Local agencies for trans local production of culture. A case study of activist-led peer practices in Milan

Abstract

In 2012 the Milan-based activists group Macao drew the public attention to the need of a radical change in the urban policies in relation to the reuse of the substantial patrimony of abandoned places in the city. By squatting an iconic skyscraper first and then calling for public assemblies in several public spaces such as squares, streets and metro stations, the movement grew massively and gathered a large number of new members and supporters in few weeks. Macao eventually occupied the former slaughterhouse exchange building of the city, in the socially problematic neighbourhood Molise-Calvairate, on the eastern edge of Milan city centre.

The neighbourhood is characterised by a deeply problematic social condition, with main issues concerning social integration of immigrants and religious minorities and insufficient provision of affordable housing.

Over the last five years, Macao has been shaping its current community form and governance model through localised practices of urban commoning, and it represents nowadays a major 'right to the city' movement in Milan, standing in contrast to neo-liberal political attitudes and acting as symbol of community empowerment and local resistance. In fact, Macao's agency is characterised by unique and original features, which are not taken into account by conventional institutional urban practices or policies.

However, the role of Macao as mediator and incubator of practices of cultural peer production within the local neighbourhood and at the city scale still needs further investigation. Thus, we primarily questioned whether Macao governance model might be adequate to activate and support forms of cultural peer production. The multi-facet methodological approach (Mason, 2011) allowed us to examine a range of multi-dimensional and contingent aspects relationally implicated to the main question. For this reason, we inquired whether the peer practices put forward by Macao's activists referred to the local or trans-local scale and what was the degree of interaction with the local community of Molise/Calvairate neighbourhood.

During two fieldwork periods (February 2016 and April 2017) data have been collected through mixed-methods, including visual mapping, semi structured interviews with Macao's activists and representatives of the neighbourhood tenants' committee and a multi-activity participatory session with volunteers of the local community.

Introduction: Macao from trans-local actions to site specific commoning

In July 2011 the insurgent cultural movement called The Art Workers (henceforth LdA, 'Lavoratori dell'Arte') officially began and laid the foundation of what would eventually be called Macao, the New Centre for Art, Culture and Research, in Milan. On 5 May 2012, hundreds of people occupied the Galfa Tower, an iconic skyscraper in the heart of the city, privately owned and abandoned since 1996. During ten days of occupation, the space hosted free events such as concerts, theatre pieces, workshops and training courses. The occupation of the Galfa Tower represented the very first public expression of the diverse underground social movements animating the cultural life of the city.

It is interesting to notice that, although the LdA's manifesto (2012) originally focused on topics closely concerned to the creative sector (such as: art space availability and financial accessibility, new communication channels and forms of expression, etc.), Macao rapidly turning into a form of collective urban mobilization, attracting new participants and sympathizers from the city and beyond in a limited period of time (D'Ovidio and Cossu, 2016). According to Valli, the process of identity formation of the collective has occurred precisely through the implementation of creative and artistic activities: 'The process of forming a political subject passes through arts and creative expressions to impact and reconfigure the sensible domain' (2015: 643). In fact, thousands attended the public events organized by the collective in the Galfa Tower and even more joined Macao after the eviction, when events and the public assembly were hold in the square at the entrance to the tower, renamed 'Piazza Macao'. Day after day, a growing number of supporters and new members joined the movement.

As Braga clarified, one of the purposes for occupying such a well-known building was to attract the attention of the media (2017), so that when Macao moved from the square to occupy its second target, Palazzo Citterio, a valuable 18th-century palace in the Brera arts neighbourhood, it had grown massively and the activities have been widely reported in real time by local and national media.

The occupation of Palazzo Citterio drew the public's attention on the forty-year project of restoration and reuse, which aimed at turning empty and decaying aristocratic estate into a key space of the broader 'Great Brera' vision. The reuse started in the '70s but was never completed, due to the lack of funding and the ineffectiveness of the public administration's decision making process (Bassetti, 2012). The attempted re-appropriation by the Macao movement brought the Palazzo Citterio situation into the spotlight. On 22nd May 2012, only three days after the occupation, Macao activists, along with several supporters, were violently evicted from the building.

