

TERRITORIALITY AND URBAN POLICY.

Addressing territorial complexity

Elena Battaglini IRES
Sandra Annunziata – Università di Roma Tre

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Abstract IT

In che modo affrontiamo le istanze poste dalla complessità del territorio nelle pratiche e nella definizione di politiche territoriali? Cosa è la territorialità e quali possono le variabili in gioco nei processi di territorializzazione dei fenomeni urbani? Per rispondere a queste domande il contributo introdurrà la nozione di regione, territorio, luogo, territorialità e territorializzazione. In seguito si analizzano le variabili e le dimensioni emerse, nell'abito della sessione *Territoriality and Urban Policies*, nell'affrontare le istanze poste dalla complessità territoriale. Tali dimensioni della "produzione territoriale" saranno qui trattate come un punto di partenza per una definizione delle politiche territoriali che sia informata dall'analisi dei fenomeni urbani e il più possibile aderente alla complessità dei territori contemporanei.

English Abstract

How do we deal with territorial complexity in present urban territorial policies and practices. What is territoriality and what are the dimension od territorial production ? In order to explore this issue the contribute will unpack in the first paragraph the notion of region, territory, place, territoriality and territorialisation. In the second paragraph it will outline the dimension of territorial production that inform urban and territorial policies as emerged from the conference parallel session on *Territoriality and urban policy*. These dimension might inform future approach in territorial policy making.

1. Intro: Towards territorial complexity¹¹³

This contribute seeks to investigate the conditions and the modalities under which urban and territorial policies deals with territorial complexity and contextual specificity. In other terms: what forms of territoriality, or territorial production are taken into account or shaped by urban policies practices and discourse? Why territoriality matters for policies in addressing territorial complexity? What is/can be the territorial dimension of policies? In order to explore this issue the contribute will unpack in the first paragraph the notion of region, territory, place, territoriality and territorialisation. In the second paragraph we will outline the dimensions of territorial production, as emerged from the conference session *Territoriality and urban policy*. These dimensions might inform future approach in territorial policy making.

2. On Territory

Regione, région, region, territorio, territoire, territory luogo, lieu, place are all terms that underpin crucial concepts in the processes of development and that have taken on specific connotation in regard to the different scientific, general and disciplinary paradigms that have succeeded one another over the course of time. In particular, the *regionalist theory* referring to the paradigm of rational mechanics and determinism in geography, considered the physical environment as a factor determining the forms of use of the ground. The affirmation of the general theory of systems and the paradigm of the complexity has subsequently led to considering the *region* as an organic bond between the communities and the natural environment (Vallega, 1995).

In the social sciences, the debate has been enriched with the outcomes of the so-called 'cultural turn' and the affirmation of constructionism and the *region*, as a 'social construct' then, has been the subject of interesting debates between those who considered it in its 'real' dimension, that is an administrative sphere or a statistical area (e.g. the European system NUTS), and those who study it as the outcome of social practices, conditioned by political, cultural, economic factors or relating to governance or power relations.

The influences of specific social contexts are instead more evident in the meaning that the term '*territory*' assumes in the different languages: there are various analogies between the semantic thematisation enacted in the southern European literatures (Italy, France but also Spain) unlike what occurs in the English-speaking world, where the term *place* is used.

Following the Lazarsfeldian paradigm, which this contribution refers to in general, any research design, in our case of a territorial type, calls for a starting concept posed as a meta-cognitive framework, a sort of *imagery* as Lazarsfeld himself calls it. Hence, starting from the blurry boundaries of this *imagery*, we consider the prevalent definitions that the English and Italian languages give to the terms *territory* and *territorio*, respectively, and consider their differences. In Italian, the term *territorio* refers, on the one hand, to the sense of belonging to a place and, on the other, to its organisational principles: cultivation techniques, habitat, social rules that shape its landscape. In the English definition the term *territory* instead indicates an area under administrative or state jurisdiction.

If in Italian the concept of *territorio* semantically alludes to the elective and organisational dimension of a place, in the English case the accent is placed on the dimension of power and

¹¹³ The premise of the paper are shared by the authors, however the first and second paragraph are by Battaglini, the third by Annunziata.

control exercised by the State. The evident distinction between the two terms refers back to a different spatial relationship that ties, in the two cultural contexts, the communities to their own areas of settlement and it can be hypothesised that this derives from the prevalence of the *Gemeinschaft* or *Gesellschaft* dimension: from the social dimension of the community rules or the authoritativeness of the public rules over the private ones, as well as the different process of social construction of the State.

