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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EUROPEAN COSMOSCAPES

The Case of the Festival of Europe in Florence

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this essay is to offer an empirical contribution to the understanding of cosmopolitanization processes, centred on Europe. Specifically, the subject of my study is the Festival of Europe, an event dedicated to European themes that is held every two years in the city of Florence (Italy). By means of this case study I intend to analyse those elements that enable or constrain the formation of a European cosmopolitan imaginary within a concrete situational context. This analysis will also permit the formulation of some observations with regard to the role that such organizational and social forms – festivals – can play in the construction of a cosmopolitan social space.

KEYWORDS: Cosmopolitanization processes, Europe, festivals, situational contexts

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1. Introduction

In their seminal article “Unpacking Cosmopolitanism for the Social Sciences”, Ulrich Beck and Natan Sznaider (2006, 8) argue that “the process of cosmopolitanization is bound up with symbol and ritual, and not just with spoken ideas”, and that “the farther cosmopolitan rituals and symbols spread, the more chance there will be of someday achieving a cosmopolitan political order”.

The subject of my work is a ritual-like event, namely the 2013 edition of the Festival of Europe (*Festival d'Europa*) that took place in Florence over a period of six days, from the sixth to the twelfth of May. The Festival has as its explicit subject Europe in its multiple manifestations: political-institutional, artistic, cultural, economic-productive, etc. The Festival week includes the ninth of May, the anniversary of a foundational moment in the European project: the declaration presented by the then French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman in 1950. Since the times of the Committee for a People's Europe (Adonnino Committee 1984–1986), this declaration has been considered among the most symbolic events aimed at promoting the image of the European Community locally and throughout the world. Together with the anthem, the flag, the motto, etc., Europe Day is part of the symbolic repertoire Community institutions have adopted to give visibility to their actions, even though no official recognition has been attributed to these symbols in the institutional treaties.

Through an investigation of this event, my intention is to offer an empirical contribution to the understanding of cosmopolitanization processes, centred on Europe. Specifically, by means of the case study I intend to analyse those elements that enable or constrain, within a concrete situational context, the formation of a European cosmopolitan imaginary. This analysis will also permit the formulation of some observations with regard to the role that such organizational and social forms – festivals – can play in the construction of a cosmopolitan social space.

In order to render explicit the theoretical framework of my reflections, it is necessary, if only briefly, to recall the link between the study of Europe and the research agenda of “new cosmopolitanism” (Fine 2007, 1). In recent years, the theme of cosmopolitanism has become recurring and pervasive in the study of social transformations in contemporary society. One of the main motives animating this new research agenda is the need felt by scholars in many disciplines to overcome the frame of ‘methodological nationalism’ and, at the same time, steer the complexity of social and institutional relations in the direction of a more aware attitude of *openness towards others*. Reflection on the project of a cosmopolitan Europe is part of this current reorientation in social sciences and humanities. In the reorientation we can broadly discern two main analytic directions. These concern “discourses on cosmopolitanism” (Calcutt, Woodward and Skrbis 2009) and the application of these in the study of Europe.

A first direction of analysis, rooted in a Kantian tradition, is aimed at defining the key elements of a new post-national world order (Beck 1998, 2006; Beck and Grande 2007; Habermas 2001, 2009) and of a cosmopolitan democracy (Archibugi, Held 1995). Within this political dimension of cosmopolitanism, Europe assumes central relevance due to the supranational nature of its institutions (Archibugi, Held and Köhler 1998). At this

level of analysis, the study of a cosmopolitan Europe aims to highlight the conditions that enable the improvement of a legal, political and institutional frame able to overcome the Westphalian order of sovereign states, connecting – without necessarily dissolving – national belongings (Turner 2002; Calhoun 2007).

A second direction of analysis is not necessarily in contraposition to the first. It aims more at ‘the social’, scrutinizing the growth and real consistency of processes of cosmopolitanism within the normal contexts of life. If the cosmopolitan disposition presupposes above all an attitude of openness that leads to the appreciation of interaction with people from different cultural backgrounds (Hannerz 1990; Tomlinson 1999, ch. 6; Vertovec and Cohen 2002, 13; Szerszynski and Urry 2002, 468), then one of the most pressing problems is that of giving an analytical consistency to this attitude, rendering it identifiable and measurable (Skrbis, Kendall and Woodward 2004; Cicchelli 2014). This need has partly shifted the attention of scholars from the macro-institutional aspects to the ‘ordinary’ aspects of social life as the field of enquiry within which we might verify the explicative value and limits of the concept of cosmopolitan ‘openness’ (Rovisco and Nowicka 2011, 2-3). This endeavor has also led to a proliferation of adjectives used to describe cosmopolitanism, other, obviously, than those used to indicate its constituent – i.e. moral, political, cultural and aesthetic – dimensions (see eg.: Vertovec and Cohen 2002; Delanty 2012). I refer to formulations like “actually-existing cosmopolitanism” (Robbins 1998), “rooted cosmopolitanism” (Cohen 1992; Appiah 1997, 618; Beck 2003), “mundane cosmopolitanism” (Hebdige, in Urry 1995, 167), “street-level cosmopolitanism” (Radice 2009), “ordinary cosmopolitanism” (Lamont and Aksartova 2002), “working-class cosmopolitanism” (Werbner 1999) and so on, by which scholars have attempted to understand cosmopolitanism as a practice enacted by individuals and groups.¹ This effort to root cosmopolitanism could and should include re-evaluation the centrality of local space in the study of cosmopolitan dynamics (Nowicka and Rovisco 2009; Pendenza 2015).

