapers or web sites and the unfolding of the event had been reported through newspaper articles and local television services. Thus, it seems that there are elements to think that this event's design mixed in a good compromise the audience's active engagement and a media coverage that allowed affecting a media public sphere that raised to the public attention the specific issues on which the event was based. Taking a closer look at the media coverage of the events we see that things are not exactly as such because the media coverage didn't report the topics that had been raised by the teenagers' participants of the event, but referred more generally to event's broadest theme, especially as these had been described in the press releases of the groups that had set up the event . For example we can read that:

> "Teenagers create a free, open, space where they can express themselves and confront each other, where they can narrate about themselves and their point of view"[2]

Thus, though in this case both the elements that appeared as separated in the previous types of events were at the same time present, *they were not tied to each other*. In particular, the events' contents were at least partially defined by the event's young attendees and "Out of target"'s contents received a media resonance but these two elements were not reciprocally defined and in particular *the media coverage of the event was not tied to the specific issues raised by the young participants of the event*.

"LET'S RECOVER!"' INTERACTIONS

A perspective centered on the public sphere implies a specific attention on the social spaces created by civil society initiatives (Habermas 1997 p.428). In particular also in the case of "Let's recover!"

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[1] At least in the Italian context. For cultural differences on the relational model in high school settings see Sclavi M., 2005, *Ad una spanna da terra*, Mondadori, Milano

[2] RepubblicaMilano 29/03/2008.

event I will develop the same double level of analysis: on the one hand I will give a specific attention to the practices that unfolded during the events, and to the meanings attached to them by attendees; on the other hand I will see if and how such meanings entered the media public sphere. Indeed, "Let's recover!" included both elements. Firstly, a type of audience's engagement that was explicitly meant to be more active and more close to the own concerns of the attendees than in the case of more "consumption"-oriented type of experiences[1]. Secondly, a communicative effort to publicize the event's contents through the media.

Therefore my analysis consisted in looking at the processes developed in these two dimensions and in particular in assessing if the meanings attached to the event's practices by the audience founded a resonance through the communicative action diffused through the media. The overall purposes of my analysis remained the same of before, that is to say assessing limits and potentials of different event's design in bringing to the public attention problems and topics coming from the engagement of attendees in the events.

The "relational space" (Tronca 2004 p. 165) created by the "Let's recover" could be at least divided in two parts because the official schedule of the event included on the one hand interactions among team members and on the other hand interactions among team members and passing strangers, when this was required by the specific tests or games that the event included. With respect to the first type of interactions it is worth precising that teams were formed by people that were friends or personal acquaintances among themselves and that normally already knew each other from before the event. Indeed, the event required the inscription of teams of players that decided to take part in the game and not of single persons that could meet new people by entering a new formed team. Directly participating in the event I realized that interactions among group members while playing and trying to pass tests were very task oriented and focused on overcoming in the less time possible the given tests, leaving little room to interactions among members that were out of the specific content of the test. For example in the test consisting in playing and singing a traditional Milan song in the main square of the city, interactions were limited to think about how to find a guitar late at night, testing the words, and then playing and singing while a member of the group would have filmed the performance to prove that it had been correctly done [2]. These kind of interactions developed in a playful climate that was made of jokes and laugh among members of the same team. "Let's recovery"'s design required also to interact with passing strangers, for example through their involvement in a collective picture the team had to take or when the test consisted in asking to Japanese tourists to read and pronounce sentences in Milanese dialect. These type of interactions broke the traditional seemingly indifference among passing people and enabled interactions among strangers that differed from the ones based on money exchange that Simmel described more than a century ago. These type of interactions were normally taken by the involved strangers as funny

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[1] Such as "consumption of sociality" events.

[2] A collective performance of this test is visible going at webpage of the event , where, besides, is possible to find many other sample of the tests in which "Let's recovery"'s event consisted of. The internet address is http://www.allariscossa.it/ws/allariscossa/foto.php

unusual urban practices and normally they actively collaborated in what "Let's recovery" participants requested them to do.

At least for its lasting, the event had been was able to make his participants, and often also strangers, experience collectively a playful dimension that was normally absent from the city public life. The event was very consisted with Esterni's project about "living the city differently[1]. The sociable practices, in which the event consisted of, prompted the emergence of what Amirou (1989) would have called "communal feelings" that created "loose communities", or what Costa (2001) would have called a "plebian public sphere" made of arts and play (Costa 2001). But it is important to note that the attendees' meaning making activities were mostly already scheduled by the event's official cast and not big room was left to allow them to bring in the event their own concerns or "lifeworld" meanings. Indeed, the event scheduled a type of audience intervention that consisted in adhering to contents entirely proposed by the organizing group (Esterni). Both the overall theme (enact an urban collective playful dimension), and the contents of the different collective tests that the event comprised, had been organized by Esterni and the general public could adhere or not to such proposal. These type of involvement was therefore more close to the one present in events with the cast of "consumption of sociality" than to "production of sociality" ones. In this case the organizing group had no intentions of creating social spaces for free micro-discursive arenas that could let the audience bring in them concerns decided by themselves. On the other hand the communicative media efforts associated to this event were significant and they were all based on the official playful dimension attached to the event:

> "Let's recover offered an occasion to get to know Milan while having fun in discovering the more representative monuments of the city but also the everyday histories of his citizens" (CorriereMilano 09/06/2009)

Also in this case the media communication draw widely on the official communication of who organized the event and gave resonance to the contents that Esterni had decided to attach to the event while ignoring the varied meanings that the audience could bring in the practices in which the event consisted of. Indeed, though the events unfolded according to a program that left little room to the raising of topics and meaning on the part of audience, during the event I observed the unfolding of dynamics that were not completely scheduled in the event's design. We may shortly consider in the next paragraph as examples of such dynamics those who can be referred to the identity dimensions.

RECOGNITION IN THE SOCIAL SPACES CREATED BY EVENTS THAT INVOLVE EPHIMERAL GROUPINGS

If I had limited my observation to events' official cast it would have been hardly possible to observe dynamics that unfolded in the collective practices in which the attendees engaged themselves but that were not scheduled in the event's official cast. But adopting a viewpoint closer to the practices that events comprised, it is easy to note that events implying the creation of ephemeral groupings

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[1] Indeed, in ordinary days it is very unlikely to see people singing and playing in group in a public square.

entailed the enactment of "relational spaces" (Tronca 2004 p.164) where attendees reciprocally recognized themselves, especially if participating on a regular basis to the events set up by a single association. To illustrate this point I will take the longest way, and I'll start by a puzzle I faced during my field research.

During the two years of my theory driven participant-observation(Lichterman 2002), I used to observe the preparation of events in their different phases, from their beginnings, when they were thought, discussed and planned in the observed groups' headquarters. Comparing different groups I was surprised to note that when Esterni organized an event knew in advance the size of the audience that would have attended it with a strikingly precision. The only big source of uncertainty seemed to be represented by whether conditions in the case of events taking place out-door. Apart this factor, and given the fact that Esterni had never realized a real market research on the audience participating to its events, I was astonished observing the degree of precision with which the organizers used to foreseen the audience participation in their events. I wandered which were the sources of such a competence. During informal conversations I asked one of the core Esterni member how did they do to know with such a precision the size of the audience that would have attended events. I was told that

> after 13 years you learn to know such things, you smell the air, the general city climate of the period and you can tell

I asked to different members but all the answers I could get were similarly vague and spoke about a non reflexive skill of foreseeing, a competence matured over time and the experiences associated to it, and that for this reason seemed to be hardly verbalizible by the group members to which I asked. The reference to this type of tacit understanding didn't help me very much in understanding how Esterni could know in advance with such a precision the size of the audience participating to its events. So I waited, hoping to see this tacit understanding developing in myself over the time spent in my participant observation in the group.

After some months from the beginning of my field research I realized something important, that was the fact that among the audience of the events this association used to set up, it was identifiable a core group of people that was almost always present at all the events Esterni organized. After a few months I was even able to recognize the faces of this core group of audience[1]. Similar core groups of publics were present at the events organized by all the observed groups but in the case of Esterni it was more easily recognizable because it was particularly wide and homogenous compared to other core's audience groups. These people were not active member of the observed groups but with stability returned to the events the group organized and this represented an important element for Esterni's predictions about the size of the audiences that would have participated in its events. The stability of behavior of these people was exactly what made the predictions so precise.

As observer I was particularly interested in the experience that the core group of audience made of the events in which it participated and over time I realized that this was partially different both from

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[1] If we were using business terms we could have termed as "return customers", but that we may simple call as "audience's core group".

that of the rest public and from what the official cast of events officially said. Indeed, events represented for this type of attendees firstly a space of reciprocal recognition that was enacted by them in all type of events Esterni organized, independently from their specific contents. In particular, because of their stable presence, the members of audience's core group had acquired an higher level of intimateness among themselves and with the group's members than all the rest of the audience. The core members enacted different, seemingly unimportant, practices than the rest of the attendees, such as shaking hands and involving themselves in chatting that would renovate and re-confirm long-standing relationships. Also, participating over time in the events that a same group organized expressed a particular loyalty toward the organizing group and often also a familiar relationship with group members. The two aspects - confirming and reinforcing a closeness to other core audience members and to the groups organizing the events- were not separated but they were lived together and reciprocally reinforced. Especially, the reciprocal recognition among attendees that during events was enacted used to take place not in abstract or neutral contexts, but in specific settings that qualified the attendees with respect to the events' contents and, more generally, with reference to the broader assumptions that informed the organizing groups' mission and activities. Audience's core members didn't simply recognize themselves as persons but as participants in specific events whose elements, such as its spatial arrangements, reinforced their identities with reference to the more general assumptions that founded the organizing groups. Indeed, following Potts' argument, we may consider the events organized by the observed groups that repeated themselves over time as rituals, and in particular as "everyday rituals" in which sociability unfolded (Potts 2009). Thus, we may see more clearly the importance of *familiarity* for the production of identities because "ritual action communicate familiarity with forms, and this familiarity may be as simple as the recognition that one is required to be present at an event. Familiarity and identity are coterminous. The repeated experience of ritual participation produces a feeling of solidarity - 'we are all together, we must share something'; and lastly it produces collective memory – 'we were all together. What is experienced and what is remembered is the act of participating in the ritual event' (Berezin 2001 p. 93). According to Berezin the identities shaped through these experiences result in the forming of "communities of feelings", a concept that particularly stress the non discursive elements of aesthetic emotion the may be active in people gatherings (Berezin 2001 p. 94).

The analysis of the identity-related processes that unfolded during the observed events can be much further developed and here it has just been hinted at. For the argument proposed in this chapter it is worth noting that these type of processes unfolded independently from the events' official contents and also apart from the fact that events could enter the media public sphere. In the case of "Let's recovery!" on the one hand the media resonance given to the event drew on the event's official contents which hoped to bring to the widest attention the playful and "urban explorative" dimension tied to the event. On the other hand, the event created a "relational space" (Tronca 2004)of reciprocal face-to-face recognition that may have represented an important symbolic resource of identity shaping processes, which in any case were independent from the media communication and developed according to the situated practices that took shape in the setting where the event unfolded.

EVENTS THAT IMPLY THE CREATION OF EPHEMERAL GROUPINGS AND ITS TWO PARALLEL PROCESSES

What characterize the events I've considered in this paragraph is the fact that they possessed a design that tried to involve the audience into the unfolding of the event through the creation of ephemeral groups: not stable civic groups devoted to act collectively according to self organizing principles and through repeated and institutionalized interactions (as in the case of "production of sociality" events) but groupings that were meant to last for the duration of the event and that filled specific positions in an overall choreography outlined not by them but by someone else[1]. Thus, these types of events didn't "produce sociality" in the sense Borghi meant it because they implied an ephemeral creation of associative publics, inscribed in a dual relationship that was not meant to blur the boundaries between "producer" and "consumers" of sociality. But these events entered the media public sphere, bringing to the widest attention new topics and thus they could have hoped to bring them in the political agenda, according to the model of communication from the periphery to the center that Habermas depicted (Habermas 1997, p.393 ; Privitera 2001 p. 85)[2]. What I deem worth to be underlined is the fact that topics entering the media sphere were different from the practices, such as those tied to processes of reciprocal recognition, in which the attendees engaged themselves with, while participating in the events.

To be more precise we could say that the events observed in this paragraph entailed a double process. On the one hand a process that was independent from the type of audience's engagement in the event, that unfolded through the entering the media public sphere and bringing the official event's contents to the attention of the widest public. In the observed case for example this process stressed the necessity to relate to teenagers not as "targets" but in a more egalitarian and respectful way or, in the other case, sensitized on the possibility of living the city in a playful way. The entering of the media public sphere occurred independently from the audience actual or scheduled involvement and that the content brought to the general attention was largely independent from the attendees' meanings. On the other hand, parallel to this process, the observed events included "relational spaces" (Tronca 2004) in which the audience's engagement and its situated meanings mattered. Such "relational space" referred firstly to face-to-face interactions among strangers that had the possibility of reciprocally recognize themselves as part of the overall action pursued by the organizing group through the setting up of events. Further, the creation of ephemeral groupings in events entailed in the observed cases specific practices that qualitatively differed from those observed in the case of "consumption of sociality" an "production of sociality" events.

Thus, the analysis of this form of events has shown that, on the one hand, *a pro-active engagement* on the part of the audience which implied the possibility of bringing into the events they own meanings and, on the other hand, the *entering of a media public sphere can be at the same time present in a single event, though their coordination doesn't come by itself.* At this respect what I

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[1] Ad in particular by the associations that set up the events.

[2] The analysis of this process of communication has not been developed because of the focus of this chapter was at the civil society's level considered as the "infrastructure of the public sphere".

have observed looking at "events engaging ephemeral groupings" was not different from what I had observed in the case of "consumption of sociality" events. Indeed, in both cases *when the event entered the media public sphere this occurred through the event's official contents, without taking into any type of consideration the audience's engagement according to its own terms.*

5. EVENTS WITH ATTENDEES' INTERACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

This paragraph is devoted to the last of the four categories I've outlined (drawing on Boghi's twofold distinction) to distinguish among the events set up by the associations I've observed in my field research. The events considered in this paragraph included the possibility of some kind of audience's active participation into the unfolding of them, though such an involvement did not develop through the formation of new groupings. The audience' involvement required by this type of events' official cast was closer to the category of "consumption of sociality" than to that of "production of sociality". The difference with "consumption of sociality" events was that the attendees' involvement in the events presented in this paragraph was explicitly framed in *civic* terms of contribution to the public good.

The purpose of looking also at this type of event's cast is, similarly than in the previous cases, to assess *how the attendees' involvement was taken into account when these type of events entered the media public sphere*.

"OUT OF FASHION"

"Out of fashion" was a cultural project set up by Esterni that included a variety of activities and that represented a bridge-building effort carried out by this association to connect, on the one hand, residents and everyday users of Milan and, on the other hand, the fashion system of Milan, mainly stylists and fashion companies). The project consisted especially of a major event, which took place during the fashion week of Milan, when the city host the world major fashion stylists and fashion shows. With respect to the more general aims of the organizing group, "Out of fashion" project represented in the viewpoint of who set it up an opportunity given to the whole city to live the "fashion world" of Milan "differently"[1] from the exclusive and elitist way in which it was normally lived. It represented a proposal to conceive the relation between the "fashion world" and the city that hosted it twice a year[2] alternative to the dominant way in which it was deemed to be structured according to Esterni. The spirit of the event is the most clear if reading the introductory text written by Esterni to present the project and that was included as part of the press release that accompanied the project:

> In Milan the idea of the "fashion world" has been distorted: boundaries have been built between this exclusive world and the rest of the city. Thus, nowadays, rather than being an opportunity of creative and cultural

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[1] Here it is possible to note the same stress on "living the city differently" that informed many events set up by the association of Esterni.

[2] Actually, Milan has four fashion's weeks every year, one for every season, because at the beginning of every season fashion stylists propose their collections for the following season. In text I say that Milan has just one fashion's week because actually just two of the four are widely known by the general public and have a wide media coverage.

development of the whole city, fashion easily ends up being an instrument of standardization and an invitation to consumerism.

The project was launched in February 2008 with a press conference and an opening event (which represents the empirical focus of the paragraph), but then nothing more happened, the scheduled other initiatives never took place and the project was soon considered a failure with respect to the attainment of his official purposes[1]. Though the focus of this paragraph is the analysis of the main event in which the project consisted of, I deem necessary taking a quick look at the overall project in which the observed event was included. This passage, indeed, is important to understand how the convivial and sociable practices observed were invested of a *civic* significance by the organizing group.

It is firstly worth noting that "Out of fashion" possessed a twofold bridging goal. On the one hand it was meant to bridge the fashion companies to the city and its inhabitants, to make business-oriented stylists and fashion companies concerned with the everyday lives of who "really" lived the city, while they were deemed to be uniquely concerned with the lives of who coul afford to buy their expansive creations. This bridging goal was clearly stated on the occasion of the press conference held just before the observed event took off. Indeed, in that occasion Stefano Boeri, a very famous Italian Architect called for the conference, made a short speech saying that:

> "we're here now firstly to call fashion companies to intervene […] if we arrive to break barriers, we may hope fashion become something different from just a way to celebrate some big egoism. We are proposing fashion companies the opportunities to leave some concrete signs in the city and to help to the many problems that afflict it"[2].

If the first bridging purpose was meant to connect the "fashion system" to the city, the second one referred to the possibility of bridging the city to his citizens through the fashion system. Indeed, we can read from the official communication prepared by Esterni to promote its event that

> Milan looks like a centre of fashion industry without citizens. The fashion system by which the city is known all over the world fails to involve its citizens, they grow disinterested to it and used to perceive fashion only like a synonym of boring fashion shows, exclusive parties, chaotic traffic and luxury without limits. "Out of fashion" starts a movement that investigates and practices the communicative potential, the social relevance and the unifying occasion of the Milano fashion weeks.

The main event of "Out of fashion" was held in the central stock exchange square of Milan[3], from 6 p.m., on the 22th of February 2008, immediately after the press conference.

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[1] Though, through informal conversations I've known that some of the organizers consider that the project "in stand by", rather than considering it yet a failure and they motivate their inactivity with the lack of money that are necessary to finance the activities.

[2] I've directly heard these sentences when they have been pronounced during the press release, but they are also partially at disposal on a you tube's videos by taping "Fuori moda Esterni".

[3] The central square where the events took place is one of the main architectural attraction of Milan, and it consists in a square surrounded in his four sides by neo-realist buildings, included the famous "Palazzo Mezzanotte", historical venue of the stock exchange.

The works for setting up the square started at 6 a.m. the day of the event, involved many of Esterni's members and lasted all day long, while the square was busy with hurried workers from the stock exchange building situated in the same square. From time to time, especially while the evening was approaching, I noticed workers stopping by to look with curiosity at the new aspect that the square was taking, or to read the informing panels and leaflets prepared by Esterni. The four entries of the square had been closed for the events and it was delimited a smaller square inside the big one, with two bar spaces, a 40 meters long catwalk in the middle and a spacious place for the deejay in front of it. For the audience of the launching conference press, roughly 60 deck chairs had been positioned in front of the catwalk, each one equipped with a wood blanket. The most famous Milan stylists had been invited to take part and speak at the conference press but none of them showed up. Indeed, though they initially had positively answered to Esterni's invitation and had shown interest in taking an active part in the "Out of fashion" project, they never did anything in particular, nor in the conference press occasion, neither in the following two years of Esterni's repeated invitations. Nevertheless, that night the press conference was held, with about 15 journalists listening to the two main Esterni's leaders and the famous Milan architect (Stefano Boeri) speaking from the catwalk. The group's leader announced:

> "Good night and welcome to everybody! Tonight we are here to launch the project called "Out of fashion"; it is a project on which we have been working very hard with a variety of actors, because we think that Milan needs it. We have spoken with many stylists and fashion companies who all said to be very interested and tonight it is like if we invite them to take an active part into the project".

The conference unfolded in his typical format, with journalists asking questions and conference speakers answering them, for about 40 minutes. The last part of the conference introduced to the event that took place immediately afterword. The last speaker invited the audience to get a free warm vegetable soup from the bar space at the corner of the square, because the night was quite cold and the event was "meant to not end very shortly". The event included a variety of playful activities (vaguely related to the fashion) that the audience was invited to perform: engaging in such activities represented concrete practices to live the fashion "differently". Example of such practices included the fact that the audience, while was going to enter the square, was invited to wear a white overall and come into the event by parading in the big catwalk put in the middle of the square. Entering the event by parading was a playful practice, which included a sort of carnival way of making fun of the seriousness of the fashion shows. Other examples of the attendees' engagement included the fact that they had been invited to bring clothes they wished to exchange with those of other people, enacting in a collective bartering. This was meant to be a sociable activity in which the fashion was just an expedient for a strategy that would fight tendencies of social isolation with respect to the relation the city possessed with the fashion system. Another playful practice the audience was invited to perform was represented by the fact that they were asked to fill with their heads a blanket provided with holes and then parading in the catwalk. The blanket could include six holes and this was meant to encourage attendees to ask to strangers to collaborate and then to parade with them, with all the heads inside the blanket, in the big central catwalk.

The party-like event in which these activities took place was a big success because the audience came massively and engage themselves actively in the playful practices organized by Esterni (such

as parading in the catwalk or engaging in a collective bartering). The audience was formed by the young urban and cultivated public that normally participate in Esterni's events, plus a conspicuous presence of foreign tourists, especially Japanese[1]. Everybody seemed to enjoy the event and especially the variety of playful activities loosely related to the fashion that the event included. During the whole event, high music was played by deejays and this strongly contributed to the party like general climate. Event's participants engaging in the variety of scheduled activities shared a sense of commonality, that reciprocally confirmed their positions as events participants. The event recalled a sort of carnival where people subverted the usual exclusiveness of fashion shows and enacted occasions where everyone was invited to "take to the catwalk" and play the part of the protagonists, making deliberatively fun of them. Attendees were brought together, the attention focused and the interactions intensified by the audience's playful engagement (Loukaituou-Sideris, Ehrenfeucht 2009).

Though the overall project could be considered a failure in terms of attainment of its official contents, its launching opening event represented a big success, not uniquely in terms of the "moral energy" that was circulating in it but also for the media coverage that the event received. Traditional media, in particular the press but also local information in television, widely reported the event and the website "you tube" received a conspicuous amount of videos that had been made directly by the attendees during the event. Mass media reports drew mainly on what Esterni's members had said during the press conference and on the official press release about the project of "Out of fashion". As example it is worth considering the following excerpt taken from one of Milan's free press journal:

> The fashion must be for everyone and Milan fashion's week must involve the whole city of Milan, avoiding to be an elitist event. This is the message that is launched by Esterni: message that concretize in a series of initiatives from the 16 to the 23 of February, in parallel to fashion shows and cocktails of big fashion stylists. What is exactly all this about? […] Firstly it will be organized a collective fashion show, open to everybody…[2]

Often in these press reports we could find links to Esterni's websites which included extensive material on the variety of subprojects that were included in "Out of fashion" as ideas to be developed in the future when the organizing group would find the adequate funding. Examples of such subprojects were:

> Bilateral interchange operations
> That is a place to meet and barter, where everybody can show up with its own garment, for a democratic and no-consumerist fashion show. An event for clothes and opinions exchange[3].

or

> Fashion from other worlds

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[1] I've been informally told by one of them that the event was included in the official fashion week's guide they had taken from a newspaper, and some of them even believed attending a real, though peculiar, fashion show.

[2] From the press journal "City" of 15 February 2008.

[3] From a publicizing document written by Esterni.

Every year a different country or a different culture. Witnesses of other fashions and other ways to understand fashion through meetings, fashion shows and dedicated exhibitions. The protagonist of the next "Out of fashion" edition will be gipsy fashion.

In terms of contribution to the public media sphere it was not important that none of these projects had actually been developed because their appearance in the news had been sufficient to bring to the attention of a wide audience the fashion in new terms, and namely as a collective issue that could involve the whole city. Indeed, the aforementioned reports may have contributed to a public discourse on the meaning of the fashion weeks (and, more broadly, of the fashion system in Milan) for the everyday citizens and this represented something that aimed at affecting the way Milan fashion was framed. This represents a possible upshot that, though different from the official bridging purposes of the "Out of target" project, deserve a deeper attention.

According to Conti (2009) there are at least two possible ways to look at the outcomes produced by an event as the one above depicted. The first one looks at the officially purposes of the event and then at what happened with respect to the achievement of such purposes. The second one takes the initial purposes uniquely as elements that motivated the group at the outset to set up the event and then look from a closer point of view at how the overall process in which the event was included developed over time. The first perspective can assess the effectiveness of the group in reaching its scheduled purposes and, in our case, at the end of the process will allow to say if and at which degree the group reached its purposes of bridging fashion stylists and everyday users of Milan. The second perspective can lead to observe how the group changed its initial purposes over time and which outcomes were produced during such a shift. On the basis of the examples I've mentioned in this chapter the reader could presume that the media communicative action draw exclusively on the event's official contents articulated mainly through the official press release. But the second perspective Conti (2009) suggested allows a wider view on the process related to the media resonance of the observed events.

CREATION OF PUBLICS AND PUBLIC DISCOURSE

For example it is possible to note that the media resonance given to the observed events may contribute to reinforce processes of "creation of publics" (Crosta 2007) implicit in the way the observed groups formulated their official goals. For example in the case of Esterni, the group formulated its purposes in terms of bridging citizens to the "fashion world", thus assuming the existence of these two entities and at the same time "creating" them. Indeed, on the one hand, the "fashion world" could be said to have existed even before Esterni's projects, for example because stylists and fashion companies are grouped into clearly identifiable representative associations. On the other hand, "citizens" was a much less identifiable group thinkable in terms of a possible pole of a relation with the fashion world. Instead, Esterni's communication on "Out of fashion" assumed Milan everyday citizens as a pole of a bridging effort and the creation of this public was reinforced through media's communication. Then the massive participation of audience in Esterni's "Out of fashion"'s event gave a concrete shape to such subject in the media reports. In particular the playful practices in which the event consisted gave visibility to a public that it was until that moment just presumed to exist and that the practices have showed to be heterogeneous (see the relevant presence

of foreigners) and willing to engage itself in an open relationship with the "fashion world" (though the "fashion world" didn't seem to be equally willing in engaging itself in such a relation). Thus this process underlined the relevance of an element that was already stressed in the previous chapter, that is the fact that an audience massive participation to an event foster the generation of a media public sphere that give resonance to the contents on which the events are based. Indeed, this event succeeded in producing media discourses that underlined the relevance of the topics on which it was based: firstly the fact that there was a fashion system that made Milan widely known all over the world but that was extremely far away from the everyday experience of Milan's citizens; secondly the fact that this represented a collective problem that needed to be repaired through the events and practices such as those promoted by Esterni.

This type of outcome could be related also to other events and performances promoted by the observed groups because they engendered media communication that brought to the public attention and tried to define as public specific issues. These dynamics contributed to the definition of the public nature of certain problems that otherwise could have been defined also as private concerns. It is not the simple fact that certain topics became part of the media communication to give them a public nature, but the fact that they were defined as concerns that affected the whole city, that they could publicly addressed through collective practices. For example, if we take a broader perspective on all the events set up by Esterni and we ignore for a moment their specific varied contents, we realize that they were all meant to create spaces of sociality in a city that was deemed to be in lack of them, and that this meant defining social isolation not as a problem of individuals that were not able of having a satisfying social life but as a collective problem that concerns a city general social conditions and the lack of free sociable spaces which contribute to isolate from one another its inhabitants. Or, going back to the example of "Out of fashion" it meant defining the distance of everyday citizens to the "fashion world" not as a problem of certain individuals that were not able to be included in the "fashion system" but as a collective issue that concerned the functioning of the whole city and in particular the relation between some of its parts. It is possible to find in sociological literature other cases that, with respect to other topics, produced similar processes. For example in the case of Olinda (Vitale 2007a), the organization of cultural events addressing the whole city contributed to bring to the public attention the problem of mental illness and the reconversion of a big site that used to host the city major psychiatric hospital, turning the issue form the concern of mental disadvantaged subjects and their families, into a public topic that concerned the whole city (Vitale 2007). More generally, Vitale and de Leonardis (2001) explicitly spoke about the fact that spaces of public action and public discourse may result from sociable practices and we have seen that in these process the media action may play a significant role. With respect to these cases, the contents of the issues could differ significantly but processes and outcomes were similar because they went in the same direction, this was to publicly question the ownership of a topic/problem that was assumed to be private or just personal until that moment: whom problem is sociality and lack of adequate non commercial spaces for its development in Milan? Is it just a problem of isolated actors that are unable to have friends, a supportive family or other significant relations? Or is it an issue that concern the whole city that make more and more difficult to find adequate conditions for free associations of individuals and thus foster the conditions of social isolation of the city dwellers?

It is necessary to underline that defining a public concern through media communication, though observed in events with a cast that required a playful involvement of their publics refers not just to this type of events but to all the four type of the typology adopted in this chapter. Indeed, all the events above described - and more generally those I have observed in the field - have been thought and presented, though in a variety of forms, as occasions to develop social relationships in a city deemed to be more and more in lack of them. Media coverage has draw on the communication of the organizer groups to produce their own messages and in this way messages clearly positing the lack of public spaces have been diffused to the wider audience. In the case of media messages about Esterni this was maximally evident. Let's consider for example the following excerpt:

> "Esterni represents a visionary and utopian effort to invent public spaces of exchange and culture. The organization sets up events that are meant to make this city belonging to its inhabitants through the invisible and powerful glue of social ties: aggregative events where people normally pass by without stopping to live. The aim of the different events is always that of revitalizing public spaces in Milan and their social and cultural role through innovative ideas" (Interni, November 2005).

As it has been underlined in the previous chapter, the mass medias play a crucial role in connecting the informal and ephemeral social occasions created through the setting up of event to the more structured level of the public sphere, and their action is particularly important in bringing to the attention of the wider audience new topics or in re-formulating old ones in new terms.

PARALLELISM WITH TRADITIONAL FESTIVAL AND THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SPACE IN MOMENTARY REPAIR

In the processes of creation of publics and public discourse through media resonance given to the events the fact that these take place in specific urban settings is not irrelevant. Among the possibilities to illustrate this argument, I've decided to develop it through a parallelism between the observed events and the long standing tradition of festivals, public rituals, parades or carnivals that take place in public spaces. These events are defined by their rupture of ordinary rhythms of everyday life: "the decorum of serious everyday life is typically subverted momentarily by parades, convention antics, marriage, and funeral procession" (Goffman 1980 p. 21). In particular these type of events exploit the fact of being tolerated because of their very nature of temporary ruptures of the social order to forge and assert collective identities (Loukaituou-Sideris, Ehrenfeuchtm (2009 p. 79). At the same time these events represent opportunities to make publicly visible the organizing group's definitions of the settings in which the events take place (*ibidem*). With respect to this dimension also the observed events possess a similar function. For example in the case of Esterni the events this group organized gave visibility to ways of "living the city differently". Indeed, also in this case "by breaking ordinary rhythms, a group inserts its concerns into the public realm, where they can be acknowledged by others" (Loukaituou-Sideris, Ehrenfeuchtm 2009 p. 62). Thus, though the observed events were clearly different from the ones performed in those more traditional forms of street events and the two contexts in which they took place were clearly far away from each other, the processes of bringing performed claims into the public realm possessed similarities. In particular, it is worth underling again the parallelism with the outcome of eliciting the public attention that may be related to observed events and a wider category of playful or demonstrative

uses of the public streets: "although an individual parade may do little to subvert social order, labor union, suffrage and gay pride parades have demonstrated that they can demand public attention" (Loukaituou-Sideris, Ehrenfeuchtm 2009 p. 68). Though, with reference to different topics, the events I have observed in my field research equally demanded public attention.

We may also note another similarity in the logic of action of this large group of events, that is the fact that they momentarily *repaired* what are perceived to be as social injustices, may that be the lack of sociality space and the distance of the "fashion world" to "lifeworld" of citizens or for example in the past the serious discriminating conditions of the black population in the US: "By creating a space of conviviality, solidarity and freedom, this exuberant and defiant taking of public streets and sidewalks allow members of the black community to celebrate black culture and history despite the chronic unemployment or underemployment, racism, segregation, and crime that many communities still endure" (Loukaituou-Sideris, Ehrenfeuchtm 2009 p. 74). Given the differences of contents, I think that there is a parallelism in the way events work in both cases, that we could frame in term of logic of *momentary repair*. For example if we take the last event described - "Out of fashion" - we may see that its unfolding created an open spaces of conviviality and solidarity for the participants of the event despite the condition of social isolation of the audience with respect to the fashion system. Thus a momentarily repair of the general condition that is similar to the one observed by scholars of traditional festivals.We clearly see also differences in the parallelism I'm developing in this paragraph, and in particular in the way traditional carnivals festivals and the contemporary events I have observed bring topics to the public attention, because in the latter case this dynamic pass through a *media* public sphere. Another substantial difference to be underlined between traditional festivals and the observed contemporary events is that for the latter a general social order that the events opposed was much less easy to identify than for the traditional festivals events because of the augmented level of social differentiation of contemporary urban societies. This difference may help understanding why part of the observed events of the studied groups consisted mainly in parties that had the purpose of allowing a playful engagement on the part of its attendees, without the possibility of exactly stating which type of distance they were taking from which type of order or social circumstance.

The analysis carried out in this chapter seems to suggest that the practices in which the observed events consisted of and the meanings attached to them by the audience were very loosely connected to their "effect" on the media public sphere. Indeed, while practices and meanings-making activities of the attendees drew on a variety of "lifeworld" element (something that is maximally valid in the case of "production of sociality" events), the contents that were brought to the general attention by the media communication referred to the contents that officially were attached to events, according to the point of view of the organizers. The relation between the practices that the event comprised and the generation of public sphere seemed to be articulated exclusively through the size of the event's audience, and in particular in the fact that the bigger the size the most likely the event entered the media public sphere. But the parallelism with traditional carnivals and festivals show another connection between these two type of processes that refer to the subverting role of the events with reference to everyday life. Traditional festivals worked through the creation of time-space settings in which the events unfolded breaking the everyday dominant symbolic order, and

the observed events seemed to have kept this function in particular with reference to the space dimension. Indeed, in the observed events - for example in the "Out of fashion" event, but also for the other events presented in this chapter - the space possessed an important role in shaping the identity of the observed event. Events drew their defining contents widely from the fact of transforming the usual meanings attributed to the settings in which they unfolded. What is most interesting to note with reference to the argument of this chapter is that this function of the space dimension is valuable for both the processes outlined in the previous pages and which refer to two broad strategies through which a civic group can use events to purse his goals of creating social ties. Indeed, the space setting in which the event unfold is important for scheduled or non scheduled practices in which the attendees engage themselves and for the generation of public sphere that bring to the general attention new topics. With respect to the first point for example the audience recognize themselves as participants of an event that is subverting the usual meaning attached to the setting in which the event unfolds. While with reference to the generation of the media public sphere the shift in the meaning attached to a place contributes to make that event visible to the widest audience because it represents the change that the official event's contents announce; furthermore the shift in the use of a well-known urban place may be important in turning an event into a news for the codes structuring the media communication. At this respect previous studies underlined the importance of space configuration for the innovative function of civic groups in the urban public sphere (Cottino Zeppetella 2009 p. 18).