In the English conception *territory* thus refers to a relationship of ownership or state control that subsumes the meaning of “land” and “terrain” (Elden, 2010) . In the former case, the term *land* refers back to a relationship of property *vis-à-vis* a resource of a limited kind that is distributed, allocated and owned and that, as such, is the subject of competition. In the case of the term *terrain*, the accent is instead placed on a broader relationship of scale, power and control by a superior hierarchical level, designated to establishing and preserving order.

In both meanings, the English thematisation refers to a concept that stresses the “hic et nunc” of the territoriality, understood as control and primary expression of social power. However we also wish here to refer to the *territory* as the place of identity in which the role of environment in its interplay with culture is emphasized. Therefore we would stress that nature in its morphological, physical and climatic connotation has agency on the practices of use and consumption of the resources (Battaglini, 2014).

2. Territory and territorialisation process: which policies for sustainable development?

What we shall argue in this contribution refers to the concept of *territory* in its relational sense: in these perspective the territory represents at the same time the physical and the social space, making visible the set of relations between the collectivity and the surrounding environment, that is, making itself the expression of a communities of ‘territoriality’ or territorial production

Few authors have dealt with thematizing territoriality precisely: amongst these Sack (1986) who put the accent on the dimension of the spatial control and Raffestin (1980) who pause, instead, on the modalities of the spatial-temporal relationship between local communities and environment.

Territoriality – which refers to the relationship of a community with its space of choice and is materialised in the ownership, in the use, the control and the defence of resources – interests us in its processual, temporal dimension in reference to the spatial and symbolic outcomes of specific local development trajectories and policies.

Building upon Turco (1988) we will refer the process of territorialisation to the complex two-directional interaction, between culture and nature made up of three different phase by means of which “space” becomes “place”, “place to live in” and then “territory.”:

1) From space to place: the process of symbolisation constitutes the mould within which the individual and collective behaviours are shaped and adapted and that gives rise to the process of identification and appropriation of space. Distancing Turco, we will stress that the possibilities of settlement of a community in an area are closely linked to its pedological, hydrographic, morphological, vegetational conformation, to its position, its climate and thus to the use of the available assets or to which that area allows access Therefore, before being socially constructed, the nature of these resources opens to the gaze and to the other sense of the observers that perceive, first and foremost, its materiality and its physicality. It is in this sense that nature too, in its way of giving, has *agency*, contributing to orienting the relationship between what is constructed with the communities that settle there (Dessein, Battaglini,

Horlings, *forthcoming*). Only subsequently are the naturalistic resources disclosed to an attribution of meanings and symbols that determines their methods of use. The material and physical characteristics of the local assets constitute the signifiers, to which the community ascribes, in this early phase, some symbols addresses the process of the territorial rooting of a community. In this sense, this constitutes a crucial phase so that the nature of the place and its role as independent and generative force to be recognised as such. The symbolisation process must not blunt the senses, and for this, prevent us from capturing the sensual presence of each natural element that is eaten, smelled, trodden upon or observed. Nature's agency – but also the possibility of local communities to adapt to its rhythms, to grasp its gifts, to respect its equilibrium and, therefore to share its fate – depends on the social capacities to grasp its essence, its creative voice.

In this first phase in the process of territorialisation, of co-foundation between nature and society, the role of culture is instrumental to the identification of the specific modalities with which the nature of the place and its assets are afforded {see further} perceived and, then, known and employed.

2) From a place to the place to live in: this step occurs when the place – and its natural signals – is structured through the occupation and the use of the ground and the transformation of the spaces. The natural assets perceived and symbolised in the first phase of the process is enriched with the attribution of meanings and values thereby becoming a resource. The values that they are attributed by the settling community, as environmental economy teaches us, are not only of exchange or use but also of non-use (Turner, Pearce, Bateman, , 1994).

An example that can help to clarify such concepts is represented by the choices that the local community can enact in regard to a wood; depending on the meaning and thus the value that is attributed to it, one may decide to get timber to be sold from the cutting of the trees or else to be used directly. But the value of use of a wood can also be referred to its internal viability, so one may opt for the payment of an access ticket that allows for the enjoyment of the woodland landscape. The same wood can also be ascribed values of non-use for the necessity, recognised and shared inside the community, to safeguard its ecosystem. Such values stem from the waiver of a use or from its postponement in time, in order to widen the possibilities of enjoyment of the environment asset – the wood – by the future generations. The fact of the matter is that the values that a community assigns to its own resources orient specific trajectories of development relating to the use, the conservation or the innovation of the local assets, in the same way as its dissipation.