What has been the impact of this growing volume of literature on the study of Europe? In spite of there being clear indications of the necessity to study Europe “beyond the EU integration perspective” (Delanty and Rumford 2005) or, rather, of the necessity to increase knowledge regarding the constitutive processes of a dawning European society (see e.g.: Rumford 2008; Cotesta 2010; Roche 2010; Pendenza 2012), there is still much to be done. Pichler 2008). There is a lack of depth in current research regarding the “situational contexts” (Nowicka and Rovisco 2009, 7) that enable or restrict the possibilities of cosmopolitan engagements in which ‘the imagined Other’ assumes a

¹ For a more complete list of terms associated with the word ‘cosmopolitanism’, see Skrbis and Woodward (2013, 4-5).

European connotation. Furthermore, one of the limitations of the research into Europe is a relative lack of participant analyses through which to observe, in their concrete happening, the forms of adhesion and imaginative styles with which Europe is lived and considered. From this perspective, the Festival of Europe in Florence provides a favorable point of observation on how individuals take part in the construction of a European public space. My intention is to analyze whether the space of the Florentine event was designed in order to promote cosmopolitan relations and, more generally, the limitations of such events' achieving this type of result.

In order to reach these objectives, I will proceed in the following way. First, I will examine the literature dealing with the relationship between festivals and cosmopolitanism. The intention is to identify the essential aspects, or rather the principal dimensions, of this relationship. Second, on the basis of the theoretical frame that emerges from this analysis and after having taken into consideration the methodology used, I will present some of the results of my field research at the 2013 Festival of Europe. Through examination of the initiatives hosted by the Festival, I aim at clarifying the extent to which the Festival took on the form of a potential 'cosmoscape' or a space able to encourage the formation of cosmopolitan social ties.

2. Festivals and cosmopolitanism

The dual necessities to move away from a single global archetype of cosmopolitanism, and to root cosmopolitan values in the contexts in which they are expressed, have found synthesis in research on contemporary festivals. The link between festivals and cosmopolitanism is an ever more discussed topic.

In recent decades the organization of a considerable number of festivals has been characteristic of cultural life and politics (and not only in European countries). Some factors that have directed this trend are the erosion of the distinction between 'high' and 'low' culture, a certain democratization of cultural taste, the transformation of urban space and consumption with relation to the advent of forms of post-Fordist capitalism, and people's increased mobility and migration (Boissevain 1992; Bianchini 1999; Richards and Palmer 2010). The phenomenological multiplicity of festival forms is the reason for the very heterogeneous and composite character assumed by the literature on this topic (Getz 2010). It is therefore not surprising that the theme of cosmopolitanism is also considered, with regard to this subject matter, using a variety of contrasting modalities.

On the one hand, festivals have been associated with a superficial, commercialized, top-down or elitist cosmopolitanism. According to Harvey (2009, 67), invention on the part of urban administrations of “unique cultural events such as film or art festivals” is the most evident manifestation of a growing “inter-territorial competition”, in which “[t]he marketing and selling of a city’s reputation in itself becomes a big business”. From this point of view, festivals are the expression of that “paradoxical phenomenon” made by “cosmopolitan urbanism” (Binnie, Holloway, Millington and Young 2006). Here, cosmopolitan urbanism denotes a space steered by “market forces and policy directives” where encountering difference can lead to the production of enclaves, class distinctions and cultural exploitation (*ibidem*, 250). In the same vein, Regev (2011) underlines how the fruition of cultural goods and works of art within festivals can be the means by which the members of omnivorous taste cultures – i.e. members of the upper middle and professional classes – “define their sense of distinction”, celebrating “their omnivorous, cosmopolitan taste” (*ibidem*, 109). However, from a different, post-modern perspective, festivals express a sociality that is flattened in the present and artificially consensual, in which fragmented individualities look for temporary and necessarily uncommitted fulfillment. Expressing a widespread “aestheticization of everyday life” (Featherstone 1992; Maffesoli 1996), the sociality promoted by today’s cultural events tolerates diversity more, even if at the cost of an episodic inter-subjectivity emptied of every moral obligation. It is a kind of “minimal cosmopolitanism” based on co-presence, such as Roche (2011) observes in relation to the contribution that mega-events like Expos currently offer to the creation of a European civil space.

