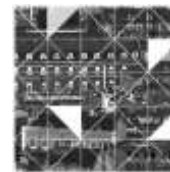

CIDADES, Comunidades e Territórios



Participation in urban interventions. *Meaning-effects* and urban citizenship in Milan Zone 4.

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Abstract

The urban interventions aimed at promoting the “right to the city” increasingly take events as their main repertoire of action, thus feeding a process of “eventification” of space which is particularly controversial with respect to neoliberal urbanism. The growing field of event studies, indeed, illustrates how the variety of minor events crowding contemporary cities may engender social inclusion, yet at the price of producing new forms of social exclusion or, similarly, can challenge neoliberal urbanism as far as they become complicit in its reproduction. Are such ambiguous outcomes inevitable? Where do they come from? How do they unfold? In order to address similar questions, the paper focuses on the bottom-up participation and meaning-effects of events included within a complex urban intervention, aimed at promoting the “right to the city” in a Milan, rapidly changing, wide urban area. An ethnographic outlook at two events taken as case-studies allows us to specify the “territorialization” processes through which they unfold, thus showing how the temporality of urban interventions matter as a condition allowing individuals to practice the right to the contemporary city.

Keywords: urban intervention, events, participation, meaning-effect, temporality, territorialization.

Contemporary urban interventions increasingly assume events as their main repertoire of action (Quinn, 2005; Cappetta et al., 2010) and this is accompanied by a growing public concern with their social impact at the local level (Vanwynsberghe et al., 2013; Smith, 2012; Sharpley and Stone 2012). While the impact of mega-events on dynamics of urban development has been widely recognized (Hiller 2000), in the case of small scale events such recognition is more controversial (McLean, 2014; Johansson and Kociatkiewicz, 2011). Indeed, a variety of outcomes associated with events are empirically documented, including community events which foster gentrification processes and social exclusion at the local level (Jakob, 2012; Grigoleit et al., 2013).

This paper focuses on the temporality of urban interventions in order to analyze how events territorialize their outcomes, particularly the “*meaning-effects*” (Pløger, 2010) they engender when raising new issues or frame old issues in new ways (Boullier, 2010: 49). The taking shape of such meaning-effects have been extensively analyzed with respect to events (Pløger, 2015) and their origins are to be searched in the fact that events promote

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space's uses which make – not necessarily new – meanings “visible and debatable” (Vitale, 2009: 158). If the materiality of such uses has been widely discussed (Zukin, 1995: 8), much less is the case for its temporality (Massey, 2005; Bishop and Williams, 2012), nevertheless its evident connection with events (Lefebvre, 1992). In what follows, the analysis of events' temporality is in particular aimed at exploring a dimension at the core of the discourses accompanying current urban interventions, that is, the possibility that bottom-up participation in them make urban interventions capable of practicing the “right to the city” (Harvey, 1990: 92; Holston, 1999). Dismissing this as rhetoric leading to “efforts to enhance public life with hog roasts, community barbecues and festivals” (Mathew, 2002: 138), means to neglect the role bottom-up participation in events plays in the ongoing eventification of place (Jakob, 2012). Indeed, informal taking part in events is a spreading, though still neglected, urban practice, generally not worth of autonomous attention (Amin and Thrift 2002: 72).

This paper discusses some of the findings from an empirical study of 48 events organized by ten non-profit organizations between 2007 and 2010 in Milan, Italy. In particular, all of the analyzed events aimed to produce local social inclusion in Milan's Zone 4, an urban district characterized by recent shifts in its local social fabric (Moresco, 2010). The paper will first discuss the urban relevance of a variety of event-based urban interventions. Then, participation in events will be framed in terms of the possibility of practicing the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1992; Holston, 1999) in its double meanings (Purcell, 2003): both as the right to use and appropriate the spaces in which events take shape and as the right to make such use and appropriation central in defining events' meaning-effects. In order to study the conditions for practicing this right to the city, a ‘territorological perspective’ (Brighenti, 2010a) on the event's development will be outlined. The empirical study will then be introduced to analyze how public participation in events shapes urban interventions' meaning-effects, focusing on two case studies – both from Milan Zone 4 – that illustrate two ideal-typical forms of territorialization associated to events. Finally, two conditions that mediate the possibility of practicing the right to the city are outlined and discussed.

1. Practicing a right to the city through participating in events

The relevance of urban events is nowadays significant enough to give rise to a new modality of production of space (Lefebvre, 1992): the “eventification of places” (Jakob, 2012) or “eventualisation of urban space” (Pløger, 2010). As whatever production of space, lived (“eventified”) spaces result from the intersection between perceived and conceived spaces (Purcell, 2003): the material settings experienced and perceived during events and the variety of representations and narratives by which events are used to valorize the urban space (Pavoni, 2011). The eventualisation of urban space is nurtured by urban events that require “a certain degree of planning” (Pløger, 2010: 852). This planning is what allows event attendees a coordinated “focus on a specific space-time moment” (Boullier, 2010: 12), which delimits the boundaries of the event and thus the temporary nature of this urban practice. At the same time such events “tend to be relatively informal” (Amin et al., 2002: 45), potentially “open for unpredictable acts and outcomes [...] simultaneously organized and yet felt to be spontaneous and never to be too obviously reduced to events for commercial purpose” (Pløger, 2010: 849). These features are typical of a variety of events, with different goals, contents and spatial scales: although the relevance of the political-economic interests and actors involved foreground mega-events, scholars increasingly recognize that the diffusion of events has infiltrated urban development on a much smaller scale (Quinn, 2005). The comparative study of Wedding neighborhood in Berlin and South Bronx of New York shows that in both cases urban events organized by local artists and civil society actors directly affect the urban development of these areas, provoking gentrification and the exclusion of the most marginal local population (Jakob, 2012; Zukin, 1995).