In essence, the space through the process of symbolisation and, subsequently, reification becomes the elective place, the place in which one has chose to live and experience belonging. And it is this passage that concretises the way in which the local communities, interpreting the characteristics of a physical context, the same that participate in the definition of the traits of their identity, produce actions of transformation in a bidirectional link, more or less cooperative – but rooted – between subject and space.

In this process of spatial rooting it is culture, through specific practices, that mediates in the construction of a relationship between community and nature.

3) From place to live in to territory: The process of structuring of a place leads to the need to defend it by setting boundaries, organising it through signs and rules, establishing criteria for its development so as to ensure advantages and benefits to the settled generations. It is through this process that a local community, in relation to the assets, the meanings and the values ascribed to the resources, attributes to the territory a set of cognitive and normative meanings: procedures and hierarchies that mark the territory so much so as to become signs of the identity

of the community settled therein. In this process of definition of functions and rules, it is the culture of a given community that defines the frameworks that preside over the policies.

The division into different stages or layers has a purely analytical value, that is used to operationalize the territorialisation process. It, therefore, does not imply that the process of territorialisation should be thought out in sequential terms, or as an orderly succession and linear stages, rigidly distinct from each other.

In essence, the process of territorialisation is a concept that alludes to the dynamic nature of the process of affordance, perception, settlement and organisation of the spaces, and it is therefore crucial for those wanting to study its outcomes in terms of conservation, innovation and development. In this sense, we suggest a conceptualisation of the territory not to be understood, as the disciplinary mainstream would have it, as a sub-category of space but as the relational and procedural concept (Mubi Brighenti, 2010), the main analytical instrument to study its transformation processes.

We think that the concept of territorialisation well lends itself to better frame the concept of *sustainable development* (in its cultural, social, economic and environmental dimension) indeed because it highlights the spatial-temporal dimension in the use and in the consumption of the resources. What counts in the studies on endogenous development, are the relations that the settled communities construct and normalise, in the time and in the places of choice, with reference to the resources and the local specificities. The territorialisation can express the existence or absence of the sense of belonging and the identification of the community with the inhabited space, according to tangible signs of recognition or difference, harmony or distance, both in its morphological and its organisational conformation. It can thus orient its fate also in terms of intra-generational and inter-generational equity in the use of resources.

In this sense, then, the process of territorialisation of a community expresses its identity both through the landscape signs and through the traditions of the rules of behaviour, the tacit knowledge (Polany, 1966), and all the other specific forms of social and community organisation. Hence, territorialisation is set as the subject of study and investigation of sustainable territorial policies, with reference to the circular and diachronic relations that are instilled between the different territorial components: the natural primary conformation of the place, the history and the culture of the settled communities, the characteristics of the social practices and the whole economic and productive apparatus (Battaglini, 2014).

3. Dimensions of territorial production

Nevertheless the conference session was very variegated, has been used as an opportunity to conduct a retrospective exercise on the dimensions of territorial production, their uses (and abuses) in territorial policies. We were asking the participant to say if and how urban design and urban policies deals with territoriality considered a form of production of territories. In other term, how do planners deal with territorial complexity?

Territoriality, as described above, refers to the relationship of a community with its space of choice and is materialised in the ownership, in the use, the control and the protection (conservation) of resources – can be seen also as territorial complexity.

The term complexity allows introducing the situations in which different forms of territoriality and territorial production overlap and situations in which conflict are manifested. Territorial and

spatial policies deal by theoretical foundation with conflicts arising over the use of a collective resource such as land, with particular reference to the value attributed to it.

In order to understand to which extent territorial policies are embracing territorial complexity we ask the participant to provide contribute on several issue:

- how cities and their policies today respond at the need of territorially rooting and identity of local community?
- What assets of the urban territories became part of a public agenda at local level?
- How effectively local policies are facing the challenge arose by globalization? Are they directly addressing territorial rooting and inclusion of a growing diversity of urban population?
- Which groups of the urban society are today more capable and effective in expressing their territorial production and public policies?