Contrary to equation of festivals with “banal” (Beck 2004, 38) and “easy” (Calhoun 2002, 105) cosmopolitanism are some considerations emerging from a group of studies in which festivals appear as elective places for the growth of a cosmopolitan culture. As models for a new participatory democracy based on cultural citizenship (Delanty 2011, 195) festivals can be considered, according to Bennett and Woodward (2014, 18), potential “cosmoscapes”: spaces and sets of practices which afford and encourage cosmopolitan socialization (Kendall, Woodward and Skrbis 2009, 154). As in the “third places” described by Oldenburg (1991), at festivals interactions can emerge that are capable of initiating “norms of trust and reciprocity with others as well as shared memories and experiences” (Hawkins Lee and Ryan 2013, 199). From this point of view, festivals are not closed spaces focused only on local actors and symbols (Picard and Robinson 2006, 4). Placing festivals within a fluid and open context and thinking through their ability to favor the encounter with alterity has encouraged some scholars to highlight festivals’ contribution to the improvement of “European cultural space”, characterized in a cosmopolitan sense (Giorgi, Sassatelli and Delanty 2011). The con-

nection between festivals and the maturation of a European cultural space can be even better highlighted by putting aside prejudices regarding the aesthetic component of cosmopolitanism associated with consumption or with *ludic forms* of social activity. This means investigating the multidimensional character of the public sphere and the plurality of forms of participation in it: from those oriented to the discursive-cognitive, to those with a more aesthetic, ludic and expressive sense (McGuigan 2011; Sassatelli 2011, 2012).² Finally, expression through festivals can encompass the need for distinction nurtured by a privileged class of consumers, and also a striving for social emancipation by the poorer strata of a population. Examples of the latter are the *housing exhibitions* and *toilet festivals* described by Appadurai (2001; 2004). These are festival events, organized by a group of non-governmental organizations (*Alliance*), whose protagonists are poor people from the slums of Mumbai and other Indian cities. In the words of Appadurai (2011, 38):

In these events, which combine festivity, learning, dialogue and solidarity-building, women (and men) from different cities and regions encounter each other and make the effort to encompass some of India's linguistic and cultural diversities. [...] Friendships are formed, tragedies are shared, stories are exchanged, and experiences of urban struggle are framed to be understood by women for other women who come from different spatial worlds of poverty.

This "cosmopolitanism from below" combines aesthetic and moral aspects and is alimented by ritual forms of participation during which people exchange ideas, socialize and simply have fun together (Appadurai 2004, 77). Through these events, according to Appadurai, poor families enter a space of public sociality, extracting themselves from the invisibility that is typical of a condition of poverty.

From the above synthetic reconstruction, it is clear that the relationship between festival and cosmopolitanism has received very diverse interpretations. In literature that describes festivals as a display of pre-packaged cultural products, and cosmopolitanism as the expression of a capitalist project of commodification of the world, this relationship has assumed a negative significance. Festivals hereby are symptoms of homogenising global factors and of an 'abstract cosmopolitanism' driven by neo-liberalist forces. Furthermore, they are occasions that at best give life to superficial relationships, and at worst reproduce asymmetric social relationships. Overall, this is a dichotomising vision that considers festivals as being opposed to weightier, authentic or symmetric forms of relationships. However, according to other authors, festivals can be spaces for the

² On this point see also Jedlowski (2011).

negotiation of meaning, for reflective connectivity of the particular and the universal, the local and the global. They can be events wherein forms of cognitive and aesthetic involvement contribute to the formation of inclusive social ties rather than exclusive ones. As shown by Appadurai, they can be spaces where people need not limit themselves to representing an existing order, but might transform their surrounding reality.

As far as my study is concerned, I intend to problematize and contextualize these assertions by means of a case study. Through analysis of the organizational architecture of the Festival of Europe, I will follow three main lines of research corresponding to specific themes emergent from the literature. 'Particular and universal', 'aesthetic and moral', and 'representative and transformative' are the three conceptual couples through which I will analyze the programming design of the Festival and its configuration as a potential cosmospace.

The first line of analysis concerns the interconnection between the particular and the universal. As stated, contemporary festivals aren't closed spaces with an exclusively local cultural horizon of reference; instead, they are occasions when local, global, particular and universal elements can dialectically interact. Like every cultural space (Clifford 1997), the one drawn by festivals cannot be considered a fixed entity. Rather, individuals can give life to a negotiation of cultural space, as far as both its content and its boundaries are concerned. It is possible for this negotiation to take on the contours of an inclusive dynamic, broadening the "horizon of relevance in people's routine experience" (Tomlinson 1999, 115). The maturation of a cosmospace is indissolubly tied to this possibility. In the following analysis of the Festival of Europe I will use the categories 'universal' and 'particular' to understand the relationships that this Festival's events created among different cultural horizons of reference.

My second line of analysis also emerges from a recurrent theme in the literature. In a festival it is possible for various "modes of sensibility", from cognitive to expressive, to coexist (Grimes 2014, 203–205). The Festival of Europe comprised simultaneous recreational, ceremonial and celebratory aspects, each of which gave consistency to the event as a whole. I will analyze the programming of the Festival in terms of the moral and aesthetic forms of involvement through which a sense of Europeanness and openness towards others was conveyed. As far as moral aspects are concerned, I will observe the space reserved in the Florentine event for the theme of the construction of a European memory. As regards aesthetic aspects, my discussion will turn to the various meanings of culture underlying the events and their intersecting with the idea of Europe.

Finally, the study of the organizational logic of a festival is helpful in understanding its transformative potential. Following this third line of analysis, I will try to ascertain

whether the Festival of Europe as a whole can be classified among “events that present” or “events that model”. According to Handelman (1998), from whom I have taken this terminology, it is within “events that present” that a “bureaucratic logic” prevails, functional to the representation of social order. “Events that model” instead generate a transformative experience: “something is changed, something new is brought into being” (*ibidem*, xxiv). It is legitimate to maintain that the emergence of a cosmopolitan attitude, as an exercise of self-transforming, is more likely in events that model because a more flexible formula of performances is more likely to produce new connections and ways of conceiving relationship with the Other. In order to further understand this issue, my analysis will focus on the symbolism inscribed in the programming of the Festival.