From that moment, a month of even more nomadic actions followed, during which the activities and the debate went on incessantly. Although it wasn't possible to localise Macao's place, the collective and their supporters met all around the city, calling for thematic focus groups and open assemblies through their Facebook page. These took place in subway and bus stations or other public spaces in the city, with the meeting points announced online with just a few hours' notice. In those days, the hashtag #whereismacao

went viral, quickly becoming the most popular one in the Milanese area. This contributed to grow Macao's popularity and allowed the activists to continue the public discussion started in the Galfa Tower, defining the boundaries of their political and cultural manifesto and even fostering the reflection on the collective's structural model.

During this nomadic phase, Macao agreed to occupy what would eventually become its stable location until today: the former Slaughterhouse Exchange Building (henceforth SEB). This valuable Art Nouveau building lies within the former communal market area of Milan, which today is one of the largest abandoned area in Europe (Mazzitelli, 2016). The SEB, abandoned for over thirty years as the result of the slow decline of the public market area, stands as symbol of the ineffective urban policy for the reuse of abandoned sites. It is worth noticing that this area is located in Molise-Calvairate neighbourhood, on the eastern boundary of Milan city centre. The neighbourhood is characterised by a deeply problematic social condition, with main issues concerning social integration of immigrants and religious minorities and insufficient provision of affordable housing.

Since the end of June 2012, after an intensive (and still ongoing) work to turn the building into a liveable space, Macao has gradually started the development a complex cultural project of everyday activities. The space currently hosts a lively cross-sector programme of visual and performing arts, experimental theatre and cinema, photography, literature, new media, and meetings of citizens committees as well as in-residency programmes for students of arts and the social sciences.

Macao currently sits at the negotiation table along with representatives of Milan City Council and the subsidiary that owns the area, which are willing to sell the building for-profit on the real estate market. As a reaction to the consequent threat of eviction, in April 2017 the collective started setting up an association (which today consists of nearly 2,000 subscriptions) to collectively buy the space, reclaiming its value as a common good.

The different phases through which Macao activists shaped their own agenda and governance seem indicative of their intent and capability to operate trans-locally. Arisen as movement demanding better condition for the creative sector, it quickly turned into a form of collective urban mobilization through the provocative walk across some key places in Milan that were once considered places of vitality and sociality. These now stand empty and abandoned, for multiple reasons, representing the greatest potential today for setting up new models of co-production in the urban area.

The initial nomadic phase has been purposeful to reach a critical mass, ensure media coverage and shone a light on the need for radical change in urban policies to enable bottom-up strategies for the re-use of the massive patrimony of abandoned sites in Milan. **However, the analysis of the stationary phase and current use of the SEB, from spatial and organizational perspectives, suggests that being locally settled allows the set-up of commoning practices and the development of a better-defined governance model.**

Methodology

The paper introduces the case study of Macao as an urban common (Ostrom, 1990) able to activate bottom-up practices (Delsante and Bertolino 2017) and nurture forms of cultural peer production at different levels. A key challenge in conducting this research was the need to develop an innovative methodology, able to involve different lines of enquiry and different perspectives through which investigate Macao's scales of operation, spatiality and governance. To do so, we borrowed the '*facet methodology*' approach suggested by Mason where the research problematics 'are seen as constructed through combinations and constellations of facets as we might see in a cut gemstone' (2011: 75), with the gemstone being the overall research question.

Thus, we primarily questioned **what type of governance model might be adequate to activate and support forms of cultural peer production in Macao**. The approach that we adopted allowed to examine a variety of multi-dimensional and contingent aspects tangled and relationally implicated to the main question. For this reason, we inquired **whether the peer practices put forward by Macao's activists referred to the local or trans-local scale** and **what was the degree of interaction with the local community of Molise/Calvairate neighbourhood**.

Each facet implied the use of specific qualitative methods for generating data. In particular, this paper draws on data from gathered during two main fieldwork periods in February 2016 and April 2017. The first session mainly aimed at understanding Macao in its complexity and diversity. To do so, we conducted a visual mapping of the spatial practices in the former SEB, we led a round of non-structured interviews with Macao activists, we took part in the open assemblies to achieve an initial understanding of their governance model. We finally gathered open data in relation to the cultural activities hosted in the space through Macao Facebook page. During the latter fieldwork, we finalised our data collection about Macao through semi-structured interviews with the activists (with a focus on governance and networks) and we led a participatory session with representative of Molise Calvairate local community. On that occasion, the methods aimed at gathering data concerning the interaction residents/activists. To this extent, we conducted semi-structured interviews, circulated questionnaire and asked the participants to draw a cognitive mapping of their neighbourhood.