Among the variety of events through which the eventification of places occurs, this study focuses on events included in urban interventions with two specific features. First, they include among their official goals the production of local social inclusion: for example, the afore-mentioned Berlin and New York events were promoted by local artists to regenerate their neighborhoods through the rise of interactions between local and external populations (Jakob, 2012: 453). Pursuing local social inclusion is variably defined in different events, but of particular relevance in this instance are those events that address conditions of deprivation in relation to

“the social references that are necessary to constitute and reproduce ourselves as citizens” (Negri, 1990: 132). The second feature defining the events observed in this study is the pro-active public participation that they solicit to pursue their goals: events such as street parties or live performances aim to be perceived and lived by their attendees as open to unpredictable acts and outcomes, stressing their spontaneous dimension and bracketing their organized nature. Even in the “strategically planned festivalized spaces”, events aim to create a situation by which the city is “redefined by the altered energy and velocity of the public engagement” (Jamieson, 2004).

These two defining features combine by making participation in events a means to pursue urban interventions’ goals of local social inclusion. These events assume that “local positive benefits do not come automatically”, instead they come from putting participants’ “interests at the center of any efforts” (Jakob, 2012: 556) of urban interventions. This type of development has grown rapidly in recent years and has become part of both event-based urban interventions aimed at economic development and those questioning the current neoliberal urbanism (Hiller, 2000; McLean, 2014). The open dimension of events make them both suitable devices for “manifestations determining a priori what will happen in terms of relevance and meaning” (Sebastiani, 2007) and possible forms of collective action with critical functions emerging from bottom-up processes (Pavoni, 2011). The argument that “nowadays the event creates its own public and not vice-versa” (Sebastiani, 2007) must be specified and verified empirically. Here, the event’s development will be analyzed through a *territorological* approach.

2. Events territorializing their outcomes

Three moments of event’s temporality

The notion of event’s “lifecycles” (Roche, 2000) allows to outline three categories offering three standpoints on the event’s development: the setting up of the event, its relational space and its spatio-temporal extensions. These categories illuminate three temporally distinguishable moments in the development of the event: indeed, the observed events are not single, one-off moments, but instead include their preparation, anticipation and prolongations (Boullier, 2010: 12). The three categories are developed with specific reference to different areas of research on urban events, as summarized in table 1.

Table 1. The categories of events as territory-making devices.

	Time	Included elements	References and approaches
<i>Setting up</i>	Before the event’s unfolding	Associational practices leading to the unfolding of the event	Event studies Organizational studies
<i>Relational space</i>	The here-and-now of the events’ unfolding	Boundary-making activities	Sociology of interaction Study of regime of engagement
<i>Extensions</i>	After the event’s unfolding	Elements overcoming the threshold of the event’s unfolding	Philosophy of events Social theory of visibility

Source: Own elaboration.

The setting up is temporally confined to that which precedes the here-and-now of the event's unfolding. It includes all of the physical, mental and organizational practices that lead to the situated taking place of the event. The setting up incorporates the event's initial act of imagination, the formal and informal meetings through which the general idea is specified, the resultant discussions, the acts and words that were neglected and the informal and institutional contexts that sustained each of these "associative practices" (Rocco, 2000: 232). This category has been developed by drawing on two sources: event studies (Getz, 2007), which emphasize the organizational process necessary to the taking place of the event; and ethnographic organizational studies, which allow to grasp the informal and symbolic, yet fundamental, aspects of the organizing efforts deployed during this phase of the event's lifecycle.

The relational space of events refers to the here-and-now of the event's unfolding. This notion includes the practices occurring inside the event's spatio-temporal borders such as chats, glimpses, speeches, dancing, coordination between speakers and all the other acts of boundary-making through which the event participants manage distance and proximity among themselves. There are two main lines of research useful in analyzing the relational spaces of events. First, the sociology of interaction, associated with scholars such as Goffman (1963) who, not unexpectedly, devoted a great deal of attention to events. The development of this line of thought has elaborated different tools for qualifying a variety of relational spaces, with particular emphasis on ephemeral occasions of interactions such as events (Daniels, 1985; Eliasoph et al., 2003). Second, the study of "regimes of engagement with the world" (Thévenot, 2007) is a useful approach for grasping the situated relationships that people develop not only with other people, but also among themselves and with the physical environment where they are situated.