3. Methodology

The material presented below derives from my empirical research that aimed to uncover the characteristics, limits and potentials of the forms of participation making up a European public sphere (Verderame 2015). I will elaborate data partly presented in this previous study, using a selection based on the above-described cognitive objectives.

In presenting the whole picture of the research design, it should be specified that it foresaw the recognition of two relevant dimensions, the *participatory* and the *symbolic*. The Festival events at which I looked in detail were chosen either for their potential for participation, or for the central relevance that they assumed from the symbolic viewpoint.

Concerning the symbolic dimension, the research employed direct observation to concentrate on the exhibit dedicated to the Schuman Declaration set up in the Palazzo Vecchio. The conference *The State of the Union* and the cortege organized by the European Federalist Movement (MFE) were the events chosen to investigate the participatory dimension. Together with the collection of documentary and photographic material, during these participatory events I held 13 semi-structured interviews with as many audience participants (P₁₋₁₃).³ The interviews touched on the following themes: the characteristics of the event, its contribution to the construction of a European identity, and its participants’ formulation of comprehensive appraisals of the

³ I will use the letter “P” followed by an interviewee number to indicate the interviews with audience participants, and the letter “K” followed by a number to indicate the interviews with key witnesses.

Festival of Europe. Herein after I will take into consideration the information gathered in these interviews, especially with regard to the organizational aspects of the Festival.

Still with regard to organizational aspects, six semi-structured interviews were also undertaken with six key witnesses (K₁₋₆) chosen on the basis of their involvement in the organization of the Festival or of single events. They are identified as representatives of: institutions (K₁₋₂; the *Europe Direct Firenze Office*; the Information Office of the European Parliament), non-profit associations (K₃₋₄), and the business world (K₅₋₆). Through these interviews, and the examination of informative documents produced at an institutional level (brochures, project descriptions, websites, etc.), I will reconstruct the Festival's set of hosted initiatives and delineate a profile of its cosmopolitan dimension.

For the purposes of the current essay, all the collected material was subjected to a primarily quantitative method of investigation, through a codification of themes (*unit of classification*) present in interviews (Strauss 1987), and the elaboration of a content analysis card (Losito 1993) as regards planning and informational documents. The analysis of these documents aimed to illuminate the cultural horizons according to which the single events were located, the types of engagement – moral and/or aesthetic – they fostered, and, finally, the situation within them of relevant European issues.

On the whole, the research approach followed was that of *case study*. I chose the Festival of Europe because of the opportunity it offers to observe in a direct way the experiential, subjective 'making' of Europe. This "immediateness" is precisely one of the characteristics of a case study, wherein, suggests Stake (2005, 454), "[t]he major questions are not questions of opinion or feeling, but of the sensory experience". Using Stake's terminology it can furthermore be claimed that the Festival of Europe belongs to the case study type of "intrinsic interest" (*ibidem*, 445), especially for those who study the processes that lead to the formation of a European identity. As in all research opting for a case study approach (Yin 1984), the conclusions I reached cannot be evaluated in terms of statistical representativeness and generalization. Tied to the methodology of case study is a "[p]otential for learning [which] is a different and sometimes superior criterion to representativeness. Sometimes it is better to learn a lot from an atypical case than a little from a seemingly typical case" (Stake 2005, 451).

4. Particular and universal

By its second edition in 2013⁴ (the first took place in May 2011), the Festival of Europe was a complex macro-event, characterized by a plurality of ‘happenings’ both small and large in terms of participation. Organized by a series of institutional actors with the involvement of civil society,⁵ the Festival had a symbolic centre in the Palazzo Vecchio, seat of the city assembly, and the neighboring Loggia dei Lanzi. Other, numerous events took place in other parts of the city, for example the ex Carcere delle Murate, the University of Florence, the Palazzo Medici Riccardi, and the art galleries of Via Maggio. Programmed alongside these initiatives were those organized by the Comune of Florence and entitled *Notte Blu (Blue Night)*.⁶ The programming of *Notte Blu* encompassed about 70 musical, literary, museum and performative cultural events over the Festival’s final two days (11–12 May). *Notte Blu* was, in the intention of the organizers, the “more festive and popular version of the Festival”⁷, centered on entertainment with the aim of involving the younger generation.

The Festival events and programmed activities (strictly, excluding those within *Notte Blu*) numbered more than 100 (see Table 1). I have divided them into four types: 1) conventions, seminars, workshops, etc.; 2) exhibitions, guided visits, competitions, prize-givings; 3) concerts, theatrical representations, tastings, artistic street performances, etc.; 4) ritual events in a narrow sense (inaugural ceremony, MFE cortege). Excepting the last type, in which various elements are mixed, the first three types of event are forms of involvement respectively connoted as primarily cognitive (*type 1*), mixed cognitive-expressive (*type 2*) or expressive/ludic-recreational (*type 3*).