Territorial policies look and seek for element of territorial and temporal stability (and temporal structuring) of the everyday life. Stability is needed to anchor and define the territorial dimension of a policy. However, as stated above, territories and territorialisation practices are not stable but mutable entities.

The notion of territoriality can be helpful indeed in grasping this mutation. In order to do so, territorial policies have to be place based, site specific and embedded into the territorial complexity that is changeable and evolves over-time.

Among the urban policies presented at the session that deal with territorial complexity we can recognized the so-called area-based integrated policies that seek to contrast territorial segregation mainly at neighbourhood level; but also transportation policies (that seek to increase public vs public mobility); housing policies and tool with their direct impacts on the production and reproduction of communal spaces.

Starting from the way territories, territoriality and practices of territorialisation were conceptualized in the session *Territoriality and Urban Policy*, we can recognize seven constitutive dimensions of a multiplicity of practices of territorial production. The are:

Contextual specificity of territorial production. The territorial specificities of the paper have been addressed using a contextualized perspective that privileged South and Central America and Mediterranean Region. Each territorial context manifested a complex combination of power relation, cultural and socio economic forces that result in a different form of territorial production.

Multiscalarity. In talking about territorial policies the paper went from macro issues such as – regional and metropolitan mobility as a matter of social justice and accessibility; to the meso level: housing privatization effect on segregation and fragmentation at the neighbourhood level; and the micro dimension, practices of micro urbanism and tactics of appropriation (and production) of public space. At the micro level particularly significant has proved to be the intermediate scale: the production and reproduction of collective space resulting from the construction and availability of intermediate, the space in between and somehow the intimate space of the daily routine.

Temporality. Temporality resulted to be a powerful lens for the exploration of the territorial potentials as well as of different forms of territorial production. Time-space relation emerged not only in mobility issue, but also in the routine of daily life the simultaneity and the ephemeral characters of social practices, the adaptability to inhospitable spaces, intermediate spaces in time laps in changing time and loops on the uses of public and abandoned spaces. Temporality introduces the changing state of a place over uses as well as the effect over time of normative policies such as the preservation of city centre.

The inertia to change. The policies directly addressing the contrast and mitigation of socio-spatial inequalities are described as ineffective. The intentionality and determination of the objectives, for instance addressing the issue of segregation and inclusion, finds contextual inertia to change (in many case due to the stratification of planning practices). The impotence of achieving the expected results is not only a matter of the rationality of policy design. Territories are a summation of moment of inertia. This inertia, passiveness, resistance to change is a dimension of territoriality *per se*, that tend on the contrary to stabilization.

A plurality of agents and practices. The low income residents, the workers, migrants, institutions, the “housing sector”, the real estate agents, the public administration are just few of a plurality of agents that contribute in the ongoing and continuous transformation of the inhabited territory. Their intentionality and needs overlap in a fertile dynamics of negation of the correct uses (and abuse) of environmental resources. This dynamics give evidence to the fascinating process of territorial production, for instance the exercise of urban citizenship in public space; the adaptability and capabilities of agents in shaping the sense of place; as well as giving evidence of the exercise of power.

Conflicting values. Social practices are in conflict by definition for the different uses, symbols and values they confer to collective resources (for instance the land, the urban and environmental amenities, the heritage sites and the collective space). Among the different ways of conferring values to territory we should not forget the role played by the market and the so called exchange value (and their encoding into real estate indicators and interest rates). Giving this assumption the informal meeting point settled in an abandoned space acquires value throughout uses, but also cultural and historical places, such as the city centre can see processes of privatization and socio-cultural transformation. Moreover the mutation over time of the real estate market can be an interpretation of the changing state of a territory

4. Conclusion

The dimensions of territorial production: *contextual specificity, multiscalarity, temporality, the inertia to change, plurality (of agents and practices) conflictuality* are both characteristic of territory and territoriality and at the same time research fields that could inform and strengthen the territorial dimension of policies.

They may allow planners to open up their notion of territory toward a more dynamic notion of territoriality, from control to co-evolution. In this perspective, territorial policy design can be seen the space in which governing practices takes the natural assets of a place and the means by which nature and culture have interacted so that the communities assigned the local assets a

meaning first of all and a function and rules of use at a subsequent stage, into consideration. In the light of decades of research experience in the field of *territory, territoriality and territorialisation* we can state, again, that the analysis of the territorialisation of a community, in a specific geographical area must consider a multiplicity of aspect through which the community express themselves and this approach can better address the sustainability of its governing action and development.

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