According to Mason, thinking in terms of facets relates not only to the development of mixed methods, but also to the analysis of data, the processes of writing and argumentation. For this reason, the paper will not follow a time-based narrative; we rather structured the paper horizontally, introducing data and arguments related to the diverse research problematics. The extent to which they interfere is discussed in the conclusion.

Consumption and peer production of culture in space

In this section, we will explore the site-specific practices that are supported by Macao as a common. Our main purpose in this section is to map the SEB's spaces through the lens of Pratt's dichotomy consumption-production (2009), drawing on the qualitative data collected on February 2016 with regards to the use of space and the forms of spatialized production of culture (Pratt, 2004).

Valli suggests that in the last phase Macao moved towards a more stable institutional model (2015), with the main purpose to set-up a heterogeneous cultural agenda within a specific space, standing as a radical alternative to the capitalist model of the creative city. Macao indeed fulfils three main functions: 'it stages different kinds of artists; it is a crucial node in the artistic international network; and it offers a high-quality, avant-garde culture that otherwise would not be shown in Milan' (D'Ovidio and Cossu, 2016: 6).

The complexity of the cultural agenda requires a highly diversified use of the spaces available, the set-up of policies to regulate their use and maintenance and the development of tools for managing the pool of resources.

The former SEB currently houses a multitude of activities related to the sphere of artistic production, ranging from visual and performing arts to music, cinema and theatre production. In particular, the large central court on the ground floor is predominantly intended for the artists-public interaction, representing the main place of consumption. It usually hosts major events, shows and concerts, as well as large assemblies, conferences and exhibitions. Rarely, it is used for temporary handicrafts workshops. Cinema and theatre for minor performances are also located on the two opposite sides of ground floor. The spaces more closely designated to the practices of peer production are located in the basement and the upper floor. Therefore we could define these as spaces for artist-artist interaction. The access to these production spaces and their use is open and free of charge; however, it is necessary to make a request through the initiative 'ComeIn' and discuss collectively the activities that will be taking place within the space. Each proposal is voted during the public assembly and the peers using the space will have to agree on looking after the cleaning, ensuring good maintenance of the space and releasing any cultural outputs produced within Macao under the Creative Commons license.

The basement hosts 'Officina', the experimental laboratory for creative wood recycling, where working tools and supplies are made available to the peers. It is a space for experience artists and woodworkers, however free classes and workshops for beginners are regularly organized. Among the production spaces, the first floor of the building hosts a theatre rehearsal studio, two recording studios for musicians and radio speakers and the 'Literary Cafè' used for readers circles, poetry workshops and debates. The large spaces under the roof, named 'The Hangar 1/2', host the production of massive scenography and exhibition devices; they're also used as guestrooms during in-residence programmes.

Lastly, a small 'directional' space is located near the entrance on the ground floor. This is not open to the public but represents the place where the coordinator members of the collective meet and deal with administrative duties, social media communication and organisational issues.

Drawing on Pratt's definition of cultural production and the assumption that the conditions under which the creative ideas may be mobilized play a key role in the definition of the cultural object (Pratt, 2004), **we can affirm that spatial practices and policies in Macao adequately support forms of peer production in space.**

Urban transformation, cultural agencies and local community needs

The building occupied by Macao is facing the north-south road axe of Viale Molise and is part of a large area known as the former municipal slaughterhouse of Milan. This complex was created at the beginning of the 20th century (between 1912 and 1929) as food supply district for the whole town. Placed in the outskirts of what at the time was the town center, was strategically placed close to the railway yard of Porta Vittoria so that railway tracks could easily switch to provide direct access into the market area (De Finetti et al. 2002).