Further important data, also represented in Table 1, concern the amount of symbolic space reserved for the theme of Europe within the initiatives of the Festival. Not all the Festival events had Europe as a specific topic. In some initiatives, ‘Europe’ represented, at most, the official frame of the event; in others the link with Europe was almost completely absent. This last was especially true for the events of *type 2* (43% with little or no link) and of *type 3* (30% with little or no link). In the events characterized by a higher involvement of overt cognition (*type 1*), the theme of Europe was almost always

⁴ The third edition of the Festival will be held after the writing of this article, in May 2015.

⁵ The European University Institute (EUI), Comune and Province of Florence, and Tuscany Regional Government were the promoters of the Festival, which was supported by partnerships with other public institutions – European, national and local – and organizations from civil society.

⁶ The initiative *Notte Blu* had its first edition in 2010. It is, therefore, antecedent to the Festival and is an annual event. The Festival itself is programmed biennially.

⁷N.S., key witness – institutional subjects, K₁.

central (23% with little or no link). But, as can be seen from the data, events aimed at favoring greater expressive participation were more self-referential in theme. Even more than in the Festival, in the various events of *Notte Blu* references to Europe occurred as framing rather than as content.

Table 1 - Festival events (excluding those within *Notte Blu*) by type and relation to Europe

<i>Type of event</i>	<i>Europe as central theme</i>	<i>Europe as background</i>	<i>Little or no direct relation to Europe</i>	<i>Number of events*</i>
<i>Type 1</i> Convention, seminar, workshop, round table, debate, instructive meeting, laboratory	26	8	10	44
<i>Type 2</i> Exhibition, guided visit, competition, prize-giving	8	4	9	21
<i>Type 3</i> Ludic-recreational event (concert, theatrical representation, tasting, game, street performance, etc.)	18	12	13	43
Total	52	24	32	108

* The count includes multiple iterations of particular events on the same day or on different days. The inaugural celebration and the demonstration of the MFE must also be added to the count, making a total of 110 events.

Starting from these data, I can formulate some speculations regarding the Festival of Europe as a potential cosmescap. First of all, it seems that the programming of the Florentine festival involved searching for a compromise between two reference cultural horizons: local and European. It is possible to interpret this compromise using the categories ‘particular’ and ‘universal’. For the purposes of this article, I will categorize as ‘universal’ the linking of an event to a horizon that transcends those of city, region and state – specifically, a ‘European horizon’. I will categorize as ‘particular’ the rooting of an event exclusively within one of the above listed contexts.⁸

Analyzing along a continuum – from the particular to the universal – the events programmed in the Florentine event as a whole (Festival and *Notte Blu*), in terms of their themes, proposed synergies, and physical, symbolic, real or imaginary spaces, it can be observed that most are quite proximate to one or other of the two poles. In other

⁸ Ascribable to this category are the events classified in the third column of Table 1 (‘Little or no direct relation to Europe’).

words, where a specific cultural and social horizon was identified,⁹ it located the event as either ‘only European’ or, prevalently, ‘only city-based’. I found ‘only European’ to be more widespread in the Festival proper, and ‘only city-based’ to be predominant in the programming of *Notte Blu*.¹⁰

However, this polarization must not be considered as too clear-cut. For the Festival events where there was a clearly identifiable rooting within a specific cultural horizon (N.tot.: 62 cases¹¹), the reference to Europe was in the majority (53%). Nevertheless, I note among this cohort the conspicuous presence of events in whose programming more than one horizon appeared. This took the form of interaction between European, regional and city horizons¹² (21%) and between European and national horizons¹³ (16%). The events rooted exclusively in the ‘particularistic’ type (reference only to the city or to the nation) comprise the remaining 10% of the cases.

This last set of data assists in delineating the cosmopolitan structure of the Florentine event. Admittedly, in the programming the particular and the universal were mostly configured in the form of simple co-existence. This simplicity derives from the tendency to program events at the extreme poles of the particular–universal continuum (*configuration 1*). Nevertheless, it is also possible to identify another two configurations of this relation.

One additional configuration appears in those events in whose programming Europe had the function of a legitimizing frame, assuming a background role with regard to the content of the event. The low profile of ‘the European subject’ in these events permitted local actors to benefit from full autonomy both in shaping that which nourished a European identity, and in defining the contribution that local culture brought to it.¹⁴ In this case, we find a projection of the local towards a broader (European) horizon

⁹ I did not include among the ‘events with reference to a specific cultural horizon’ those aimed at the production of forms of pure sociality.

¹⁰ Two examples of events labeled ‘only European’ or ‘only city-based’ are the planning initiatives *The European Parliament as an International Actor* [original title] (Festival), and *Le visite guidate in Palazzo Vecchio* [Guided Tours of the Palazzo Vecchio] (*Notte Blu*).

¹¹ I have excluded from the count the repeated events, which are instead considered in Table 1. Therefore the events with reference to a specific cultural horizon number 62 out of a total 85 events.

¹² Examples are initiatives such as *Le vetrine di via Maggio e via dei Fossi, ambasciatrici di cultura europea* [The Window Displays of Via Maggio and Via dei Fossi, Ambassadors of European Culture] or *L'Europa a scuola* [Europe at School].

¹³ For example, the initiative named *Giornalismo e media italiani nella governance dell'Unione* [Italian Journalism and Media in the Governance of the Union] can be seen to display this form of interaction between horizons of reference.