A double meaning with respect to participation can be derived from the distinction between the setting up and the relational space of the event: first, "participating in a milieu, in an ecological way" (Boullier, 2010: 70), taking part in the here-and-now of the event's unfolding. Second, participation in events encompasses a planned dimension that may involve taking part in the general organization and decision-making processes of the event that precedes its situated unfolding. The analysis of how participating in events may shape their meaning-effects cannot be limited to the situated unfolding of the event; it also includes the broad involvement in the whole process of the event's development, from conception to organization and the management of consequences. Thus in this paper, participation in events refers to a dimension that is extraneous to the longstanding debate on conflict and consensus in participation (Silver et al., 2010).

Extensions identify a component of the development of events that is subsequent to the relational space and that includes both material and immaterial elements that follow the occurrence of situated events. Extensions develop by overcoming thresholds of different types: these thresholds are not neutral with respect to the events that they mediate and will therefore be a particular focus of the analysis of extensions. The approach through which extensions can be qualified and their elements analyzed is the social and philosophical theory of urban events, which defines them as forms of surprise (Boullier, 2010:13) that by definition overcome the spatio-temporal limits of their situated unfolding to thrive over "space and time" (Amin et al., 2002).

Each of the three categories introduced above offers a standpoint on participating in events and on the peculiar thresholds that each component poses to participation. Of particular interest is the reciprocal articulation of these categories, through which the origin of meaning-effects and the impact of participation (if any) on those affected by these meaning-effects can be analyzed. Distinguishing between types of articulation among the three elements will facilitate the outlining of different types of mediations of the events (Boullier, 2010) and therefore, different ways of building ties with the public sphere at large (Rocco, 2000: 235).

Events as territory-making

A number of approaches are potentially relevant to the issues addressed by this paper. For example, Habermas deemed urban events such as concerts and arts festivals apposite modern devices for connecting concerns originating in the "lifeworld" of citizens to the institutional political sphere (Habermas, 1998). Studies that have

attempted to empirically investigate such arguments have focused solely on outcomes corresponding to Habermas' normative model, without offering any tools for investigating how participating in events may shape meaning-effects outside the habermasian logocentric approach.

Harcup (2010), considering Leeds St Valentine's Fair as a civic spectacle, argues that bottom-up events are more effective than top-down in producing positive local outcomes because they entail the participation of local actors. In Harcup's analysis, participation is addressed with reference to the category of the *carnivalesque*, which is too broad a lens for the situated analysis of how (that is, through which mechanisms) participating in events comes to shape their outcomes. More generally, event studies (Getz, 2007) pay specific attention to the local positive outcomes of a variety of events and attempt to study their development through interviews with events' organizers. Their findings also suggest that participation in events is a key success factor, but they neglect to account for it empirically, instead focusing on the search for "good and scalable organizing practices" (Cappetta et al., 2010). What is lacking in these studies is a processual perspective showing how such outcomes were shaped by the participation in events.

In order to overcome such limits, this paper proposes to adopt a *territorology* perspective (Brighenti, 2010a; Kärrholm, 2013) for reading the processes through which the practices of event participation might shape meaning-effects. The intention here is not to view territory and territorialization processes according to their current conception in urban studies literature, whether it is the restructuring of the sovereign space of the nation-state (Purcell, 2003: 571) or the double movement of forced migration of a local population (de-territorialization) and its re-embedding in a new society (reterritorialization) (Gottdiener Budd, 2005). According to such a perspective, a territory may be understood as an attempt to define a social group, and at the same time the meaning of a space, through its collective use and the social relationships that are inscribed in it (Brighenti, 2010a). Territorialization is a form of spatial institutionalization, a more or less stabilized spatial and social ordering whose primarily mobile and open nature (Kärrholm, 2007) makes it a particularly apposite tool for analyzing both how events produce meaning-effects and the role played by public participation in this process of production. Brighenti states that "territory is not defined by space, rather it defines spaces through patterns of relations" (Brighenti, 2010b: 57). Territories are always practiced; they are expressive and boundary-producing power relations that define space, often in complex ways. The territorological approach allows studying the temporality of event-based urban intervention, particularly shedding light on the connections between the setting up, relational space and extensions of events.

3. The study

In the Italian context, the case of Milan constitutes an urban setting whose cultural and socio-economic life is largely shaped by the periodical repetition of specific events² over the course of the year (Pasqui et al., 2017). Recently, local public discourse is increasingly focused on events and urban development (Foot, 2003). Moreover, the local event economy in Milan is characterized by a lively civil society, which includes among its main actors, dynamic non-profit organizations and community-based groups (Vitale, 2009). These groups – embedded in a social context "commonly perceived as uniquely focused on work and devoid of adequate possibilities of sociability" (Foot, 2003:40) – increasingly work in order to set up events to create occasions of inclusive sociability that are not directly tied to the supply of specific services (Citroni, 2010). The pursuit of such a goal developed from the 1980s, in parallel with the rapid de-industrialization of many urban areas of Milan, as a multi-faceted strategy for enhancing a social fabric that was shrinking and facing serious risks of social exclusions (Fantini, 2004; Pasqui et al., 2017).