FINAL REMARKS

According to Habermas, civil society subjects represent the "infrastructure of the public sphere" that create the social spaces of discursive communication where "lifeworld" meanings and concerns are re-elaborated and became public issues. I knew already that the "logocentric" approach (Berger 2009 p. 254) that characterize Habermas's model of the public sphere was not suited to grasp the nature of the sociable and playful practices that most of the observed events included. Without assuming the type of rational communication that Habermas' model implied, I deemed this model useful in shedding light on how civil society subjects setting up events extended their action beyond the physical settings in which their events concretely took place and acquired a public status through mass media communication. The main finding of the inquiry carried out in this chapter states that when the observed events entered a media public spheres, this wen to the detriment of the meaning-making activities of the events' attendees.

The observed events were conceived for the groups who set them up as social occasions creating the favorable conditions for the generation of public sociality. The empirical analysis I've carried out throughout this and the previous chapter have stressed two parallel processes. On the one hand events may enter the public sphere through the media resonance given to them especially when they implied massive audiences, in spite of the internal diversity of such an audience[1]. On the other hand, the face-to-face interactions that take place during events can represent significant symbolic

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[1] Here the implicit reference is to the two conditions, outlined in the previous chapter, that according to the normative model of the public sphere of Habermas qualifies the social spaces created through events as the intermediate level of the public sphere.

resources for identity-related processes. These two channels are hardly connected to one another. Especially, on the contrary from what we could have expected on the basis of the argument of "civil society as infrastructure of the public sphere", events that enter the public sphere do not draw on the meaning-making activities engaged by the attendees of those events. I have indentified different events' official casts, that alternatively elicit the conditions for an active audience's involvement (that may even shape the event's defining contents) or that fashion events in formats that are particularly suited for giving them media resonance. In the observed events whose official casts included elements that encouraged media discourse on them and at the same time an active attendees' involvement, these two elements were not tied to each other in a way that could bring to the widest attention contents deriving from the active participation of attendees. Looking beyond the events' official casts, I have observed that events enter the public sphere on the basis of their official contents decided and outlined by the organizer groups, and not drawing on the attendees' meaning making activities, and identity-related processes. Events may elicit significant active involvement on the part of its attendees (as in the case of "production of sociality" events) but these involvements are neglected in the process through which events enter the media public sphere. Here it emerges a tradeoff which refers not to the limitedness of organizational resources that the observed groups may possess. This tradeoff refers to the very logics of the two outlined processes and in particular to the way the contemporary media public sphere works. Indeed, this is based on his "scarce capacity of solving problems in *its own field*"[1] (Habermas 1997 p. 427) but instead in its power of bring to the widest attention certain topics.

While entering the media public sphere requires especially powerful organizational resources (such as press office) that could affect media discourses with clear effective messages, the active engagement of attendees during events requires slower processes that may call for the repetition of events over time and the fact of not denying a variety of meaning- making practices, not necessarily consistent among themselves. Further, these two processes aimed at producing different outcomes, which were not equal among themselves for the attainment of the observed group's purpose of creating social relationships. In particular, events that pro-actively engaged their attendees created conditions that were more suited for the development of new social relationships than events aiming mainly at attracting massive audiences for augmenting their possibilities of entering the media public sphere.

The most relevant finding of this chapter is about the quality of events as means to shift private sociability and in public sociality through the media communication. Indeed, from previous researches we knew already the advantages in terms of visibility, legitimization, and possibility of defining as public a certain topic (Vitale 2009a) that were tied the use of events on the part of civic groups. The analysis conducted in this and the previous chapter has outlined specific drawbacks in terms of loss of attendees' active involvement for the events entering the media public sphere.

But it is now time to go on in the inquiry of this study, beyond the level of the event focused in this and the previous chapter. Further, with reference to what it has been said in these chapters it is

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[1] Italics from the original.

worth remarking that important elements of the announced analysis are still missing or have been just partially developed:

- the understanding of the patterns of action that shaped the way the observed groups used event;

- the fact that the same type of event can be used as part of different strategies of inclusion set up by the observed groups, each one with its own tradeoffs;

- the fact that events do not exhaust the way the observed groups tried to build inclusive forms of social relationships but that efforts at this respect started from the interactions taking place in the settings in which the everyday life of the observed group unfolded.

According to the argument I'm proposing with this study, in order to understand these three points alike it is necessary to focus the attention on the group styles through which the observed associations structured their everyday group life. Indeed, according to the proposed argument, the recurrent patterns of actions and interactions is what fashioned the way the observed associations used events, the strategies of inclusion they set up to reach their goals of creating social ties, and the "quality" of the "relational spaces" (Tronca 2004) that group life entailed.

OPENING. A NON PROFIT GROUP EXPLOITING INTERNS AND AMBIVALENTLY RELATING TO ADVERTISING

Especially, one among the cultural associations taken as case study of this research – Esterni - appeared to condense in its everyday life and in the public activities in which this group engaged itself a variety of aspects that if taken as a whole may appear as in critical tension or potential contradictions among themselves. A couple of opening examples may help in clarifying this point.

1)   Exploiting interns. With respect to its everyday life it is possible to cite a critic that is widely addressed to Esterni by a variety of subjects[1] to which it occurred to interact with this organization or, anyway, to know it. This critic refers to the "exploiting" use Esterni make of interns-workers, whose work is crucial in carrying out a variety of activities this organization engaged itself with. In particular, the "exploitation" critic refers to the fact that interns work for free, generally for far more than 10 hours a day for three months, without any guarantee of being hired to continue their work after their three months period of internship. Interns working in Esterni were normally recently graduated young men looking for a job and knowing that hiring possibilities augmented after having conducted an intern experience. Internship is a practice widely used by business companies working in a variety of sectors in Milan, and recent graduated students usually know that before getting their first job they must have done one or more internship experiences. Esterni's use of interns is widely criticized because this organization is not a business oriented company but a non-profit cultural association that officially claims of pursuing "a different way to live the city", made of "public space of free, not instrumentally oriented, sociability"[2]. Indeed, Esterni, similarly to regular business companies, used interns taking advantage of the loose regulative laws toward this type of work. During the two years of my empirical research on the one hand I've seen only in two cases interns being hired after their three months internship experience. On the other hand, I've observed the turnover of roughly 80 interns that have worked for free in Esterni with the official motivation that the group couldn't afford to pay them[3]. Indeed, unprompted, on several occasions, Esterni core members (especially the group leaders), while informally speaking with me, felt obliged to justify their "employment policies" of interns by saying that if they had behaved otherwise it wouldn't have been possible to economically survive. Esterni's members were the first to see different elements of their organization as a potential contradiction and anticipated the criticisms that someone else could have addressed to them. Moreover, Esterni's members informally said to me that the way they

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[1] I've listened to this critic while interviewing 7 interns who finished their internship experience during my fieldwork, engaging in informal talks with the attendees of Esterni's events and interviewing members of other associations also acting with cultural initiatives in Milan. The critic I talk about in the paragraph is particularly widespread in members of radical leftist groups of Milan.

[2] From the group official communication cited in chapter 3.

[3] During my fieldwork I've seen more than 20 interns working in Esterni and only a person has been hired for a short period of time after the end of his/her internship experience.

worked and the events they used to set up required that massive use of non paid interns, though implicitly recognizing that other ways of working and other types of events could have been possible.

2)   A seemingly contradictory relation to advertisement. With respect to its public activities and official statements it is possible to observe another type of contradiction. This refers to the fact that Esterni seemed to contradictorily relate to advertisement because on the one hand core Esterni members officially declared their opposition to the ongoing invasion of advertisement in public spaces in Milan but, on the other hand, Esterni widely used its own advertisement to publicize its events in several ways, including mass media communication and street posters. At the level of official communication, Ben, one of the two leaders of Esterni, on several occasions openly manifested its long standing concern for the invasion of ads on Milan walls. For example I've repeatedly listened to him making a point of saying that his graduation thesis in Philosophy focused in documenting the ever growing invasion of advertisement announcements in Milan public spaces and outlining the consequences for the experience of urban dwellers in terms of "visual pollution". This topic remained particularly important for Ben over time and kept being one of its main concerns even when he became the leader of a cultural association. For example, during an interview released to a sociologist during my fieldwork, he stressed the role Esterni played in contrasting the invasion of advertisement in Milan:

> Once we did a sort of sit-in, a protest demonstration next to the ancient Spanish Walls of the city which have been covered with ads for more than three years [...] The company who is restructuring the Walls is doing the job for free in exchange of using the Walls for putting up ads as long as the restructuring works are going on, but the works are going on indefinitely, and they have put massive ads up for more than three years, we are not even able to realize it. It is something quite scandalous and unseemly for any eye which is at least minimally critical, and not used to such offences.. [...] we did some protest performances to say in short " take down all the ads because we are not going to stand them anymore!"[1]

But during my fieldwork I've also observed Esterni widely resorting to advertisement in a variety of ways to set up its events: billboards, handouts, fake ironic road signs, but also wide screen and massive banners that clearly represented a contribution to visually polluting Milan. Indeed, these visible street signs in most of the cases brought Esterni's own brand and slogans, but in some cases the signs' contents were about companies that had sponsored or funded specific Esterni events[2]. The relation Esterni engaged with advertising seemed to be contradictory because its practices seemed to openly contradict its official statements.

INTRODUCTION. LOCAL COMPROMISES IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF GROUP STYLES

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[1] From the interview released by Beniamino on the 23 February 2008 to the sociologist Silvia Mazzucotelli in my presence.

[2] In this respect a case that is often quoted in informal conversation among Esterni's members refer to the sponsorship of a famous Italian brand of beer of an Event set up by Esterni. The reasons of the quotation of the event was that the beer company tried in a variety of ways to give more visibility to its brand at the expense of the name of Esterni.

In both of these two cited aspects it seems to be present the opposition between civic official orientation toward the public good and particularistic, commercial, practices aiming at exclusively benefit Esterni to the detriment of other subjects, (exploited interns or a visual polluted city). This type of contradiction may be seen in many other aspects characterizing this organization and its public activities. For example, we can see it also in the contents shaping a single event; consider for instance "Out of target", an event that has been illustrated in the previous chapter and that aimed at giving voice and "really listening to" teenagers through their involvement in the setting up of cultural initiatives. We can interpret this event in terms of an offer of a specific product designed with an interactive and non commercial package that Esterni thought would please teenagers more than openly commercial products[1], but that similarly aimed at making earning money to the organizing groups[2].

Framing studies in American social movement research[3] would probably look at these empirical evidences in terms of strategies of framing the group communication aiming at reaching specific audiences. They would consider Esterni official statements on interns exploitation, advertisement pollution or teenagers' lack of voice in terms of "discursive packages, or ways of communication about facts and events" (Cefai, Lichterman 2004) that are strategically suited to reach specific targets. I will try to show that such a perspective at best just partially account for the empirical evidences collected in my field research. Firstly, because having directly participated in the life of this group, and to the active setting up of events and communication I have had the possibility of observing the absence from the everyday group life of strategic decisions that rationally anticipated the consequences of using certain frames, and not others, to pursue specific goals. Especially, the strategic frame perspective seems not useful in this case because what I've introduced in terms of potential contradictions and critical tensions among aspects that could be referred to different orders of worth were not openly lived as potential contradictions by group members in their everyday participation in Esterni. Indeed, through my participant observation in the group I noticed that potential tensions never openly arouse, they *dissolved in local compromises that made them invisible* to group members.

Indeed, if from an external point of view Esterni represented a potentially explosive cohabitation of different "institutional logics" (Friedland, Alford 1991), as a participant observer I realized that the actors I was observing in each setting in which their action was taking place knew how to treat aspects that were in potential reciprocal tensions among themselves. Even following the experience of new members it was rare to observe them making mistakes that could be referred to the fact that their actions were inappropriate for the specific setting in which they took place. This represented an interesting puzzle to investigate: how in the group could cohabitated so many potential contradictory logics and repertoire of actions relating to several institutional logics (business, social movement, convivial) and at the same time the experience of its members could

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[1] For further details on the unfolding of "Out of target" see chapter 6.

[2] Indeed, though the attendance to this event was free, Esterni got funded by private or public companies to set it up.

[3] For a general review on this perspective see Polletta F., Ho M. K., 2008, "Frames and their consequences", in Goodin R. E., Tilly C., 2008, *Oxford handbook of contextual political analysis*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

unfold so smoothly, without exposing them to the risk of being torn into pieces between several equally plausible lines of action and also keeping the group tightly bound in his everyday action?

While the strategic framing perspective would look at the group communication in terms of means to reach group purposes, I propose a contextualist analysis that aims at accounting for them observing from close the concrete settings in which such a communication took place and the cultural structures acting in those settings. The advantage of this perspective is that of shedding a brighter light than the strategic frame perspective on how the observed group worked in its everyday setting and thus having the possibility of relating the outcomes of its public action to the everyday group life and to the institutional aspects shaping it.

We know that "all organizations have to cope with critical tensions between different orders of worth" (Thévenot 2001 p. 410) and the aforementioned examples may be easily referred to different orders of worth (civic and commercial firstly) that compromise on a local basis, in the concrete settings in which the group life unfolds. Esterni appears a as a composite organization (Thévenot 2001) in which the involved "entities qualify for different orders of worth" (Thévenot 2001 p. 410) that "suspend controversy" on the basis of local compromises, "compositions between order of worth" (ibid). The perspective I'm proposing here claims that looking at how the local compromises arise and routinezed themselves over time is interesting for two reasons. These can be sum up in the fact that looking at the way tensions are managed through group styles represents a good viewpoint to account for the group's action and outcomes: both at the level of which repertoire of action the group use and at how it relates to this repertoire of action, that is to say how different form of actions were used by the observed group. Indeed, the bedrock assumption on which I build the argument of this chapter refers to the fact that the way critical tensions were managed and made invisible in the everyday group life of Esterni was not accidentally but instead it was shaped by its group style. Looking at how tensions disappeared in the everyday group life through multiple local compromises allows to see the functioning of group styles which enabled and constrained how the observed group used its repertoire of actions and thus which outcomes derived from such an use in terms of generation of inclusive togetherness. Thus, this chapter (for Esterni) and the following one (for other observed groups) try to link the outcomes and tradeoff illustrated in the previous chapters with the institutional properties shaping the group life of some of the cultural organizations taken as case studies of my research.

What make the case of Esterni especially interesting and worth of dedicating an entire chapter to it[1], is the astonishing variety of repertoires of actions used by this group over the course of my field research. Further, in spite of such a variety, the group outcomes in terms of inclusion were very limited and not able to measure up to the group official goals.

For what concerns the vast repertoire of action used by Esterni, in chapter 3 we had seen that this cultural association, on the contrary of all the other observed groups, used to carry out activities that refer to all the 4 quadrants I depicted.

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[1] A choice apparently inconsistent with the other chapters of this research, which focus on comparing different groups.

Main orientation of groups' everyday activities

	Raising money to restructure the farmhouse	Sociality activities
Events	Esterni	Esterni
Settled forms of action	Esterni	Esterni

Main repertoire

Of action

Figure 1. Esterni in the analytical groupings of the observed case studies

According to this chart, Esterni's repertoire of actions was particularly varied and heterogeneous because it included events and more stable form of actions alike, used both to raise money and to produce sociality. Just to cite some concrete examples of this variety, it included the fact that Esterni supplied consulting services, held workshop on how to start up a cultural association, used to set up massive cultural events which repeat themselves regularly over time[1] and not regularly scheduled party like events, run a restaurant twice a week, promoted political workshops, engaged in protest action, related with public local institutions. In spite of such a variety, the group, according to its own point of view, accomplished its goals of generating public places just in a very limited way. We have articulated this point through past chapters: in chapter 4 observing Esterni's involvement in Piscinella partnership, in chapter 5 inquiring the excluding outcomes of Esterni's events (starting from the opening interview with Simona) and in chapter 6 observing that Esterni's events could be mainly referred to the category of "consumption of sociality". Indeed, the outcomes generated by Esterni could be referred to mechanisms and tradeoffs associated to the category of "consumption of sociality", as this has been defined in the previous chapter. In particular, all the activities this group used to set up developed mainly at the symbolic level of defining sociality as a public concern through media communication. Indeed, though varied, all the group's actions succeeded mainly at the level of media communication while in general failing when they attempted to create "public spaces of proximity" (Laville 1994) that is to say places for face-to-face communication that for Esterni represented "ways of living the city differently"[2]. This chapter addresses the origins of such outcomes looking at how possible controversies were suspended in the group everyday life through the patterned actions that shaped it. Thus in the next pages I will focus on introducing and showing the functioning of the group styles through which

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[1] Three arts festival on cinema, design, arts and music.

[2] See chapter 3 for more details on the group purpose and vocabulary.

Esterni group life unfolded, implicitly showing how the critical tensions and controversies were "suspended" in the group everyday settings.

1.THREE GROUP STYLES SHAPE ESTERNI EVERYDAY LIFE

The viewpoint proposed in this paragraph looks at all the three analytical aspects in which a group style articulate itself - group bonds, group boundaries, and speech norms (Eliasoph, Lictherman 2003) - as a bundle of shared assumptions on which group members interactions unfolded while they were in group context. A similar operation will be carried out in the next chapter (chapter 8) comparing group styles of different observed organizations to clearly show specific tradeoffs that can be associated to each observed group style. In particular, in the next chapter I will focus on a dominant group style for each organization[1]. For Esterni I took a different analytical path and I've chosen to explicitly underline the variety of group styles through which this cultural association worked. Indeed, the variety of group styles (each one associated to a one or more specific settings) is useful to show how they smear on different settings aspects pertaining to different orders of worth that when put together may bring about open controversies. At the same time, looking at the variety of group styles and the specific way they coordinated themselves in the group contexts allows to account for the wide repertoire of actions Esterni recurred to and the little inclusive outcomes this organization produced.

Group Style	SPEECH NORMS	GROUP BOUNDARIES	GROUP BONDS
Informal autonomy /active informality	Informal substantive contribution	Informal hierarchy	Informal autonomy
Universal partisanship	Disinterested creativity	Indignant Milan Citizen	Active coolness
Enlarged cynical family	Take distance from group purposes and means	Personal affiliation in Esterni	Not taking oneself seriously

Figure 2. Group styles shaping the group life of Esterni

This table sum up the three main group styles through which Esterni members related to each other while in group contexts and they acted while carrying out the group public activities. Each group style *conventionally* describes the way Esterni related to, but did not coincide with, broad common sense collective representations. "Informal autonomy" was the way Esterni represented the implicit customized way in which group members in group contexts acted relating to collective representations about what a *business company* is and how it should works. "Universal partisanship", similarly, was the customized way in which Esterni members acted when relating to collective representations about *social movement organizations* and "enlarged cynical family"

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[1] The master/disciple relationship for CGCP, partisanship group style for CC, and partnership for Green PT. See next chapter for details about these three group styles.

sums how Eserni members acted when relating to collectively shared ideas about *informal groups of friends*. As it will be illustrated in the next pages, while showing how these group styles worked and coordinated themselves, it will be evident several affinities among elements of different group styles. Indeed, it is worth remarking that they are analytical categories that describe the patterned and institutionalized ways in which Esterni members behaved while in group contexts. They are meant to be useful tools to account for the outcomes of Esterni's actions and for relating the group's functioning to wide collective representations, and thus they may also partially overlap. Also, the three group styles did not equally shape Esterni group life, the activities this group carried out and the related outcomes. Most of the group life of this association was dominated by the "informal autonomy" group style, which enabled and constrained Esterni members interactions and public activities in a specific way. In order to account for the group's outcomes it is particularly important to keep in mind the dominance of this specific group style, and thus this aspect will be particularly stressed throughout the chapter.

Though in different terms, Esterni's everyday group life was shaped by the three of the aforementioned group styles. They together describe the functioning of Esterni as a composite organization (Thévenot 2006b). Indeed, their specific articulation resulted in local compromises that smeared on the different settings in which the group life of Esterni unfolded the critical tensions among aspects pertaining to different orders of worth. In particular, each one of the identified group style refers to patterned and institutionalized ways in which Esterni coordinated itself while in specific group settings. Esterni group life unfolded in a variety of physical settings and not all the settings were governed by the same group style. This is the very reason why critical tensions among elements pertaining to different orders of worth didn't openly arise. For example, with reference to elements cited at the opening of the chapter, this is the reason why the afore described policy of interns' recruitment could be practiced in the everyday group life. Indeed, members' self criticism about this aspect of group life raised in the settings of interviews or informal talks with sociologists and not in the main routine group context. Interview settings are typical context were members are encouraged to "explore issues at length […] in a setting not so unlike the setting of the archetypal therapeutic relationship"(Eliasoph, Lichterman 2003 p. 751). Starting to use the categories elaborated to identify the group styles at work in Esterni group life, while group members self-reflexively recognized the unfairness of their own practices they were acting through the "universal partisanship" group style.

Each group styles corresponded to a different situated group identity, or organizational culture, through which the group members used to reciprocally related to each other. In the settings where the "informal autonomy" group style was dominant, members conceived themselves (and their reciprocal relationships) as autonomous, highly- motivated and self-propelling workers settled in a steady ambience, organized according to the typical strategic organization of a company: a press office, a production, a marketing and fund-raising sectors, each one confined in a room that made it clearly identifiable[1]. When Esterni members acted through the "universal partisanship" group

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[1] In particular members deemed themselves as part of a company who organized events in Milan made of young urban hipster working in a friendly and informal ambience.

style, they conceived themselves as part of a movement organization that worked in coordination with other groups to challenge the lack of public spaces in Milan and to promote a different and more playful way of living Milan. As a movement organization they positioned themselves on a map that comprised also other movements and they made a point of differentiating themselves from other, more radical–leftist organizations acting on similar issues than those addressed by Esterni. At this respect Esterni strived to make explicit that it was not a grievance–oriented group but that instead it possessed a more task-oriented and problem-solving attitude that many other, apparently similar, groups lacked[1]. When the group enacted through the "enlarged cynical family" group style they conceived themselves as long-standing and very close friends that had come together to try to give concrete shape to their collectively shared ideals, and that remained widely open to critically discuss their own assumptions. The "enlarged cynical family", as the other two observed group styles, didn't include all the group members. Instead, we will see in the next pages that group styles drew specific boundaries internal to the organization that previous researches on Esterni had already empirically documented.

In order to underline differences among group styles at the same time present in Esterni, I've decided to organize the next pages introducing each one of the analytical dimension of group style at once, comparing how they articulated themselves in the three identified group styles. After having introduced the group styles I will try to specify how they coordinated themselves and which outcomes were linked to such a coordination. As it will be clear looking at which settings were associated to which group styles, the "informally autonomous" style was the dominant one because it shaped most of the settings in which Esterni group life unfolded.

SPEECH NORMS

Speech norms represents an analytical perspective on the shared, routinezed assumptions and patterns of actions on which group members interactions and actions are shaped. This concept focuses on what an appropriated speech is in the settings where group life unfolds (Eliasoph, (Lichterman 2003 p. 739). Let's see the main outlines and reciprocal differences in the speech norms of the three identified group styles.

INFORMAL AUTONOMY SPEECH NORMS

The "informally autonomous" group style shaped group members' interactions and the way they related to third parts while they were in the setting of group's headquarter[2], in the group everyday life. This used to unfold from Monday to Friday, from m 9.30 a.m. to at least 6.30 p.m. (but often generally after this time) and it mainly included roughly 20 people sitting at their desk, telephoning, speaking, meeting and using their computers to organize Esterni's various activities.

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[1] Also the group members interpreted their strategy of action as available for compromising with market subjects as a means to attain more ambitious goals, on the contrary to other movement organizations that demonized the market.

[2] A three levels building, called "Palazzina". See note .. on chapter 3 for detail on Esterni's venue.

In such a setting there was usually a frenetic rhythm, with many people coming and going for meetings and new interns learning to carry out specific activities in the first period of their experience. I've spent 4 months every day in this setting, where I was assigned a little desk that I used as the basis of my participant observation of what was going on around me[1]. During this period I paid a close attention to people working by themselves at their desks and occasionally relating to each other in a very task oriented way, but I also directly participated in the meetings that used to take place in Esterni's headquarter. While they were not involved in meetings, Esterni members were normally working by themselves, composing a scene that was apparently similar to the one the reader could imagine for an office of a business company. For example Maria - a young intern woman that had came from Naple for studying at the university and then had decide to stay in Milan- was normally at his desk in front of a screen with an excel document file full of journalists' telephone numbers that she called to remind them about shortcoming Esterni public events. She called, introducing herself as "Maria from Esterni's press office", asked for the name of the journalist, and then told the journalist about the Esterni's event to which he/she had been invited. Maria then thanked the person at the telephone, hanged the phone and - sometimes while doing some sarcastic comments with other people at near desks or by herself - went back to the screen to look for the next number to call. Significantly with respect to the speech norms regulating this setting, Maria never addressed her teasing comments to the whole the group members that were present in her room. Indeed, this would have contradicted the speech norms of that setting, which consisted in the fact that members' interventions should have given a *substantial contribution* to the group's activities. Apart from Maria, other members at their desks were carrying on similar specific tasks, such as preparing the press communication or calling suppliers of specific services necessary for example to set up an event. Apart from the general disorder of the room – filled with unusual objects, such as roughly 15 old TVs and many colored boxes - and the informal dressing of Esterni members, the physical arrangements of this setting reminded the observer of an office of a commercial company.

This very general description may suggest a setting made up of solo workers, just occasionally interacting among themselves and usually about matters of no importance at all for the group's activities. Instead, I propose to see group members engaged in this setting as collectively enacting a specific group style (the "informally autonomous" group style) that made certain behaviors – as those just hinted at – particularly appropriated and certain others as unsuitable or even not possible at all. In particular, public interventions addressing the whole group were qualified on the basis of their substantial contribution to the group activities. In particular, the enactment of speech norms of "informally autonomy" group style was maximally visible when group members *had to* speak publicly, that is to say during the group meetings. Esterni used to held a weekly meeting every Tuesday morning at 9.30 a.m., and an "accident" that happened during one of these meetings cued me in on the speech norms that dominated this type of collective interaction. The first part of the Tuesday meeting held on the 4th March 2008 had been dedicated to try to understand why a party event the group had organized the previous weekend had resulted in a big failure in terms of

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[1] For more details on methodological aspects of my field observation see the methodological appendix of this dissertation.

audience attendance. Though such a subject of discussion could have been particularly suited for a kind of self-reflective talk, the group discussed it through its "informal autonomy" group style, which allowed to related to topic just in certain ways. A specific episode that breached the dominant implicit institutionalized routines that were ruling that occasion made the "informally autonomous" group style the most clear. In particular, during this meeting group members expressed their opinions about the failing event that was under discussion. After a couple of short comments from Esterni's members that pointed at the lack of sufficient ad campaign as the main reason for the party failure, the word was taken by Riccardo, a recent intern that tried to contribute to the group understanding of the failure as it follows:

> Riccardo: I would try to put myself in my own shoes, as a young man that goes out at night in Milan. Thus, let's see.., tonight I want to have fun and so I try to get adequate information… and I 'm told that there is this party, in a big square, with a Dj… but it is February, probably too cold to party in the open air, I don't know who the Dj is and then it is not clear if it is compulsory to pay to enter the party , I don't really understand what the party is about, so I think that if it occurs to pass by it, I'll go there, otherwise I'll go somewhere else, it is not that important

Riccardo had not yet finished his short intervention that roughly all the more than 20 Esterni members that were present at the meeting bursted in a loud laugh, and spontaneously started an hand clapping that applauded Riccardo's intervention. While the collective laugh was still going on, a group member asked Riccardo:

> Have you never tried to play theater? I think you have the makings of the good actor..

And Riccardo - very surprised and amused at the same time by the reaction that his intervention had called for in the audience - seriously answered that

> Yes, actually I did some theater in the past…

No one in the room, except for himself, had taken seriously Riccardo, not even for a moment. They all thought he had joked, though his tale was quite plausible and may have helped the group to understand why a very small audience showed up at the event of the previous weekend. He had proposed to approach the point of view of who didn't show up at the event and invited the other members to collectively imagining aloud the reasons why few people showed up at the party. This was an intervention that clearly contrasted the dominant "informally autonomous" group style that members were enacting in that setting. On the basis of this group styles the subjects of the collective conversation were not discussed at length. Riccardo's intervention had been taken by its audience as a pause from the collective conversation that was going on, which was indeed continued afterwards the intervention just saying:

> let's go on to another topic in the discussion's agenda

This short sentence made clear that now it was time to go back to continue discuss the topics on the agenda according to the scheduled order, without losing any more time. But this intervention also interrupted any possibilities to leave more room to self critical or in depth speeches.

The official frame said that Tuesday's meetings were occasions where the group collectively discussed about the way it was dealing with its ongoing activities. This meeting was also called the "Tuesday general meeting" and any Esterni member was overtly invited to take an active part in it. But, according to the "informal autonomy" group style, taking an active part meant bringing direct and substantial contributions to the group's activities. These could have taken whatever form, even a playful one but they had to be *direct*, not indirect, contributions such as the one that Riccardo had proposed .

"Tuesday general meeting" occurred to happen sometimes at night during my field work and especially on this circumstance group members spoke very informally in their public interventions in the meeting. On one occasion Vins, a recent intern was clearly drunken during the meeting but nevertheless, he spoke and he proposed the group a new cultural event to be developed. Though visibly drunken, he was listened by the other members and, unlike Riccardo, his proposal had been taken seriously, discussed and then refused uniquely for technical reasons. It was not important if he showed of being drunken or if had said swear words while making his proposal. What most mattered was the substantial contribution that that proposal could had brought to the group's activities. Also the internal groups life of other, more radical leftist, associations active with cultural initiatives in Milan were structured on weekly meetings seemingly similar to Esterni's "Tuesday general meetings". During my field work I participated in the weekly meetings of the two main self-administered social centers of Milan[1], that were publicized on their websites as open to anyone who wished to attend them[2]. In both cases these meetings were called "political collectives"[3]. Also for social centers, these meetings represented a setting in which the group members regularly met to discuss about the ongoing activities the groups were engaged in and about possible changes that were required at this respect. It is worth leaving for a moment apart the manifold diversity between the cited self-administered social centers with the observed cases of this research and in particular the fact that self-administered social centers activists probably represented what Ion would call "identity niche" (Ion 1997 p.91). The contrast in the speech norms governing the "general Tuesday meeting" and the "political collectives" I've attended was striking and telling. Interventions in political collectives continuously and outrageously reaffirmed the group partisan identity and the group members loyalty to such an identity was often stressed with outspoken, emotionally-laden, talks. Substantial contributions to the development of group activities were not required and group members rarely aimed at positively proposing new activities or changes in the ongoing one. Especially, speech norms conveyed a different relation with informality than the one observed in Esterni's Tuesday meeting. The setting were the observed "political collectives" took place were highly informal both in terms of spatial arrangements and seemingly with reference to the participants' behaviors. For example group the activists of the two

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[1] In particular I've participating to the weekly "political collectives" of Leoncavallo Social Center, and Vittoria Social Center. To take a closer look at Leoncavallo Social Center see Membretti (2005). For further methodological details see the methodological appendix.

[2] Posso mettere le pagine web in cui questo c'è scritto.

[3] Authro translation of the italian "Collettivo politico".

self-administered social centers used to gather in small rooms, usually cold in winter and with low light, where people sat not necessarily on chairs, smoked, drunk and in some cases didn't paid any attention to the ongoing discussions. Though, the informality of these type of settings clearly differed from that of Esterni's "Tuesday general meetings". Indeed, the speech norms governing interventions in the observed "political collectives" did not allow very informal behaviors and especially informal languages on the part of its participants. When they dwell on informal behaviors they did not take an active part in the ongoing collective discussions. Indeed, talking publicly informally, or even with a very profane language, meant risking of not being taken seriously by the other meetings' participants, especially if the speakers were young new members of the group. Here, it was better avoiding excessive informality in public interventions, no matter of the content of the interventions. A clearly different speech norm that those regulating interventions in Esterni's general Tuesday meetings.

The long-standing participant observation carried out in Esterni allowed me to see that in the setting of the "Tuesday general meetings" was active the same group style that ruled front-stage interactions among group members in Esterni's offices from Monday to Friday, from 9.30 a.m. to roughly 6.30 p.m. Indeed, also in this setting public interventions made sense according to the "informally autonomous" group style because members felt qualified to speak to all the rest of members that were present in the same room when their interventions could substantially contribute to the development of Esterni's activities. While in their "working setting", group members perceived themselves as autonomous co-workers who could interrupt each other uniquely just when coming up with substantive contributions to the group activities. Indeed, all the rest of the interventions were relegated to whispers among desk mates (like the aforementioned Maria's comments in between telephone calls) or back-stage talks. The more the contents of what members said was directly and overtly useful, the more members felt qualified to speak publicly to the whole group in these settings. Riccardo's intervention didn't share this assumption and introduced a kind of self-reflective talk that was so inconsistent with the ruling group style that it was not event taken seriously.

At this respect, we can think that it is hardly a coincidence that Riccardo was a new intern that had entered Esterni from a couple of days when he pronounced the aforementioned intervention. Becoming a new member required learning which type of speech was appropriate in which type of setting, without assuming that all the settings in which Esterni group life unfolded were equal among themselves at this respect.