¹⁴ Other research (in particular Sassatelli 2005, 2009) confirms that this style of programming is widespread in events in and inspired by Europe.

of meaning (*configuration 2*: 'From the particular to the universal'). The below extract from an interview with an exhibitor at an art gallery in Via Maggio summarizes the significance of this projection.

What links us to Europe is our historicity: Italian and above all Florentine. This [Festival] initiative serves to value our culture, taking it abroad and making youngsters aware of it. (A.T., key witness – business world, K₅)

In yet another configuration, 'Europe' was entwined with the content of single events, creating the possibility for interaction – significantly – with the expectations, symbols and practices of local actors. This can lead to a reflective and genuinely cosmopolitan self-transformation in the subjects involved, able to nourish the relation with the Other (*configuration 3*: 'From the universal to the particular'). An interviewee, participating at a meeting-debate connected to the cortege of the European Federalist Movement (MFE), expressed this idea as follows:

From this initiative, I have realised how important it is to speak of Europe, that is, to go beyond national egoism. There is so much superficiality and ignorance – I also include myself, you understand – especially amongst us Italians. When we speak of Europe it almost seems like speaking about Mars. It is not like this. (G., audience participant, P₁₂)

Obviously, the circumstances, intensity and diffusion of cosmopolitan self-transformation among participants cannot fully be defined on the basis of a single interview or simple organizational analysis. But one point seems to emerge: that the first and second type of configuration prevailed in the Florentine event's programming, whilst more rare were *devised* moments aimed at a transformation of the local space in the direction of broader life meanings.

5. Aesthetics and morals

Here, I will concern myself with how cosmopolitan socialization processes were favored through various events of the Festival. I will examine two constitutive dimensions of a cosmopolitan socialization: aesthetic, and moral.

In evaluating if and how the Festival, together with *Notte Blu*, encouraged the formation of aesthetic stances of openness, it is helpful to return to Table 1. Here it can be observed how the attention reserved in the programming for events that were ludic, expressive or linked to the fruition of cultural products was anything but

marginal. In my typology (Tab. 1), the distribution of event type is balanced with regard to participatory dynamics: evenly spread at either of the two poles (cognitive and expressive) on our continuum. The events of the expressive and ludic-recreational type (39%) were numerically only slightly less than those of the cognitive type (40%). In the programming of *Notte Blu*, instead, there was a more clear-cut prevalence of events aimed at entertainment and play. A 'marathon' of light music in the square, laboratories for children, mountain bike lessons, exhibitions by Florentine flag-wavers, kite flying performances, night-time visits to corners of Florence, and readings in the street of Dante Alighieri's *Canti* were some of its initiatives. It is possible, therefore, to speak of a marked aestheticism in the overall programming. Within this aesthetic dimension is one important difference between the Festival and *Notte Blu*. The former, though not exclusively, evinced a type of 'high culture' consistent with certain cultural products like works of fine art, architectural heritage, operas, etc. The latter understood the concept of culture with a more anthropological orientation, and introduced events concerning the lifestyles of the local population.

This institutional design seems to have encouraged a distinction based on cultural consumption: a distinction between "omnivorous cosmopolitans"¹⁵ and "local consumers" (see e.g. Peterson 2005). *Notte Blu*, as tied to a cultural horizon of local tastes, is confirmed in my opinion as the "more festive and popular version of the Festival", as formulated by a key witness. The distinction is slightly attenuated by a different type of aesthetic cosmopolitan involvement mediated by the theme of Europe which, as stated previously in this article, was most often absent from or negligible in programmed events of the ludic-expressive type (type 3 in Tab. 1).

In the Festival (strictly speaking, excluding *Notte Blu*), reference to types of high culture was not at all synonymous with reference to a European-centered horizon of meaning. In the events ascribable to this type, Europe was almost completely absent.¹⁶ Rather, the thematizing of Europe occurred in the aesthetic performances that were nourished by forms of casual sociability, not programmed in their manner of approaching the audience. Participants in these events were not visitors to a museum or theater spectators but passers-by. A party in a public garden, a musical performance in a crowded street, a street game about linguistic competencies, a projection in the square of a dance dedicated to the 'Myth of Europe', were events able to generate "casual sociability among strangers" (Turnaturi 2011), an emotional experience to

¹⁵ As underlined by Peterson (2005, 263), omnivorousness represents "an increasingly common measure of high status over the second half of the 20th century in North America, Europe and beyond".

¹⁶ According to my classification, the events belonging to high culture are, for the most part, those with little or no direct relation to Europe (per the third column of Table 1).

which the idea of Europe contributed a background inflection and motivation. The intention pursued by these events seems to have been to mimetically clasp bodies together, bringing them close to a European ‘symbolic core’ – without, however, making this intent so visible that it corrupted the effervescence of the generative randomness.