At a wider scale, the market area border on the Calvairate neighborhood: originally constituted as a village established outside the historical town and its walls it was largely transformed (1929-1931) according to a new masterplan accommodating extensive social housing complexes. Similar initiatives were realized in the adjoining neighborhoods: one is 'Molise', built in between 1933 and 1938 and including 700 housing units; another one is named 'Ponti' (Pagano, 1942) and faces the post second world war General Markets' extension.
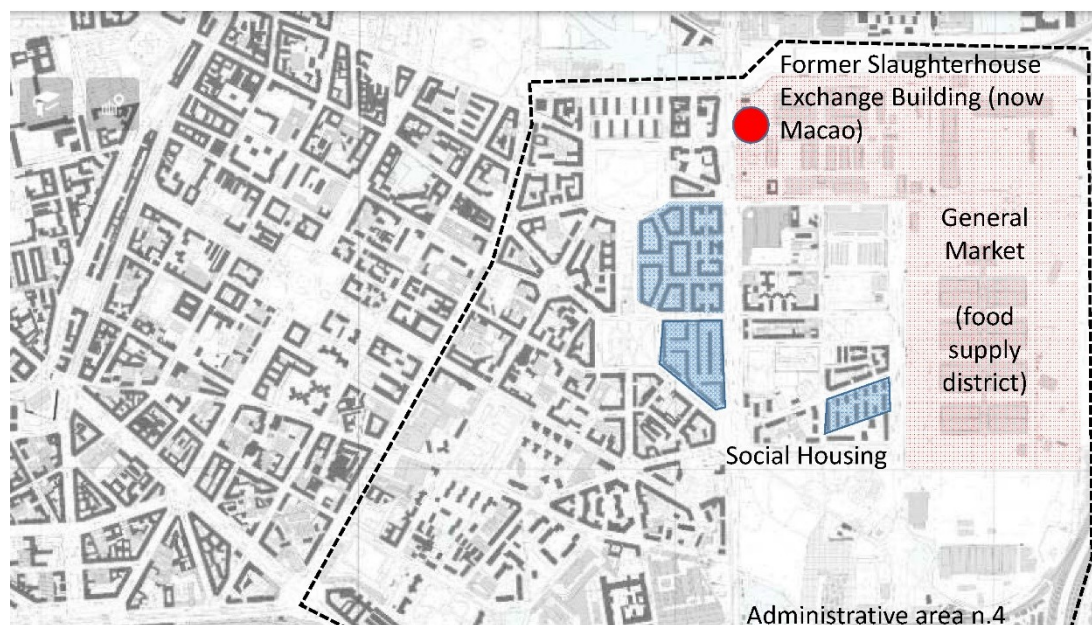

Fig.1 Macao and the former slaughterhouse area, adjoining the neighbourhoods Calvairate, Molise and Ponti. Source: https://geoportale.comune.milano.it/ [accessed May 2017]

Since the '70s a number of industrial activities in town were displaced or dismissed so vast areas and railway yards became us-used, including the most part of the former slaughterhouse complex and the

adjacent railyard. Even if the city council adopted quite consistent deregulated planning policies over the years (Oliva 2002), these areas did not go through urban regeneration or transformation, apart from some high-end housing complexes facing on the railway yards. The list of grand projects not realized or completed include the competition for the new European Culture Library, as well as the post-Expo 2015 citadel for 'taste and health'. The squatting and re appropriation of the former slaughterhouse building spotted not only the current needs of the creative sector and its workers, but also **the incapacity of the public administration to deal with urban transformations following the traditional pathways provided by urban planning and local governance.**

However, following the commoning actions delivered by Macao a period of discussion took place in town since 2012, involving several stakeholders and agencies. Positive outcomes of this process are the first mapping of private and public vacant spaces in town, included altogether on the same plan (Temporiuso 2016, Comune di Milano 2014). Moreover the City Council approved a resolution so that to allow local administrative districts (nine across the entire town) to temporarily assign the use of publicly owned vacant spaces in town to cultural agencies (private or public) or to non-profit organizations (NPO). Overcoming the principle of profitability, the council agreed to provide NPOs spaces for free and up to three years, as far as the activities are creative or culture-led and shared with local communities (Comune di Milano 2012). **Following this political action, a number of bottom-up and sometimes temporary initiatives have been implemented by various actors and stakeholders**. Macao, Temporiuso, Fucine Vulcano and Associazione El Modernista, for example, are among them and developed artistic and cultural initiatives in different buildings of the former slaughterhouse, even if based on different premises (as Macao is not adhering to the official procedures put in place by the city council).

It is worth noting that nowadays the former slaughterhouse, the surrounding neighbourhoods and all of the social housing units (Molise-Calvairate-Ponti) and are included in the same administrative district (called 'Municipio 4') that has political and administrative bodies that provide indications to the city council and deals with local services and communities (e.g. citizens' participation).