"UNIVERSAL PARTISANSHIP" SPEECH NORMS

Speech norms associated to the "universal partisanship" group style were the most evident in the settings of interviews, when Esterni members answered questions, exploring in length the meanings of the group's action for journalists or sociologists that left them wide room to do that. The excerpt of interview cited at the opening of the chapter about the way Esterni officially related to advertising is a good example at this respect. Another topic very often developed in interviews

by Esterni members was the "founding story" about the origins of this group that members used to tell to introduce the overall meaning of the activities this group used to carry out. At this respect, it is possible to cite an interview released by the group leader to a sociologist during my field research:

> Esterni was born in 1995 to react against the cultural boring climate of Milan, to change this city and the way in which it was mainly used, we were all not happy with the city lack of cultural and public spaces but instead of just leaving the city, as many other were doing in that period, we decided to stay and to actively engage ourselves to change Milan[1].

Esterni often used to presented itself as a movement organization, though with a quite peculiar contentious purpose that distinguished it from more traditional - and well rooted in broader organizations and political cultures - forms of social movement. We shall see that according to this group style, Esterni positioned itself in a map of other social movement organizations, and differentiated itself in the fact of using a "generative" repertoire of action. Esterni claimed of directly producing the change that other groups simply complained about. Indeed, according to the group own point of view, the cultural events it used to set up were means to equip Milan "Zone 4", and in general the whole city, of cultural opportunities and public spaces that were currently lacking from the urban scenario. What characterized Esterni as a movement organization it was the fact of promoting a universal, and not partisan, cause like all the other movement organizations were perceived to do.

In the official statements that developed through universal partisanship group style, Esterni members also made a point of underling its limits as a movement organization. For example group members often stressed in official statements that Esterni "don't work with citizens because this would take much more time than what we give ourselves to set up our actions"[2]. Though with these limits, group members still (in certain settings) conceived their association in terms of a grassroots mobilization aiming at generating public spaces in the urban context in which it acted. But, the "universal partisanship" group style was not uniquely a frame the group used to present itself to certain audiences, as scholars of the strategic framing perspective could guess. It was a bundle of shared assumptions that regularly shaped group members behaviors while they were in certain settings. These settings didn't consist uniquely in the context where the group officially presented itself publicly, such as the interview settings to which until now I've referred to. For example speech norms of "universal partisanship" were in action enabling and constraining verbal exchanges in specific meetings, different from the "Tuesday general meetings" and from other task oriented meetings that used to unfold during the official working time (from 9.30 a.m. to 6. 30 p.m., from Monday to Friday). Settings of Esterni group life were the "universal partisanship" group style was in action were more rare and they normally unfolded late at night, in spaces not directly accessible to every member. Though they used to take place in "marginal" timing – in the

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[1] From the interview released by Beniamino Saibene (one of the two leader of Esterni) on the 23 February 2008 to the sociologist Silvia Mazzucotelli.

[2] From a video presentation of "Public design" (a design festival set up by Esterni) at http://www.publicdesignfestival.org

margins of officially working time – , these type of meetings were not marginal in terms of contribution to Esterni's public activities. At this respect it is useful to refer to the same event on which it was focused the Tuesday general meeting were Riccardo made his intervention cited in the past paragraph. Indeed, looking at the same event it is possible to show the *not* equal contribution of different group styles in the shaping the group's actions.

Riccardo, with his intervention was trying to figure out the reasons why not a big audience had showed up to an event the group had set up that was called "Public Design". This event had been mostly set up through the "informally autonomy" group style, the dominant pattern that shaped Esterni internal and public activities. But not all the parts of this event had been fashioned through this group style. Some activities of it had been thought and set up through the "universal partisanship" group style. These parts consisted in the playful activities the event's attendees would have been invited to engage themselves with, once they had come to the event. Though these activities could have seemed at first sight a quite central part of the event, they had never been discussed during the official meetings through which the event had been organized in the months preceding it. This was something that surprised me, more and more the day of the event was approaching. I didn't understand why such a central aspect of the event was not discussed at length in the numerous meetings that had been held to set it up. Just two days before the event was scheduled to take place, a meeting was convened late at night, informing group members just one hour before its beginning (scheduled for 10 p.m.). The location chosen for the meeting this time was not the usual big room hosting the "Tuesday general meeting" but the room hosting the kitchen in the court of Esterni's headquarter. When during informal conversations I asked Esterni members why such an usual location had been chosen, I was told that the kitchen was "the place where the most creative ideas come up". I started to realize that that fact of deciding upon the activities the event would have included and of holding the meeting in that location were not due to the group's carelessness, but were part of the "universal partisanship" group style that informed the organization of those aspects of the event. Indeed, the "kitchen meeting" clearly differed from all the other ones I had previously attended, firstly because the participants were not really concerned in giving any substantial contribution to Esterni activities. Instead, on the contrary, group members seemed to compete in proposing the strangest and unrealistic ideas. Everything that was said in that meeting was well accepted and pondered by other members, no matter how unrealistic and useless to Esterni's activities it could have seemed. Also, the "kitchen meeting" had no scheduled end-time, as it was normally the case for all the other meetings held during the official working time. In the kitchen the "universal partisanship" group style was in action. Esterni, was acting as a creative social movement organization: informally, collectively and especially creatively. Being creative in this setting meant being unrealistic, proposing ideas that couldn't be bothered by commercial or economic concerns. These type of concerns would have been treated separately in the following day meeting, when the group would have returned to its "informally autonomous" group style. In the kitchen it was time for group members to express themselves, proposing ideas quite in opposite terms than what they could have done during the official working hours. Indeed, in the meeting held the following day it was decided which of the ideas that had come up the night before were actually going to take place and many of the proposed ideas were rejected because they were not economically affordable. With respect to this

example it is worth underling the little part the "universal partisanship" group style played compared to the "informally autonomous" one in shaping the group's activities. Indeed, the general organization of the event - including choices about its place and time, its overall content, who to involve, how to promote it – had been developed during meetings in which group members acted through the "informally autonomous" group style. The specific activities taking place during the event had came up through the "universal partisanship" group style but then finally decided on the basis of the other group style. Further, this event (as many other one Esterni used set up) developed mainly at the level of the media resonance given to it. Indeed, the fact that not many people had come to the event was deemed as a serious problem according to Esterni's point of view because it impeded to give the event adequate media resonance. Also, this is the reason why the concrete activities taking place during the event had been considered a marginal aspect, that could be decided in a "kitchen meeting" just few hours before the event. The media symbolic resonance given to the event was more important than its concrete unfolding and this was the outcome of the way the event had been set up in the group everyday life. Indeed, the "informally autonomy" group style had channeled the group's energies through office activities (and especially the press office one) and focused the group concerns on the "substantial contribution" of the event, defined in terms of media resonance.

Also, it is worth noting another dimension of the everyday composition of this organization's group styles. This refers to the clearness of the time-space boundaries that in general separated one group style from the other one. Indeed, in the cited example the two settings in which the different group styles were in action were clearly separated by time (the kitchen meeting had been held after the work timing, at 10.30 p.m.) and space (the kitchen, and not the big meeting room) boundaries. The "universal partisanship" speech norms ruled also other meetings and also in these cases clearly time-space boundaries were visible. To make another example, once a year Esterni used to held a weekend retreat in which the group members and close collaborators gathered in a country side large house in the hills in the center of Italy to discuss about new ideas and projects to be developed by the group in the immediate future. Clearly, in this case the time-space boundaries separating this setting from the other ones in which the group life unfolded was maximally visible. Furthermore, the "universal partisanship" group style, on the contrary of the "informally autonomous" one, was not accessible to anyone but it included just certain group members[1]. Indeed, this aspect was maximally visible in another meeting governed also by the "universal partisanship" speech norms, the *managing board meeting*, which was held once a week in a room with closed doors that impeded to anyone, apart from the meetings' participants, to listen to the ongoing discussion. The meeting was accessible exclusively to the six core members of the group that were official part of its managing board. After having asked, I had been given the right to participate in the managing board meeting, but just for the first half of it. Also this meeting didn't possess a scheduled end–time, it lasted "for the time that was necessary"[2] and once it lasted for

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[1] Which will be specified in the next section when speaking about the group bonds dimension.

[2] This is the answer that I've been informally told by Nicolò, the Esterni member to whom I had asked how long the meeting would have lasted

more than 7 hours consecutively. In this setting I've listened to the same unrealistic creativity interventions that I had listened to during the aforementioned kitchen meeting. But in this chase this creativity didn't refer to public initiatives the group could engage itself with, but it self-reflexively refereed the same group, its way of operating, its internal organization and the very meaning of its existence. At this respect, interventions drew on single episodes that had occurred during the ordinary group life. I had been informally told that in the half of the meeting that I was not allowed to attend, interventions referred to behaviors of single members. These were the same type of collective discussions I had the possibility to listened to during my presence, with the only difference that while I was present interventions were about the whole group and when I was not there they were more about single members' behaviors. An example of the type of self-reflexive interventions I've listened to may help in understanding the point:

> Beniamino: I'm more and more wandering what Esterni is doing, you know, sometimes it occurs to me to think that the setting up of events it's not the best way to reach our purposes. I'm even skeptical about the need for public spaces in this city, I don't know, maybe I'm just getting old, maybe we all should think that it would be better to go in the country-side and run a farmhouse… I meant it seriously

This intervention exemplifies how seemingly unrealistic talks were used to self-reflexively question the group's activities. In the example, the intervention was about the very core of Esterni's activities, which indeed consisted firstly in the setting up of events to generate the public spaces that Milan was perceived to lack. These type of self reflexive talks were not allowed by any of the other group styles shaping Estenri everyday life, because they would have directly threaten the group very sense of cohesion. In this setting they could be said, though through an "unrealistic creative" speech act and in a situation whose access was strictly limited by a minority of group members. It is worth noting that officially this meeting possessed the same purposes of the Tuesday general meeting, that is to say it was meant firstly to discuss about the ongoing activities and the need of changes in the way they were structured. The unique formal difference was in the fact that the managing board meeting was restricted to Esterni core members while the Tuesday general meetings included all Esterni workers. But, in the point of view adopted by this study, the important difference between the two meetings was in the fact that they were shaped through two different group styles that in one case impeded the development of reflexive talks and in the other encouraged it.

"ENLARGED CYNICAL FAMILY" SPEECH NORMS

Group members' interactions were ruled also by another type of speech norms, those related to what I've called the "enlarged cynical family" group style. This group style also used to shape group members' interactions in specific and delimited time-space settings, which were mainly the back-stages of the official activities the group carried out, both public activities (mainly events) or group life occasions (mainly group meetings).

Speech norms ruling backstage members interactions maintained group members' distance from the official stances they assumed while acting according to the other two main group styles ruling

group life. For example, during backstage conversations of Milan Film festival[1], while some core group members were eating and chatting among themselves in a locked room, I have listened a few Esterni members laughing at two Sri Lanka people the group had hired for carrying out manual works. These type of talks would have been out of context when the group was acting through its "informally autonomous" group style because they wouldn't have been of any direct substantial usefulness to the group productivity. Similarly but for different reasons, this conversation would have been misplaced when the group acted through its "universal partisanship" group style. In this case laughing at immigrant manual workers would have been probably read as not politically correct for a movement organization that aimed at generating public space inclusive for everyone, immigrants included. But in the backstage setting where I've heard the scornful jokes toward the Sri-Lanka workers, the jokes re-affirmed intimate social ties that were based upon a complicity in cynically taking distance from the official roles as Esterni members. It is possible to presume that this group style was active also in other settings, not necessarily backstage, for example, in the everyday interactions taking place in the apartments that many group members shared. But the researcher's access to these and other similar semi-private settings was much more restricted, as the reader can easily imagine.

GROUP BOUNDARIES

Group boundaries represents an analytical perspective on the shared, routinezed assumptions and patterns of actions on which group members interactions and actions are shaped. In particular, such a concept allows to focus on what the group's relationship (imagined and real) to the wider world should be while in the group context (Eliasoph, Lichterman 2003 p. 739). Let's briefly consider how this dimension articulated itself in the three main group styles through which Esterni everyday life used to unfold.

"INFORMALLY AUTONOMOUS" GROUP BOUNDARIES

According to the "informally autonomy" group style, Esterni positioned itself in a map that included mainly business companies. These were firstly represented by the companies with which the group interacted in the organization of its activities: suppliers of specific services such as websites developers, food and catering companies or clients of Esterni consulting activities or of the small products (such as t-shirts, dvds, bycicles, fake road signs) the group sold[2]. Esterni differentiated from regular business companies because its overall purpose was not that of making profit but instead generating public spaces of sociality accessible to everyone. This is the reason why Esterni *informally* used its repertoire of actions and the internal means for structuring group life that were typical of a regular business company. The means and languages through which a business company organizes its activities were widely used by Esterni but they were filtered through its "informally autonomous" group style. Business aspects were used both in the group official activities and in its internal structuring as a group. With reference to the first point for

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[1] This is a movie festival that Esterni has been organizing for 14 years in Milan.

[2] For a more detailed to the products this group used to sell see: http://www.Esterni.org/spaccio/.

example the group in specific occasions used to refer to the public of its initiative in a similar way that a company refers to its target public. For example, in spite of the official name of the event, the public of "out of target" was defined in the launching press conference of this event in terms of

> "curious teenagers, willing to learn something and that are normally treated as a target by the strategies of advertisement and marketing of business companies but that instead are worth to be treated differently and to became for once real protagonists of their own lives"[1].

Using a business language we could say the group had find a target niche that was remained still uncovered by more regular business companies. What it is important to underline it is the way teenagers participating in this event were informally treated as a target by Esterni: firstly they were explicitly told, through the very event name, that they were not a going to be treated as a target; secondly no real market research had been made to know their main traits and cultural tastes. They had been known by Esterni members through *informal* meetings where they had been given the possibility of engaging themselves in collective conversations. Though in a specific way, it is possible to conceive these practices as Esterni's ways to get to know the public of one of its product.

Press conferences were typical occasions in which Esterni made the most evident the social map conveyed by its "informally autonomous" group style. To make an example it is possible to cite the press conference Esterni held on the 14th of March 2008 to launch the edition of Milan Film Festival 2008 and find new sponsors of this project. For this occasion Esterni rented the main room of "Milan Arena Civica" and invited potential sponsors companies and the councilor of Milan for sport and leisure activity[2], whose presence was crucial to give Esterni visibility and legitimation at the eyes of potential sponsors. The social map Esterni exhibited in that occasion was particularly precise and it included both companies with which the association had collaborated in the past and a detailed description of Esterni audience's traits and its variation over time. During backstage conversations with Esterni members I've been told that most of the data presented in that occasion had been invented. Anyway, they had been useful to show the other participants of the press conference that Esterni was equipped with the means and language that allowed to recognize the group as a reliable, non profit, organization. Scholars of the strategic frame perspective could interpret this in terms of strategies suited for a specific audience. The viewpoint of this chapter considers that Esterni used and re-interpreted means and languages associated to a regular business company through its "informally autonomous" pattern of action, not just strategically, but according to the possibilities and burdens associated to this group style. Such possibilities oriented group members actions to get the most substantial contributions possibly, also inventing data about event's audiences if this was necessary.

Collective representations associated to regular business companies also shaped the internal structuring of Esterni, similarly through the filter of "informally autonomous" group style. It is

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[1] Excerpt from the press conference of "Out of target" held on the 26th March 2008 in the Science and Technology museum of Milan.

[2] Giovanni Terzi in that period.

possible to illustrate this point for example looking at the way Esterni used interns' work. As business companies nowadays do, this association used the free work of interns but informally considered young interns as group members, that is to say actively and willingly contributing to purse the generation of public spaces in Milan through Esterni. For this reason, new Esterni's interns were not "enrolled" on the basis of their curriculum vitae. But, instead Esterni based its decisions about new interns exclusively on the basis of two conversations in which Esterni main concern was that of assessing the intern candidate motivation in actively contributing to Esterni's activities. Interns were not treated like in a regular company but as group members that contribute to generate the public goods the association devoted its efforts to.

Esterni's social map according to its "informally autonomous" group style included also other subjects that were not commercial companies. At this respect Esterni boundaries included also subjects that were, according to other group styles, considered as internal parts of the group. Esterni boundaries comprised subjects that were occasionally physically present in the settings where the everyday group life unfolded. These subjects were collaborators or partners with which Esterni interacted while carrying out its activities. As a consultant on a specific project of this association, I've personally experienced these type of boundaries. Let me briefly introduce my collaboration with the group to show this specific aspect of group boundaries.

In April 2008 Esterni was asked by the Milan Province council to support the associations of a little village near Milan (Locate Triulzi) to manage their move from their original venues into a new common venue that the city council had set up for them. Esterni's core members knew I had been studying associations from close and they asked me if I wanted to work for them as sociological-consultant of that public funded project, meeting the associations, trying to understand their specific needs and then writing a report about this. I agreed, deeming it as a good occasion to observe from very close the way Esterni worked in those type of project. I did my work[1], which seemed to have left satisfied Esterni and the Milan Province council alike. Indeed, it revealed us that there was the possibility to continue the work. Unfortunately, Province council lacked the funds for continuing the project, so the association had to find a way to get other types of public grants. Esterni asked me to help them in writing a grant- application, I did it but we didn't get the money to continue the work, so the experience was finished after about 5 month from its beginning. About an year later I saw in the newspaper that Esterni was working on a project in the same village where I had worked with them. After reading the article I realized that Esterni had continued to work on the same project without me. I spoke informally with Esterni's members with who I had worked, asking gently how the things had exactly gone with respect to that project. They explained to me that after a short time some money come from business companies that offered to sponsor the project. They had had the opportunity to continue a little bit the work I had done with them and they organized an exposition. They said that to me without feeling sorry for not having informed me even if Esterni members were normally very polite and

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[1] Consisting in participating in internal meetings with Esterni and the Milan province council , managing meetings with the associations of Locate Triulzi listening to their specific requirements, and writing two short reports of suggestions for Esterni.

attentive to not spoil relationships. I had been treated as an Esterni's collaborator and this implied the possibility of dropping the relationship without any specific formality. Over the period of my participant observation I noticed that I had been treated in the same way Esterni treated all its professional workers, that it is to say as a commercial partners not as members of the same group. Boundaries were clearer after that experience and this supported my understanding of how the group related to third parts according to its "informal autonomy" group style. Through a more close observation at Esterni members engaging themselves in interactions with clients or suppliers I outlined the boundaries of the informal autonomy group style, noticing that they drew distinctions also in the settings where the everyday life of the group used to unfold. Esterni's boundaries appeared to be composed of various, quite hierarchical, levels. Firstly the group itself comprised two different type of members:

- There was the managing board's level of the group, composed by 6 members, two having been (together with a third person) the "founding fathers" of Esterni and the other four people, which possessed at least a 8 years long experience in the group.

- There was the level of Esterni's stable workers, composed by managing board members plus other 5-6 long term workers who had worked in Esterni for at least 5 years. Esterni, according to its "informal autonomous" group style was limited to these two first levels, beyond which there were subjects external to the group, and thus pertaining to its social map.

Then, it is worth underling that Esterni people working in Esterni venue did not comprise exclusively group members but also all the interns working for Esterni. Interns, though treated as group members were not part of the group according to this group style, they were collaborators. There were various type of collaborators(website developers, graphic, artists that produce specific product for Esterni), they did not normally work in Esterni's headquarter but they used to pass by quite frequently for meetings or for simply hanging out. The social map associated to this group style included also the public of the group's events, which included also a clear identifiable component of friends, acquaintances, ex-interns and stable clients of Esterni restaurant. Thus, the "informal autonomy" 's social map included companies but also interns, collaborators and the group core audience. Each one of these subjects was treated differently, but they were all treated differently from the group members.

"UNIVERSAL PARTISANSHIP" GROUP BOUNDARIES

Not all the group members interactions that used to take place in backstage settings were shaped by the "enlarged cynical family" group style. Indeed, engaging in informal conversations with a couple of Esterni's members I've learnt about an important element of the social map that the group projected while acting according to its "universal partisanship" group style. While helping to arrange the tables of the buffet that followed an event Esterni was setting up a young new intern asked Vins – a core group member[1]– why Esterni had never organized a retrospect on a famous

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[1] The responsible for the choice of movies of the Film Festival that Esterni organize each year

Italian movie-maker named Nanni Moretti. Vins smiled and answered politely that Moretti was not enough "esternoso". It was not the first time I listened group members using that term and each time it meant something that was fully understandable just looking at the specific setting in which the terms was used. In this case "esternoso" was used to position Esterni in a map of movement organizations that were active with cultural initiatives in Milan. The new intern was not very familiar yet with this map and thus couldn't fully understand what the other group member was telling him. Thus, he went on asking:

> Intern: Why? What do you mean exactly with 'esternoso'?
>
> Vins: projecting Moretti's movies, especially the old ones that a serious retrospect should include, would mean clearly collocate Esterni politically… I mean we all know where Moretti's movies come from and which is its public, we share his ideas but as Esterni we try to be bipartisan, not excluding the attention of anyone.
>
> Researcher: Did you never projected a Moretti's movie without doing the whole retrospect?
>
> Vins: no, never and for the same reasons: we are not a social center!

This clearly indicated the social map the group used when deciding upon the content of movies' projections. The group didn't want to project very commercial movies because this would make the association too similar to ordinary movie theaters. But neither the group wanted to project clearly leftist oriented movies that would make him too similar to a social center. Indeed, Vins' tacit assumption was that Moretti's movies goes normally with radical leftists people and in projections set up by social centers. Esterni wanted to differentiate itself from those subjects, trying to be more inclusive than what self-administered social centers are generally assumed to be. Indeed, what Vins was saying in the aforementioned conversation is that what differentiate Esterni from other movement organizations also active with cultural initiatives (and especially movie projections) is the fact Esterni activities are universal and not aimed towards a specific type of public.

Correspondingly, according to the "universal partisanship" group style the boundaries separating Esterni from its public, its collaborators or other subjects in its the social map were the most *invisible*. Firstly, Esterni in this group style included subjects such as collaborators, interns, friends or acquaintances that according to the previous group style were subjects external to the organization. This point can be exemplified illustrating the project that Esterni has called "This is a city", which consisted in the association's candidature to the city council of Milan in the administrative political election of 2006. This project was presented as a direct continuation of Esterni's activities:

> "questa è una città" ["this is a city"], a list that has not been artificially thrown together for these elections, but is instead the potential and literally political continuation of esterni's 11-year-experience in utopian activities in Milan.

In particular this project represented the continuation of Esterni's activities while this group acted through its "universal partisanship" group style. At this respect, it is worth to be considered that Esterni did not propose a single candidate as mayor but 46 candidates instead, that is to say all the people that at different title collaborated with this group in carrying out its activities. This choice

was repeatedly stressed in the communication accompanying the political candidature, starting from the first line of the official press release, which announced the candidature in these terms:

> "46 people present an independent list to run for mayors in the city. All together […] we don't run neither with the Right nor with the Left. We run as a group to administrate this city all together. The 46 candidates stem from Esterni, a group that has devoted itself to Milan, to its inhabitants or occasional visitors, to social interaction, public spaces and suburbs for eleven years; in a nutshell: it has tried to turn Milan into a better city. Come what may with the elections, Esterni will keep doing it[1].

Being part of Esterni meant feeling part of a larger movement, that included many people acting together to create public spaces in a city that was perceived to lacking them. Such a movement included also other groups in Milan or outside of it, forming a web that could have been easily put in communication and mobilized. This assumption was at the basis of various projects in which Esterni engaged itself with, such as "Piscinella" 's project, in which Esterni easily mobilized members and representatives of a variety of cultural associations active in Milan. But the social map projected while the group acted through its "universal partisanship" group style included also external subjects, that were firstly the ordinary citizens living in Milan and that, on an ordinary basis experienced the lack of public spaces suffered by this city. The citizens depicted in this map were not outlined with reference to their specific political preferences, but they were addressed in the most universal way as possible, that is to say as "indignant citizens" that had the right of not standing anymore the city lack of public spaces .

I was not yet conducting my participant observation in this cultural association when it candidated for Milan city council. But, looking retrospectively at this experience and at the official communication it has produced it is possible to see that it was clearly shaped through the association's universal partisanship group style. Indeed, such a communication repeatedly underlines the universal orientation of this group, not linkable "neither with the Right nor with the Left" . Also the outcomes of this experience illustrate that the group's communication did not represents any deliberate rational choice but instead it had stemmed out from the group style through which the association acted while running for Milan council. Indeed, the choice of declaring its leftist orientation and affiliation with some left oriented parties would have been more effective for the group, because it would have guaranteed better results than the ones the groups has reached openly declaring its universality[2]. Indeed, such results were easily strategically predictable from the very begging of the group candidature by its own protagonists, at least according to what they said to me during informal conversations.

The social map in which Esterni situated itself according to its "universal partisanship" group style differentiated this group from more radical leftist associations that possessed similar goals of generating public sociality and also organized cultural initiatives to pursue such goals. During informal conversations with me Esterni members often cited a specific group - called "Serpica naro"- and showed a great knowledge of this group's single initiatives. This was a leftist group

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[1] From the official press release at http://www.questaeunacitta.it/english.aspx

[2] Esterni got very few votes, not even sufficient for electing a city councilman.

mainly active in contrasting the frailty of contemporary work conditions with creative initiatives, the most known of whom was probably the big party this group organized during the first of May's parade. During informal talks Nicolò, one of the core group members of Esterni and probably the most taciturn of them all, reported me about a project "SerpicaNaro" had set up, in which this organization had succeed in inventing a fake stylist that took part in prestigious Milan fashion shows, revealing just from the catwalk the real identity of the stylist. Nicolò appreciated the creativity of this type of actions and told me that

"Esterni should set up this type of initiatives, that are playful and can bring a message to the widest public".

Also other Esterni's members cited to me other initiatives "Serpicanaro" had set up, similarly as good examples that Esterni should have in mind when thinking about its own projects. Nevertheless, this group was never cited during formal or informal collective interactions in Esterni everyday settings because it clearly possessed a partisanship, radical-leftist, identity that was incompatible with Esterni "universal partisanship" group style.

"ENLARGED CYNICAL FAMILY"

Also the "enlarged cynical family" group style did not include every Esterni members, and the boundaries that this group style drew also cut across who was included in the same everyday setting where the group life unfolded. In particular, from previous ethnographic researches on Esterni (Sauger 2004; Nava 2004) we know that at least two big groupings divided Esterni members' solidarity ties: a more loose group and with ephemeral ties while the other made of "members that were more than close friend among themselves, who shared their group life and were bound together by significant ties of solidarity that distinguished them from the rest of the group" (Nava 2004). While conducting my field research I've noted that this distinction was still present 4 years after that research. In particular, I remarked that the first and most tied grouping included managing board members and the most ancient members of Esterni, who in many cases were part of the original core group of people that founded Esterni 15 years ago. The second grouping was made mainly by temporary workers and interns that formed a looser group of people that used to spend most of their time together while not working in Esterni's venues or in the settings where the events took place. These two groupings were clearly distinct in terms of dynamics of internal solidarity and sharing of an idio-culture made of specific topics and jokes and their separation was clearly physically visible in most of the occasions of free time from work in the Palazzina, for example the morning before the work started in the pause of lunch time, where people in groups used to go outside Esterni's headquarter to take coffees. Trying to understand which type of boundaries separated the two groupings I firstly realized that apparently the division confirmed the hierarchic levels previously outlined when speaking about boundaries implied in the "informal autonomy" group style. Still the two boundaries did not overlapped completely because there were significant exceptions. Listening from close to the informal chatting and backstage jokes I realized that the boundaries were traced on a different criteria. To be part of "enlarged cynical family" group style it was firstly necessary to be an Esterni members, but what distinguished who participated in this group style from who couldn't was the fact that he/she didn't take him/herself too seriously as an Esterni member and appreciated jokes about its own

engagement in the group. For example Lorenz, one of the two leaders of the association, was in the social map of the "enlarged cynical family" group style, but outside the boundaries of Esterni according to this group style. Indeed, many jokes addressed him and its incapacity of laughing about himself, while jokes never addressed the other leader (Ben) that was deemed capable of not taking himself too seriously. Boundaries of this group style distinguished group members on the basis of this criterion, including in it all the group members that could participate in teasing interactions about their engagement into the group.

GROUP'S BONDS

Group bonds represents an analytical perspective on the shared, routinezed assumptions and patterns of actions on which group members interactions and actions are shaped. In particular, this concept offers an analytical perspective that focuses on what group members' mutual responsibilities should be while in the group context (Eliasoph, Lichterman 2003 p. 739). Let's briefly consider how this dimension articulate itself in the three main group styles through which Esterni everyday life used to unfold.

"INFORMAL AUTONOMY" GROUP BONDS

When Esterni acted according to this group style its members conceived their reciprocal ties in terms of relationships among autonomous workers, where each member had the right to its own autonomy and the duty to respect other members' autonomy in carrying out their works. Relations among Esterni's members according to the "informal autonomy" group style were firstly relationships among autonomous, self-directed, people. At first sight, it appeared to me a simple coincidence the fact that in one of the main room of Esterni's venue there was a big poster that said: "Don't complain to other, just do it by yourself!". This was not a simple joke. The sign was especially directed toward new interns that in the first period of their internship experience used to pose an "excessive" number of questions to Esterni more ancient workers. More generally, different episodes I've observed in my field research confirmed that the rule written in the poster expressed the main customary rule governing relationships among group's members, according to the business group style.

During the first two weeks of my participant observation I was hit by the amount of work carried out by every member of Esterni and my impression were ratified through informal conversations with new workers and interns who also shared my opinions at this respect[1]. Looking carefully at my field notes and going back to the observed scenes I realized I was particularly stroke by a specific aspect of the work that group members carried out while in Esterni's venues during working time. This was represented by the high level of *autonomy* that was required to all group

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[1] Especially through conversations with Simone (a member that I also formally interviewed) and with Stefano, an intern with which it occurred to go to Esterni's venue because he was also coming from the same village just outside Milan where I lived in that period.

members in order to carry out the activities they had been assigned. Such an autonomy implied that new interns were asked from their very first period to take direct responsibility for issues such as the supply of services and products that could value also thousands of euro. Esterni members seemed to be particularly aware of the relevance of the autonomy implied in the way they acted as group members during working time. Indeed, in informal conversations I engaged with them, when speaking about more general aspects of their everyday work they often underlined that "here everyone manages his own stuff autonomously" or that

> "Esterni nature implies a certain degree of autonomy for us, there are often some specific urgencies that you must understand immediately, without anyone telling you exactly what to do".

But nothing cued me more in my understanding than the observation through which the new comers learnt at their expenses to behave during everyday working time in Esterni's venue and especially to treat other group members respecting their autonomy. The following field notes excerpt is telling at this respect:

> Stefano (a new intern): "Sorry to bother you, I would like to ask you something that I don't understand here.."
>
> Nico: "What? Is that necessary ? I'm quite busy at the moment, you know… many things to do at the same time, as usual"
>
> Stefano: "oh, sorry. I can wait when you're free"
>
> Nico: "I'm always busy actually when I'm working.. If it is strictly necessary, just show me what you want to know now."
>
> Stefano: "ok, thanks. It was about this document, it is an application- grant and I don't understand what they ask in this voice here. Further, I've been asked to do something else very important and I don't know what to do with that..What to do first."
>
> Nico [in a louder voice, which was audible to everyone else in the room] "Look, this is not the right way. Here everybody is asked to do many things at the same time, and you have to manage them, deciding which is the most important without depending on other people; what do I know about your own work?"

One could think that Nico in this episode had been excessively irritable or he was simply a rude person in general. But participating everyday over a 4 months period in Esterni's life, I noticed that every time the autonomy of a group member was breached this caused significant reactions that aimed at re-establishing the previous customized ways of relating without invading each other autonomy. In particular this type of episodes were frequent among new interns in their first period and the aforementioned poster was directly especially to prevent them. In the episode reported with Stefano and Nico we can look from close at the breaching of the autonomy that should regulate relationships among group members while they were in the group working context. Firstly, Stefano had invaded Nico's own space, interrupting him while he was ordinarily engaged with its own work. Secondly, Stefano had asked Nico to take responsibility of the work that he, autonomously, had to carry out. Stefano didn't possess the same customs that were shared by Nico and all the other members of Esterni: he was not the task-oriented, self-starting, individually responsible workers who solved directly problems instead of assuming someone else had the

answer to them. Nico's reaction signaled the breaching of the implicit assumptions that should regulate reciprocal relationships among group members while they were in working times. The episode depicts Stefano learning at his own expenses how to behave according to such implicit assumptions. But other accidents happened before Stefano definitely learned the customs of the "informal autonomy" group style. For example, it is possible to cite another episode that involved another intern and that, though strictly speaking refers to the speech norms dimension, is significant of the mutual obligations that tied group members while they were in "working settings".

Daniele was a recent intern that was attending many type of group meetings for its very first time. Daniele showed from the very begging of being an active participant of the group meetings, but his way of intervening was peculiar. Indeed, he used to put before everything he said during meetings expressions such as "May I..?" or "May I say something?.." or similar. These expressions were meant to be polite way of addressing the audience but they sounded particularly out of place in the meetings in which he pronounced them. During a "Tuesday general meeting", Stefania (another group member) abruptly interrupted Daniele's stock phrase to made him notice in front of the whole group that

> it is not necessary to ask the permission every time you want to say something, just speak as everybody else here does!

Stefano didn't really wanted to ask the permission to speak, he just wanted to be polite and respectful of other people. But his way of understanding the respect for other people contrasted with how the respect was meant according to the "informal autonomy" group style. Formal linguistic expressions of politeness were not part of this situated meaning of respect for each other, and, moreover, hesitation had been taken as a lack of the necessary autonomy that was required in those settings. Indeed, during Esterni's meeting ruled by this group style it was not just required to come up with substantial contributions to the group but also to do that autonomously.

The autonomy of this group style required an high level of motivation on the part of Esterni's members. It is hardly a coincidence if the lack of motivation of new members represented a recurrent topic of discussion during the managing board meetings and in informal conversations among Esterni core members. For example during a diner among these members I participated in, Nicolò (an Esterni core member) was wandering about the reasons of such a lack of motivation in these terms:

> We do have an hard time in passing the passion we received from the two "founding fathers" of Esterni (Lorenz and Ben) to new members…This is not working anymore, we are not able of enlarging our passion for Esterni. If I think about the future I'm quite worried about this, It seems like the other members lack the necessary motivation to go on by themselves.