Randomness cannot be the characteristic of a moral-oriented cosmopolitan engagement. A way of investigating this issue is to analyze the space dedicated by the Festival to the construction of a shared memory. This is a theme that numerous scholars have identified as central to the formation of a European cosmopolitan society (Eder 2005; Levy and Sznajder 2007; RI.LE.S. 2009). What type of memory was encouraged by the events programmed for the Festival? To reply to this question, it is useful to borrow a metaphor from the American historian Charles Maier (2002), who distinguishes between “hot memories” and “cold memories”. Using a nuclear physics metaphor, Maier describes hot memory as a traumatic collective memory with a long half-life (similar in its destructiveness to the effects of plutonium), and cold memory as less persistent memory (similar in fallout time to a tritium isotope).¹⁷

In the Florentine Festival, the events that specifically aimed for the construction of a collective memory were very few, and directed in a celebratory style that favored “cold memories”. To illustrate, one of the central ‘symbolic’ events of the Festival was the exhibition dedicated to the Schuman Declaration. Displayed at the entrance to the Palazzo Vecchio in Cortile Michelozzo, the exhibition comprised documents in the form of posters, images and films dedicated to three great ‘founding fathers’ of Europe: Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer and Alcide de Gasperi. The exhibition manifested that celebratory style that European institutions promoted until the early 1990s (Calligaro 2010). There are two salient elements to this style: the exaltation of *European cultural heritage* and the dissemination of knowledge linked to the most important personalities (*founding fathers*) who marked the stages of the European integration process. This celebratory style results in a ‘coldness’ little suited to generating identification mechanisms of an extensive reach, such as those susceptible to spreading cultural trauma (Alexander 2003). One of interviewees expressed himself as follows:

Perhaps we need symbols that are a little more shareable, recognizable and visible. I work in a place called Robert Schuman Center. If you ask me what there is in the Schuman Declaration, I’m not sure that I remember it all. I believe that all Americans, instead, know by heart the Declaration of Independence and suchlike. Moreover, they

¹⁷ On this point: Littoz-Monnet (2012); Bottici and Challand (2013, 73).

are not doing anything else to make it become something different from what it represents today. (D.G., university researcher, audience participant at the conference *The State of the Union*, P₆)

It should be said that the same European institutions, on the wave of a ‘memory boom’ raised by the events tied to the fall of the Berlin Wall (Pakier and Stråth 2010), have insisted in the last decade on cultural policy intended to nourish a European identity based on the perseverance of hot memories. For example, an appeal to a pivotal role for a traumatic event like the Holocaust – culminating with the proclamation by the European Parliament of the *European Holocaust Memorial Day* (January 2005) – has been insistent in recent years. This inclination, however, seems to have been little acknowledged in the programming of the Festival. Equally feeble, then, from this point of view, was its potential to promote a cosmopolitan engagement of the moral type.

6. Representation and transformation

Some observations regarding the transforming nature of the Festival have already emerged from discussing the configurations of its institutional design. In particular, co-existence rather than interaction between particular and universal predominated (*configuration 1*). This means that due to organizational factors there was little margin for transformation of the local social space in a cosmopolitan sense (*configuration 3*). At most, a transformation happened as a projection of the local towards a broader (European) horizon, with Europe acting as the background for the single initiatives (*configuration 2*).

Beyond the relation between particular and universal, was the logic of the Festival representational or transformative? At first glance, both these logics seem to have inspired its programming, as articulated by a key witness:

Arranging the Festival around the ninth of May was also an attempt to strengthen those celebratory moments that are part of the construction of an identity. In every country, people celebrate – I don’t know – Independence or the Day of the Republic, which are moments that represent the sense of national unity. [...] The ninth of May reproduces this type of situation for Europe. (N.S., key witness – institutional subjects, K₁)

The same interviewee added:

This type of event has a twofold importance: on the one hand it makes people aware of Europe and the influence that it has on the daily life of its citizens; on the other, it is important to let it be understood what is missing and what is missing is a Europe in which the citizens have a greater voice than they currently have.

On the one hand – it can be argued – the Festival had a transformative orientation. It favored initiatives of micro-participation around issues that were and are very relevant to Europe and its institutions: problems linked with immigration, the role of the media in the construction of Europe, the economic governance of the EU, its gender policies, the participatory democracy, the role of civil society, construction of a federal Europe, etc. As another key witness told us: “The Festival is not only so we can say: ‘Oh, isn’t Europe beautiful!’, but to highlight its defects, to understand where to identify the deficits that have to be made up”.¹⁸

On the other hand, the Festival can be included among those initiatives that the EU institutions – in the case in question, together with local ones – have encouraged since the last two decades of the twentieth century, using the medium of ‘culture’ to socialize the people of Europe into a shared history and identity *conubium* (Shore 2000; 2006). From this point of view, the strategy that animated the Festival, like in all events of this type, was that of the construction and legitimization of a consensus. Rather than encouraging a transformation of the horizons of sense, the Festival can be seen as a mere representation of a cultural project delivered via a top-down method.

For my part, I believe that neither of these two interpretations should be considered absolutely valid. Rather, it is necessary to reflect on their contentions through the examination of specific cases. It is useful, then, to refer to what Handelman (1998) claims about the properties of events-that-model. According to Handelman, events-that-model have an “anticipatory” and “procedural” character. Handelman writes: “the purposiveness of an event-that-models is anticipatory: it indexes or pre-views a hypothetical future condition that will be brought into being, and it provides procedures that will actualize this act of imagination” (*ibidem*, 28). The judgment that I have formed is that, despite programming of the Festival in an anticipatory or transformative direction, there was no following elaboration by the programmers of procedures adequate for the direction’s implementation. These procedures would have concerned the symbolism actualized by the Festival. Especially where it was meant to be central, the Festival’s symbolic dimension resulted in being too flattened on an ‘institutional model’.