Among the variety of urban interventions carried out in such context, this paper focuses on a complex event-based intervention which aimed at enhancing the right to the city with respect to Milan Zone 4 and the processes of transformation that characterize the recent history of this wide urban area. Zone 4 is 20.95 square kilometers

² Such events take place especially during spring and autumn and they include "Fourisalone Milan Design week", "La Milaneseiana", "Bookcity", two "Milan fashion week", "Milano filmfestival", "MITO settembre musica" and "Fa' la cosa giusta".

wide, with a population of roughly 150,000. It includes 15 historical neighborhoods and corresponds to one of the nine administrative districts of Milan. There were three major socio-economic transformations which occurred between the '80s and the '90s on the local social fabric of this area. The first was the closure of the numerous industrial plants that occupied Milan's Zone 4 (Aleni Redaelli, 2010). Over time, the industrially declined areas underwent various fortunes, in some cases becoming new marginal areas (Fantini, 1994), and in others constituting new urban centralities, thanks to the arrival of economically dynamic actors such as private cultural foundations.³ The second transformation occurred at the beginning of the '90s with the opening of the third metro line of Milan's tube system and the associated reorganization of the socio-economic geography of Milan zone 4 (Citroni, 2010). The real-estate values of the areas near to the new tube stations rapidly grew and new commercial activities flourished, while the more distant areas witnessed a general process of decline (ibid.). The third transformation begun in 1998, with the suppression of the national law [n.431] that imposed affordable rents on some private houses of Zone 4. The liberalization of the local real estate market prompted a gentrification process in the most central parts of Zone 4 (especially Porta Romana neighborhood), with the rise of real-estate values and the progressive expulsion of the less wealthy residents (Moresco, 2010).

Under the pressure of these changes, the social fabric of Milan's 4 was locally perceived to be shrinking: all the studied events were part of the same overall urban intervention aimed at enhancing social inclusion and the right to the city within the area (Citroni, 2015). It initially developed in 1992 as a local mobilization promoted by a group of residents with a petition that succeeded in preventing the demolition of a 17th century building, locally known as the Cuccagna farmhouse. In 1996 the promoters of the petition constituted themselves in a formal, nonprofit, organization (Cooperativa Cuccagna). In 2004 this organization convinced the local council to open a public tender for private organizations interested in restoring the former farm and transforming it into a local community center. In 2006 the tender was won by a non-profit consortium (Consorzio Cantiere Cuccagna) formed by the initial group and six other organizations⁴ from both Zone 4 and elsewhere. Overall, 58 citizens participated in these various groups, usually with multiple involvements in different formations. The consortium's official goal was to "turn the ancient and crumbling farmhouse into a public space, open to a new sociality, a place capable of fostering the creation of new, inclusive, social relationships in contrast to the ongoing social fragmentation and marginalization processes".⁵ The stated official strategy for achieving such a goal consisted of "not simply offering services to needy citizens, but promoting their pro-active involvement in the production of local solidarity, offering them spaces and opportunities to be the direct protagonists of what they do" (ibid.) This strategy was carried out from 2005 onward primarily by setting up events that, while varying significantly among themselves, equally pursued the promotion of local social inclusion through the pro-active involvement of their participants. This involvement could be viewed as citizenship claims arising from "associational practices" (Rocco, 2000: 232), aiming at starting "a process of public interest" that could affect the local public discourse (Vitale, 2009).

The observed events "advance a conception of (...) rights-claiming practices that expand the parameters of (...) the public sphere" (Rocco, 2000: 233) but, at the same time, they were ambivalently tied to the ongoing gentrification process in the central part of Zone 4, where the former farm was situated (Moresco, 2010). Many of the events nurtured this gentrification, especially from 2008, when the farm's restoration was completed. Indeed, at this point, the once dangerous streets surrounding the ancient farm, rapidly witnessed an increase of their real-estate values (ibid.). Over time there was a sustained increase in events which stressed meaning-effects related to issues – such as environmental sustainability, fair trade and community gardens –, and that were particularly attractive for upper middle class Milanese urban dwellers (Bovone et al., 2007).

Some of the meaning-effects of the observed events succeeded in raising new issues in the local public discourse, such as the public use of abandoned buildings (Vitale, 2009). This contributed to shaping urban policies on this topic, for example by fostering the assignment of other unused spaces for social purposes. Not all

³ Such as Dolce&Gabbana's atelier, the Italian headquarters of Etro and the Prada Foundation.

⁴ Associazione Esterni, Cooperativa Smemoranda, ChiamaMilano, Cooperativa Diapason, Cooperativa Comunità Progetto, Cooperativa S.Martino.

⁵ Excerpt from the interview to the managing board of the Cuccagna Consortium, recorded a journalist of Radio Popolare the 21 June 2008.

of the outlined outcomes resulted from public participation in events: the two events introduced in the next section serve to illustrate two occurrences that differ in this respect.

Two empirical illustrations

The analysis of events has been carried out by outlining their outcomes, and distinguishing between presence-effects and meaning-effects. (Pløger, 2010). The two dimensions correspond to the double meaning of the right to the city outlined by Lefebvre (Purcell, 2006): the former concerns the use and appropriation of space through event participation, the latter refers to the centrality of such participation in defining the event's meaning-effects. Meaning-effects were outlined as significant discontinuities, that is, new frames that the event provides, allowing to read the meanings of specific topics, including the places where the events unfolded (Vitale, 2009: 148). Participant observation identified the formation of meaning-effects in events that differed from all of the others because of the territorialization processes through which they developed, that is to say, the nature of the connection between the three components of setting up, relational spaces and unfolding. This connection was characterized by the centrality of the relational space, a consequence of the significant investment in this component on the part of the organizing group.