What this member was trying to figure out were the reasons of the lack of autonomy some of the new members were showing in the way they were engaged in Esterni. Being involved in Esterni everyday activities in the Palazzina meant firstly engaging oneself according to a dominant "informal autonomy" group style which required an high level of motivation. This was the most clear when Esterni's core members had to decide upon the enrollment of new members as

Esterni's workers once their internship period was ended. In these cases the main criterion used to take such a decision was not based on the level of competence showed by the interns but on the degree of autonomy and motivation to work they had showed during their engagement, no matter how competent they had proved to be. Listening from close at informal conversations among group members I understood that the engagement of new members was judged as positive when they had showed of being "unproblematic people"[1], capable of expressing their ideas and feelings (both positive or negative) in public, creative but not in the tortured-genious way, communicative and looking positively at their capacity to solve their problems. Put it in other words, Esterni judged new members firstly assessing the level of autonomy they had shown in their involvement in Esterni. This was quite clear looking at how the engagement of Ciro – a new Esterni member, enrolled as an intern – in the group was discussed in informal conversations among group members.

Ciro was a young man graduated in sociology that came from a village in the South of Italy. After about two weeks of various works he was confined in the basement to arrange the movie archives of Esterni; he had to stay by his own in the basement engaged in a work that should have been done since long time but that it had never really started for many years, because it was not a real group priority. The choice of assigning Ciro that unappreciative task was taken because Ciro was judged as

> "not suitable to represent Esterni in public"[2].

The member that had pronounced this sentence had articulated it by adding that

> "he doesn't know how to relate to people, you barely can understand when he speaks because of his accent and he is a too problematic person".

When this sentence was said everybody agreed and showed to understand perfectly what they were talking about even if very few and general words had been said. I tried to understand better what made Ciro a "not suitable" and "a too problematic person" for Esterni members. At first sight, Ciro did appear different from all the other members of Esterni. Ciro was dressed like a teenager, like many other Esterni also looked like, but he was different somehow. His shirts didn't seem to be the kind of very studied careless style that all the other members used to ware, he was really unkempt because his carelessness was not intentional as much as the one of the other people seemed to be. Speaking with him, if you were able to understand his very strict accent, you could immediately know his personal life and his familiar big problems of health and crime. He wouldn't hid them to you, on the contrary he was happy to tell them to you as if for him his problems were something to be proud of, something to show to strangers. At this respect Ciro never showed to have learnt the customs that structured interactions among group members according to the "informal autonomy" group style which included a wide respect of each other

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[1] From field notes on the managing board meeting in which it was discussed Ciro's involvement, according to the episode reported in the following lines.

[2] *Ibidem*

autonomy. Ciro didn't want its interlocutors to respect its autonomy and he was happy to share with them even its familiar problems. Generally, Esterni members significantly differed because they wanted other to respect their autonomy. When you first met them they would probably tell you how many interesting past working experiences they had had, or the latest arts show or concerts that they had seen and usually without saying nothing of very personal. They tried to appear cool as probably also Ciro tried to appear in its own way, but between the two way of conceiving a cool person there was a significant difference. Esterni members appeared in the office working setting as autonomous people. Ciro was proud to show publicly its personal problems and didn't ask any respect for its autonomy, which was something that in the settings of Esterni's offices during working time breached the reciprocal obbligations that tied together group members.

The kind of member Ciro represented was a problem for the image esterni wanted to give of itself and, especially, his behavior breached the groups bonds related to the "informal autonomy" group style. Esterni was proud to be a problem-solving oriented, autonomous, civic group, as no one of the civic and political group active in Milan they considered to be. Especially, Ciro's behavior while he was in Esterni's offices during working time violated the shared assumptions about what the group bonds should be while group members were in that context because he continuously violated the autonomy with respect to himself and toward other group members.

"UNIVERSAL PARTISANSHIP" GROUP BONDS

The group bonds associated to this group style obliged group members to *informally r*elate to each other. Such an informality character was not an aspect of secondary importance but it represented a constitutive attribute that qualified the relationships among group members according to the "universal partisanship" group style. Informality was required when group members related to each other, and when this requirement was violated it called forth telling reactions. Also, informality didn't came by itself but it needed to be "organized". To understand the way Esterni's members related to each other in settings where the universal partisanship group style was dominant it is useful to look at how the above cited adjective "esternoso" was used in these settings. In this case the term meant "being informal", that is to say do not plan every single aspects of Esterni's activities or at least make as if not every aspect seemed of having been planned. For example it is possible to look at this use of the term in a specific occasion where I had been invited to take part to a sort of brain-storm meeting and contribute to propose new ideas about projects that could have been developed in the next future. In order to prepare the meetings I thought useful writing some notes and sending by e-mail to the other participants of the meeting. Anna - an Esterni member with who I had a confidential relationship - answered my e-mail saying that those notes "were not necessary" and in the following conversation I had with her, just before the meeting, I was explicitly invited to be "more Estornoso". In this case this word meant being "autonomous" but also relaxed, *cool*. I was invited to relate to Esterni members more informally, without expecting from them that they read my notes. My behavior for example clearly contrasted with the aforementioned practice of organizing at the very last minute important aspects of an

event[1]. Scheduling the interventions I was going to do in a meeting and expecting other members to read my notes was not at all "esternoso". Even when there was the possibility of planning the details of a meeting, being "esternoso" required avoiding to do that and not excepting any other member to do that.

"ENLARGED CYNICAL FAMILY" GROUP BONDS

Group bonds associated to the "enlarged family" group style are particularly difficult to be outlined because - as I have already mentioned -interactions unfolding according to this group style happened in settings not always accessible to the researcher, such as private houses or other private spaces. This is the reason way I have no empirical evidences to show the group bonds of this specific group style. Nevertheless, I can say that while group members were in backstage settings of corresponding front stage group context their mutual obligations included taking distance from their direct engagement in Esterni. Indeed, members related to each other through this group style with teasing jokes that were about behaviors or speech they had done during their ordinary engagement in the association[2]. The necessary condition to access the "enlarged cynical family" group style was to be a member of Esterni. Without possessing this condition it was not possible to be part of the internal ties that were related to this group style. This is the reason why I was not able to accede to those ties, not being "really" a group member[3]. Also, being part of Esterni represented a necessary but not sufficient condition for entering the enlarged family group style. Indeed, not all the members of Esterni could be part of this group style but uniquely those that in backstage settings engaged with other members reciprocal relationships of mutual teasing jokes about other members, or they own, behavior as Estenri members.

TO SUM UP

The three group styles that structured Esterni members interactions and the way this cultural association coordinated its different parts in its everyday setting represent three institutionalized patterns of actions in consistency among themselves and that uniquely for analytical sake have been articulated in the three dimensions of speech norms, group boundaries and group bonds. In the everyday settings where Esterni group life unfolded these elements were tied together and a single setting may comprise different, potentially competing, group styles. Nevertheless, it is worth underling that the variety of group styles through which Esterni acted in its different group settings was characterized by the dominance of the "informal autonomy" group style. Indeed, this is the group style which was dominant most of the time in the group contexts where Esterni activities took shape, the style that most shaped relationships among group's members and the

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[1] I refer here to the kitchen meeting to decide upon the activities comprised in the event called "Out of target".

[2] Consider at this respect what it has been already said about this group style previously in this chapter.

[3] My position inside the group was not simply that of the participant, neither that of covert participant observer. Instead I was participant observer who was overtly collecting empirical evidences to for a specific research purpose.

official activities carried out by the group. In order to see how the three group styles articulated themselves in the group life and in particular which part was played by the "informal autonomy" group style, it is possible to present schematically an idealized typical process through which a group's cultural initiative took shape. We can in particular identify different phases of group life:

- the very idea of the proposed initiative took shape in meetings and in settings of group life dominated by the "universal partisanship" group style;
- The concrete shape of the initiative formed through the "informal autonomy" group style where the proposed idea was considered for example from the point of view of its economic sustainability;
- a launching press conference, where Esterni acted also through its "informal autonomy" group style, announced publicly the initiative.
- during interviews with journalists or sociologist, Esterni members made sense of this initiative acting through the "universal partisanship" group style.
- The initiative took place involving group members acting mainly through the "informal autonomy" group style, though specific events called for other group styles. For example in the events set up in the association' venue that involved small audience group members in general behaved and coordinated themselves through the "enlarged cynical family" group style, which could include some of the events' attendees and could exclude some of the group members.
- Every group context was accompanied by backstage settings in which group members engaged in interactions filtered through the "enlarged cynical family" group style.

Though, this vision is very schematic, it doesn't possess a general value[1] and it extremely simplifies the complexity of the observed processes, it is useful to have an overview of the general process through which Esterni used to coordinate itself to set up its initiatives. This specific coordination allowed critical tensions among aspects pertaining to different logics of action to be smeared in different settings, regulated by different group styles. This avoided potential critical tensions to became open controversies in the single settings where Esterni's group life used to unfold. Further, the general dominance of "informal autonomy" in the specific architecture of groups styles that shaped Esterni group life shed light on the little inclusive outcomes this association was able to generate in spite of the big variety of its repertoire of actions. Indeed, this group style was associated to forms of actions that developed mainly through the mass media sphere and not in the construction of inclusive spaces. As final remarks of this chapter, let's consider in more length these last aspects, which have been now just shortly summarized.

A. CRITICAL TENSIONS SMEARED THROUGH DIFFERENT GROUP STYLE

The examples given in this chapter to describe the group styles shaping Esterni group life, together with those illustrated in the previous chapters to show Esterni's public activities, have stressed the variety of logics that composed this associations. At this respect it is useful to refer to the categories

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[1] Which refers to all the types of events the group used to set up.

Cefai (2006) used to describe the variety of different "logics" that compose associations. In particular, it is possible to see in the way Esterni "used" interns according to its "informal autonomy" group style a logic pertaining to "commercial companies" aiming at "optimize the use of human resources, to obey to an instrumental and utilitarian rationality" that "submit the association to the imperatives of productivity and profitability" (Cefai 2006 p. 14). When Riccardo made is misplaced intervention to understand why so few people had come to the "Public Design" event, the group was "reasoning in terms of performance"; according to the "logic of the industrial organization" Esterni was trying to adopt "methods of measure and control" that could regulate the association according to the principles of "effectiveness and predictability" (*ibidem*).

In the episode in which I told about my enrollment as a sociologist consultant I was acting with Esterni pursuing "purposes of general interests", carrying out a specific activity that had been funded by the province local government and that followed the "logic of the public service" (*ibidem*). Or again when Esterni members gathered in the "Tuesday general meeting" to discuss about the ongoing activities, the group acted according to the "logic of the democratic representation" (*ibidem*) that draw the legitimacy inside the association on the collective formal contribution of everybody to the group's activities. The very purposes of Esterni of generating public sociality can be linked to the logic of the "popular sovereignty" (*ibidem*) that tried to establish a form of local democracy in this case articulated in terms of a society equipped with spaces of public encounters and discussion among strangers. Also, these purposes link the observed association both to the "logic of the social cohesion" in which Esterni "regenerate social ties and renovate social relationships against the entropy of individualism" (*ibidem*). This logic of action is pursued drawing on another one, which is that of the "domestic life" where social relationship are regenerated in public events stressing the "pleasure of sharing and conviviality" (*ibidem*). Furthermore, the engagement of single members in Esterni often represented also their main activity and source of income and thus it had to confront with a logic of "individual satisfaction" according to which members had to find their own path in the horizon of their "individual autonomy" (*ibidem*).

The combination of all these logics of action in a single association may lead to the emergence of several types of critical tensions. The aspects of "exploitation of interns" and contradiction in the relation the group engaged with advertisement cited in the opening of the chapter were just two of many other possible examples at this respect. These aspects are useful to exemplify the fact that such critical, potentially disruptive, tensions "disappear" when looking at the variety of settings that composed the group everyday life and at the variety of group styles that shaped interactions taking place in them. This articulation of group life in different settings included local compromises among aspects pertaining to different order of worth and logics of actions. Different aspects were treated separately in different settings and the same aspect, or very similar ones (such as different aspects of the same event) were treated differently in different settings. The strict and stable times-space boundaries among different settings reduced to the minimum the emergence of open controversies among different logics and ways of acting and interacting pertaining to different group styles.

The maintenance of such a complex "architecture of group style" possessed its own costs. Firstly the fact that its pragmatic understanding on the part of group members in order to adequately

behave in the different group settings, required time and significant efforts. This is valuable both for the researcher wishing to understand how this group functioned but also for the new members, or interns, to which it was required to enter the group life in a relatively short period of time. The "accidents" new interns engaged themselves in, especially in their first period of internship experience, were wonderful occasions for the researcher that was looking for patterns of actions that shaped everyday group life, but they may represent also a significant cost for an association that recur to the work of an extremely high number of interns that change with an elevated frequency rate. Further, a particularly composite group life - that, for example, unfold through a variety of settings associated to different group styles – implies that the access to group styles and to the related solidarity ties (group bonds) is subordinated to the long standing engagement of members into the group life. This process is particularly visible considering the case of the "enlarged cynical family" group style but, though in different terms, is valuable also for the other outlined group styles. This is something that may help to understand the splits in the solidarity dimension internal to this group that have been underlined in previous qualitative studies conducted on Esterni (Sauger 2004; Nava 2004) and that in general do not ease the generation of enlarged solidarity ties capable of including all the members of a single group.

B. THE DOMINANCE OF THE "INFORMAL AUTONOMY" AND ESTERNI OUTCOMES

The inquiry on the architecture of group styles that I conducted in this chapter may be also useful to account for the outcomes Esterni produced in terms of generation of public sociality; in particular to account for the fact that, in spite of the big variety of the repertoire of actions used by this group, its initiatives mainly entailed dynamics that could be associated to those observed in the past chapter when speaking about the "consumption of sociality" events. The proposed argument at this respect states that the specific coordination among group styles that I've tried to describe in this chapter is what shaped Esterni activities. The same variety of group styles if differently combined would lead to different results. At the cost of being a little reductive, it is worth noting that Esterni's outcomes in terms of generation of inclusive togetherness have to be firstly linked to the fact that the architecture of group style through which its group life unfolded was dominated by the "informal autonomous" style. Indeed, the group cultural initiatives were mainly set up through this group style, which implied not only the optimization of interns resources but also a variety of other aspects that made these initiatives more close the ideal-type of the "consumption of sociality" than to all the other outlined in the previous chapter. These aspects include for example the concentration of the group's resources in setting up commercial media campaigns of advertising to attract massive audiences which in turn could guarantee media resonance to the events. Also, we have seen that the dominant business group style didn't leave any room for reflexive talks, not being these type of interventions of any direct substantial contribution for the group activities while the group interacted in meetings' settings. The only type of critical talks that this group style allowed to express had to take the shape of measuring and quantitatively controlling the association performance, following the principles of effectiveness and predictability typical of the "industrial organization logic of action" (Cefai 2006 p. 14). This for example was visible in the aforementioned

episode of the Tuesday general meeting where Riccardo made his intervention[1]. The other two group styles I outlined played a little part with respect to the one played by "informal autonomy". The "universal partisanship" group style shaped the meaning-making activities through which the group's initiatives were explored at length during interviews, and this style shaped also specific aspects of the initiatives the observed group used to set up. The "enlarged cynical family" group style shaped interactions and verbal exchanges among group members in many settings. But the public activities thought through the "universal partisanship" style were then re-elaborated through the "informal autonomy" one, and interactions developing through the "enlarged family " were confined to backstage settings. These were contexts that - as Goffman has shown - were extremely important for distanciating members from their roles, and, in general, for reliving tensions associated to role expectations, but played a little part in shaping Esterni's public initiatives.

Thus, on the one hand it is important to keep in mind that all the three observed group styles shaped the group life and the variety of activities (above depicted in chart number 4) Esterni engaged itself with. But, on the other hand, in order to understand the outcomes of such an engagement it is worth taking a closer look at how the three different group styles combined themselves in the everyday group life and the different parts they played in shaping each one of the initiatives this group set up. Finally, the analytical path developed in this chapter has shown specific advantages of using a perspectives focused on group styles instead of a strategic framing approach. Firstly, the analytical tools that the group style perspective make at disposal have allowed a textured and situated analysis of Esterni's everyday life. This analysis has been crucial to see that there was not a simple contrast between official statements framed to pursue specific targets and concrete practices that contradicted those claims, as it could have been possible to think observing the opening arguments of this chapter. Indeed, we started the chapter noting that in spite of the fact that Esterni officially said of contesting advertising, the group widely recurred to this activity to promote the group activities, and though declaring of feeling sorry for not paying interns' work, it widely exploited them for setting up its events. The group style perspective has allowed to see that there is no a simple opposition between "words" and "facts", because not only these elements are embedded in one another but they are also part of a variety of logics of actions that are used and re-interpreted through enabling and constraining situated patterns of actions (group styles). Further, the strategic framing perspective postulates that different (communicative) frames are strategically used to better pursue the group's purposes. The close observation I've conducted has revealed that this is something that not necessarily happen and the episodes described in this chapter are telling at this respect. For example it is possible to think that Riccardo's intervention, if taken seriously it could have helped the group to understand the reason why a few people had shown up at the event they were discussing about in that meeting. A group cannot always choose the frames of its communication. On the contrary, the analysis carried out in chapter, has shown as these frames are

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[1] The only setting in which reflexive talks are allowed and even encouraged is represented by the managing board meetings where the participants leave each other room to overtly question the overall meaning of the activities the group is carrying out. But, as we have seen, the access to this meeting was strictly limited and regulated.

normally embedded bundle of shared and situated assumptions that are difficult to change intentionally and that shape the group action in not always predictable ways.

In the next chapter the focus will remain on the group styles of the observed associations and on the link between the patterns of actions shaping group life and broader outcomes of production of sociality. The adopted perspective will come back to comparatively observed such aspects as they developed in different observed organizations and not in a single association, as it has been done in this chapter.

OPENING. "WHY NOT PARTY OURSELVES, THE FOOLS OF THE CUCCAGNA PROJECT?"

Sergio D was hired by the Cuccagna Alliance in mid 2006 with the purpose of "building the tools and the conditions allowing the widest active participation of citizens in the development of the Cuccagna Project"[1]. He has been professionally engaged in the CP for more than 3 years, until December 2009, devoting his energies mainly to form, lead and manage the Cuccagna Group for the Construction of the Participation (CGCP). More generally, during his working experience he has been engaged in a variety of ways in the CP that went much beyond what it was expected to do according to the professional agreement he had signed. Indeed, his engagement in the CP had not uniquely a professional basis but also a political one (Sergio D shared the CP's overall goals) and a personal one because he was personally tied by relationships of friendships to many activists and volunteers that were part of the CP.

Unprompted, toward the end of his three years and a half period of professional engagement, Sergio D decided to write a final document in which he openly express his reflections upon what he defined "crucial aspects of the CP"[2]. The document addressed the CP managing board and it was meant as a support to overcome some difficulties the Project was experiencing in that period. Indeed, apart from the reflections, the letters also contained also specific proposals. The document was called "On some problems internal to the Cuccagna Project" and the subtitle was

> "a reflection on the difficult answer to the following question: why after more than three years of working together it has not developed the habitude to go out at diner, once a month, all the volunteers and professionals engaged in the CP and PARTY OURSELVES, THE FOOLS OF THE CUCCAGNA PROJECT[3]?

The document focused some difficulties that, according to his author, derived from the cohabitation inside of the CP of a variety of logics of action. Some considerations contained in this document represent a good starting point for the inquiry developed in this chapter, whose subject is to show how different group styles enable and constrain differently the management of the coordination among different logics of action.

In the very first page of the document Sergio D wrote it was said that

> If to all the active participants were interviewed through a survey on their experience of the CP, the main answer to the question "which is the principal problem that you see for what it concerns the internal relationships of the Project?" would the most likely be "lack or difficulties in communication". These type of critics would address the Managing board and its politics : 'the Managing board do not coordinate' or 'it is not

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[1] Excerpt from the document called " Building the participation in the Cuccagna Project. Some preliminary intentions" (Costruire la partecipazione dentro il Progetto Cuccagna. Alcuni intenti preliminari) written by Sergio D at the beginning of his professional experience and approved by CP's managing board.

[2] From the internal document called "On some problems internal to the Cuccagna Project"

[3] Capital letters from the original.

good at coordinating', 'It works usually authoritatively' and 'without any motivation', 'interfere in the own group's affairs', and the same critics would probably affect the Secretariat.

According to viewpoint offered by Sergio D in his document, these type of critics would have come mainly from the volunteers engaged in the CP. But in the document Sergio D went on to show the reader other sides of the same problem and in particular which type of problems would raise professionals and citizens engaged in executive positions of the CP:

> if the same aforementioned survey's questions would be posed to the members of the Managing board and of the Secretariat it is very likely that the problem would came to be seen from the other side: 'everyone here does what he/she wants', 'we do give directions and circulars but there is not a real will to collaborate', 'for the events we set up many outside people come but almost all the internal activists disappear', 'there are professional opponents who uniquely critic without doing anything', 'there are people who set up interesting initiatives but it remains something exclusively for them', typical here would be the accusation of 'insensitivity toward the urgent and dramatic problem of the lack of funding'.

So, Sergio D was focusing on a problem of internal communication in the CP articulating it through supposed reciprocal accusations: " the basis critics the very 'high-handed' and distance/absence of the top and this who critics the 'lack of interest' and the 'short –sighted closure' of the basis". The problem of internal communication in the CP has a variety of "bad" consequences for the author of the document:

> "The existence of a gap between a general collective experience of great enthusiasm for the Project on the part of all the persons that have been approaching it and a 'climate' - in and between the variety of groups in which I've participated in and beyond them – of diffidence, dissatisfaction, suspect, mistrust, polemics towards other groups and in particular toward two executive groups: the Managing board of the CP and the secretariat"

Sergio D in the document stated that such a climate was indicated for example by the fact that the volunteers, professionals and activists engaged in the development of the CP had not taken the habit of having a diner together once a month, even if he personally made on several occasions such a proposal. The main cause that Sergio D in his document attributed to the problems of internal communication was considered- using the words of the same author – the existence of a "double logic in the CP". According to Sergio D, this double logic referred on the one hand to the "logic of the participation" that aimed at involving citizens in the construction of a sociable public space and, on the other hand, the economic goals that such a project required to fulfill, which were particularly serious in the case of CP because of the funds that the restructuring of the XVII century farmhouse required.

The empirical evidences collected through my field observation confirmed the reflections developed by Sergio D but I propose a different argument to account for the difficulties the CP experienced in managing and coordinating different logics of actions. Indeed, on the one hand I've personally felt the general climate of reciprocal mistrust Sergio hinted at[1]. Through my direct participation in the various groups of the CP I have had the possibility also to note that, differently

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[1] I've collected a significant quantities of empirical evidences at this respect, these have been introduced in the past chapters, they will be described in this one but most of them I haven't had to possibility to cite in this dissertation and thus will remain on my field notes.

from what Sergio D assumed the conflict and argument he talked about didn't simply oppose one group to other ones. Instead different logics of actions were at the same time present inside a single group, with a variety of outcomes passing from one group to other ones. Indeed, a broader perspective on non-profit associations reveals that by definition this type of organizations possess an hybrid and ambivalent nature (Ranci 1999 p. 132). Such a nature derive from the fact that non profit groups "have to delegate the responsibility to pursue their mission to an organizing structure that inevitably alter their initial original functions" (*ibidem*). As for many other studies of third sectors groups, also for the CP conflicts arouse from external pressures that put into question consolidated forms of action (Ranci 1999 p. 138). For the CP such pressures consisted mainly in the need of finding the adequate funds to finance the restructuring works of the ancient Cuccagna farmhouse. According to non-profit studies this type of pressures provoke two specific processes: firstly they weaken the associations' embeddedness in the "local community"; secondly they provoke crisis in the internal solidarity of the associations (Horch 1994). Thus, the picture Sergio D depicted seems to be the most consistent with what many non-profit studies claimed. The argument I'm proposing states that that picture was partial, and it especially aims at accounting for the outcomes Sergio D observed . Indeed, it is certainly true that

> The moment of great difficulty of the project- the central and dramatic issue of a lack in funding of more than 1,7 millions of euro – didn't become an occasion to 'draw together the threads', to bound together to face the difficulties, with a multiplication of the energies, a release of the conflicts and a development of the creativity and the unity of everybody. But instead the difficult time assumed more often a breaking up function, or at least it accentuates the already existing conflicts and gaps

But it is also worth adding that those gaps and conflicts articulated themselves differently in the different group contexts were the everyday life of CP concretely unfolded. Differences at this respect are the most significant because in some cases the augmented relevance of the lack of money experienced by the CP arose tensions that torn groups and risked of breaking up their internal bonds (as in the case CC), but in other cases it united and reinforced the group bonds (as for the Green PT), in other it didn't affect at all the group's life (as in the case of the Art PT) and in some other it has resulted in a specialization of the groups (Everybody's money PT) or of parts of single groups (Esterni) in one of the two poles articulating the "double logic" described by Sergio D. In some cases the attempts of keeping together both the poles of the "double logic" didn't succeed except at the cost of the internal splitting of the group or of the abandoning of some of its members. This chapter aims at accounting for such differences on the basis of the group styles of the observed cultural associations. Ranci stated that "a change in organization may hope to succeed only when the organization is capable of keeping an equilibrium between its identity function and its management function" (Ranci 1999 p. 144). The chapter aims at specifying the institutional conditions of group life allowing the observed organizations to reach such an equilibrium. The argument proposed states that this capacity of reaching an equilibrium do not come from scratch, or it is each time improvised, but it is tied to the patterns that shape interactions among group members in the everyday setting where group life unfolds. Thus, this chapter will continue the inquiry conducted in the past one on the institutional properties of everyday interactions among group members, but enlarging the perspective from one group (and the variety of settings in which its everyday life unfolded) to a variety of groups and their changes over time. The aim remains that of

shedding light on and accounting for the differences in the outcomes produced by the observed groups in reaching their sociality goals.

1. CGCP'S "DILIGENT LEARNING" GROUP STYLE

The purpose of the Cuccagna Group for the Construction of the Participation (CGCP) was that of "building the active participation of citizens in the Cuccagna Project (CP)"[1]. With "active participation" the group meant involving ordinary citizens in the production of public sociality beyond their simple attending of events. CGCP pursued this goal mainly supporting the setting up of new civic groups where citizens acted collectively and autonomously to pursue their own shared goals. New stable groups would involve ordinary citizens in the overall CP in a more pro-active than their simple taking part in events.

FROM IGNORING TO MONOPOLIZING THE "DOUBLE LOGIC"

Though over time CGCP kept acting through the same group style – that I called "diligent learning" - this experienced significant internal shifts. I have already described (in chapter 4) how reciprocal obligations tying group members in group context changed over time and how this implied different type of group members' responsibility in carrying out certain association's tasks, such as playing the role of moderators during the Participatory Event the group used to set up. It is worth remembering that such an higher level of responsibility didn't came by itself and it didn't affect all the activities in which group members engaged themselves while in group contexts. The change was elicited by the indication of the group's leader that had asked group members to take more direct responsibility in the management of the Participatory Events, and not in the rest of activities this group used to carried out. The way the CGCP related to the overall tension between participation and fund-raising exigencies has followed the same pattern: initially the group ignored it and just when the group leader brought it in the group settings group members started to widely discuss it. At a certain point, the coordination of the aforementioned "double logic" became even the main group activity. It is possible to account for the way the group managed, over time, exigencies pertaining to the "double logic" by looking carefully at the group style that shaped the CGCP's everyday life.

According the official initial mandate at the basis of the hiring of Sergio D by the CP' managing board, the sociologist had to set up and manage a new CP group. This had to focus on fostering the *participation* of everyday citizens in the CP, that is to say uniquely on one of the two poles of the aforementioned overall tension affecting the CP. Indeed, all the group's activities during its first two phases were aimed at making actively participate new citizens in the CP. In that period the overall tension was completely absent from CGCP meetings. Though, single members of CGCP knew in detail the financial needs that affected the overall CP because they were usually also members of other PT groups or because they had been informed about these needs in informal conversations with other "activists" of the CP. In spite of this, CGCP members never openly

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[1] From the document "Cuccagna partecipazione. Intenti preliminari" written by Sergio de La Pierre at the begging of its professional experience in the CP.

expressed their concerns about the lack of money suffered by the CP while they were in the settings where CGCP's everyday life used to unfold. I heard them expressing this type of concerns while they were in different settings from those where group life unfolded. For example, one of the group's members while engaging by e-mail in a conversation with other members of the CP wrote:

> When I think about the mountain of money that is necessary for the management and running of the CP I'm quite scared, I don't know if and where the money will come from, I see this as a major problem because it risks of stopping all the efforts the CGCP is doing, maybe there will not be any development of the CP and thus of the CGCP (Paolo).

This intervention was expressed in a e-mail sent during the CGCP's first phase, it was a part of a larger conversation that included many other CP's activists and also CGCP members but not the group's leader. The answers this interventions elicited in the following e-mails clearly showed that the concern was shared by many other "activists". In particular, Sandra, another CGCP member, articulated the concern in an elaborated way that clearly indicated that he had been thinking about it before.

> I'm not able in finding any mediation or a *trait d'union* between our voluntary work of "small ants" and the construction of a space which will succeed in working as a whole and that needs a lot of money to do that. Personally I'm quite short-sighted and I'm only really good at looking at the short-term… But I think a higher level of interconnection is necessary between the various levels within the Project.. (Sandra)

The excerpt expresses the typical problem of the lack of coordination and communication inside a large loose network (Wuthnow 1999) and it explicitly refers to the lack of money suffered by the PC. Both interventions clearly reveal that who expressed them were widely concerned in that period with the problem of raising the money necessary to run the CP and with the tensions deriving from the difficulties in coordinating that dimension of the project with the social voluntary work made by many volunteer participants of the CP. Though some of the group members were largely worried about these aspects, they never expressed them in the settings of CGCP's meetings. According to the argument I'm proposing in that period expressing these concerns in the settings where CGCP's group life unfolded would have meant explicitly threatening the group own sense of unity and internal solidarity.

Then, during the group's third phase[1], something seemed to have changed. Indeed, group members started to explicitly and publicly articulate the problem of the lack of money that affected the CP while in the settings of CGCP's meetings. The group started even to schedule this topic in the discussing agenda of meetings and it decided group members should have contributed to come up with good ideas to help the CP to figure out where to find the necessary money that it lacked. In the meetings of the group its members started to widely express their concerns for the fund-raising problems affecting the CP with interventions that until that period had been left to backstage settings or context that in any case where not those of the group's meeting. During these meetings, group members increasingly recognized publicly the importance of providing the CP of adequate

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[1] See chapter 3 for the stages in which I've divided the life of CGCP. The main apparent difference between the group second and third phases of the group was the dramatic shrink in the number of group members. For more details on the distinction between these two phases see chapter 4, paragraph 3.

funds and decided to start using the "participatory techniques"[1] depicted in the "Participation guidelines" to figure out new solutions. The CGCP's leader, in the occasion of the meeting including all the volunteers, activists, and professionals of the CP (the "Active" meeting) held on the 15th of October 2009, proposed the setting up of a new group entirely devoted to figuring out new productive ideas to fund the CP. The new group was called "Everybody's money" to indicate the fact that the lack of money was something affecting everybody inside the CP and not uniquely those who were devoted to running the CP as professionals or from "executive" positions. The group aimed at monopolizing all the fund-raising efforts that were taking place in the CP and coordinate them according the "Participation guidelines". But adhesions to this group came uniquely on the part of CGCP' members. The group lasted just three months and then dissolved without being capable of coming up with any productive fund-raising idea. Nevertheless, this group, on the contrary of other CP associations, had at least tried to contribute to solve the lack of money suffered by the CP, changing over time radically the way it related to this topic. What needs to be understood is which conditions encouraged the change that made this group moving from completely ignoring the economic difficulties suffered by the CP to pro-actively striving to came up with solutions to could alleviate such difficulties. Why previously the group never publicly discussed this topic during its meetings, though expressing it in other contexts, and then it even eliciting the setting up of a new group to take charge of the economic side of the CP?

One could think firstly that the CP over time worsened the lack of money it suffered and this was the main reason why just at a certain point the CGCP took up this aspect of the overall project to which it belonged (the CP). This is at least partially true. Indeed, over the two years of my field research the CP certainly worsened its financial needs because of the start of the restructuring works that in the meanwhile had happened. But this account miss important aspects and especially it is not able of entirely account for the reasons why the group dramatically and abruptly passed from ignoring the economic difficulties of the PC to dedicating most of its scarce resources to manage them to the point of aspiring to monopolize the coordination of all the efforts oriented at this respect.

The argument I'm proposing link the shift in the way the CGCP related to the financial needs of the CP to the functioning of the group style that shaped the group life of this association. Indeed, looking at CGCP's group style allow to see important elements of continuities in the way the group related to the financial needs of CP both when ignoring them or when it tried to monopolized them. For example the fact that the group in both cases worked *in isolation* from the other groups that composed the CP. Indeed, in its first phase the group focused on the participatory side of the CP, and especially in learning the "Participation guidelines" and techniques. Then, the CGCP set up the new group of "Everybody's money", but adherences to this group came uniquely from the same participants of CGCP and the activity of such a group went on parallel to the activities promoted by other groups of the CP with the same official mission of raising money. The group moved from ignoring to focusing most of its efforts in the management of the fundraising problem but in both cases the group worked in isolation from the other groups composing the CP. To understand why

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[1] These included brainstorming meetings, Open Space Technologies events and other "creative" methodologies.

group members never raised concerns about the economic side of the CP in the settings of CGCP's everyday life during the first two periods of life of this group and then suddenly centered all the group's activities in trying to solve the CP's economic problems, it is necessary to take a closer look at the group style of CGCP. This will be the subject of the next paragraph.

"DILIGENT LEARNING" GROUP STYLET

I've named the dominant group style that structured the group life of CGCP as "diligent learning" because interactions among group members were patterned in a way similar to the master/disciples relationship. To be more precise, there were two main channels through which group members interactions unfolded in the everyday group contexts. The first one included exclusively group members and it was parallel to interactions among students in a class setting and the second channel paralleled interactions between students and their teacher[1]. Group's members attended the CGCP's official meetings firstly to learn the "Participation guidelines" from the group's leader. This was the only group member that possessed the recognized power of deciding upon the contents discussed in the group meetings and upon how to discuss them. The other group members were mainly learning from the group leader how to enact the "Participation guidelines" and thus their interventions were always subject to his approval. This was the most evident thinking about the exerts cited at the opening of chapter 4 when the group had to reject Marco's intervention even though it was shared by most of the other group members[2].