¹⁸ M.S., key witness – non-profit associations, K4.

Europe needs symbols (Kaelble 2003; Bruter 2005; Manners 2011). They are indispensable in the construction of any socio-political entity (Kertzer 1988). In this work of construction, the symbolic assumes an ambivalent function. It can reproduce social order but it can also lead to its transformation. This means that the symbolic space can assume a form, on the one hand, of a pre-reflective space. The flag hanging unnoticed on the public building is an expression as much of “banal nationalism” (Billig 1995) as of “banal Europeanism” (Cram 2001), of implicit or subconscious identification with the nation or the EU respectively. On the other hand, the symbolic space can be characterized by openness to hermeneutic and transformative actions, by means of which social actors manipulate and transform their relationships. This is a character that shows itself with greater intensity precisely in ritual or ritual-like events (Turner 1982; 1986).

What type of symbolism was activated at the Festival? The dominant symbolism was of an institutional type. At best, it was barely amenable to the appropriation and negotiation of meanings, and at worst, even actively excluded such developments. An example of this exclusiveness was the dynamic generated by the conference *The State of the Union*, considered by many of interviewees to be the central happening of the Festival by virtue of the participation of high level institutional and political figures. On the occasion of the conference, these public personalities heavily occupied the symbolic scene. This was made immediately visible by the delimitation of physical space, with part of the Piazza della Signoria cordoned off and access to the entire Palazzo Vecchio building limited to the participants at the conference. The image offered by the conference was of an event that clearly differentiated invited ritual participants and non-participants.

It is a symbolic event, it is not here that anyone will change their mind. They come to share with very vague words what has been decided by another. In my opinion, this type of event does not lead to the construction of an identity, because at the end you see the barriers. Seeing the flags [on the façade of the Palazzo Vecchio] is beautiful, but putting barricades in front goes in a totally different direction. (G.F., university researcher, audience participant at the conference *The State of the Union*, P₂)

When symbolism becomes the exclusive expression of an *auctoritas*, it risks being counterproductive in terms of participation and formation of a wider (cosmopolitan) sense of belonging.

Both tendencies – towards representation and towards transformation – were present in the programming of the Festival. Nevertheless, by virtue of an institutionally-centered symbolism that precluded negotiation, it was, above all, representationism that prevailed.

7. Conclusions

My analysis of the 2013 Festival of Europe has identified various critical aspects of this event with regard to its potential configuration as a cosmoscape. They concern, in particular, lack of interaction rather than simple cohabitation between horizons of meaning, weakness of the references to a shared memory and, in general, a symbolism that was scarcely open to negotiation. Local content and wider horizons of references generally coexisted rather than merged within the programming, not greatly encouraging relativization of the local or formation of a cosmoscape with the idea of Europe at the centre. The forms of programmed involvement did not favour an interconnection among local and European identitarian levels. In some events – mainly those with a recreational-expressive attendance – the reference to Europe was too bland and concealed, but when ‘Europe’ completely dominated an event through institutional representations, dynamics were created that were exclusive and counterproductive in terms of participation, in spite of the intentions of the actors involved. In general, the difficulty initiatives like this Festival come up against is combining different styles or sensibilities of participation: cognitive, expressive, recreational. Only interpenetration, rather than simple coexistence of these sensibilities can give life to performances in which empathetic behaviour is translated into inclusive cultural (and cosmopolitan) models with the idea of Europe at the centre.

These critical statements notwithstanding, the Festival of Europe as a whole also represented an occasion when Europe transformed from an abstract ideal to a concrete performance. The main merit attributable to the Festival, and more generally to this type of event, is that of placing the *preambles* so that Europe is not only ‘thought’ but also ‘lived’ towards a plurality of forms of involvement.

My research has favored analysis of situational aspects on which rests, potentially, the growth of a cosmopolitan European involvement. In particular, by means of research into the Festival’s thematic programming, I have tried to bring to light how Europe, both as an idea and as a performance, was devised and transmitted. Two considerations grounded my analysis: the scarce attention, up to now, paid to situational contexts in the study of European-centered processes of cosmopolitanization, and the fact that festivals represent ‘objects’ that can enrich the study of the empirical forms of cosmopolitanism. It goes without saying that this research cannot be considered exhaustive. Cosmopolitan involvement implies an individual sense of mastery, a skill of code-switching, that an analysis centered exclusively on cosmopolitan settings cannot fully show. With regard to the maturation of a cultural European space, then, further participating analyses are needed that place under the magnifying

glass the imaginative styles through which Europe, within local contexts, is thought and lived.

In conclusion, my exercise in understanding the factors that can influence the dawning of cosmopolitan relations in events like the Festival of Europe should be followed up in at least two directions. One is extensive study of the motivations that animate the public in these types of events; the other is observing how the performers and audience members participate and communicate with one another within the festival spaces. The conclusions I have reached on the 2013 Festival of Europe in Florence must be considered as partial, or as a first step towards the understanding of the contribution that this event, and others like it, can offer to the construction of a European cosmopolitan space.

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