Two ideal-typical modes of territorialization emerge from this analysis. These modes are characterized by different articulations of, and relations between, the components outlined above. In the analysis that follows, these two ideal-typical modes are empirically illustrated with reference to two of the observed events.

“Movimento Centrifugo”

Movimento Centrifugo (Centrifugal Movement), from here on MC, was an event made of “seven appointments for seven marginal areas of Milan, aiming at promoting a new type of urban tourism and rediscovering seven squares and their inhabitants, making them the centre of city life”.⁶ The event was set up in 2008 by one of the organizations involved in the studied Consortium. The name sums up its official goal: inverting the usual movement of Milan's cultural life, by bringing people to Milan's unexplored marginal areas and translating their local actors and practices at the core of the urban cultural dynamics. The event took place in urban spaces located in Zone 4 as well as in other parts of Milan. Each of MC's appointments started in the early afternoon with playful workshops and shows for children that were staged in the more frequented streets, platforms and public gardens of a specific, peripheral, neighborhood. The central part of the event commenced after dinner, when the central square of the neighborhood was transformed in an open-air cinema for free movie projections.

MC did not succeed in attaining its ambitious goal of inverting the flux of the city's social and cultural life but it did produce a relevant meaning-effect: the proposal and visibilization of a new and anomalous (Pløger, 2010) frame through which Milan marginal areas, undeservedly lacking the social and cultural attention of the rest of the city, could be conceived as potentially interesting neighborhoods to explore. This frame significantly differed from other contemporary frames that viewed these spaces as poor locales, or even as dangerous places that needed to be securitized (Foot, 2000). This security-focused approach paralleled the framing that was mainly promoted by left-wing local associations, whose intention to address the needs of marginalized areas was based on promoting universal citizenship rights and access to the social services offered by public and non-profit actors. Both securitarian and leftist framings shared the same assumption that those areas were poor, lacking adequate resources and opportunities. MC contested these assumptions, drawing on the idea that these areas were rich in possibilities and as such deserving further exploration, maintenance and cultural investments.

MC's reframing was an outcome of both its presence-effects and its meaning-effects. The first dimension refers to those physically involved in the taking place of the event, the second to a public dispersed in a variety of other settings that were affected by communications about MC. For example, the day after the first event – which took

⁶ From the website of the organizing group: <http://www.esterni.org>

place in Ponte Lambro neighborhood, in the peripheral part of Milan Zone 4 – the main local page of the second Italian newspaper ran a headline titled “I’ll see you in the outskirts. The beauty of Milan’s peripheries”, with a subtitle: “the hard challenge of inverting the flux of the amusement”. The local page of another important national newspaper was entitled “Let’s date in the outskirts. Milan’s beauty far away from the City centre”. The official meaning of the event was also prolonged through internet communication, where the same narrative about the possibilities offered by seemingly deprived urban areas was promoted, for example through images underlining the beauty of streets and squares barely known.

Although MC did not succeed in affecting local public policies on the issues raised, it did nonetheless succeed, primarily as a result of media communication and reporting, in producing a relevant meaning-effect: the possibility of addressing urban deprived areas in a new way and the demarcation of peripheral areas as central locations, not in need of external interventions, but rich in actors, practices and initiatives. In the following section, the proposed territorial model will be used to analyze if and how this meaning-effect of MC was shaped by the participation in the event itself.

How MC territorialized its meaning-effects

The main meaning-effect of MC corresponded to the official meaning of the event as defined by the organizing group: this was due to the fact that most communications about MC drew exclusively on the setting up of this event, ignoring its relational space. For example, content analysis of newspaper articles shows that they were written by developing the official press releases. Similarly, videos and other internet communications used images and recordings taken during the situated unfolding of the event, to amplify its official meanings as defined by the organizers during the setting up phase, excluding divergent meaning-making practices that were observed to be present in the relational space of the event. For example, during one observed MC event, the movie projection had been unexpectedly preceded by the intervention of a local activist who, in thanking the organizers, repeatedly underlined how MC was:

“(...) consistent with the effort that we, as engaged citizens and through our local association, are making to improve the living conditions of the neighborhood, starting from the implementation of services directly useful to all citizens such as Italian language courses for foreigners (...)”

Such an intervention provided a different framing of MC with respect to the one adopted by the organizers, implicitly sharing the perspective of many other organizations that does not consider this type of neighborhoods as potentially interesting areas to be explored, and rather sees them as deprived areas lacking the most basic services, and in need of public interventions. The local activist’s intervention could be seen as a “presence-effect” developed in the relational space of the event, and thus tied to the unpredictability that each event unavoidably carries with it (Pløger, 2010). In spite of the fact that each MC event was widely documented by the organizing group, it was not possible to find any trace of the local activist’s intervention. The inability of presence-effects to shape meaning-effects demonstrates the type of territorialization through which MC developed its outlined outcome. In this case, the setting up proved crucial to the production of meaning-effects. Thus, the possibility of being involved in the event in a way that would shape its outcomes required the overcoming of certain access thresholds related to the participation in the setting up of the event. Such thresholds were firstly material, encompassing the spatial barriers inside which the setting up of the event developed. These spaces included the private building that was the venue of the organizing group and more restricted spaces, such as the houses of core members of the organizing group. Furthermore, the participant observation of the everyday associative life of this organization showed that other, less visible, barriers existed, which gave core members of the organization unique rights to participate in the most important planning meetings. Joining or working in this organization was not enough to access and affect the setting up: for example, the event was named during an

informal evening meeting in the kitchen of one of the organization's two leaders⁷. Participating in the setting up of this event was particularly demanding, requiring the citizens not only a significant commitment in this phase of the event, but also to be already a member of the core organizing group.