The group's leader (Sergio D) was a sociologist that strived to equip the CGCP with the customs that he knew where best suited for the attainment of goals of social inclusion and pro-active citizen participation[3]. But he was teaching the group those customs through other customs, that I have named as "diligent learning". The group's members were defined as good members when they acted as good students. Then, during the group's third phase group members started to act as teachers toward other members or groups of the CP with respect to specific topics that the group leader had indicated. Let's see how this group style worked by looking closely at the three features defining the group style according to Eliasoph and Lichterman (2003).

GROUP BOUNDARIES

The widest map in which the group used to put itself was extremely vague: collective conversations in which the group engaged itself during group meetings rarely included external single or collective subjects. Further, the group leader often explicitly rejected interventions that focused

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[1] It is worth underlining that the writer is aware that there are a variety of ways a student may relate to his teacher, both inside the same cultural context and, especially, comparing different contexts, as it shows for example the empirical research "Ad una spanna da terra" (Sclavi 2003) on the subject of high school reletionships between teachers and students in Italy and the US. Though, the relationship between a teacher and his/her students if taken in its most general form may be taken as a good metaphor of the way a civic group structure its everyday interactions, as I hope to have shown in this paragraph.

[2] See p.

[3] Theoretical references of Sergio de La Pierre are the "participatory methodology principles" illustrated in chapter 3.

specific subjects that were part of the wider world in which the group was situated. The group aimed at eliciting ordinary citizens pro-active participation "starting from the local neighborhood", but when a group of neighbors had collected signatures and presented a petition to the local authorities complaining about the CP, the group leader had authoritatively proclaimed that the group couldn't "stop in every external problem it run into". Group members' interventions that articulated the social map in which the group acted differently from how the group leader's assumption about such a map represented threats to the group's sense of cohesion. Indeed, alternative maps made group's members something different from students learning from the teacher inside an overall context that was given and couldn't be questioned. Group members could ask about the overall map in which the group was situated but they couldn't discuss about the contents of that map, or bring corrections in it. For example Alessandra repeatedly proposed the group about "establishing connection with other groups" and proposed herself to carry out this task:

> I think we should establish relationships with other groups, I know at least of couple of associations that would be interested at this respect, and I could invite them to come here, or fix a meeting with them. But then I don't know exactly what to tell them, maybe this is a premature action for our group (Alessandra)

Alessandra had anticipated the critic that Sergio D would have addressed her just shortly after her intervention, saying that the group in that moment had to "focus on its own", and especially in learning the "participatory and relational competences while carrying out interviews" with, very generically defined, neighbors.

In the first two phases of the group's life, the group was entirely committed to acquire specific relational skills through a schedule of readings and collective exercises. Over time the exercises became more and more refined and during the third phase Sergio D decided to make the group play an exercise that was meant to make the group members collectively imagine the establishing and development of relationships with regular citizens that had entered the building of the Cuccagna Farm pushed by curiosity. Indeed, one of the function the CGCP was meant to play once the restructuring works of the farm had ended consisted in functioning as an "incubator of the participation"[1], that is to say to facilitate the active involvement of citizens in the Cuccagna project and, a step before, tell them about the CP and making them interested in contributing to its active development. This meant especially welcome new-comers in the restricted spaces of the Cuccagna farm. A delicate and crucial task which according to Sergio D required the acquisition of specific competencies on the part of the group members. The leader of CGCP knew that in order to acquire such competences was not sufficient to read documents and study them (as the CGCP members had done) but it was necessary to make the group collectively imagine aloud the concrete development of possible new relationships. So the group leader made group members play an exercise consisting in a simulation of interactions between the group's members and possible new comers in the imagined setting of the restructured Cuccagna farmhouse. The exercise was played during the group's official meeting that was held in one of the group members house in a Saturday afternoon of Spring 2008. Sergio D gave the instructions of the exercise and let the group by itself for about 15 minutes in order to decide who would have played which role in the performance exercise that

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[1] From the internal document called "Participatory guidelines".

he would have then looked at. The group imagined a variety of social urban characters passing by the Cuccagna farm and asking information about the CP to one of CGCP members, which didn't limit themselves to inform the passing strangers but tried also to persuade them to engage him/her self in the CP. The exercise was played imagining social types such as a couple of gay architects with their dog, an old rich woman, young hipsters, teenagers and so on and so for. CGCP members had a real good time engaging themselves in such an exercise because most of them played fanciful interactions, with passing-by citizens that stubbornly resisted the attempts of persuasion.

The group engaged itself in imaging aloud the relationships it wanted to build and possible difficulties and frustrations arising from these. The group was apparently imagining aloud future relationships in order to be prepared for then actually creating them. But the group was still playing this exercise through its "diligent learning" group style. The observed exercise was not part of the group customary way of speaking and interacting among members, though Sergio D had wished it was. Members engaged in that exercise because they had been told to do that. Indeed, I noticed that members were mainly concerned in playing their roles the best as possible without really paying attention to the contents and the general meaning of "imaging aloud" possible relationships. The act of imagining the new relationships the group wanted to build were not part of the everyday interactions of the group, or something that aroused "spontaneously" from the participants verbal interactions when the group was facing some of the concrete problems of its everyday life or engaging itself in conversations on other topics. The act of collective imagination was part of the official schedule of the group's activity and this was entirely decided by its leader. Also the in depth interviews carried by CGCP members in the first phase of the group life with locals members of the neighborhood equally represented something that was scheduled in the group's activities and that had been done not primarily for an outward purpose of getting to know better the interviewees but for the inward purpose of refining the relational competencies of the group's members.

The social map in which the group positioned itself was quite rarefied and it was composed mainly by the Projectual Tables and the other groups comprised in the CP that were from time to time cited during the group's discussion that took place in meetings. PTs were conceived mainly as an extension of the group that were supposed to acquire more and more autonomy but until a certain level, because when the autonomy from the CGCP overcame a certain level this started to represent a problem[1]. Indeed, relationships with these groups reproduced the same teacher/students patterns observed in the customary way group members related to each other. PTs had to behave as good students, observing the roles established by the CGCP.

SPEECH NORMS

Speech norms of group members interventions were also formally regulated by the "Participation guidelines"[2] that the group committed itself to. These guidelines prescribed mainly to group members to "avoid polemic talk" but instead give the group discussion a "creative, responsible and

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[1] See chapter 4 at this respect, in particular paragraph.

[2] See chapter 3 for more detail on this document.

pro-active contribution"[1]. "Participation guidelines" prescribed also to equip in advance every meeting with an agenda of scheduled topics to be discussed. The scheduled agenda was prepared by Sergio D, just occasionally with the help of a CGCP member that offered to help him a couple of days before the meeting was going to take place. During meetings people sit in circle and Sergio D stood next to a flip chart where he had previously written the subjects on the discussing agenda and where he took note of what group members said during the meetings. As his physical position indicated, Sergio D had a leading role in these meetings: he started the meeting, he introduced things to be discussed, he managed turns to talk, often cutting someone when the intervention became too long or out of context, or simply out of the scheduled agenda. The leading role lately during the second and third phase of the group sometimes passed to CGCP members at turn, because the competences necessary to lead a collective discussion were among those that members were supposed to acquire through their active participation in CGCP. When a member lead the meeting, Sergio D still remained the reference point to him/her for assistance and constant confirmation of what the member-mediator did. Every member leading a collective discussion continued constantly to look at Sergio D's eyes, in search of a sign of confirmation and approval of what he/she was doing.

During the meetings everyone was normally expected to give his opinion and if this didn't happen, the discussion mediator explicitly asked the member who was not speaking to tell everybody his opinion on the discussed topic. The mediator of the discussion tried to maintain in this way a democratic atmosphere in the conversation. But when people talked too much, with interventions that were judged as too long they were asked to leave room to other members that hadn't spoken yet. It was difficult to exactly know what was the right length of an intervention without directly participating in the meetings. The good member was expected to be capable of speaking spontaneously, not for too short but also not for too much. The exact lasting of each talking was difficult to describe abstractly but you could knew it participating in CGCP meetings, because the exact length varied in different occasions and it was each time decided by Sergio D's decision.

When there was something the group had to decide on, "Participation guidelines" prescribed avoiding voting but instead reaching an "unanimity shared solution through collective discussion"[2] among group members. The guidelines added that "deciding by voting represents a group's failure of its capacity of discussing and reaching a shared decision"[3]. Actually, no decision during my fieldwork was taken according to such a procedure, because the discussions in which the group engaged itself didn't lead to change members' opinions. More often, the discussions resulted in collective argument among single group members that kept the whole group from engaging itself in other activities. As a result of such disputes several group members left the group and more

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[1] Excerpt from the document with the group guidelines.

[2] From the internal document called "Participation guidelines"

[3] Ibidem.

generally no one was happy with the tense climate the quarrels created[1]. For example Giulia, a CGCP member, left the group explicating claiming that she

> "didn't enjoy anymore participating in its activities because of the arguments that these entailed"(Giulia)

The "Participation guidelines" that had to shape the group conversations had a very hard time in being implementing in these meetings, because they stroke with different customary ways of talking and being together that CGCP members enacted with their behaviors. "Participation guidelines" were not the pattern of speech norms that structured group members interactions in the context of group meetings. The actual patterns resulted from the interaction, on the hand, of the efforts of the group leader/teacher to structure the group conversations according to the customs described in the "Participation guidelines" and, on the other hand, the attempts of the group members to follow such prescribed customs, interpreting and using them in a specific way. Group members sincerely understood the importance of acquiring new customs and they strongly tried to acquire them as spontaneous ways of doing things, following Sergio D's instructions. They never succeeded to make the customs proposed by Sergio D as part of their group style, instead they created expedients to avoid to acquire such customs which reinforced themselves over time and became part of their group style in action in the everyday group activities. The most evident of these expedients consisted in the fact that every time a member realized he/she was going to say something differently from what the "Participation guidelines" would have prescribed he/she justified in advance his intervention by saying that in that moment he was speaking as a member of another group of the CP and not as CGCP 's member. There was an expression that became commonly used for this function in the group's meetings. Such an expression was based on the metaphor of "wearing the hat of…". Every time a member knew that the intervention he was going to make couldn't receive the official approval of the master/leader, he/she used to premise that "in saying this I'm wearing the hat of … group", specifying the name of Cuccagna Cooperative, Cuccagna ciclofficina, Esterni, one of the PT, or also one of the other organizations that formed the Cuccagna Alliance. Indeed, the members of the CGCP were in most of the cases also members of other CP groups. The metaphor of the "hat" was so widespread in the members' interventions during my fieldwork that it represented the object of wisecracks and jokes such as the following one:

> I think we should really bring with us several hats and wear them when speaking in the meetings. But I should bring so many hats…

This joke was said during informal conversations among groups members just after a meeting where several members used the metaphor of the hat to avoid following the "Participation guidelines" in their interventions. This linguistic expedient allowed members to speak differently from what the official "Participation guidelines" prescribed and especially reinforced a master/disciple group style where the master tolerated the members to momentarily elude the prefixed rules.

GROUP BONDS

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[1] An example of that climate can be found in the opening example of chapter 4.

In chapter 4 we have seen that the reciprocal obligations that tied group members while they were in the group contexts changed over time, and in particularly they acquired an higher level of personal responsibility after the group radically diminished the number of its members. We also considered that this responsibility was limited to the management of the Participatory Events that the group used to held to set up new groups (the Participatory Tables, PT). Especially this shift had came from an explicit invitation on the part of the group leader and thus it was embedded in the "diligent learning" group style.

Indeed, generally the tension that affected *group bonds* of CGCP during my field research were similar to those I've hinted at in the previous paragraph. In this case also there was a set of official prescriptions that were used through the filter of the "diligent learning" group style. Also in this case the result was the reinforcement of the master/disciples group style or the abandonment of the group on the part of CGCP' members. This doesn't mean that the customs shaping the customary way group's members related to each other were entirely decided by the master. For example rules governing the entrance of a new member were just formally those decided by the group's leader with reference to the "Participation guidelines"[1]. The pattern that shaped group members interactions was that of "diligent learning" and this was the result of the interaction between the official "Participation guidelines" and the customized ways in which group members related to each other. For example, the official "Participation guidelines" prescribed that relations among members should have followed the "Seven rules of the Art of listening" articulated by the Italian anthropologist and sociologist Marienalla Sclavi (2006). These rules represent general invitations to adopt communicative attitudes that elicit the emergence of reflexive knowledge about the interactions we are engaged in our everyday life. Such rules stress the importance of the being aware of the dynamics that may lead to not recognized misunderstandings in interpersonal communication. Group members were anxious of learning such rules in details but they didn't really try to enact them. The "diligent learning" group style defined the good member as someone that was anxious to listen and learn from the master as well from the other members about whatever topic. Indeed, group members articulated their desires of learning with reference to an astonishing variety of issues. The listening and learning oriented style was in the meeting settings something more general, that included generally every possible aspects. Members were approved if they presented themselves as someone from which it was possible to learn something. Once, for example, Sara was introducing the French game of the "petanque" as a possible activity for elderly people in the Cuccagna farm. In Italy we have an equal game, called "Bocce", and to introduce the game it would have been sufficient to speak about the "Bocce"[2]. Sara didn't took that way. She spent about 15 minutes explaining the "petanque" game and its traditional roots in the south of France street life. Such a description assumed people were interested in knowing in detail the game,

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[1]With that example I've shown that the rules fixed by Sergio to decide upon my entrance into the group were not shared, or even understood, by the group's members. Indeed, Sergio fixed a specific meeting to decide upon my entrance as an active member of the group, while for all the other members this was not necessary because they personally already knew me.

[2] The only difference between *Boccie* and *Petanque* is that in the latter the balls with which the game is played are of a smaller size. The rules of the two games are equal.

not just the rules but also its historical geographical and social origins. Indeed, all the group members appreciated Sara's intervention and the group leader didn't stop her as he normally would have done with such a long and out of the scheduled agenda intervention.

Ties among CGCP members were not personalized, though Sergio D wished they were. The group's leader proposed several times the group to meet outside the Cuccagna farm, to spend time together, for example by having a diner in a restaurant or hiking in the hills, but none of such proposals was ever accepted by the group. The group didn't use to spent any time outside the settings of the formal meetings in convivial occasions, even if these possibilities had been overtly proposed by the group's leader. People rarely knew details of each other lives, like for example their jobs or where they lived. No one asked to me anything personal when I was a member of the group. Friendship may or may not develop among students of the same class, but in any case these are not what define them as students. Such a condition derive primarily from the relation they collective engage with their teacher. Group bonds of CGCP were also characterized by little trust as I soon realized by participating in the group. More often it was the jealousy and the envy that characterized the way members related to each other. For example on the occasion of my hiring in the CP as a sociologist with the purpose of carrying out a specific empirical research on the neighborhood where the Cuccagna farm was settled, I soon became the target of many suspects and accusations on the part of other members of the group[1]. On that occasion I discovered that - on the contrary of what Putnam would have predicted - trust was not part of the defining element of the reciprocal bonds among members of the same civic groups. Indeed, I received a variety of accusations which claimed that my real intentions were different from the ones I was explicitly claiming. But this was not in contradiction with respect to the master/disciple group style and in particular with the fact that competitive relationships may develop among students of the same class.

The variety of features composing a single group style are in consistency among themselves and, especially, they cannot be reciprocally in contradiction. The mistrust among the same group's members didn't contradict the fact that they acted as "disciples" with respect to the "master". Instead, what could directly compromise the dominant group style was the introduction of discussing subjects on the part of the "disciples" that were not part of the official meeting agenda approved by the master. This is what happened when Marco during a meeting overtly raised the subject of the relation with the neighbors and insisted on the urgency of open a discussion on it[2]. Such a subject was not included in the group scheduled activities and in that meeting agenda and thus was considered as a waste of time on the part of Sergio D. The insistence of Marco openly threatened the group sense of unity and not by chance it resulted in the menace of Sergio D to resign from the group if its members continued in bringing up subjects of discussion that were outside the scheduled agenda.

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[1] The episode is reported in chapter 4 and partially in the methodological appendix.

[2] This episode is reported in the opening paragraph of chapter 4.

The same dynamic observed with respect to the topic of the relationship with the neighbors occurred also every time a member, during the first two phases of the group's life, openly raised subjects related to the fund-raising problems suffered by the CP. Indeed, every time a member expressed his concerns for the lack of money suffered by the CP during the CGCP's official meeting these were systematically ignored. Everyone in the group realized the seriousness of the problem of the lack of money suffered by the CP. Also Sergio D was aware of the problem, but when Paola during a meeting proposed to include the topic in the discussing agenda for the next meeting he told her that

> the group cannot deploy his efforts also to manage the problem of fund raising because in this moment our energies must concentrate in concluding the formative path we have been doing until now (Sergio D).

The topic of the CP's lack of money remained out of the discursive horizon of the group's discussions because its leader had decided it. Things changed just when Sergio D decided it was the moment for taking up the issue and devote the group's efforts in supporting the CP in finding the money it necessitated. Starting from that moment the group concentrated his efforts in using the participatory skills it had acquired for helping the CP to raise the money that were lacking for the works of reconstruction of the Cuccagna farmhouse.

The lack of money suffered by the CP, though represented a crucial concern for all the participants in the CP, could not be overtly discussed in CGCP's meetings, because of the group style that shaped such meetings. In particular the topic couldn't be introduced on the part of group's members without the approval of the group leader because this would have meant to compromise the group internal sense of solidarity. The group style of the CGCP didn't allow a change in the group agenda on the part of its members because this directly threatened the internal solidarity of the group.

2. CUCCAGNA COOPERATIVE (CC) AND THE PARTISANSHIP GROUP STYLE

The Cuccagna Cooperative was the most ancient of all the associations comprised in the CP. Indeed, it represented the first group that had been formed more than 10 years to develop the Cuccagna Project. It was

> "born in 1998 from the initiative of some citizens of Milan 'Zone 4' motivated by their shared need of creating opportunities of meetings, sharing, solidarity and to contrast isolation and exclusion. It has been set up with the specific purpose of recuperating the abandoned Cuccagna farmhouse, to make this structure became an active laboratory of urban sociality, a everyday point of reference, open to the cultural, artistic, leisure, and convivial initiatives of the locale"[1].

While the CP developed, it increasingly required a more structured organizing form and for this reason the CC lead the process of formation of the Cuccagna Alliance. But over time the CP played an increasingly marginal part in the development of the CP, and at the same time dramatically dropped the number of its members. The group kept on existing even though it shrank its activities, limiting to held group meetings to discuss about the ongoing initiatives in which the CP was engaged in. But in these meetings topics related to the economic difficulties experienced by the CP

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[1] From the CP website http://www.cuccagna.org/portal/IT/handle/?page=chisiamo_consorzio

had a real hard time in being discussed. Something similar from what happened in the CGCP but the reasons in this case - though equally having to do with the association's dominant group style – differ from what I have tried to illustrate in the past paragraph. I have termed the dominant pattern that shaped action and interactions among members of CC as "participative partisanship". Such a group style was dominant inside CC but it was not an exclusive prerogative of this group. On the contrary, the "participative partisanship" group style was present at least partially also inside other groups of the CP. The specific argument proposed in this part of the chapter states that the way the "participative partisanship" group style structured CC's meetings made not easy for the group members to raise topics relating the economic dimensions of the CP. Let's consider in detail such an argument.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN PARTICIPATION AND THE MARKET

The fact that the CP had to fund itself was conceived by CC members as a betrayal of the original spirit that animated the Cuccagna Project at its beginning when the CC was the only association that developed the Cuccagna Project in that period. Indeed, members of the CC used to conceive the main group's mission that of preserving the original grassroots spirit of participation that initially animated the CP. The group, implicitly and often explicitly, conceived itself as in opposition to all the other groups inside the CP that worked with an openly market-oriented logic to raise the money that the CP lacked.

The money served to fund the restructuring work of the ancient Cuccagna farm, but members of the CC reapeatedly stated the

> our concern is represented by the people that form the CP, not the walls of the farm[1]

While, at least officially, for many other PT groups the market was a means to create a broader participation, the CC saw the market in opposition to the participation that it wanted to create. According to the CP viewpoint, a vaguely defined participation of citizens was the priority to which the CP had to dedicate its energies, instead of devoting them to fund-raising activities. "participative partisanship" implied a "sense of sacrifice for the cause" (Lichterma 2005 p. 202) of defending the original spirit of participation inside the CP against the invasion of market-oriented logics.

"PARTICIPATIVE PARTISANSHIP"

GROUP BOUNDARIES

The social map of this group divided single or collective subject that were internal or external to the CP on the basis of who was primarily concerned with the participation of ordinary citizens and who was not.

> Restructuring the walls of the farm is certainly important, but this is not our business and for this reason we cannot be concerned with that. We are simple citizens and we want to remain as such, I don't want to became

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[1] From field of the CC group meetings.

> anything else, I've a profession who is not certainly satisfying but for the moment I want to keep it. I'm engaged in the CP as a simple citizen and as such I want to go on. For this reason I'm concerned with the participation of other everyday citizens and I'm worried with the fact that this is more and more lacking from the CP (Aldo).

This short talk opened the annual meeting of the CC devoted to the approval of the balance sheet on the part of its members[1]. This intervention addressed the audience tracing a fundamental distinction inside the CP, distinguishing who was still concerned with the participation from who had became a professional and had been hired by the CP's managing board to pursue specific tasks that "simple citizens" couldn't have carried out in their free time. The intervention tell the group who it was with respect to who. It served to reinforce the CC sense of identity and tie its members together, in a moment when the conversations held in most of the other groups of the CP were mainly concerned with the problem of how to raise enough money to fund the restructuring works of the farm. That statement served to set a different agenda from the dominant one inside the CP and to make clear the point that they wanted to distinguish themselves from the other CP groups. According to CC, who was were mainly concerned with the fund-raising problem didn't realize that the CP was going more and more faraway from its original spirit in favor of a market orientation, or was someone that realized it but it had a specific interest in making this happen. The latter assumption was often attributed to Esterni, one of the group that was most present in the social of CP.

> This farm is becoming the venue for events set up by business organization, as those organized by Esterni here. This was not what we had in mind when we started the CP, and I don't want to see the farm becoming simply the venue for Esterni's events, we have fought and we are still fighting to get something different (Umberto)

Esterni was conceived to have an economic interest in the CP, and in particular of wanting to make the farm the venue of its events, as it was partially already happening according to them. Indeed, Esterni, especially during the good season, set up events that previously used to host in its venue (such as the bar-trattoria), even though in order to raise money to fund the CP. Esterni was working for the development of the CP, but this was ignored and this group was observed with great suspect. The social map of CGCP included members of other groups that do not possessed an economic interest but whose conscience simply needed to be awaken because they didn't realize what was "really" going on in the CP. The conscience raising function was carried out by members of CC with telling stories such as the one Daniele (a CC member) used to tell on several occasions:

> From time to time I'm asked to say what is participation according to my opinion, I'm used to answer by telling them an interesting story. More and more local councils implement what they call 'participative policies' but this doesn't mean that such policies are necessarily really participative. For example in my village the mayor made the villagers choose the color of the new benches that were going to install in the village park. How do you would call such a policy? It is something of no real importance at all, and I wouldn't call it a participatory policy (Daniele, CC member)

I've heard this story at least 8 times during my fieldwork, told in slightly different versions always by CC members. These stories were told during informal conversation among the group's members

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[1] As some of other groups inside the CP, the membership in the CC required the payment of a fixed amount. On the contrary to all the other groups of the CP, the CC used to convoke all its members once a year for the formal approval of the association balance sheet.

or were also told as a special warning during other groups meetings including people that were also CC members. They represented a way to try to convince that the participation inside the CP was more and more concentrating on not important aspects and they needed to realize this. The social map of CC included also positive reference point but these were groups outside the CP, such as the "Legambiente circolo Zanna Bianca", or the "Arci Bellezza", or local venues of the communist party. All these associations were cited as good example of pursuing active participation outside market logics of actions.

SPEECH NORMS

Speech norms shaping interventions in CC meetings were the most formal among all the CP groups. Indeed, interventions in meetings had to be scheduled in advance, signaling the will to intervene to a group member that played the role of the moderator of the meeting. Who wanted to speak raised his hand, the moderator took note, and when everybody preceding him had spoken the moderator assigned him the right to speak. Every meeting had to be "summoned" in adequate advance, and meeting included usually many "delegated"[1] of absent members that nevertheless usually expressed their "vote by delegation". These formal mechanisms were absent from all the other meetings I had attended in other CP groups. But, apart from the strict observation of these norms, what qualify an intervention as an appropriate one was the long standing activism of the speaker in the group. Indeed, during the setting of the CC formal meeting most of the discourses pronounced were preceded by an explicit reference to the historical membership of who pronounced the discourse to the CC. The more such a membership was a longstanding one, the more it was stressed at the begging of the discourse:

> I'm Carlo and for those who are new in the CC I'm one of the historical member of this group, since back its very origins when we were just a few citizens (Carlo, CC member)

In spite of the contents of the interventions, the long-standing membership of who was speaking legitimized his/her intervention. Indeed, the fact of having belonged to the CC for a long time represented a warrant of the fact that who was speaking was on "the right side", that it to say that he/she was someone who cared firstly for the participation of citizens in the CP. The way to make this clear in group members' interventions varied very little:

> I'm one of the founding and historical members of the CC (Igor, CC member)

> I was here when more than 10 years ago we founded the CC to run this old farm and we started all this project (Sara, CC member)

> I've always been a member of the CC, since its first days (Marco, CC member)

I've heard these expressions and very similar ones with the same content not uniquely in the settings of CC's meeting. I've heard them, and firstly noted their relevance, in the settings of other CP groups meetings. Indeed, many CC members were also part of other CP groups but the "participative partisanship" was the dominant group style uniquely in the group life of the CC.

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[1] English term for the italian "delegato".

Indeed, in these settings stressing the long standing membership in the group had elicited different reactions than when the same expressions were used during other meetings of the CP. Indeed, uniquely in the settings of CC's meetings the long standing participation in the group gave credibility to the speakers that, on the basis of such a long standing participation, could propose new topics or new frames for old ones. Indeed, similar interventions made by recent members risked of not being taken seriously and they often dropped when pronounced.

This type of speech norms was particularly evident every time was tentatively enacted in the context of other groups meetings but it didn't produce the same reactions. Other group had other ways of define appropriate interventions in the group contexts. For example we can cite here the clearly different way in which Estenri members legitimized their interventions while enacting their "informal autonomous" group style on the basis of the substantive contribution each intervention brought to the group activities[1]. CC members didn't have to come up with any proposal for the group life, but they could legitimize their right to speak on the basis of their long-standing belonging in the CC and thus in the CP.

GROUP'S BONDS

Members of CC related among themselves as "loose comrades". They all shared the same vague cause, that was that of defending the original spirit of grassroots participation in the CP against the invasion of market-oriented logics that came from within and outside the CP alike. Such a cause was a thin one and it didn't call for any big sense of sacrifice. Past utopias had disappeared and activists had turned to doable tasks or, more often, in simply opposing activities that other CP groups were carrying out.

What tied CC members together were not the sharing of the same socio-economic conditions. Their professional's domains and roles were extremely diverse among themselves. What bound together them was the sharing of the same "cause" of defending the spirit of participation that originally animated the CP according to them and that more and more risked of being extinguished in the CP. The group bonds drew on this "cause" and openly questioning it meant risking of threatening the group situated sense of cohesion and unity. Indeed, this happened each time interventions in formal meetings explicitly or implicitly problematized "the cause" and at this respect the CC's official meeting of 9th May 2009 may work as good example. Indeed, the contents of the interventions made by group members during this meeting openly and high-pitchy reaffirmed the group opposition to those parts of the CP that were working to equip the project with a more solid financial basis:

> I deem necessary at this point, and I want to ask the group' opinion at this respect, to contact the press and tell the journalists what is happening here and that the original mandate of the CP has been transformed in, and I

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[1] I remember that according to this group style in Esterni meetings a good member of the group was judged on the basis of his factual contribution to the group's activities in terms of bringing and especially producing new ideas, and speakers tended often to underline such aspects of their work.

The proposal of even taking a legal action was widely approved by the following interventions, which reinforced the group's sense of opposition to the CP's managing board. For example, the fact that the chief of the CP's managing board (who also member of the CC) had been invited but he didn't show up was taken as a sign of the general lack interest of the Managing board toward topics relating to participation concerns. Or, to make another example, more than one intervention in this meeting complained about the fact that the CC hadn't been cited in the official speeches of the press conference held 5 months previously in which the CP had been presented to the press.

During the group meeting of the 9th May 2009 Lucio, a member of CC which was also part of CP's secretariat, was asked to inform the CC about recent development of the CP. Lucio, because of his everyday presence where the CP managing board's decisions were usually taken, was asked to report the CC on the state of advancement of the reconstruction works and also on the way in which the money collected until now had been spent. In a15 minutes long talk Lucio updated the CC about various aspects the managing board was currently working on, such as which consultancy company they had decided to hire, which were the main results of the public campaign to collect the money, on what the new interns were working on, and so on so forth with other details of the daily secretariat activity. CC members were satisfied with the answers but they found problematic the fact that they hadn't been informed on such aspects:

> I find here a serious problem of participation, we are completely outside of every important decision that is taken, I've never been informed about anything and this is something that makes me think that there is an intention to keep the CC far from all the important decisions…(Daniele)

This and similar comments addressed specifically Lucio, implicitly asking him the reasons of such a lack of information. Lucio realized this and calmly tried several times to explain that

> during the everyday work of the secretariat unfortunately we do not have enough time to inform everybody about what is going on, because we are few people with few resources, we cannot also spend energies in informing other about what we do because this would subtract energies for something else (Lucio)

Lucio was trying to make clear that there was no explicit intention in not involving everyone in the CP's everyday activities and that the lack of information was simply the unintended outcome of the scarce personal and material resources possessed to run the CP. Lucio's interventions represented a potential threat to the group sense of cohesion, which was embedded in a group style that implicitly assumed the existence of a conflict between participation and market logic in the management of the CP's development. Indeed, CC's members kept asking Lucio the reasons for the exclusion of the CC from the active management of the CP. In particular it was cited the fact that members of the CC, because of their jobs, possessed competences that could be useful in the running of the Cuccagna Project. For example it was cited that Maria, a member of the CC, was an architect and thus she could have supervised the restructuring works, giving an informed opinion about how the works were conducted. Lucio's answers to this type of comments made a point of saying that the CP was still widely open to any contribution from whatever person, independently from its belonging to whatever group, inside or outside it's the CP. Still the group kept asking Lucio

questions that were aimed to understand his commitment the cause of participation the group defended, and especially his opposition to use market logic in the development of the CP. Indeed, reciprocal obligations tying group members included the possibility of asking and being asked to demonstrate the level of commitment to "the cause". After about half an hour of this type of conversation Lucio proposed to move to another topic

> I think I made myself clear, I don't see why we are keeping talking about the same things all the time… I know the discussion agenda of the group is quite busy today and I would pass to something else now (Lucio, CC member)

Lucio's proposal had breached an important implicit assumption of the "participative partisanship" group style. His last intervention was taken as a sign of the fact that he conceived of no importance or not worth of any attention the topics relating to the Participation that CC members were raising. The tone of the discussion progressively warmed up to the point that Lucio loose his patience and said:

> [in a very high voice, with an angry and nervous tone] I'm tired of keeping listening the same polemic accusations on the part of the same people here, without making anything to actively solve them. I've been listening to them for years, I cannot stand them anymore long! I present my resignation from this group right now!!" (Lucio, CC member)

After having said this, Lucio took a sheet, a pen and started nervously to write his letter of resignation. The rest of the members reactions divided between those who tried to convince Lucio of not resigning and those who considered exaggerated Lucio's reaction and assisted at the scene with big astonishment. Lucio's reactions represented a threat to the group sense of internal cohesion because they problemized what reciprocally defined CC members' mutual obligations, which was the fact that they were all "comrades" for the "cause" of protecting the original participative spirit of the CP. The group members couldn't tolerate to put overtly into question or engaging in a self-reflexive discussion on their own identity on the basis of a partisanship group style. Thinking that the opposers simply couldn't inform the CC about the development of the CP would have implied that the cause of defending the project original spirit would be senseless and with this what defined the group's internal bonds. Thus, the partisanship group style during CC meetings implied the fact that in such settings it was not possible to explicitly discuss about the economic aspects of the CP in a reasonable, not partisanship way, as Lucio had tried to do. The use of logic market was not simply "bad", but it also represented the negative reference point that defined the group sense of cohesion.

I've observed the CC facing other types of tensions during my fieldwork, as for example when it had to decide on which were the most suitable ways to contrast the overwhelming concerns on fundraising. In this case the specific partisanship was able to manage such dilemmas through the traditional decision making technique of shows of hands. But the CC was not able to engage in self-critical discussion about how to run the CP because of its partisanship group style. Indeed, all the members of the CC I knew, recognized the fact that the lack of money that the CP was facing was a major problem in that moment. I had heard them saying explicitly as members of other groups equipped with a different group style or during informal conversation held with them during CP

parties. For example, during the party of 19 June 2008 while I was at the entrance taking data of who was entering the farm I engaged with a CC member in the following conversation:

> Marta (cc member): I think these kind of party-occasions are doing very well for the development of the CP, here today for example there are lots of people in the farm

> Researcher: I agree, many people are getting to know about the CP in this way and it seems they are really enjoying this sunny day in the farm garden

> Marta: Yes, and especially many people are offering some money for the development of the CP and this is the most necessary now, indeed it is a rough time at this respect…

These or similar expressions couldn't simply have been pronounced publicly in the contexts of CC meetings because this would have explicitly threatened what bounded CC members together. Over time the CC didn't engage itself in any type of new activities than what it used to do in its early years. The group went on collecting signatures and proposing legal action, even if this time these were directed towards other groups inside the same network it was a part of. This didn't imply the necessity to shift its group style from the partisanship: there was no need to define differently the mutual responsibilities binding CC members, and these perpetuated themselves over time, keeping defining them as a sort of "participation partisans" in the Cuccagna farm.

If the group had tried to set up big events for a massive audience where it was necessary to maintain commercial relations with, for example, suppliers of specific services, the partisanship group style and the related group bonds would have experienced an hard time in being sustained. In this case, a move from the partisanship group style towards another one would have been necessary to carry out that types of activities. But the CC didn't took on any new activities which required a new type of responsibility among members. In the meantime the Cuccagna Alliance was changing, establishing more and more relations with commercial companies which required new type of responsibilities on the part of who was running the CP. Partisanship became more and more out of context, being incapable of facing the commercial problems the CP as a whole was facing and thus contributing to the isolation of CC from the development of CP. A change in the context and in particular in the shape of the network to which the CC belonged made the participatory partisanship group style move from its initial propelling function of the CP to an obsessive defensive function which took all the energies of the group.

3. THE GREEN PT AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE PARTISANSHIP GROUP STYLE

The Green PT (Participatory Table) was a CP association that was born during a Participatory Event set up by the CGCP and that devoted mainly itself to taking care of the garden of the Cuccagna farm. In the viewpoint of the promoters of this group, gardening represented simply a pretext, a good occasion for enacting "relational spaces" (Tronca 2004) that offered everyone the possibility of breaching its social isolation and contributing to contrast tendencies of social fragmentation[1].

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[1] For more details on this group see chapter 3.

We have already briefly considered in chapter 4 some features of the group style of the Green PT, when we have tried to account for the successful outcomes of this PT in terms of creating ties compared to the failure of another PT with a very similar organizing structure, the Art PT. We have seen on that occasion that the good member of this group was defined as someone who actively engaged him/herself in the gardening works and that took a very direct responsibility in doing that. We saw that group bonds in this group were highly confidential and personal. We have described also in chapter 4 how over time the group took more and more distance from the CGCP, from which it had originated as all the other PT. The Green PT didn't claim to follow any "Participation guidelines" and it didn't make any effort to structure its activity according to these guidelines. The Green PT deemed more necessary to spend its energies in more concrete tasks, such as hoeing and gardening the earth of Cuccagna farm. But the accent this group gave to do-able activities didn't imply to avoid at length talks, which occurred in different settings of the group life (in the group meetings but also while gardening) and could focus on a variety of subjects. Also, group members discussed in the context of group life about the ongoing developments that were affecting the CP. Through these discussions Green PT members more and more realized the importance of the lack of money that was affecting the overall CP. As a result of these discussions, the group more and more engaged itself in activities that could benefit the overall CP because implied the collecting of money. At the beginning these activities were simple and the organizing efforts to set them up didn't require any specific competence or any contact with subjects external to the group. An example of this type of activities was the public auction that the group held during events taking place in the Cuccagna farm and in which the vegetables the group had cultivated in the Cuccagna farm were sold to fund the CP. Then the activities became of a different type and more and more required the contribution of professionals with specific expertise. For example the Green PT set up in winter 2009 specific workshops on pruning and graft that were carried out by a professional[1]. This shift implied a parallel reinforcement of the partnership group style through which the group acted, that while in the past was already present together with other group styles, became over time the dominant one. The new activities carried out – such as the workshops - implied the fact that the Green CP had more and more to face the management of the cohabitation between different and potentially conflicting logics of actions such as that of collecting money and that tied to the setting up of sociable, inclusive, free activities in the Cuccagna garden. The group succeeded in managing these tensions through a reinforcement of its partnership group style. I will consider in the next paragraph in detail how this happened and how the Green PT's group style reciprocally adapted itself over time with respect the activities carried out by the group.

PURSUING SOCIABLE GOALS AND MANAGING ECONOMIC ASPECTS

The way the Green PT related to the cohabitation of different logics of action in the CP changed over time. Indeed, during its first period the group was merely a part of the CGCP and as such it carried out its gardening activities *ignoring* the problem of lack of funds that was affecting the CP, exactly as we have seen that the CGCP *ignored* these problems. All the members of the Green PT

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[1] Prof. Antonio Velonà.

were also part of the CGCP and as such they tended to reproduce its group style, keeping a constant eye on the "Participation guidelines" that Sergio D was trying to teach. Shortly after this first period, and especially from the beginning of the good season in the spring of 2008, the group rapidly acquired new members who enjoyed gardening the Cuccagna farm. The group rapidly acquired a different group style form the "diligent learning" of the CGCP. The most astonishing difference was that the group started to discuss in its meetings about topics raised directly by its members, on the contrary to what we have seen it used to happen in the CGCP, for its whole life. Soon, the issue of the lack of money affecting the CP come out during the group meeting. I observed members of the Green PT relating to this topic similarly to what I had observed in the CC:

> They [the Managing board and the secretariat] are selling the CP to business companies, it's a shame, they do not involve us in anything, in no single decision and then they ask us even money to contribute to the overall CP… But if I wanted to give my money I would like to decide or at least know about how such money are spent (Umberto)

Umberto represented better than anyone else in the Green PT the "participation partisanship" group style that dominated the group life of the CC. But this was not the only group style that shaped the group life of the Green PT. Indeed, at the same time other members used relate to the lack of money and to the CP Managing Board's perspective through a *"partnership"* group style. Participatory Partisanship group style related to the fact that the CP needed money in the way I have shown in the paragraph about the CC, that is to say by denying its urgency and looking at it as something dangerous because it implied a lack in the participation process of potentially interested citizens and especially of all the groups comprised in the CP. Instead, the *"partnership"* group style included the possibility of understanding and taking seriously the CP's lack of money, without denying or demonizing it. Especially, the "partnership" group style allowed the Green PT to carry out activities that were at the same time useful for funding the CP and represented for the group good occasions for enacting public space of sociality while taking care of the Cuccagna's farm garden. This association was the only one among all the CP groups that succeeded in harmoniously combining its purposes of pursuing public sociality and at the same contribute to the management of the economic aspects of the overall CP. According to the argument I'm proposing it is possible to account for such an outcome looking in detail at the partnership group style that shaped the everyday life of this group. Let's see who the Green PT slightly reinforced its partnership group style and made it the dominant one while more and more engaging itself in structured activities in cooperation with other groups of the CP.

SPEECH NORMS

The Green PT used to gather once a month, every Monday of the first week of each month, but during the good season the frequency of the meetings augmented significantly because the bigger activity of the gardening works required more discussions. As we have seen in chapter 4, direct and frank interventions were welcomed during the group meetings. Appropriate speech was direct speech. Also, if a member didn't speak spontaneously no one used to ask him explicitly his opinion, as this was systematically the case in CGCP meetings. This style of intervention remained the same over time in the Green PT and in particular the frankness of the interventions revealed itself to be

particularly useful when the group started to carry out more and more complex activities. Indeed, this was a trait who was consistent with a type of in-depth discussion that aimed at grasping other points of views (Lichterman 2005). At this point is the case to illustrate with an example of conversation the type of speech norms that governed the Green PT everyday discussions. The conversation was part of a larger episode that started when during the CP press conference of January 2009 it was publicly announced a plan on the future setting of the farm, once the reconstruct works will be ended. Such plan included the fact that where at the moment there was the garden of the Green PT there will be a set of boxes hosting the meetings of the agricultural commission of Milan Expo 2015 international fair. Most of the members of Green PT realized for their first time on the occasion of the press conference about the future destination of the space where they were in that period cultivating their garden. Not surprisingly, the news generated a relevant amount of discussions in the next meeting. All the members expressed their vivid astonishment with respect to the decision unilaterally taken by the Cuccagna Managing board without previously informing them, but the expressions of members revealed a variety of group style:

> Michele: We've been excluded from something that directly involved us and I feel offended by the CP, I'm disappointed…

> Valentina: What has happened is not fair, yes. But firstly I want to understand the motives of what has happened, it is too early to judge..

> Umberto: In my opinion it is already quite clear. I find here a clear intention, a will to exclude us from taking an active role in the important decisions, and even of informing us. I find this extremely unfair and this is just the last of many other similar facts

> Valeria: According to my opinion things may also be less dramatic, it may have occurred, that the Managing Board has been extraordinary concentrated on making a good impression in front of journalists, potential sponsors or general contributors and it has forgot to tell us a decision it had taken that was crucial for us but that the Managing board didn't even think it was so crucial. We all know how things work here and the fact they the Managing board is always in a hurry because it didn't possess enough resources…

All the interventions draw on the same vocabulary of injustice and the same collective representation of an unfair behavior on the part of the Managing board toward the Green PT. Though, the last and the second intervention made the effort of trying to understand the reasons of the "injustice" that they had undergone. This is quite different from the "demonization" of who can be deemed as responsible of such an injustice that was implicit in the partisanship group style assumed by all the other interventions. Every type of intervention was accepted in the group and members expressed a variety of stances usually with their interventions. But appropriate interventions, those that didn't drop but were instead reinforced in the collective conversation, were those that contributed to build the premises for generating new relationships, such as the last intervention of Valeria in the aforementioned excerpts. Taken together, the short excerpt reveal that in the setting of this conversation where at the same time present two bundles of different assumptions of what group members interaction should be while in the group context. A first set of assumptions can be linked to the "participatory partisanship" group style that I've described for the CC in the past paragraph, while a second one was the "partnership" group style that soon became

the dominant pattern that shaped this group interactions while in group context. These two bundles were potentially in contrast among themselves simply because some of the assumptions that one included could have not been acceptable for the other one[1]. It is important to underline that the discussions that followed the aforementioned episode of the press conference ended in the group's decision to devote more Green PT activities to collect the money that were necessary to the CP. The group recognized the unfairness of what had happened but it didn't necessarily attribute any negative intention to the CP's managing board. The Green PT deemed necessary to strengthen its relationships with the CP's managing board in order to avoid the reiteration of similar episodes in the future. The group tried to collaborate to collect money through the activities it used to set up. Some of the group members proposed to start from a symbolic public auction in which the vegetables cultivated by the group would have been sold and the money collected would have gone to fund the CP.

Over time the group increasingly engaged itself in activities devoted to collect money for the CP that were much more structured and required the taking up of responsibilities on the part of the group toward third parts. All this process reinforced the partnership group style at the detriment of the partisanship one in the way the group acted in its everyday settings. Indeed, the partnership group style was enacted each time the group engaged in explorative speech that were not strictly necessary before. Indeed, it occurred more and more that the group's members had to confront themselves about which activity could have possible interested a paying audience, or a firm willing to finance a project. Moreover, the group was still animated by the will of setting up activities that were firstly sociable activities in which the attendees could have found room for sociable interactions. Thus, the group's activities had to keep together both a sociable dimension and the fact of representing a possible source of financial resources. The group had thus came to manage in the public activities it proposed the overall "double logic" affecting the whole CP.

GROUP BOUNDARIES

After having long discussed in several meetings how to react to the Managing board unilateral decision and their announcement during the press conference, the Green PT choose to write a formal letter to the Managing board. In this letter it was explained that, though they understood the need of money that the CP was suffering in that period, they expressed

> "disappointment for not having being informed about the future destination of the spaces hosting the garden".

They also wrote that they were currently working on

> "an alternative plan for the future destination of the garden that could arrange both the interest of the Managing board and those of the Green PT".

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[1] For example referring to the fact that the effort of understanding the Managing board could have represented an explicit menace to a partisanship group style (such as the one observed for CC) in which the group bonds were somehow based on the demonization of the Managing board, as of all the other parts of the Pt that worked to collect the money.

Indeed, the part of the garden affected by the decision was conceived as particularly precious for gardening because of its geographical orientation toward the sun.

Sergio B – the chief of the Managing board- as a response to the letter proposed the Green PT to meet to discuss the alternative plan. During such a meeting Sergio B told the representative of Green PT that the alternative plan was not doable because it didn't take into account specific constraints that the restructuring works had to respect and especially because it didn't include an alternative venue for the Agricultural Commission of Milan Expo 2015 international fair. I participated in this meeting and I've listened to Sergio B repeatedly inviting the Green Pt to

> "specialize its activities, to develop them in a more professional way and less just improvising them each time"

This was invitation to make the gardening activities something that could have contributed to the collecting of money and not uniquely a leisure activities of volunteers. In any case the meeting ended with the agreement that the Green PT could have continued to cultivate that part of the garden until the very last moment before the works for building the venue of the Agricultural Commission would have started. In exchange the representative of the Green PT said the group would have tried to orient its activities in ways that could have been appealing for possible sponsors or that, anyway, would have made the effort to collect money for the CP. Through these interactions the group was changing the social map in which it positioned itself, including the CP managing board as a major reference point and gradually excluding the CGCP, its original group of reference to which the association felt obliged to relate its activities to.

The agreement reached with the Managing board was reported and discussed in the following Green PT meeting. Most of the reactions of the group members were positive even though someone explicitly expressed its disappointment for the fact that the Green alternative plan had been refused and its skepticism for the possibilities and competences the group possessed for engaging itself in activities that could have collected money for the CP. Nevertheless, even in this meeting some of Green PT members started to try to collectively figure out new ideas for future activities and some specific projects the group will develop in its next period came up on that occasion. For example the idea of setting up and promoting gardening workshops for a paying public, as something that could have at the same time attracted new members in the Green PT and collected some money for the development of the overall CP. Besides the group set up a photo exposition with an inauguration event on the 17th May 2009 on the "Biodiversity in the lawn" and during the following summer it sets up two specific workshops

1. "Getting to know the soil" (27th Juin 2009)
2. "Spontaneous and nourish herbs" (21th July 2009)

In autumn 2009 the group set up the activity the "Cycle of the bread", a playful and instructive course articulated in four meetings for children between 8 and 12 years old[1]. Let's focus on the

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[1] The first two meeting took place in autumn 2009 (7th November: preparing the soli and sowing the wheat; 19th December: analysis of the soil and observation of the wheat growing). The other two meetingss will take place in spring time: (May: spring sawing ; June: picking up the wheat).

setting up of two other workshops that the group held during November 2009. The concrete organization of these workshops revealed to be more complex than what the group had initially thought because it required a variety of activities: get the legal authorizations from the council authorities, adequately publicize the workshops through the mass media, participate in a public grant for getting funds reserved to organizers of teaching activities on bio-agricultural techniques. Some members also sharply observed that in Milan there was already a plethora of workshops on gardening and agriculture and thus, suggested that the Green Pt workshops had to specialize themselves somehow to attract enough public to collect a minimum amount of money from their inscriptions. Thus, the group decided to call a renowned professor from the Agricultural Institute of Milan and to set up two workshops on specific gardening techniques: pruning and graft. The carrying out of all these and other related activities required a *more nuanced and precise map* than the one that was necessary to improvise a public auction during CP' parties. The map was formed through long discussions in which members shared their specific knowledge deriving from their professional activities, their residential settlements or personal acquaintances. We have seen in chapter 4 for example how the organization of workshops for children implied the formation of a map including local subjects, such as elementary local school. The forming of these nuanced maps were part of a more general process of reinforcement of the partnership group style because the inclusion of a new subject in the map was accompanied by the effort of understanding and taking into account its own point of view. This was the most evident in the case of business companies to which the group could have sent his proposal of sponsorship the workshops the group was setting up.

> Fausto: I know this plant food company has already sponsored in the past social activities directed to the restoring of traditional cultivations, I know this because a friend of mine works there…
>
> Valentina: This augment the likelihood to get funds from them, maybe without the necessity of giving them so much in exchange..
>
> Valeria: However we have to keep wary at this respect because I think they would inevitably get some visibility for their brand

Indeed, the partnership group style didn't imply the flattening of the group on other subjects' stances, especially when these subjects were business companies. Every important decision required a delicate mediation and mix between the exigency of setting up a sociable activity that was capable of creating a space for interactions among citizens and that at the same time could hope to bring some money to the CP. The group was still a volunteer group devoted to generate spaces of public sociality but its social map included increasingly the CP's managing board as a partner with who it worked to collect the money that the CP still lacked.

An example of the activity which succeeded in keeping together these two different logics was that of the "Garden of aroma", that consisted in a piece of Cuccagna garden cultivated with a variety of aromatic herbs and little panels explaining their origins and main uses. The meaning that this piece of cultivated earth had assumed in the group members' viewpoint in relation to the overall

dynamics affecting the CP was revealed to me by one of the Green PT member. Indeed, it was Umberto that, while proudly showing to me the aroma garden, explained to me that:

> this garden represents a compromise, people come here and look at it without realizing it, they cannot know that we succeeded in staying here just because this aroma garden is at the same time good for letting us engaging in our gardening activities and also good in attracting money because of its specific definition as an "aroma garden". It is something specific, even professional, that may attract potential sponsorship according to the Managing board, because it is not the typical vegetable plot made by retired people who pass their time cultivating tomatoes. At the same time is something good for us because its our sociable activity"

The garden of aroma revealed to be a successful idea also because he was capable of raising the interest of the everyday visitors of the farm (especially women) and that of a firm that proposed the group to pay for the panels with the names of the herbs. In this way it represented something that was satisfying both for the group – because it was seen as a sociable activity capable of enacting public sociality- and for the Managing board because it could raise money to finance the CP.

Over time the Green Pt shifted the social map of subjects in which it positioned itself. Through collective conversations taking place in group life, the Green PT didn't see itself anymore uniquely as a group of volunteers who gardened the Cuccagna farm as if they were gardening whatever other gardens to spend their free time in an enjoyable way. They had became an active part of the CP, a partner that recognized other partner subjects and was recognized by them as such. A group that especially wanted to be recognized by the CP's Managing board as a good partner and shaped the activities it carried out consistently with this.

GROUP BONDS

In parallel with the growing up of the activities carried out by the Green PT, it slightly changed the group's members sense of reciprocal obligations while in the group settings. The group internal structure didn't formally changed but the good member was now called to give directly a bigger contribution than in the past. Indeed, while before Green PT members reciprocally defined their responsibilities in terms of volunteers that dedicated their free time to responsibly take care of the soil of the Cuccagna farm, now this was not enough anymore. It was necessary to think through activities to promote that could collect money for the CP, that were related with concrete gardening activities and that at the same time included a sociable component. All this was not necessary at beginning of the group's activities, when all they had to do was to garden hardly and take direct responsibility for a specific part of the soil. Now it was necessary to be responsible in a double way: on the one hand by keeping to work hardly with the gardening activities as in the past, on the other hand it was also necessary to try to figure out solutions to combine the collect of money to the gardening activities. The managing of different logics of action required, indeed, members to take an even more active responsibility in their engagement in the group's life because it was requested them now for example to be responsible toward third parts on behalf of the Green PT and sometimes – as in the case of the "Aroma of garden" – even on behalf of the whole CP.

But not everything changed in the way group members related to each other. For example, the personal basis of the group bonds described in chapter 4 didn't change with the shift toward a more

market oriented nature in the activities promoted by the group. Especially, the fact that the group had now to choose more carefully its activities trying always to balance the setting up of sociable occasions with the exigency of collecting money for the overall CP didn't affect or risked to threaten the sense of internal solidarity between members, as we have seen happening for the CC. The group style of the Green PT didn't change as a consequence for the new informal agreement with the Managing board, but simply certain traits already present in the group's style got reinforced because they were particularly suited for carrying out the half sociable and half sponsor-appealing activities to which the group had started to commit itself. This was the case for the direct responsibility in the individual commitment to the group's activity, which was something already present in the fact that cultivating the garden implied a public visibility of the activities in which the group engaged itself (see chapter 4). But the same happened for example for the speech norms, because the frankness of interventions toward each other during meetings was now more encouraged than before.

But something relevant had happened with respect to the group bonds because the corroboration of the partnership group style and its dominance in the group everyday setting implied that other group styles couldn't anymore exist alongside. Indeed, the group saw a significant change in its internal composition at this respect and in particular in the fact that two of its early members left the group when it started to increasingly engage itself in activities devoted also to collect the money for the development of the CP. The two members who left were Pablo and Umberto. Pablo was an Ecuador immigrant who enjoyed cultivating and gardening but that could hardly speak Italian. He entered the group because he was an acquaintance of another member. He realized that over time the group's meeting had became more frequent and that mattered most than in the past. In its first time he continued to come gardening but uniquely to the monthly meeting and not to all the other meetings. Then with the winter he stopped coming in the Cuccagna farm but then he never appeared again the following spring. We cannot know why exactly he stopped coming, but it is possible that he understood that the group was not anymore primarily about gardening and this for sure was the activity that most interested him, as he repeatedly said to me during informal conversations in Spanish. If this was the case, its volunteer style could have made him too different from the participation the other members were engaging in the group. The abandonment of the other member was more telling at this respect firstly because in this case the member was Umberto, who we have seen embodied a partisanship group style and secondly because its abandonment had been adequately linguistically articulated. Umberto on several occasions revealed to be an extremely bright observers of the changes that were affecting the group. Indeed, he was the one that explained to me the aforementioned compromising nature of the "Aroma garden", that even if apparently similar to the previous activities carried out by the group, instead embodied a significant change in the group's mandate. Umberto on different occasions opposed such a change, even if materially continued to contribute to the activities that the group started to set up to collect money, such as the "Aroma Garden". Once he affirmed that

> I'm part of this group as a citizen, as a citizen I've wanted the setting up of this group for organizing the gardening of the cuccagna farm and I want to keep being a simple citizen. I don't want to make this activity became my professional activity, I already have a job and it is enough!

The fact that he wanted to keep being a simple citizen - not a professional - was repeated on several occasions in slightly different ways. In particular it was a topic that kept emerging when the group engaged in discussions that, enacting a partnership group style, made the effort of understanding companies criteria of sponsorship of social projects:

> Valeria: I think this company could funds us because they could see in the CP a good image to associate its brand to.

> Michele: I don't know, I'm not quite sure about it, it's a rough time for companies too, they don't have so much money for funding non-profit projects

> Umberto: Listen, I'm coming from the work, I came here to leave any professional worries outside the gate of the Cuccagna farm, I came here to garden at the open air, I don't think that in order to do that it is necessary this kind of discourse. All of what is necessary is to take the how and use it

Michele had introduced in the social map an important element of the outside world (the economic crisis) that Umberto wanted to leave apart. Umberto wanted to keep gardening without engaging himself in other activities that were not strictly necessary at this respect. His informal conversation with me about the "Aroma garden" revealed he was highly aware of the change that was affecting the group, even if he didn't want to recognize it or discuss it according to the words of this short excerpt. Three months later the group had spoken with Sergio B and had started to think of activities that could make the Green PT actively contribute to the development of the CP by collecting the necessary money, Umberto left the group openly explaining that he considered

> incompatible to keep gardening the Cuccagna farm and at the same time think of contributing to problems that are much more bigger than us and that require specific competences to be solved.

Umberto didn't want even to try to engage himself in such new activities because he considered the group's activities uniquely that of gardening and considered not only out of place but also dangerous any invasion of market oriented logic, exactly as CC members said while in group context. Instead, the rest of Green PT members thought that they could confront with the economic aspects of the CP and even actively contributing at this respect. Over time this group slightly changed its social map and this had changed the way it used to relate to the activities it set up, bringing in them also the necessity of raising enough money for the development of the CP. Carrying out these type of activities was allowed by a group style that enabled group members to take seriously, without demonizing them, the economic concerns affecting the overall project in which they were engaged.

4. CUCCAGNA CICLOFFICINA AND THE TWO COMPETING GROUP STYLES

I will now briefly present as a last comparative case an episode pertaining to the everyday life of the Ciclofficina Cuccagna. While in the previous cases I have had the possibilities of showing my argument about the relation between group styles and the ways the economic dimensions of the CP were treated in the group life, this last paragraph represents just a marginal exemplification of the same argument. Indeed, in the case of Ciclofficina Cuccagna I will adopt a different rhetoric strategy from what I have done for the previous associations whose group styles have been

illustrated in the previous paragraphs of this chapter. In this paragraph I won't present the three main analytical dimensions (group bonds, group boundaries, speech norms) that make up patterns shaping interactions among group members in the group everyday life. Instead, I will focus my analysis exclusively on a single episode of the group life that is useful to illustrate the enactment of two competing group styles that were not equal among themselves in allowing the observed association to confront with the economic dimension of the CP. The example is meant to show, as all the other until now described in this chapter, the enabling and constraining power of the patterns that shape interactions among group members in the contexts where group life unfold.

Ciclofficina Cuccagna can be deemed as a "simpler" group compared to the others observed during my field work, because its everyday life used to unfold in a limited numbers of settings. This circumstance made the case clearly different from what it has been observed for example in the case of Esterni and in particular because made more likely the emergence of tensions between different group styles in a single setting. This group started as a "ciclofficina", that is a place where volunteers members teach people to work on their own bikes and continued over time its activities as such, though accompanying its bike repairing service to the setting up of cultural events such as movie projections or concerts. Both the bike repairing and the cultural initiatives in the group viewpoint were meant as expedients for generating space of public sociality for their attendees[1]. This association had called itself "Cuccagna ciclofficina" because their venue was a room inside the Cuccagna farm, but no one except from a group member (Paolo) wanted to build any specific type of relation with the Cuccagna Alliance or with the CP managing board. The "Cuccagna ciclofficina" was hosted in the spaces of the Cuccagna farm, but the dominant viewpoint inside this group didn't aim at building any type of relationship with the other subjects that were part of the CA.

The episode below cited illustrates the contrast between two group styles which drew on different social maps that conceived the relation with the Cuccagna Alliance in different terms. The episode refers of what happened in the group meeting held on the 7th February 2009 in a group member' house[2] . The meeting was held short after that Paolo, a member of the group who was also part of the secretariat, had asked the Cuccagna Alliance to allow the Cuccagna Ciclofficina to formally enter the Alliance. This decision had been rapidly taken during a previous meeting without the need of any specific long discussion. The group had unanimously agreed on it. But as this short conversation will reveal, the entrance of the group in the Cuccagna Alliance possessed a variety of meanings for different group members. Such different meanings were linked to different group styles. Let's consider them as they were revealed in the following conversation:

> Lorenzo [at the begging of the meeting, while defining the discussing agenda of that gathering]: apart from what we've just said, someone think we ought to include something else in the discussing agenda of this meeting?

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[1] For more details see chapter 3 where there is a wider description of this association.

[2] The Cuccagna farms was temporary not available in that period.

Paolo: I often wonder what do we know about the overall CP to which we now belong…This could be something to discuss.

Lorenzo: To be honest in my opinion such a topic is no of great importance for our group, we would do better to concentrate ourselves in keep organizing our activities as we have been always doing… What discuss for?

Paolo: Today, me and you, we engaged in a mail exchange that lead me to think that this point needed to be clarified because it seemed we have quite different ideas at this respect… I think we should assign more structured roles for managing our activities

Michele: Me too I think that too many discussions are not necessary now. I think that discussing now don't lead to anything… If this is necessary, why don't we start to play directly such roles in the activities we are organizing? What discuss for? It would seem like abstract discussion at this point…

Sara: I totally agree with Michele and Lorenzo

Paolo [with an higher tone of voice]: No, on the contrary, I think discussing is necessary now, because I keep thinking that there is a more fundamental issue that need to be raised here. This refers to why during more than a year of our activity it never occurred a single question about the Cuccagna alliance or the overall Cuccagna Project? The answer I think is that you don't have the least interest in such a topic. You are now members of an association that is part of a bigger alliance, we all together have taken this decision but you ignore the problems that such alliance is facing at the moment, you don't know for example that at the moment the priority of the CP is that of raising enough money to finance the restructuring of the Cuccagna farm that has been hosting us for long time, as we also ignore many other issues that according to my point of view it would be important to know and discuss

Lorenzo: ok, maybe we should ask a meeting with the Cuccagna Alliance to try to understand what the alliance wants from us, in this way we can then go on in carry out our own activities and if they don't want to meet us all the better for us because here we don't have time to loose..

Paolo [with an even higher voice and this time also standing up from his chair]: I'm trying to figure out the group's own mission here and according to my opinion what you just said is significant at this respect: 'what the alliance wants from us!' I mean, being part of the Alliance is not a constraint, but I think that is something that is very important for enriching ourselves as group, the question I pose myself is 'What can we do for the good of the alliance?' and not the other way around, especially, I do not deem asking this type of question as loosing time

The collective conversation soon had turned in an open argument in which Paolo (the group member that was arguing against the rest of the group) abruptly left the room. The other members were strongly surprised by this behavior, they tried to convince him to stay but they didn't succeed in making change his mind. They were especially surprised by Paolo's reactions to the differences in their opinions. But for Paolo it was not simply a matter of opinions. The discussion had touched the core element that defined the group membership and the group members reciprocal obligations and the implicit assumptions that guided Paolo interventions differed from those shared by all the other members that intervened in the aforementioned conversation. Paolo assumed that the entering of the Ciclofficina Cuccagna into the Cuccagna Alliance implied a change in the group's priorities, because the group had became now responsible also for the problems affecting the overall CP and thus it couldn't anymore deal uniquely with the bike repairing activities. This firstly required that

the other members knew the problems the Alliance was now facing, starting from the relevant amount of money that was lacking. Paolo as a member of the Secretariat knew in detail these problems and, as a member of the Cuccagna Ciclofficina, knew that the other members didn't know them. He was surprised and disappointed by the fact that no one ever asked him anything in particular about this issue. But for the other members of the group being volunteer didn't imply any relevant change in the group activities or priorities. They acted according to a "plug-in volunteer" group style that didn't require any long discussion, while Paolo enacted a partnership group style that conceived the members of the Ciclofficina Cuccagna as active members working for the development of the Cuccagna Project. The group bonds assumed by this group style were defined on the basis of a sense of mutual responsibility toward all the problems the CP was facing in that period. Instead, the mutual responsibilities that defined the group bonds of the "volunteer group style" were limited to the ordinary activities that were necessary to run the bike repairing Ciclofficina. This was the implicit assumption that draw the conception of the relation to the alliance as a burden to be managed ("what the alliance wants from us"), spending the less time that it was possible at this respect. The "plug-in volunteer group style" was firstly oriented to "do things" and in this case assumed the group's involvement into the alliance according to the model of the loose network, which don't require any length discussion about the other subjects part of the alliance. Moreover, Paolo was aware of the difficulties relating to the new activities that the entrance into the alliance may have implied because of his work in the Cuccagna secretariat. For this reason he proposed to equip the group with a more formal structure in which everyone possessed a less loosely defined role. At the same time he was also asking group members something else, he was asking for a shift in the way the group related to its wider context and in the way group members related to each other. Thus, Paolo was enacting a different group style, very similar to the partnership one that was present in the Green PT. Paolo called for a wider map that positioned the Cuccagna Ciclofficina with reference to subjects that the other group members widely ignored. But Paolo's proposal was not even understood, the group continued to act as previously without finding any change necessary. Paolo in that setting left the meeting but he didn't leave the group. Indeed, I've had many other occasions to observe the contrast between the partnership group style that he enacted and the "plug-in volunteer" group style that the group adopted as its dominant group style. But the patterns governing the aforementioned episode was repeatedly observed in a variety of occasions in which the group life of this association unfolded. These repeated observations have lead me to depict the contrast between two group styles that have been summarized in the following chart:

	"Plug- in volunteer" group style	"Partnership" group style
Speech norms	Speaking about the immediate work to be done	Discussing at length relations with other subjects
Group Boundaries	The group is one of the many "ciclofficinas" present in the generic context of Milan	The group is a part of the Cuccagna Project and, thus, a partner of all the other subjects forming the Alliance

Group bonds	Members are mutually responsible at most for the activities carried out by the group and the related problems	Members are mutually responsible for the activities carried out for the development of the CP and the related problems

Figure 1. Comparative chart between "plug-in volunteer" and "partnership" group styles

Going back to the main argument of the chapter it should be now more clear how a certain group style, and the associated group bonds, could more suited than another ones to face specific tensions deriving from the cohabitation of several logics of action in the same group. In particular, with reference to this last example, the "plug-in volunteer" group style was not equipped with the tools apt to manage the cohabitation of potentially conflicting logics of action, while the "partnership" group style was more suited at this respect. If the Cuccagna ciclofficina had re-defined its activities including the problems the CP faced, it is likely that this would have implied also a re-definition of the group style, and therefore of the group bonds, in a way similar to what we have seen happening for the Green PT.

In other cases, such as the one of the CC, we have seen that engaging the group in discussing from different viewpoints topics related to the economic aspects of the CP represented an explicit threat to the group bonds because these were based precisely on the opposition to such aspects. Thus, the group style revealed to be a good tool to observe the way recurrent relationships among group members structured themselves in the group settings and how such a structuring enabled and constrained the group's possibilities of actions, the way it related to its repertoire of action and if and how it confronted with different logics of actions at the same time.

In this and the past chapter we have widely dwelt upon features of the groups styles of some of the observed cultural organizations. This type of inquiry was meant on the one hand to further qualify the type of sociality produced by the observed associations in their group life and, on the other hand, to shed light and try to account for the outcomes – illustrated in the previous chapters – of their collective efforts to establish social relationships with subjects beyond the group. But in developing this type of operation I introduced also many other additional theoretical and empirical aspects. Therefore, the next chapter will sum up the path developed through these chapters and It will also propose a theoretical argument to account for the observed conditions of the production of sociality developed by the observed groups.

9. CONCLUSION. FROM ASSOCIATIONS TO EVENTS THROUGH GROUP STYLES AND THE OTHER WAY AROUND

At the outset of this dissertation (in the introduction), I had attributed my analysis a twofold research question: on the one hand *specify* and *qualify the production of sociality* of the observed cultural organizations and, on the other hand, *inquiry the conditions and predicaments of such a production*. Then, (in chapter 1) I tried to theoretically define the collective efforts of civic groups that *intentionally* aimed at creating urban social inclusion in terms of providing the "service of identity"[1]. I also introduced the *constitutive* relation with the public sphere that characterizes such collective efforts. Afterwards, once introduced the observed cultural associations and some broad traits about their local context of action (chapter 2 and 3), I've dedicated the analytical chapters to specify and qualify from a variety of viewpoints the togetherness produced by the observed groups. In particular, I've considered both their *structured* efforts of creating social relationships (in chapter 4) and the "*ephemeral* practices" (Cognetti 2009) they organized to make people connect with each other in the city (in chapter 5 and 6). With respect to the first type of efforts I've outlined the variety of situated meanings that the associative participation acquired in the observed cases, highlighting their enabling and constraining power in terms of possibilities for spiraling outward (chapter 4). The "ephemeral practices" comprised in the observed cultural events have been analyzed trying to specify the type of "relational spaces" (Tronca 2004) they created, in particular assessing their inclusiveness of different styles of sociality and the possibilities such styles allowed for the development of commonizing processes (chapter 5). Also, I widely used the verticality of Habermas' model of the public sphere to analyze how the observed associations *used* events to exert their function of "naming reality" by entering the media sphere and thus bring to the widest public new topics or new ways of framing old ones. As a result of such analysis I've tried to depict tensions and tradeoffs in the togetherness enacted by attendees of the observed initiatives deriving from the "grammar of events" (chapter 6). In the last previous two chapters I inquired and disentangled the bundles of institutionalized and taken for granted assumptions on which interactions among members of some of the observed organizations drew. The purpose of such an inquiry was twofold: on the one hand to account for the ways the observed associations used events (ways illustrated in the previous chapters) and, on the other hand, to observe from close and thus specify the togetherness enacted by group members while in group contexts. In particular, I developed this inquiry (in chapter 7) observing from close how tensions among different institutional logics didn't openly arise in the associational life of Esterni because they dissolved in local compromises through the architecture of group styles that make up the group's everyday life. Finally, (in chapter 8) the aforementioned twofold purpose was developed taking off from the variety of group behaviors with respect to the same context constraints and trying to make sense of them comparatively observing the enabling and constraining power of different group styles enacted by some of the observed organizations.