Thresholds related to the media through which the communications about the event were developed are also significant here. These thresholds include the criterion of newsworthiness in the local pages of the national newspaper where the event became news, the length of the video that could be posted on YouTube. Such dimensions worked as thresholds in regulating the possibility that elements of the setting up could develop into significant extensions of the event, capable of shaping the observed meaning-effect.

Participation in the relational space of MC was irrelevant with respect to the outlined meaning-effect. It was not in the relational space, but in the setting up, that participation was needed if one wanted to affect the observed outcome. The only exception in this respect was found in the sheer quantity of the attendees in the relational space of the event: the more people were present, the more capable they were of supporting whatever element of the setting up in shaping the relevant meaning-effects. Apart from this quantitative exception, the way in which MC territorialized its meaning-effect overlooked the qualitative peculiarity of the relational space, and instead linked the setting up with the event's extensions.

A comparative case: "Sabati Aperti"

MC can be contrasted with events whose meaning-effects were shaped by the presence-effects. A useful comparison here is the case of *Sabati Aperti* (Open Saturdays), SA from hereon: a cycle of public gatherings that took place on Saturday afternoons in the open-air space of the former farmhouse. SA pursued local social inclusion by organizing gatherings that stimulated processes of self-organization among citizens, promoting in particular the constitution of civic groups that could directly address local needs and problems. The development of this type of process was pursued by organizing convivial events, occasions to "meet together to confront and discuss".⁸ SA was organized by a group of citizens that in 2006 had established an informal association.⁹ The members of this group coordinated the activities that took place during the event: initially by organizing them into a large circle where everyone introduced him/herself, then by asking participants to list on post-it notes their interests and topics with which they wanted to engage. The organizers then grouped participants on the basis of similar interests, forming subgroups that sat in smaller circles, tasked with outlining concrete activities which they would cooperatively address. Through such procedures, the participants were able to propose and discuss topics of immediate interest, and could be channeled into constituting citizens groups directly engaged in addressing specific needs.

Besides succeeding in facilitating the birth of two new civic groups, SA produced specific meaning-effects both for their participants and for the "involuntary but affected participants of the event" (Boullier, 2010: 44); these effects, however, were not initially foreseen by the organizers. In particular, SA increasingly took the meaning of an occasion in which it was possible to freely gather and socialize with other people, independently from the processes of citizen self-organization that officially framed the gatherings. This meaning-effect is different from, though not in conflict with, the outcome anticipated by the organizers and summarized in the opening speech of an appointment of SA:

"The project was born from the idea of reacting to a social fabric that is increasingly fragmented as a consequence of the socio-economic changes occurring in the last years, and reacting to the social isolation that derives from such changes, directly activating ourselves with initiatives that may prove useful for creating a pro-active local citizenship".

⁷ The author could access such a meeting as uncovered participant-observer.

⁸ Excerpt from the official leaflet promoting the event.

⁹ Named "Gruppo per la costruzione della partecipazione".

Through these words, SA is framed as a constitutive moment of a proactive citizenship that reacts to the socio-economic changes of the neighborhood and promotes social inclusion through direct engagement with respect to local problems and needs. This meaning draws on specific cultures of political engagement that identifies in economic shifts (primarily tied to the crisis of the local productive fabric) the cause of social exclusion and fragmentation. This frame is not shared by all of the event participants and is different from the meaning-effect that they elaborated through participating in events. Indeed, the topics that participants raised were less oriented toward the civic engagement desired by the organizers: they were more frequently about, for example, the construction of a ‘*bocce*’ (bowls) court for the elderly of the neighborhood or having at their disposal a place where they could play cards, the cleaning of the streets or the noise of local clubs open until late. Even when topics tied to social exclusion and isolation were raised, they were treated differently from the event organizers’ framing. That is, the main focus was not on the “socio-economic transformations” of recent years, but on topics such as the everyday fabric of social, often superficial, relationships that over time had disappeared: neighborhood shops, local and parish cineclubs were thematized in the discussions of the participants according to a narrative of “profound nostalgia with reference to a romantic image of the city, mainly depicted as a village” (Foot, 2003: 40).

The participants of the relational spaces of SA were invited to pro-actively engage with the discussed topics, thinking in particular about what they could possibly do to improve their situation. This pragmatic focus contributed to the excluding of the socio-economic changes, lingering instead on the past occasions for everyday sociality and the possibility of their revival. SA were good occasions in this respect, not as moments for developing citizenship self-organization with reference to specific problems, but instead as relaxed occasions of sociality where any topic could be raised, without the injunction to directly engage with them, or a commitment to political action.