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[1] This operation has differentiated my analysis from studies of social inclusion meant as insertion of subordinated people into the conditions and privileges of upper class (or status) citizens. For further details on the theoretical definition of the "service of identity" see chapter 1.

Throughout the analytical chapters of the dissertation I've developed specific theoretical arguments and illustrated empirical findings that aimed at *detailing and qualify specific aspects of the sociality produced by the observed cultural associations*. This last short section of the dissertation is mainly about *the conditions of such a production*. Indeed, at this respect I will propose a specific argument that is based on the empirical evidence illustrated in the past chapters and that summarizes some of the theoretical aspects previously introduced. But, before I will develop some very short methodological considerations about the categories used in my analysis both to specify sociality and to analyze the conditions of its intentional production. For what concern the first aspct, in the past chapters we have seen that the *qualification of the different togetherness enacted by the observed organizations required a situated perspective* and that this can be offered by an approach that focus on group style. Indeed, the use I've made of this concept to analyze the collected empirical evidences has opened up an in-depth exploration of different ways of being together among group members and in the sociable practices set up by the observed groups to include subjects beyond them. This exploration has revealed the complexity of the different observed togetherness, which were not simply classifiable or rankable on a scale of inclusiveness because of their qualitative reciprocal discontinuities. Also, such an exploration has suggested that the variety of the observed togetherness and their different ways of being inclusive were not totally unpredictable, unaccountable and chaotic but instead they could be specified and accounted for with reference to institutionalized patterns of action and interactions among group members, according to the threefold argument proposed in this chapter.

Considering the analysis of the *conditions of the observed intentional production of sociality,* this has been developed with a privileged attention to the event, considered as the main form of action to spiral outward in the repertoire adopted by the observed cultural associations. In particular, I've integrated the situated perspective offered by the approach of the group style with the normative model of Habermas (1997) because the verticality of such a model supplied the tools to inquiry the outcomes produced by the observed groups beyond the settings of face-to-face communication in which events used to take place. Thus, I analyzed the grammar of events aiming at acquiring a media visibility and its costs in terms of involvement on the part of its attendees. Finally, the combination in a single study of the approach of group style and of the model of the public sphere has allowed to link broad processes (such as those tied to the entering of events in the media public sphere) to situated ways of being together. In particular in this last part of the dissertation I will propose a specific argument that frame the ways in which the observed associations used their repertoires of action - the events, in particular – as patterned by the institutional properties of their everyday group life. In order to illustrate such an argument it's firstly necessary to sum up specific aspects of the pursue of public sociality described in the previous chapters.

Firstly, it is worth remembering that the observed groups of this study aimed at "re-embedding" sociality, that is to say they intended "re-appropriate and re-define social relationships at the local conditions of space and time" (Bagnasco, Barbagli, Cavalli 1999 p. 673). In particular – as shown especially in chapter 3- such "conditions of space and time" were defined in the groups' official communication with privileged reference to Milan "Zone 4". For this reason I've inquired (in chapter 2) this wide urban portion of Milan, outlining the general spatial distribution of some broad

socio-economic traits and the internal boundaries perceived by its residents and everyday users. At the begging of my analytical path I deemed necessary this type of inquiry as preliminary operation for then understanding the outcomes generated by the observed groups. But, over the course of my inquiry I had to change my mind at this respect. Indeed, the track of analysis I had developed focusing on Milan "Zone 4" resulted fruitless for my research because in the meanwhile the observed associations were increasingly pursuing their goals of generating sociality setting up initiatives that were largely regardless of the local dimension defined by the boundaries of Milan "Zone 4". This shift has been a general process that has affected most of the observed groups, though not all[1]. It has developed mainly at the level of the *practices* enacted by the observed groups and in spite of the fact that they generally kept defining their goals in their formal communication with reference to the administrative limits of Milan "Zone 4". It is worth underling that the progressive, practiced, disregard toward this local dimension has been a relevant process for the outcomes produced by the observed groups because – in the cases where it has occurred - it has significantly *re-defined the conditions of possibility for their pursue of public sociality*. Indeed, "local societies don't repeat at different scales the same social structure […], each way of organizing sociality at different scales possess its own peculiarities" (Bagnasco, Barbagli, Cavalli 1997 p. 212). In my study, the shift in the spatial scale of the pursue public sociality enacted by the observed groups has elicited a shift in the very meaning of the sociality they produced. The fruitlessness of the researcher's track of analysis that focused on Milan "Zone 4" was a telling finding in itself because it was an important aspect of the observed efforts of making Milan sociable. This aspect developed through the progressively increased use of events made by the observed groups but, as research finding, it still needs to be adequately accounted for and in particular it is necessary to understand: Why it didn't occur in all the observed organizations? How it developed in different groups? Which were its implications for their production of public sociality?

In the next pages of this conclusive chapter I will try to answer these questions, thus analyzing specific aspects of the conditions of possibility of the observed pursue of public sociality. For clarity's sake I will carry out this operation schematically distinguishing among types of contexts in which the observed groups acted. Firstly, I will separate the observed collective efforts of creating social relationships among groups members from attempts to create sociality with respect to subjects beyond the group. Then I will further specify this latter aspect in three points.

1. CREATING SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG GROUP MEMBERS

Group life is a context worth to be inquired in a study on the social relationship produced by cultural associations because, as underlined in the introduction and in the first chapter, many sociological accounts attribute to the concrete contexts in which associative participation take place the quality of "relational space" (Garelli 2004) producing "social ties" (Ranci 1999 p. 68). Also, some of the observed groups of this study - such as the CGCP and, though partially, the Green PT- explicitly tried to make Milan sociable through the inclusion of new members in their group life.

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[1] In particular this process has not involved the Cuccagna Cooperative and it has just partially affected the CGCP.

In the previous chapters we have seen that relationships among group members significantly differed considering the different observed associations - and even considering the different settings in which the group life of a single association unfolded[1]- and the situated meanings that the participation in their group life possessed. The different group styles I outlined – "informal autonomy", "universal partisanship", "enlarged cynical family", "diligent learning", "participatory partisanship", "partnership" – entailed different types of ties among group members. In particular, the dimension of "group bonds" has allowed to see that members' mutual responsibilities while in group context could vary significantly: they could include aspects of members' personal lives[2], they could consist in obligations of coming up with concrete contribution to the group[3], they could simply require members to respect each other sense of privacy[4] and so on and so forth. These type of togetherness were differently inclusive among themselves because they differently enabled and constrained interactions and conversations among group members. It is useless ranking different type of group bonds on a scale of inclusiveness, except if considering a specific trait with reference to which assess the "degree of inclusiveness" of specific recurrent interactions[5]. Indeed, the empirical evidences shown in the previous chapters have illustrated that each type of togetherness was inclusive in its own terms and that such terms patterned broader processes, such as for example the possibility of entering the media public sphere[6].

2. CREATING SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS BEYOND THE GROUP

With respect to the second observed context, that it to say the efforts of creating social relationships with subjects beyond the group it is necessary to introduce another distinction which further develops the previous one between ties among groups members and with subjects external to the group. This distinction is useful to articulate three ways in which group style affected the possibility of creating social relationships with subjects beyond the group:

1) when the observed associations tried to build social ties through "structured practices" that unfolded overt time, such as those observed in chapter 4;

2) *in* the "ephemeral practices" (Conti 2007) that the observed groups used to set up, which mainly consisted of cultural events, such as those described in chapter 5 and 6.

3) in the ways the observed groups related to and used event as means to pursue their goals of public sociality, ways described throughout all the analytical chapters.

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[1] Such as in the case of Esterni outlined in chapter 7.

[2] As in the case of the Green PT, illustrated in chapter 4.

[3] As in the case of Esterni (and in particular of its "informal autonomy" group style), illustrated in chapter 8.

[4] As in the case of CGCP, illustrated in chapter 4.

[5] For example with respect to the possibility of bringing in the group life personal aspect of group members' lives we have seen in chapter 4 that group bonds in the Art PT were more inclusive than those in the Green PT.

[6] A process inquired especially in chapter 5 and 6.

The first and second point will be just hinted at in this conclusive section because they have already been articulated in the previous chapters. Instead, the third point will be developed widely in the next paragraph of this chapter because it includes the proposal of a specific theoretical argument that has not been previously detailed. For what concern the first point of the three afore mentioned points, in chapter 4 I've compared different efforts of establishing new relationships with specific subjects beyond the group that required associations to engage in practices that unfolded over time and in different settings. The empirical findings exposed in that chapter have underlined that not all the observed group bonds equally enabled the building of relationships with subjects beyond the group promoted by some of the cultural associations of this study. In particular, we saw that the intentional creation of relationships was enabled when group life allowed the collective exercise of social reflexivity, included the possibility of expressing the local embeddedness of group members or when it implied a direct responsibilities on their part. The presence of all these elements in group life was tied to the specific group styles that shaped interactions among group members while they were in group contexts.

Passing to consider the second point of the aforementioned threefold distinction, that is to say the creation of social relationships through and especially *in* "ephemeral practices" such as cultural events, it appears more difficult to focus the part group style played in shaping the generation of public sociality. This is mainly due to the fact that the observed events involved wide, variable, attendees in settings that not always possessed the conditions that allowed the stabilization of interactions taking place in them and thus to the emergence of institutional properties. Indeed, the adopted focus on institutional properties emerging from recurrent interactions was useful especially when events involved small publics and they took place in the same settings over time. In these type of events I have observed different ways of carrying out the "work of sociability" (Daniels 1985) on the part of members of the observed associations. These different "works of sociability" contributed to make dominant, in the settings where events unfolded, different "styles of sociality" which were not equally inclusive among themselves with respect to subjects beyond the organizing groups. In particular, in chapter 5 I've shown that a "style of sociality" largely drawing on a "familiar regime of engagement" that "maintains a personalized, localized good" (Thévenot 2007 p. 416) made more difficult commonizing than other types of more public "engagement with the world" ( ). In chapter 7 I focused on the various group styles adopted by a single association (Esterni), the same cultural organization whose "work of sociability" I had observed in chapter 5. This has allowed to see - among other things - that the "work of sociability" was not carried out randomly by group members of this association. Instead, it was patterned by the group styles through which this organization acted in the different settings where its group life unfolded. Indeed, during the small events set up in the association's venue, group members enacted a group style – that I've named "enlarged cynical family" - that drew on a "familiar regime of engagement" (Thévenot 2006a) and that for this reason made particularly difficult for group members and subjects beyond the group alike to take part in the "relational spaces" (Tronca 2004) produced by this association.

If putting together the considerations I have developed for the first and the second point of the aforementioned distinction, it appears the most evident the difficulties of assessing *in general,* independently from the specific observed settings, the inclusiveness produced by the observed

associations. Indeed, it is possible noting for example that the first point comprised also the fact that group bonds allowing the emergence of the local embeddedness of group members and including the possibility of enacting a familiar type of engagement were particularly suited for creating relationships with specific subject settled in the same neighborhood of the observed association. But with the second point we have seen that familiar type of engagements with the world made particularly hard commonizing including also subjects beyond the group. Thus, this also suggests that the inclusive character of the sociality produced by the observed groups has not only to be referred to specific settings but also to specific subjects that the groups aimed at reaching.

3. GROUP STYLES FILTERING THE WAY GROUPS USED EVENTS

I will now turn my attention toward the third of the three aforementioned points that I have outlined to articulate *how* the institutionalized patterns of interactions shaping group life affected the intentional generation of public sociality promoted by the cultural associations observed in this study. The introduction of this point will be the occasion to sum up some of the empirical findings of this research, to articulate the main proposed theoretical argument and, at the same time, to account for the aforementioned process of progressive disregard for the local boundaries of Milan "Zone 4" in the pursue of public sociality enacted by the observed associations. I will start from this last point for then introducing the other ones while developing it.

Over the course the two years of my field research the *local* embeddedness of the observed groups has generally[1] shifted from Milan "Zone 4" to at least the whole city (Milan) and often much beyond its boundaries. At this respect it is necessary précising that the term "local" (or local character or local embeddedness) refers here especially to the space implicitly delimited by the interactions and the relationships the observed groups have developed while pursuing their goals of generating public sociality[2]. Thus, to precise the aforementioned shift in the local embeddedness, this refers firstly to the fact that at the end of my field research the spatial area in which most of the observed groups strived to generate public sociality had became much less identifiable in its physical boundaries than at the begging of my field work. In particular, the local character of many observed groups had became "mobile", changing its main features according to the specific activities they carried out. This process can be schematized with the following picture.

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[1] See..

[2] This refers to the meaning of locale outlined in chapter 3.
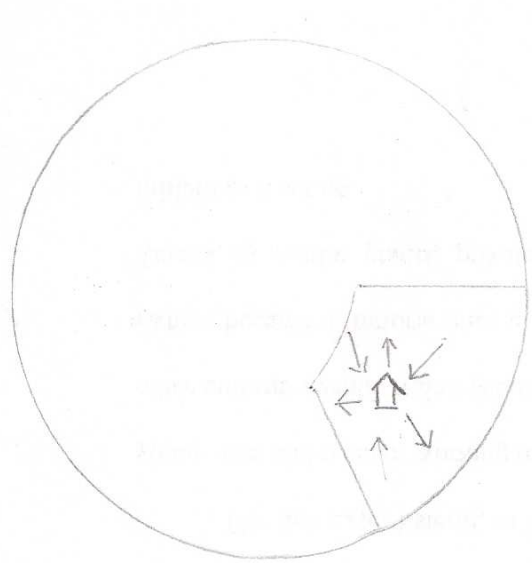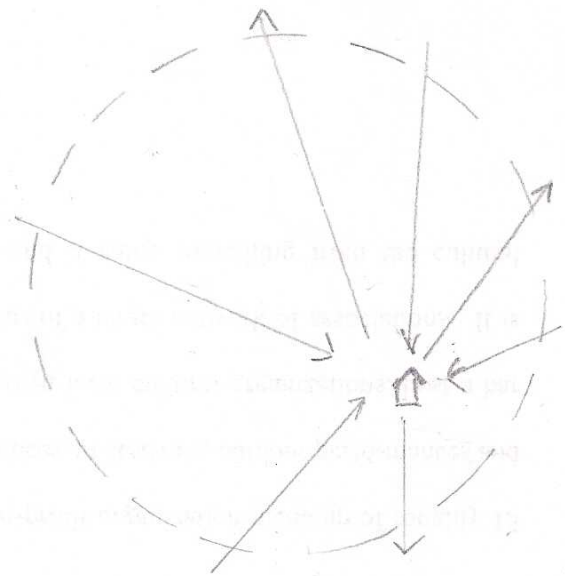
02/2008   02/2010

Figure 1.Shift in the local embeddedness of the observed cultural associations.

The small house in the picture represent the farmhouse that hosted the observed associations and it indicates the cultural associations observed in my study. In the left side of the picture the small house is collocated inside the clearly delimited boundaries of Milan "Zone 4", to indicate the this urban space was the main "locale" in which the observed groups were embedded at the beginning of my field research (02/2008). Such "local embeddedness" referred both to the fact that the observed groups defined their collective purposes with respect to Milan "Zone 4" and to the fact that the relationships the groups engaged while pursuing their goals were mainly limited to this urban area. In the left side picture, the fact that the arrows do not overcome the limits of Milan "Zone 4" indicates that at the beginning of my field research the observed groups engaged mainly relationships with subjects inside this area[1]. In the right side of the image it is schematically represented the relation between the urban space and the actions carried out by the observed groups in the final stage of my field research. The boundaries of Milan "Zone 4" have disappeared because such a space - though equally present in the formal communication of the observed groups - did not delimit anymore the privileged context where the actors with which the observed groups related with were mainly located. The boundaries of the right side of the picture are those of Milan and they are depicted with a broken line that is overcome by the arrows to indicate that the relationships the groups activated while pursuing public sociality mainly surmounted the city's limits.

Over the two years of my empirical inquiry I've observed the local character of the observed groups changing its main traits in parallel with the worsening of the financial needs of the overall project

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[1] Such relationships contributed to the "structuring of the local society" because the observed actors oriented their actions and strategies toward other local actors (Bagnasco 2003 p. 65).

(the CP[1]) to which all the observed groups belonged to. The main link between these two processes seemed to be the fact that almost all the analyzed associations progressively shifted their repertoires of actions, using more and more events in their pursue of public sociality. Indeed, events on the one hand contributed to legitimize the groups that set them up and this augmented the possibility of being funded, but on the other hand tended to extend the local scale of action of the groups that set them up. Indeed, previous researches[2] have shown that events play a relevant role in building "visibility", "legitimacy" and "a shared interest" (Vitale) that widely transcend the strict limits of the local neighborhood. Further, my own field observations revealed that both the attendees coming to the events set up by the observed groups and the relationships these groups engaged while setting up events were, over the two years of my research, less and less limited by the boundaries of Milan "Zone 4". While the observed groups passed to increasingly set up events, these more and more attracted wide audiences that were not necessarily from the same "locale" – at whatever spatial scale this was defined – of the associations that set them up, but that came on purpose from a variety of places. Also, the observed groups more and more involved in the organization of their events subjects such as suppliers and commercial partners from the whole city and beyond it.

To further support the aforementioned argument about the link between the change in the local embededness of the observed groups and the increased use they made of events it is possible to cite that the shift in the local character had not occurred uniquely for the only observed group – the CC- that kept constant its repertoire of action over time, without increasingly recurring to the setting up of events. Therefore, the shift in the local character of the observed groups appeared firstly linked to the grown importance of events as repertoire of action used by the observed groups to pursue their goals, as summarized by the following picture.
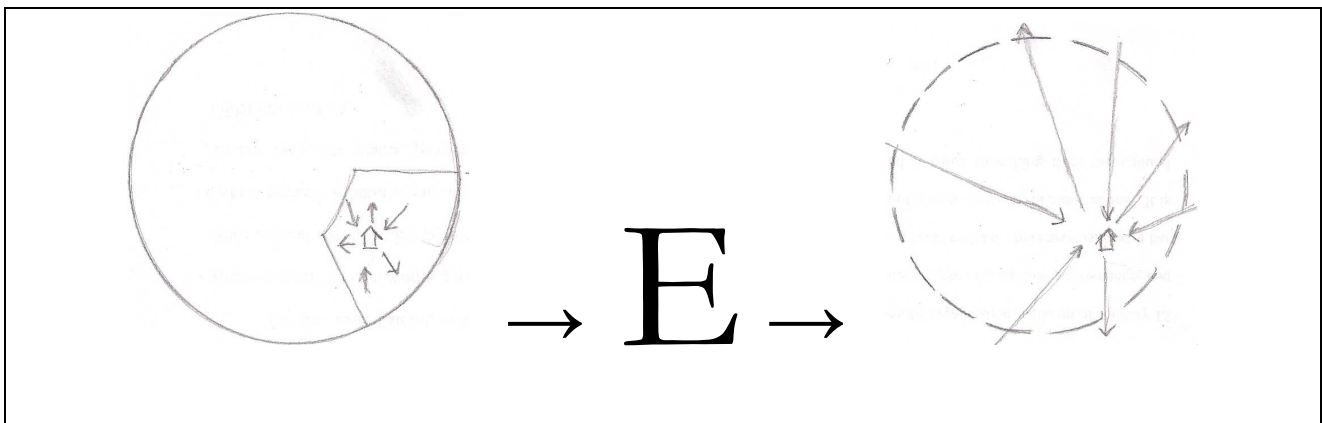

Figure 2. The event (E) causes the shift in the local embeddedness of the observed groups.

But, according to the theoretical argument I'm proposing, the picture in figure 2 does not help in understanding neither the *why* nor the *how* of the process it schematizes. Indeed, it doesn't specify

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[1] The Cuccagna Project

[2] For example the reconversion of the Milan ex-psychiatric hospital into the association of Olinda.

the reasons *why* the observed groups have progressively set up events, it doesn't account for the motives at the basis of the fact that one of the observed groups has not followed this process, keeping constant its repertoire of action over time. Indeed, though the event represents in general a form of action particularly suited to fulfill financial requirements ( ) , not all my case-study groups have increased their use of events while the Cuccagna Project progressively worsened its monetary needs. Also, the picture in itself does not provide elements to understand *how* the progressive disregard toward the limits of Milan "Zone 4" occurred, how it changed the conditions of possibility for the observed groups and, especially, which implications this have had on their pursue of public sociality. In particular, it still remains to be understood how the change has affected bonds among group members, how relationships with third parts and how it has affected the articulation between sociability and public sociality. Further, the picture in figure 2 neglects that the associations observed in my study have set up a variety of events which were not equal among themselves in their possibility of creating social relationships. Events affected the pursue of public sociality in urban context but different events differently affected such a pursue. In general, *the event* augments the capacity of who set it up of "go up of scale, bringing with it the network of bottom-up initiatives to which it is connected" (Vitale 2009a), projecting beyond the strict limited boundaries of the local neighborhood[1]. But, as I have particularly illustrated in chapter 6, *different events* allowed different processes of "go up of scale", each one with its own specific tradeoffs with respect to its capacity of bringing with it the local and familiar type of engagement that events may include. For example, the empirical evidences of this study have shown that events differed in their capacity of "entering the media public sphere" (Oliver, Myers 1999) and this outcome was associated to different type of attendees' engagement in the events[2].

According to the viewpoint I'm proposing in this study the observed groups have not only set up different events, but they have *differently used* events. For analytical reasons I propose to see the different events included in my study as part of articulation of a unique form of action[3]. According to this view, what needs to be clarify in order to understand the implications of events in the pursue of public sociality carried out by the observed associations is *how* they used events and *why* they used events in that way. The answer I'm proposing to both these points is that the observed groups did not used events randomly but instead their *group styles enabled and constrained the use they made of events*. Indeed, looking from close at the group styles of the associations of my study I've had the possibility to see how events have been used and why different groups have differently used events. The empirical evidences supporting this argument have been illustrated throughout the past chapters looking from different viewpoints at the actions engaged by the observed associations in

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[1] It is hardly a chance at this respect if the American model of community organizing associated to a strict defense of the limited boundaries of the neighborhood (often through strategies of formal and informal control) is often cited in scholarships on local participation with reference to its failures (Petrillo 2000 p. 132).

[2] In particular I refer here to the tradeoffs underlined in chapter 6.

[3] This is not the reason why I propose to see events as part of a unique form of action, but it is worth underling that the events I have observed in my field research possessed significant similarities among themselves; in chapter 6 I have grouped the observed events in fourfold typology that represented the articulation of a broader tradeoff about event as means to enter the public sphere. I propose to look at events as part of a broader single form of action which possess its own grammar with respect to specific goals.

their pursue of public sociality. Here I would like to illustrate a theoretical argument that aims at systematizing the mechanisms and empirical findings previously illustrated. Indeed, the proposed argument aims at accounting for (a) the different ways in which very similar groups "reacted" to the same context constraint consisting in the increased monetary needs of the CP and (b) for the implications of these reactions for the observed organizations' attempts of creating social relationships.

For clarity's sake it is possible to split the proposed theoretical argument in two parts. The first part states that if and which type of events the observed associations have set up in response to the worsening of the financial needs of the CP was enabled and constrained by their group style. This first part can be very schematically represented with the following scheme:

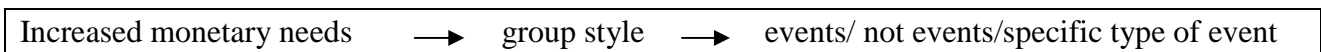| Increased monetary needs $\longrightarrow$ group style $\longrightarrow$ events/ not events/specific type of event |

Figure 3. First part of the proposed argument

The second part of the argument states that the implications deriving from the setting up of events were also shaped by the group styles of the observed associations. Such implications referred mainly to the raising of tensions in the group life linked to carrying out market oriented tasks and, more generally, to the deepening of the potential contrast between "the exigencies of functionality and those connected to participation of group members" (Ranci 1999 p. 135). This second part of the argument can be summarized according to the following scheme:

| Event/not events/type of event $\longrightarrow$ group style $\longrightarrow$ associations' actions |

Figure 4. Second part of the proposed argument

The first scheme indicates that to understand the adaptations in the repertoires of action of the observed groups engendered by the increased financial needs of the CP it is necessary to look at the group styles that shaped their group lives. Indeed, it is at this level that took shape the meaning-making activities and practices through which the collective representation about the financial needs made sense for group members. In particular, the increased need of money of the CP became part of the group lives and concerns through the filtering action of group style and for this reason it acquired different meanings in the group life of different observed associations. For example in chapter 8 we have seen that for the Cuccagna Cooperative accepting the urgency of the CP monetary concerns and re-orienting the group's activity according to such a concern would have meant directly threatening the sense of the group's cohesion, explicitly putting into question the situated bonds that tied group members. The way the same collective representation about the, very concrete, need of money was filtered in the everyday lives of the observed associations was shaped by the institutionalized patterns of interactions among groups members while in group contexts. Also, even admitting that the same collective representation about the financial need made sense in the same way in different groups, that representation led to different types of events according to

the possibilities offered by different group styles. Indeed, each of the observed group styles was associated to features of the organizing forms that allowed the observed groups to set up different types of events, for example with respect to the use of resources such as press offices or media campaigns.

With this point we approach the second part of the proposed argument, summarized in figure 4 and according to which group styles shaped the actions set up by the observed associations in their pursue of public sociality. To be more precise, I've built the second part of my theoretical argument noting over the course of the two years of empirical research that the fact of increasingly setting up events changed the observed associations, affecting their organizing form and group styles. Indeed, we have seen in the past chapters that setting up events in Milan required groups to engage in advertising and marketing activities that were necessary to attract the attention of the audience in an urban context increasingly filled with cultural events (). Features characterizing the organizing form of the observed associations were not abstract properties, but instead they were the formal aspects tied to the way a group coordinated itself in its everyday life. Throughout the past chapters we have seen that, for example, in the case of Esterni the presence of a press office or of internship workers were in tight relation with the fact that group members reciprocally related to each other in terms of "autonomous workers"[1]. The same can be said about the fact that keeping minutes of group meetings for CGCP was consistent with the "diligent student" group style that characterized interactions among group members while in group context[2]. When some of the observed associations started to increasingly setting up events (that allowed to fund the CP and give it visibility and legitimation), this entailed tensions that affected both their organizing form and their group styles. When the Green PT started to set up workshops this required the group, for example, to interact with commercial suppliers of services; this implied at the same time different and more formal roles inside the group but also different *group boundaries* and the drawing of a *map* that included in the group conversation subjects that were previously out of it, such as commercial suppliers[3]. Changes in the organizing form of groups did not occur in abstract but in tight relations with the way group members reciprocally defined their mutual obligations while in group contexts. We have seen that the group life of associations could include a variety of group styles, often "in competition" among themselves. The fact of starting to set up events on a regular basis affected significantly such a competition. With the neo-institutionalist vocabulary we could say that "when an organization hosts different institutionalized routines, the practical consequences of one routine may diminish the possibilities for keeping other routines going" (Lichterman 2006 p. 553). The fact of setting up events in an ever more structured way reinforced certain group styles at the detriment of other ones. This is not a purely functionalist argument, because I have also observed associations acting through group styles that made difficult for them pursuing their own goals or carrying out the or treat certain topics in group contexts. For example we have seen that the group style of CC didn't

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[1] Further details are illustrated at this respect in chapter 7.

[2] Indeed, minutes were meant to offer members the possibility of self-reflexively "learning" from their own experience. At this respect further details are illustrated in chapters 4 and 8.

[3] This shift has been illustrated in chapter 8.

allow this association to treat and discuss in group meetings the monetary needs of CP, even though single members wished and deemed necessary to do that[1]. The activities the observed associations carried out affected in the long run the group styles through which these activities were carried out. With reference to events, many of the observed groups increased the use of this form of action over time and in particular more and more set up "consumption of sociality" events that scheduled the participation of massive audiences[2]. This has implied significant changes in the organizing forms of these groups and also in their group style.

We knew already from previous studies that non-profit groups have to confront with the "primordial quandary"(Ranci 1999) associated to the inevitably tensions between functionality requirements and the participation of members (Ranci 1999 p. 135) in the group life. Moreover my analysis has observed specific tensions tied to the generation of public sociality that, on the one hand, required process of mediation to overcome the immediacy of interactions but, on the other hand it widely produced sociality through a means that strongly drew on the immediacy of interaction, such as the event. In this last section I have tried to summarize the empirical evidences illustrated in the past chapters about how the management of these type of tensions was enabled and constrained by the group styles that shaped the everyday group life of the observed associations. The next picture schematizes the overall argument proposed, putting together the two parts that I have until now kept separated for clarity's sake.
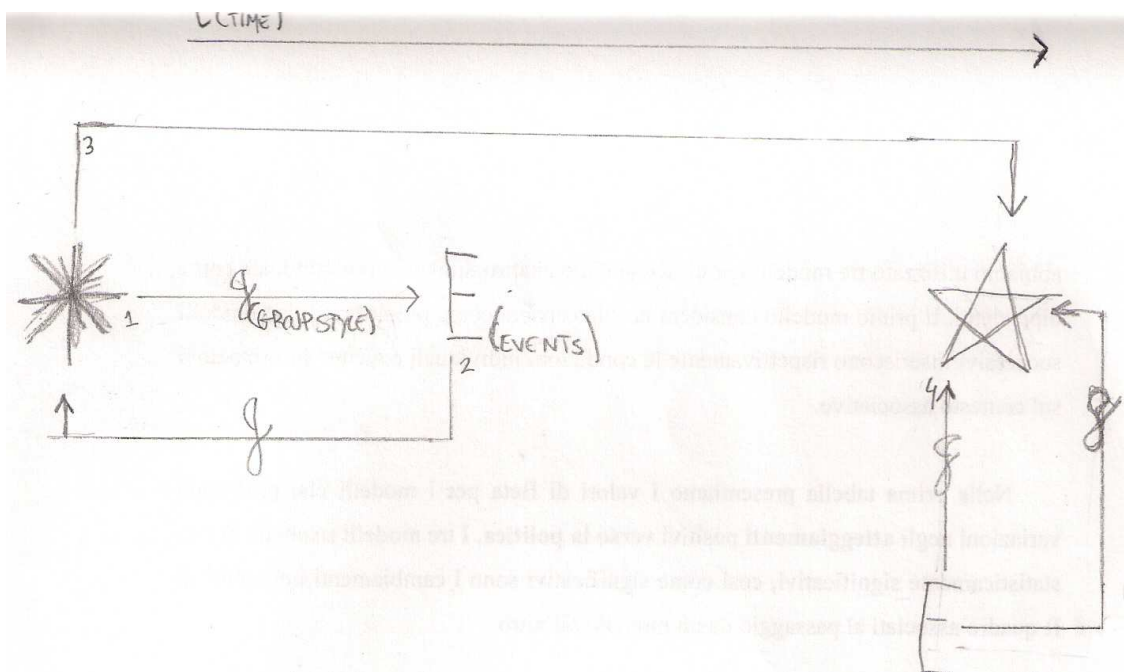

Figura 5. The overall theoretical argument

The picture in figure 5 aims at offering a dynamic overview of the way group style filtered the pursue of public sociality of the observed groups over the time (t, the line drawn in the highest part

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[1] This aspect has been illustrated in chapter 8.

[2] For the proposed distinction among different types of events see chapter 6.

of the picture) of my field research. The asterisk indicate an observed group of my study as it was at the beginning of my field research and the star indicates the same association as this presented itself at the end of my field research. The scheme represents the general process and it is particularly valuable for those groups that have more and more set up events over the two years of my field research and that in parallel have shifted their local embeddedness according to what I have outlined in figure 1[1]. The small numbers put beside the lines indicate the order to read different elements comprised in the picture. Following this order we firstly see that the setting up of events - as "reaction" of the increased financial needs of the CP - was filtered for each of the observed group by its specific group style (g), according to the first part of the argument proposed and schematized in figure 3. Secondly, also the setting up of events affected the observed groups (the asterisk) through their group styles, according to what I previously outlined in the second part of the proposed argument. This process over time stabilized itself and in some cases resulted in changes that affected the organizing form and group styles of the observed groups, turning them from asterisks to stars, according to the symbols used in the picture. In this new configuration, in the right side of the picture, I have represented the same association of the left side keeping setting up events being enabled and constrained by its group styles, which in turn shaped its specific way of being a group especially at the level of informal interactions among group members but also at the more formal of its organizing form[2]. This scheme sums up the theoretical argument I propose to account for the shift (outlined in figure 1) about the change in the type of local embeddedness that some of the observed groups experienced over the period of my field research. This argument aims at underling that *it is not the event in itself what changed the local embeddedness of the observed associations*, but instead that context elements and the forms of actions used by them affected their local character and their pursues of public sociality *through the filtering action of their group styles*. In particular, the proposed argument stresses that the implications of events on the endeavors the observed association engaged to make Milan sociable were always mediated by their group styles. This is valuable in the double sense: firstly with respect to the leeway and margins of action associated to different group styles; secondly with reference to the implications that the setting up of events had on the observed cultural organizations. Going back to the previous outlined process of shifting in the local character of some of the observed groups, the proposed account shifts from :

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[1] Therefore the scheme is useless for those groups, such as the CC, that have kept constant their repertoire of action over time. Though, with reference to these cases the scheme give some elements to understand comparatively why they have not changed their local character over time.