The overall meaning-effect through which SA was perceived was that of an occasion of “inclusive sociality” (Citroni, 2010): to the extent that the most enduring groups of this event developed on the basis of activities such as shared reading groups or playing cards. This meaning still referenced the social exclusion and isolation cited in the opening speech of the organizers, but these topics were not related to general socio-economic shifts and the possibility that citizens might self-organize in order to face them. Instead, they were more concretely concerned with the fabric of social relationships that had been lost, but could be restored through occasions of ephemeral sociality such as that of SA. The meaning-effect of SA developed through different media with respect to MC. In this case, newspapers were bypassed in favor of internet communication: blogs, e-mail conversations and web forum discussions in which the topics raised during the events continued to be discussed.

Despite their shared goals of local social inclusion, there are clear distinctions between SA and MC, most significantly the way in which the outlined meaning-effects for SA came from participation in the event, while it was independent from such participation in the case of MC. The proposed analytical model can account for this difference by outlining the way in which the two events territorialized their meaning effects.

How SA territorialized its meaning-effects

The process of territorialization can be outlined by considering SA with reference to each of the three categories that form the model proposed in this paper. The reciprocal linkages between these categories can then be used to analyze how this event territorialized its outcomes.

The setting up of SA consisted primarily of three group meetings, during which the organizing group discussed two broad topics: the event promotion (leaflets distribution, word of mouth, internet and the local press) and the organization of the relational space of the event’s unfolding, considering in particular how the event could welcome wider autonomous and pro-active participation. During the relational space of the event, the members of the organizing group were engaged in the “work of sociability” (Daniels, 1985: 363): the carrying out of a variety of practices for “welcoming guests, putting them at their ease, in order to be ready to be interested” (ibid.). Through this work of sociability, participants were prompted to get to better know one another. Most of

the work of sociability carried out by the organizing group was also oriented towards sustaining the self-organization of participants as citizens coming together to take care of specific local problems. For example, the organizing group's members repeatedly suggested that participants (grouped according to similarity of interests) orient their conversations towards doable tasks that could be followed up in the next SA. Such tasks were the extensions of SA in which the organizing group was most invested, but were not exactly those shaping the meaning-effect of this event. Indeed, the subgroups that followed the instructions of the organizers and assumed demanding tasks disappeared after few meetings. Instead, those groups that did not assume specific tasks kept attending the meetings, consolidating the meaning-effect of SA as an occasion of inclusive sociality, not tied to formal civic actions but to convivial and leisure activities. Such an effect developed by extending the communication that started during the relational space of the event into other settings, with presence-effect directly shaping meaning-effects.

As considered with respect to the setting up, the relational space of SA also possessed its own specific thresholds, which filtered the possibility of participating in and affecting the event. Such thresholds for SA were also primarily material, requiring that participants physically take part in the relational space of the event. In addition, there were invisible, but no less important barriers, related to the possession of linguistic and relational competencies necessary to both publicly speak, introduce oneself and to carry on conversations with previously unknown individuals. The relevance of the relational space to SA derives from the fact that in the territorialization of this event, this component is fundamental both for its meaning-effects and for other outcomes: indeed, it is through the relational space that the setting up connects with the event's extensions, ensuring that the latter two elements simultaneously shape the event and are shaped by it (Boullier, 2010). This is a territorial process that significantly differs from what occurred in the case of MC, where the outlined meaning-effect developed ignoring the plurality of presence-effects of the relational space (such as that proposed by the local activist), instead drawing directly on elements of the setting up defined by the organizing group. The meaning-effect of MC emerged before the situated unfolding of the event, in the phase of its setting up and developed ignoring the relational space of the event. Conversely, in the case of SA, the relational space (rather than the setting up) was the component that was most significant for shaping the event's observed outcome and this is where participation was relevant to the shaping of the event.

There are two main differences between the relational space of SA and that of MC. First, SA was organized (during the setting up) in order to make its thresholds as accessible as possible; this was the work of sociability outlined above, that functioned as a coordinated, real-time, effort to lower such thresholds. Second, SA territorialized its outcomes in an effort to make what happened during the relational space of the event count as much as possible and sought to extend the meaning-making practices of those who participated in the event. The extensions that developed most fully in SA were not exactly those predicted by the event organizers, the latter being much more civically oriented those that actually emerged. However, this possibility was included in the way SA developed and in the type of territorialization process through which the outcomes of this event took form.

4. Forms of territorialization

This empirical illustration of the production of meaning-effects can be used to more fully develop a territorialological view on the relevant conditions for practicing urban citizenship through participating in events such as those previously depicted. The formation of relevant meaning-effects in 25 out of 48 of the observed events occurred in a number of different ways (Citroni, 2015), which were more or less similar to two ideal-typical forms, exemplified by the two empirical illustrations introduced above and schematized in table 2.

Table 2. Two ideal-typical models of territorialization through events.

	Pre-Organized Territorialization	Situated Territorialization
<i>Setting up</i>	Oriented towards organizing the <i>relational space</i> and determining the significant <i>extensions</i> .	Oriented towards organizing the <i>relational space</i> in a way that it could be the source of the significant <i>extensions</i> .
<i>Relational space</i>	Categorical recognition; spectacle.	Shaped by the work of sociability; justifiable engagement with the world
<i>Extensions</i>	Prolonging the <i>setting up</i> , ignoring the <i>relational space</i> .	Prolonging the <i>relational space</i> , ignoring the <i>setting up</i> .

Source: Own elaboration.

The two ideal-types in the chart differ in two dimensions. The first difference is found in the linkage that connects the three proposed categories. The “pre-organized territorialization” is characterized by the centrality of the setting up component, from which derive the main extensions of the event towards spatio-temporal settings that differ from its situated unfolding. In this case, there exists a direct link between the setting up and the extensions: a link that at best considers the quantitative dimension of the relational space (the number of participants), but ignores its qualitative nature and in particular, the meaning-making practices of its participants and their possible distance from the official meanings of the event envisaged by its organizers in the setting up.

Conversely, the “situated territorialization” is characterized by the centrality of the relational space, which constitutes the necessary link between the setting up and the extensions of the event. In this case the relational space is the component towards which the setting up is oriented and from which the main extensions of the event in settings other than that of its situated unfolding develop. The difference between the two proposed models is most evident in the cases discussed in this paper, which demonstrate that the two modes of territorialization correspond to different possibilities for participation to shape the event and its outcomes. In particular, attaining such a goal in the case of “pre-organized territorialization” is especially demanding because it requires entering the setting up, while in the case of “situated territorialization” the participant must access the relational space of events.

The second element distinguishing the two modes of territorialization concern the thresholds of the categories in which the territorialization process is articulated. In particular, as demonstrated in the empirical illustration, in the case of “pre-organized territorialization” the thresholds for accessing the relational space were relatively low, while those of the setting up were higher. On the other hand, in the case of situated territorialization the thresholds for entering the relational space were more demanding than those of the setting up. The two dimensions distinguishing the two ideal-typical modes of territorialization are clearly intertwined: the most demanding thresholds for participation in events are associated with the components most relevant to the possibility of shaping the events and its outcomes: the relational space for “situated territorialization” and the setting up for “pre-organized territorialization”.

The comparison carried out among all of the observed cases indicates that the closer an event development was to the ideal-type of situated territorialization, the higher its capacity to make presence-effect shape meaning-effects. This finding is consistent with studies that distinguish between a logic of social service capable of empowering those who benefit from the service and conversely an alternative logic that inevitably renders the beneficiaries passive (Silver et al., 2010). These studies underline how the possibility of shifting from the latter to the former logic of delivering social services depends on the institutional grounding that shapes the social quality of organization (Vitale, 2013).

The findings are also consistent with a recent study on the capacity of “event-based cultural initiatives” to act as “drivers of urban regeneration” (Paiola, 2008). Indeed, this study stresses that this capacity depends on events’ “organizational frames” (ibid.), that is to say the patterns through which the actors involved in the setting up relate to each other: the closer to the model of “bottom-up network-based” the greater the capacity of the event to favor “local activation and creativity spanning”, leveraging local resources into an overall regeneration process (ibid: 520). However, in this study, the notion of “organizational frame” refers exclusively to the formal dimension of the setting up, without any inquiry into the role that public, informal, participation may have in shaping events and their outcomes.

Conversely, the focus here has also concentrated on the informal sides of both the setting up and the relational space. Public participation is viewed as a possible opportunity to practice a specific right to the city, with reference to the event’s meaning-effects. Such an opportunity, this paper argues, is shaped by the type of territorialization through which events develop. The overall study carried out (Citroni, 2015) also outlined the way in which forms of territorialization are grounded in the informal, yet patterned, relational dynamics shaping everyday group life. In particular, forms of territorialization were tied to the “group styles” of the observed organization, the “recurrent patterns of interactions in everyday group life” (Eliasoph et al., 2003: 737) and that “an emerging body of work” identified as shaping “how a group talks about and carries out action both within in and with the world outside it” (Lichterman, 2009: 851). Group styles worked as the main institutional grounding for the analyzed events, that is to say as “specific ensemble of relations that enabled the [observed] claims” (Rocco, 2000: 235).

This study focused on the conditions in which participating in events with goals of local social inclusion might be deemed a means for accessing the right to the city. The use of a territorological approach (Kärholm, 2013; Brighenti, 2010a) has allowed to pinpoint specific analytical tools to empirically investigate the temporality of events’ unfolding. Some of the findings of this inquiry have been discussed to show that the possibility of practicing the right to the city is shaped by two general conditions. The first concerns the weight given by the event organizers to the relational space and to the setting up of the event for shaping the extensions that they seek to promote. The second concerns the specific access thresholds of the relational space and the setting up for the event participants. These two conditions determine the possibility that participating in events may shape their outcomes without predicting what these outcomes might be. Indeed, the observed cases demonstrated that outcomes can differ significantly from those pursued by the organizers (for example, nurturing the gentrification of an area with a fragile local social fabric) and this differentiation may derive from participants’ interventions.

The proposed study facilitates the overcoming of essentialist typologies of events – that divides, for example, community events and spectacle events (Smith, 2012) – in favor of the study of different forms of territorialization through which events may produce their outcomes, each form giving different space to the participation in events (Citroni, 2015). Further analysis might be undertaken by broadening the focus to the observation of other types of outcomes of similar events or considering urban events other than those here observed.

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