[2] Though it would be incorrect to state that group style shapes the organizing form, these two aspects are widely tied among themselves.
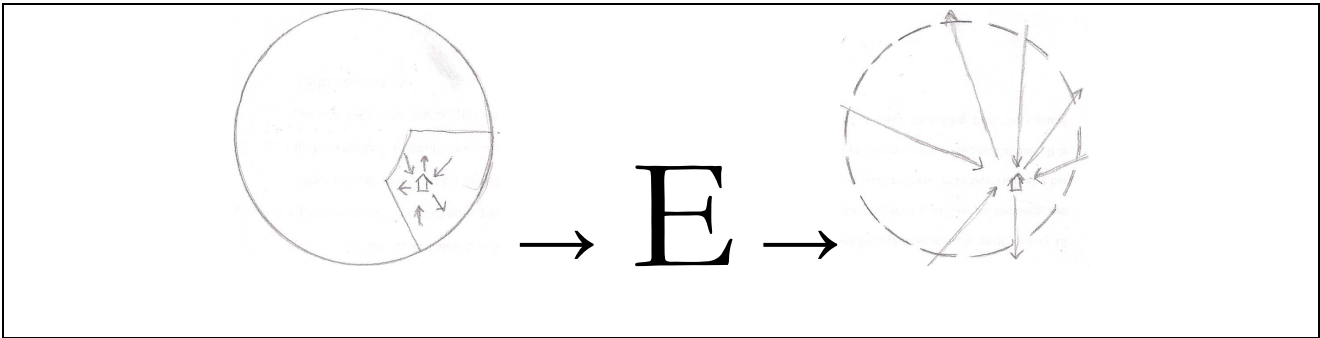
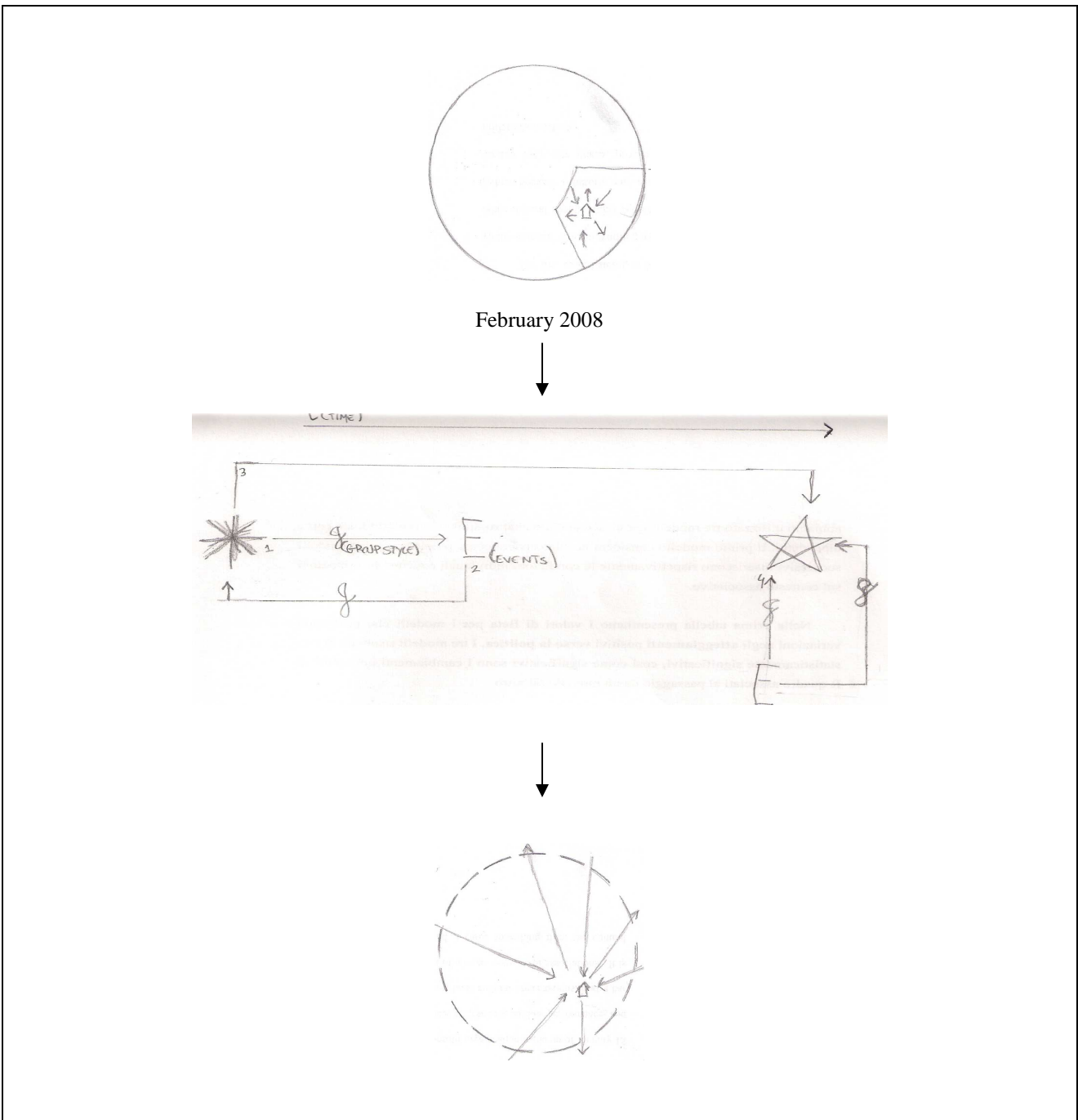to the following one:

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Figure 6. The proposed argument schematized.

On the basis of what I have already said in this chapter, the central part of figure 6 represents the proposed argument, while the initial and last pictures of the figure summarize the relation between the urban space and the pursue of public sociality at the begging and at the end of my empirical research. The main findings of this research converge in underling that the patterns that shape interactions among group members in the everyday group settings enable and constrain in various - not always direct - ways the groups' pursue for public sociality. Indeed, in this chapter I have articulated my exposition showing that this is valuable both with reference to the pursue of sociality that develop through the inclusion of new members in the group life and with respect to the efforts of creating social relationships with subjects beyond the group. With respect to this last point I have outlined three different articulations that were meant to summarize how the institutionalized patterns of interactions of group life mattered when the observed associations (1) tried to create social relationships *through structured practices* that unfolded over time (2), when they set up "ephemeral practices" (Cognetti 2007), such as events, *in* which they wanted to generate public sociality and (3) in *the way they used* event as means to pursue their collective goals of contrasting social isolation.

Thus, it is worth noting that the concept of group style proved in this study to be heuristically useful to grasp the patterns that shaped group life and their enabling and constraining properties with respect to the pursue of public sociality carried out by the observed groups. This concept has underlined the importance of looking at the specific contexts where everyday group life unfolded in order to understand broader outcomes related to the groups' formal goals. Considering sociability as the "daily life" (Camus-Vigué 2000 p. 214) of all sorts of organizations, the operation I've carried out in this study has developed the assumption according to which "sociability is not well understood in our society, nor is it given the serious consideration it deserves" (Daniels 1984 p.). In particular, I've tried to suggest some reasons why sociability – meant in the aforementioned sense - should be taken more seriously when analyzing intentioned efforts of generating public sociality. The concept of group style has given refined analytical tools to study "the way group solidarity is organized" and "interrogate the form of the action" (Melucci 1984 p. 443). Finally, it is worth also citing that the study I've conducted on the pursue of public sociality has required to integrate the concept of group styles with other tools - firstly Habermas model of the public sphere but also many other ones - that took in consideration context elements tied to the fact that the observed groups acted in an *urban* context which implied its own specific requirements of publicity.

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

Over the course of my research I used different methods of inquiry or research techniques: interviews, surveys, uncovered participant observation, shadowing. I've formulated the theoretical arguments proposed by this dissertation to answer to the starting research questions[1] drawing on the ethnographic evidences collected through my participant observation[2] in the observed cultural associations. In spite of this, I deem worth detailing in this methodological appendix the specific ways in which I used each one of the aforementioned research techniques over the course of my analysis. Such a subject will be developed in the next pages through a narration of the research choices I took over the course of my inquiry and with methodological considerations useful to make sense of these choices.

EXPLORATIVE INQUIRY ON ASSOCIATIONS PRODUCING SOCIALITY IN MILAN

At the beginning of my field research, between November 2007 and February 2008, I carried out a first explorative inquiry that aimed at selecting the civil society subjects to be included in the comparative ethnography I had planned to do on the basis of my research project[3].

. During this preliminary inquiry I mainly, but not exclusively, used semi-structured interviews. In particular I conducted 14 interviews with core members or leaders of associations that, according to their formal statements, aimed at creating social relationships in Milan. In particular I interviewed members of the following non-profit organizations: "Società umanitaria", "Cento11. Impronte di quartiere", "Casa delle culture", "Pim spazio scenico", "Alexexea. La casa di Alex"; "Banda degli Ottoni a scoppio", "Esterni", "Assocaizione La scheggia", "Arci Corvetto", "Arci Todo cambia", "Bar boon Band", "Studio Azzurro" and "Orchestra di via Padova". I also participated in one group meeting of two Milan radical-leftist social centers: "Centro socaile Leoncavallo" and "Centro sociale Vittoria". I participated in three group meetings of the association "Banda degli Ottoni a scoppio", in five of its cultural events, in three cultural events set up by the association "Cento 11. Impronte di quartiere" and in one event set up by "Orchestra di via Padova".

While conducting my explorative inquiry I progressively refined the definition of the empirical cases I was looking for and that could best suit my research questions. Initially I generically looked for non-profit organizations that somehow used arts to produce sociality then I abandoned such a requirement and I formulated a definition that described the groups I was looking for in terms of *stable, urban,* non-profit groups aiming at producing sociality in Milan and that *intentionally* tried

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[1] These were mainly about which sociality outcomes the observed cultural associations produced and which were the conditions of such a production. For further details on the research question see the introduction and the theoretical chapter.

[2] In particular I mainly used the technique of "theory-driven participant observation" (Lichterman 2002) which has been described in the introduction of the dissertation.

[3] The document in which I outline the original research project is still available in the web site of the department of Sociology of Università di Milano Bicocca. This documents has experienced significant changes over the course of the field research carried out.

to make people connect with each other in the city. The category of *stable* was used by the researcher to mean durable, not ephemeral groupings composed uniquely to set up a specific initiative, but instead possessing a purpose that projected them over time. *Urban* referred firstly to the physical settlement of these groups and to the reference area of their associative action. Once I found the first non-profit organization that according to the conducted interviews fulfilled my requirements, I started my participant observation in it. The first group was the cultural association of Esterni and in February 2008 I started my daily uncovered participant observation in it. I spent in the venue of this association everyday (but not generally in the weekends) for four months from 9 a.m. to at least 7 p.m. while observing from close its group life in the different settings where it unfolded[1]. The first collected empirical evidences possessed a wide focus because they were oriented at documenting how the observed group produced sociality (meant as creation of social relationships) among group members and with subjects beyond the group. Over my field work I progressively refined and detailed the focus of my attention according to the procedures described in the next paragraph which – it is worth précising- refer in general to the empirical research conducted in all the observed associations and not uniquely in the first one.

METHOD OF WORK: FIELD NOTES AND THEIR ANALYSIS

In the settings where I carried out my participant observation I took field notes organizing them in four columns according to the technique outlined by the Italian anthropologist and sociologist Marianella Sclavi (2005). The columns served to group the empirical evidences directly while collecting them during my field observations. In particular, the columns divided vertically the page of the researcher's field notebook in four sections, each one devoted to: (1) a detailed description of the observed settings and of all the physical arrangements included in them, (2) a detailed description of the behaviors enacted by the actors present in the observed settings, (3) an integral transcription of the verbal exchanges taking place among the observed actors using their own words as much as possible (4) a description of the *researcher's amazement (stupor/surprise)* with respect to the observed settings, actors, actions and interactions.

This last section was the starting point for the first analysis I carried out on my field notes, short after having collected them. Indeed, I firstly tried to trace my own surprises with reference to the, often implicit, assumptions that had prompted them. In particular I tried to link my assumptions to scholars' arguments about civic processes. I developed this operation writing memos documents in which I strived to outline the most clearly as possible the gap between what scholars of civic life predicted and what I had observed and documented through the field notes. I then tried to make sense of such a gap going back "in the field" and paying attention at specific aspects of the observed scenes that could support guesses or delimited hypothesis taken from previous studies. Often, further empirical evidences elicited specific puzzles that the researcher was asked to account for, instead of solving previous ones. These puzzles – such as those introduced in the opening paragraphs of the analytical chapters- called for further field observations and further theoretical readings. Thus, the starting research questions got progressively detailed and my inquiry on the

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[1] See chapter 8 for details.

production of sociality and on the conditions of such a production was specified in the variety of outlooks depicted in the analytical chapters of the dissertation.

Among the readings I did during the inquiry, that of Elusive togetherness (Lichterman 2005) and the following related ones have been particularly important because they suggested to me a specific way to observe in the field at the organizational cultures of the observed groups in order to make sense of the quandaries that my analysis of field notes prompted. Thus, I started analyzing field observations by writing specific memo documents that tried to outline the group styles of the cultural organizations I was observing, articulating in particular their speech norms, group bonds and group boundaries (Eliasoph, Lichterman 2003). The approach of the group style was useful to answer many research questions, as I have illustrated in the analytical chapters and especially summarized in the conclusive section of the dissertation. Though, this approach was integrated by a variety of other analytical tools that have been also described in the previous pages. When I succeeded in making sense of the puzzles raising from my analysis I came back in the field sites to see if my accounts were confirmed and in the case of positive responses I passed to try to answer other theoretical research questions or to make sense of other quandaries raised by previous field observations.

I kept this method of work constant over the course of my field research in different cultural associations and I refined it with the precious advises and suggestions given to me by Paul Lichterman in Los Angeles, where I spent a two months period[1] as visiting scholar. In particular, Licherman helped me to elaborate on memos documents I had previously outlined and to write new ones that could be useful for my overall analysis.

IN SEARCH OF SUITED CASE STUDIES ORGANIZATION

In the first observed cultural association - Esterni - I mainly conducted an uncovered participant observation of its group life, which was mainly made of meetings but also informal interactions among group members. I also was also actively involved in this organization because I was hired by it for a delimited and small consultancy service[2]. I also carried out a "shadowing" (Sclavi 2005) observation of the group leader of this association while he moved in various sites of Milan to carry out various tasks to set up the group's activities. Shadowing observation was carried out for short periods, lasting at maximum a whole working day, from 9.00 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.While using this research technique I observed Esterni' leader participating in a meeting of the Cuccagna Project inside a room of the Cuccagna farmhouse. The Cuccagna Project appeared to me at first sight as a possible interesting case study for my research because its official goals explicitly addressed the generation of social urban inclusion in a perceived fragmented local society through the setting of cultural initiatives and other convivial occasions[3]. Especially, in that period of my empirical research I had decided to focus my attention on non-profit organizations settled or acting with

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[1] From the 22nd of June 2009 to the 23nd of August 2009.

[2] This episode has been described in chapter 7.

[3] For further details on the Cuccagna Project see chapter 3.

reference to the same urban area. Indeed, taking groups aiming at creating social relationships in different parts of Milan would have introduced too many elements of heterogeneousness among the selected cases. So, I interviewed in march 2008 two members of the Cuccagna Project (CP): Sergio B, the president of the Cuccagna Alliance and Sergio D, the leader of the Cuccagna Group for the Construction of Participation (CGCP). In these interviews I was told about the variety of associations that formally and informally worked for the development of the Cuccagna Project. Thanks to these interviews I realized that I was not interested in the organizations that were formally part of the Cuccagna Alliance because their official aims and repertoire of actions were too heterogeneous among themselves. Also, the activities promoted by these groups took place with respect to a variety of areas of reference in the whole city and in other northern Italy cities and villages. Nevertheless, I realized through those two interviews that that the Cuccagna Project, because of the different groups it included that were not formally part of the Cuccagna Alliance, represented a very good site for carrying out my field research. This was due to the fact that it allowed to *comparatively* analyze different cultural associations working in conditions that made maximally visible the different enabling and constraining power of their group styles, according to the main research hypothesis adopted in the meanwhile. Let me briefly illustrate this point in the following paragraph.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS ON THE CHOICE OF THE CP AS PRIVILEGED FIELD SITE

The CP comprised several cultural associations that were not officially part of the Cuccagna Alliance but that possessed traits that were particularly interesting to me with reference to the research questions of my study. Indeed, these associations devoted their energies to the development of the Cuccagna Project stressing, in their official statements, their goals of creating social relationships both within their group members and beyond them. These groups pursued such goals mainly through the setting up of various cultural initiatives. They possessed a very similar, but not equal, informal organizational structures. They were all settled in the same urban area of my first observed group (Esterni), which was also the formal reference area of their associative goals (Milan "Zone 4"). Especially, these groups shared most of their members and their everyday life unfolded in delimited settings (the spaces of the Cuccagna farmhouse) that often overlapped among themselves. Thus, given that "in the interest of theory elaboration […] internal subunits of a complex organization that face some similar constraints originating from the environment" (Vaughan 1992 p. 177-8) represent a privileged condition of observation, I decided to take as case studies 8 associations that were included in the Cuccagna Project but not part of the Cuccagna Alliance (CA), which integrated the other two case studies groups: Esterni, the first observed cultural association which was also part of the CA and the CA.

Such a choice was motivated by the fact that studying these groups represented to me a privileged condition to focus my analytical attention on the concept of group style. Indeed, I had found the best conditions I could look for in order to comparatively analyze the enabling and constraining power of different recurrent patterns of actions shaping everyday group life. In particular, these conditions were the fact that these associations' group life unfolded in the same settings and, especially, that they shared most of their members. Indeed, this implied the possibility of looking at

the same individuals participating in different associations, each one potentially possessing its own group style and thus - according to the main adopted hypothesis - differently enabling and constraining their actions and interactions while in group contexts. The possibility of analyzing the same individuals confronting with situated recurrent patterns of actions that were possibly different among themselves allowed me to analyze the link between the observed group styles and the creation of social relationships both among group members and beyond the group.

Over the course of my empirical research this privileged condition revealed to be even more profitable for answering my research question and for theoretically develop the adopted hypothesis than what I could have expected at the outset. Indeed, after about an year from the begging of my field work the observed groups started to face the same delimited and clearly identifiable context constraint, behaving in a variety of ways that were linked to the possibilities offered by their group styles and that strongly shaped their creation of social relationships[1]. In particular, such a context constraint consisted in the fact that the observed groups had all to face the increased necessity to contrast lack of money the Cuccagna Project suffered. Their reactions differed significantly at this respect. Indeed, as illustrated in the previous pages in some cases the collective discussions that developed in group meetings about the economic aspects of the CP threatened the solidarity among group members (as in the case of CC); in some other cases the necessity of dealing with those aspects reinforced the bonds among group members and contributed to make the group grow in terms of activities carried out and numbers of members (as in the case of the Green PT). In this case, the lack of money the CP increasingly suffered over the period of my field research was analytically treated as a collective representation associated to a variety of groups' reactions because filtered through different "group styles" (Eliasoph, Lichterman 2003).

Given the consistency of the conditions in which CP groups acted with my research questions and adopted hypothesis, I decided to include as case study of my inquiry the associations introduced in chapter 3. From April 2008 to February 2010 I participated in the group life of these associations and in all the initiatives they set up to make people connect with each other in Milan. Most of their group life took place in the settings of the Cuccagna farmhouse, though from time to time (especially after the begun of the restoring works of the farm) it moved in other settings consisting mainly in the private houses of group members. Also the public initiatives set up by the observed organizations took in place nearly always in the Cuccagna farmhouse and they consisted mainly of cultural events: movie projections, arts shows, concerts, conferences, parties or "Participatory Events"[2]. Apart from taking field notes (according to the afore described method of work), I collected empirical evidences also conducting informal interviews both with group members and with the attendees of the events the observed organizations set up[3]. I directly observed 32 distinctive cultural events. Furthermore, I participated in the group life of the observed associations both as a volunteer (for example helping set up and clean up after events or carrying out specific tasks during

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[1] According to the threefold argument introduced in chapter 9.

[2] See chapter 4 for more detail at this respect.

[3] An excerpt of this type of interview is reported in the opening conversation of chapter 5.

them) and as a professional (as previously mentioned for Esterni and directing a research on Milan "Zone 4"[1] for the Cuccagna Alliance). I considered both these types of involvement particularly fruitful possibilities of learning more about the observed cultural associations in the process.

As aforementioned, I also used quantitative methods of research, though not for directing addressing the main research questions but instead in order to collect context empirical evidences. Indeed, over the course of my field research I realized[2] I needed a more structured knowledge of the associative context in which the observed cultural organization operated. So, from July 2008 I conducted two different surveys: the first one lead me to create a database that included general information of all the associations and non-profit groups active in Milan "Zone 4", the second one instead was a more detailed analysis of the organizing structure of some of them. I've briefly reported some details about the first survey I did in chapter 3 of the dissertation, in the next paragraphs instead I will sketch out some empirical findings of the second, more detailed, survey.

SOME HINTS ON THE ASSOCIATIVE CONTEXT OF MILAN "ZONE 4"

In this paragraph I will briefly overview specific traits of the organizing form of 42 associations of Milan "Zone 4" that have been included in a specific survey I've conducted. The questionnaire I've uses drew on the one used in IREF's research on associations in Lumbardy (Iref 1994) and replied by the Bicocca group of research "Polislombardia" 13 years afterwards to re- propose that research (Biorcio, Vitale 2010)[3]. This survey has focused its attention on some of the associations that had been previously included in the original database of 177 associations. The choice of the associations included in the second survey was not made using a technique of statistical casual sampling. Thus, the information introduced in this paragraph have no representative value with respect to the original database or to Milan "Zone 4" in general. The purpose that motivated this survey was that of having a broad overview of associations active in this urban portion of the city from the point of view of traits referring to the, strictly defined[4], organizing form. In particular, I've tried to stress as much as possible continuities and differences of the empirical evidences I've collected with this survey with respect to, on the one hand, the widest (regional, Italian, international) context and, on the other hand, the associations selected as case studies of my research.

SECTORS OF ACTIVITY

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[1] Now published in Citroni 2010.

[2] Especially thanks to the precious support given to me by Tommaso Vitale at this and many other aspects of the research I carried out.

[3] In particular I've chosen which items of that questionnaire include in my survey with precious support of prof. Roberto Biorcio.

[4] In scholarship on associations and third sector groups it is possible to identify at least two main use of the category of "organizing form". In the first case this category is used in "its general meaning […] of the 'how' of organizations with their culture and concrete practices" (de Leonardis 1999 p. 244). Secondly, organizing form strictly defined refers to organizational characteristics of associations' structure such as the one outlined in this paragraph or described by Forno and Polizzi (2010) with reference to the whole regional context of associations.

In the following chart we can observe the distribution of the associations included in the - non casual- sample of my survey according to the sectors of activities in which they stated of operating[1].
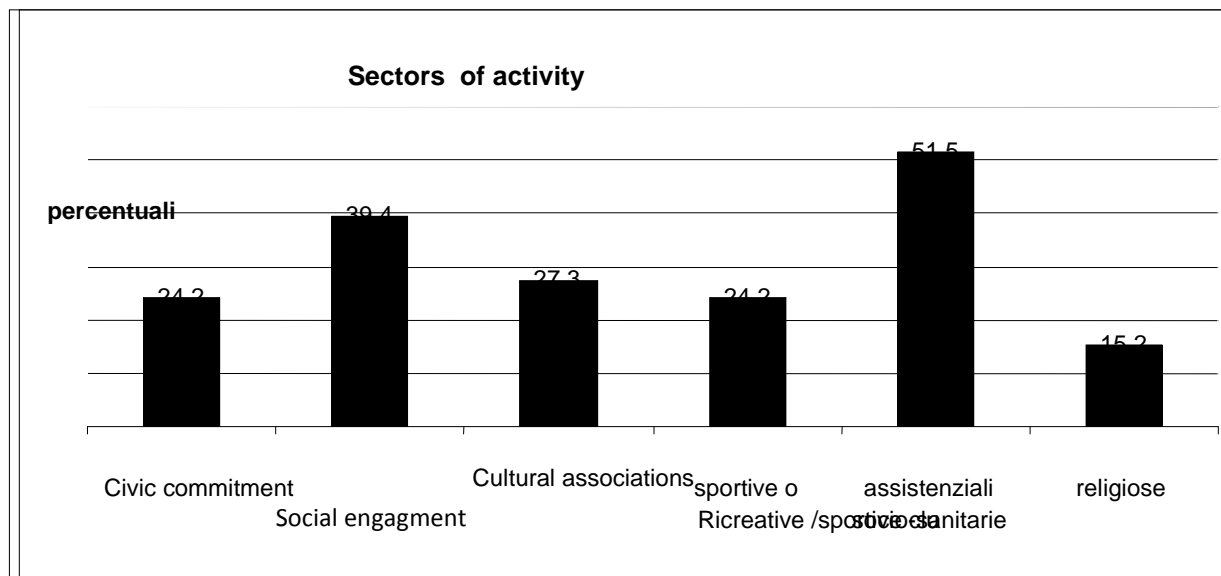

Figure 1. Sector of activity of the selected associations of Milan "Zone 4"[2].

The associations active in the assistance and social care sector were the most numerous among those included in my sample. In this category were comprised all the collective subjects that supplied health-care services and that carried out socio-educative activities. The overriding part of this type of associations was consistency with a general tendency affecting the entire city of Milan (Barbetta 2008) and the whole Lombardy context alike (Forno Polizzi 2010). The second sector of activity most numerous - 39,4% - was that of the associations that have been defined of "social engagement": groups committed in activities of international cooperation and solidarity, immigrant support, "fair trade economy"[3], "solidal purchasing groups"[4]. Then there were cultural associations (27,3%), mainly engaged in setting up and promoting arts activities, music concerts and other cultural initiatives. Then, there were the associations that have been defined of "civic commitment" (24,2 %), that is to say those engaged in activities for the promotion of the quality of urban life, environment care, gender equality or peace. Finally, there were sportive and recreational associations (24,2%) and religious based association (15,2%).

Therefore, the data gathered through the small survey I have conducted, though without any statistical value – confirm the presence in Milan "Zone 4" of a trait characteristic of the whole

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[1] The distinction in sectors of activities proposed in this chapter widely replicate the one used by Biorcio (2009) to outline the context of associations in Lombardy.

[2] Source: empirical evidences collected through the survey I conducted in 2009; Elaboration: mine. If not otherwise specified, this refers to all the charts presented in this chapter.

[3] English translation of "commercio equo e solidale".

[4] English translation of "gruppi di acquisto solidale" (GAS).

Italian third sector in general. This is the "overriding presence of associations active in the sector of social services and that devote their activities toward the more disadvantaged groups" (Ranci 1999 37). As we shall see in the next paragraph, with reference to such a scenario the relevant presence of cultural associations is a fairly recent novelty.

PERIOD OF BIRTH

Figure 2. Period of birth of the selected associations.

Taking a look at the period of birth of the associations included in the survey I have conducted (fig. 2), it is worth noting the relevant rising in all sectors from the mid 70's up to these days, with a peak at the mid of the 80's. Indeed, in this period was born roughly the 30% of all the association included in the survey. These empirical evidences are consistent with findings of previous workson Lombardy volunteer organizations (Angiari, Canino, Cicoletti 2006 p. 3). More generally, studies on this region underlined that Lombardy associative fabric is make of consolidated organizations, with more than a half of the associations of this region have been founded before the 90's (Forno Polizzi 2010). Also, we know that during the whole 90's and in the first years of the 2000's, the participation in cultural associations has constantly grown in the whole Italy (La Valle 2004). In particular this has happened in the North of Italy, where "associative ties linked to political parties have became rather rare and associations are prevalently cultural associations, unions, volunteer groups and professional organizations" (La Valle 2004 p.459). At this respect the choice of analyzing local generative mobilizations that articulate themselves through cultural associations analyze a new, but already relevant, subject of the civil society that as such it is still widely unexplored.

A QUICK LOOK AT THE ORGANIZING FORM

The focus of elements pertaining to the organizing form is increasingly used in sociology scholarships to account for changes that have occurred in the last years in civil society (Ranci 1999; Forno, Polizzi 2010). In particular, as I have hinted at in chapter 1[1], there are numerous hypothesis that identify risks and challenges associated to changes that are affecting the organizing forms of associations and in particular that refer to their growing level of professionalization. At this respect, it is worth taking a quick look also at the organizational structures of the associations that I have included in the survey I have conducted. There exists different ways of looking at the organizing structure of non-profit groups. Here I've decided to focus uniquely on: a) the modality of member's participation in associations; b) the dimensions of organizations.

TYPE OF PARTICIPATION

The following chart describes the "type" of participation that it is practiced in the associations of Milan "Zone 4" included in the survey I have conducted,

	Sector of activities of associations					
Typology of participants	Civic engagment	Social engagment	Cultural associations	Social care associations	Recreative and sport groups	Religious based
Active volunteers	13%	10,7%	6,9%	19,9%	2,4%	6,6%
Desultory members	12,1%	6,6%	2,7%	18,4%	1,1%	5,7%
Remunerated	1,3%	7,1%	0,8%	7,2%	0,4%	0%
Non active	73,6%	75,6%	89,6%	54,52%	96,1%	87,7%
Tot.	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Figure 3. Type of participants divided according to the sector of activity.

This chart shows that there are different modalities of participation. A first one is that of those who participate actively and on a regular basis in the group life of the association to which they belong, without receiving any type of retribution and thus can be considered as volunteers. Roughly the half of the associations included in the survey (51,5%) possess a low number (from 1 to 10) of these type of members, while the 24,2% of the associations included a number of them comprised between 11 and 50 and the 12,1% of the associations stated of possessing an high number of them (more than 50). Another type of participation was represented by professionals, that is to say group members that were remunerated. These type of member was present in general in the 42,5% of the cases included in the survey, but in the 64,3% of the cases in which they were present they did not overcome the 10 units. Just the 9% of the associations included in the survey have stated of possessing more than 50 remunerated members. A third type of member was represented by

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[1] In particular in paragraph

volunteers that engaged themselves in the association not on a regular basis (defined "desultory members"). These were members that did not possess any type of responsibility in their groups and thus carried out mainly specific, and often practical, tasks. At this respect Lichterman (2006 p. 541) talked about "plug-in volunteers", that is to say participants tied to the groups in which they volunteer uniquely for the time necessary to carry out specific tasks, leaving to someone else the elaboration of ideas and proposal about those tasks. According to the statements released by members of the associations included in the survey, this type of members was not very widespread: the 42,4% of associations didn't possess any "plug-in volunteers", while in two cases on three they possessed reattributed members. Just the 6% of associations had a number of "plug-in volunteers" that went from 11 to 50 and just the 9,1% of the cases had more than 50 of them. A fourth and last modality of participation consisted in those members that sustained their associations uniquely through their formal inscription, but that did not take an active part in the associative life. This a form of participation that in the scholarship is called also "checkbook participation" (Verba et al., 1995; Pattie et al., 2004). According to my survey roughly the 60% of the associations included this type of member's participation. In the associations that I have taken as cases study of my research the presence of these type of participants was strongly variable.

The following chart illustrate the overall dimensions of the associations that were included in the survey I conducted.

Associative size	Including all type of participants	Without inactive members
Big (beyond 300 participants)	27,3%	9,1 %
Middle (between 50 and 299 participants)	39,4%	21,2 %
Small (between 1 and 49 participants)	33,3%	69,7 %
Total	100 %	100 %

Figure 4. Dimensions of associations included in the survey

Subtracting to the total of participants the number of inactive participants[1], the result is a significant downsizing of the dimension of the associations included in the survey. Thus, association that have been defined of big dimensions relevantly diminish, passing from the 27,3% to the 9,1% of the total

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[1] Which included uniquely the "non active" members of the chart in figure 3 of this chapter.

of the associations included in the survey. The category of associations that I've defined of "middle size" diminish of about 17% and the "small" associations almost double, passing from 33,3% to 69,7%. This data draw a picture that, though not representative, is consistent with findings about the regional context of third sector groups, where "similarly that in the rest of Italy associations are mostly of small and middle dimensions. In Lombardy, the 74% of associations has less than 35 members and the 54.5% less than 20 ones (Forno Polizzi 2010 p. 5)

SOURCES OF FUNDING AND THE PERCEIVED PROBLEMS

To complete the picture of associations of Milan "Zone 4" that I've included in my survey, it is useful to look at their sources of funding. It is this a trait of associations' organizing form that is particularly important for the study I've conducted. Indeed, over the course of the two years of my research the processes I've observed have been significantly affected by the context constraint of increasingly funding the overall project (the CP) to which all the observed groups belonged. The necessity of finding adequate sources of money represents a general trait of the organizing form of third sector associations that correspond to the inevitable "exigency of functionality" (Ranci 1999 p. 135). In particular, in the observed groups such an exigency was particular relevant because of the need of contributing to the financing of the restructuring of the farmhouse[1] that hosted them.

Among the associations included in the survey I've conducted, the 54,5% recurred to private donations, the 69,7% self- financed themselves, the 54,5% of them used to sell goods and services, while the 45,5% of them benefited from public funds[2]. Thus, roughly more than the half of the associations included in the survey financed themselves selling goods and services they directly produced, an aspect typical of the most professionalized associations (Cattaneo, Citroni, Polizzi 2010). More generally - also on the basis of the other analysis I carried out - the survey I've conducted depicted a fairly jagged picture of the organizing form of associations of Milan "Zone 4" , in which numerous associations presented elements of professionalization form the point of view of forms of financing, degree of formalization and presence of remunerated members[3].

A part of the questionnaire I've used in the survey explicitly asked which were the most perceived problems by the members of the associations interviewed. The most diffuse problems resulted the economic ones. Indeed, associations most commonly complained about the lack of money and the temporality of their sources of financing. These problems affected the 54,5% of the interviewed association and the cultural associations taken as cases studies of my comparative ethnography were no exceptions at this respect. Another problem quite common among the associations included in my survey was that about the *management* of their resources. Indeed, problems such as the difficulties tied to the management of different types of members, the continuity of projects in which the associations engaged themselves with, the lack of collaborations among group members

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[1] This is the Cuccagna farmhouse.

[2] I dati derivano da una domanda a risposta multipla, perciò la somma delle percentuali è superiore a 100. Si ricorda inoltre che la fonte di risorse "autofinanziamento" è l'unica considerata di tipo interno.

[3] For more details see Cattaneo, Citroni, Polizzi 2010.

affected roughly a fifth of the associations included in my survey. Surprisingly, one of the least perceived problems of the interviewed associations, among those proposed with the questionnaire, was that about their relation with the locale in which they were settled. Indeed, just the 15,2% of the interviewed associations declared of having an hard time in making them known in the territory in which they were settled or acted. But this data is in itself not very telling because it can alternatively indicate both the irrelevance of the locale scale for the interviewed groups or the fact that these were well embedded in the social space in which they acted. The in-depth examination of the observed case studies has highlighted the complexity of the relation between the associative goals and the locale in which they were settled. In particular it made evident the dynamic character of such a relation, that, indeed, significantly changed over the period of my field research.

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