Consequently, needs and local initiative are usually developed and discussed at this scale. Focusing on the social housing estates, for example, since 2004 an important scheme named "Neighbourhood Contract" has been approved and funded (one of four approved by the City Council and worth 240 million €), led by the public with other local stakeholders. A number of not for profit organizations and volunteering groups joined the scheme, and the 'Laboratory for Molise Calvairate Neighbourhood' act as official networking agency and event organizer. In light of its role has been mapping on the web the presence of not for profit organizations and social spaces in the neighbourhood, including for example Macao and Fucine Vulcano but not others.
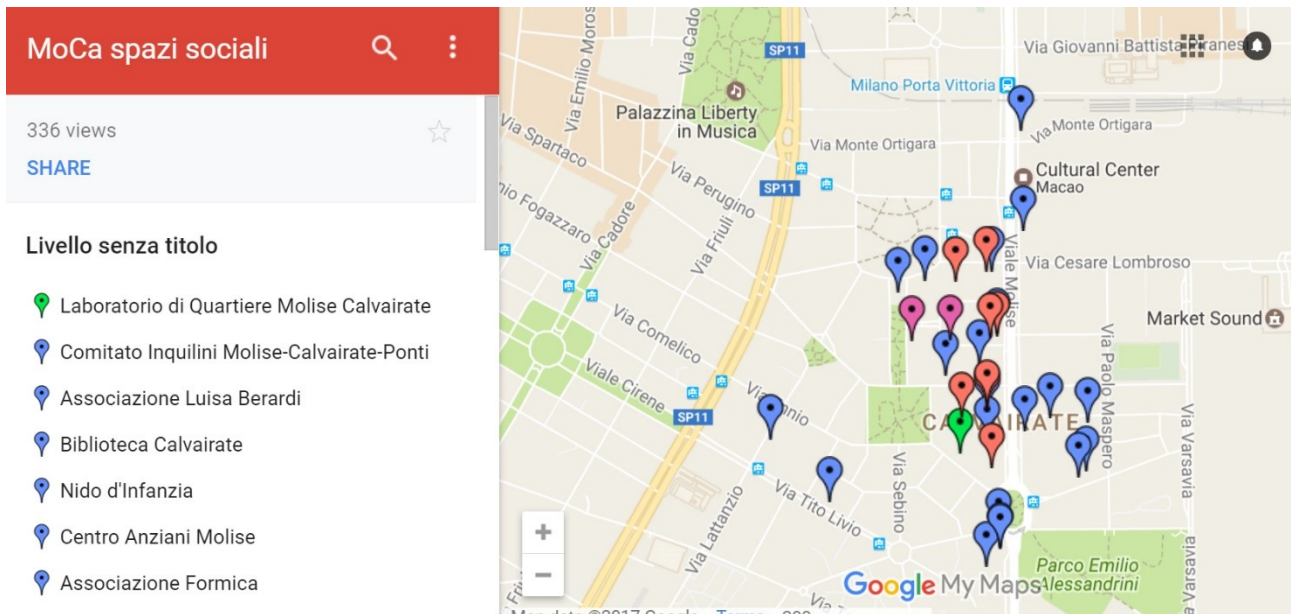
Figure 2. Map of social spaces in Molise Calvairate (2013) by the 'Laboratory for Molise Calvairate Neighbourhood'. Source: http://www.cdqmolisecalvairate.com/il-quartiere [accessed May 2017]

At the beginning of the project an extensive survey on social and housing conditions was delivered (Comune di Milano, 2004: 68), by collecting large number of questionnaires[1]. The evidence gathered at the time reflects the very poor conditions of housing units (size, maintenance, technological) but also the needs expressed by local communities: among them the maintenance of courtyards and public spaces, the lack of communal spaces for gathering and for micro-entrepreneurial activities (e.g. craft) (Comune di Milano, 2004: 63).

After more than ten years since the start of the scheme, its implementation is still low (40%) (Comune di Milano, 2017) and the whole area has been facing rising social and economic challenges. The latter are linked to the financial downturn and its implications for low-income population; the lack of public spending on services; the population aging and particularly those living in social housing; and the increasing presence of immigrants, including those illegally living in town.

The impact of these dynamics on the neighbourhood and especially on low-income and disadvantaged tenants is huge, and linked to 'right to the city' (Lefebvre 2003) aspirations. Through interviews with representatives from the tenants' union (*Comitato Inquilini Molise Calvairate Ponti*[2]), and a participatory workshop with volunteering tenants that included open questions, questionnaires and cognitive mapping, **there is evidence most of the issues recognised by the initial survey are still present, even if some achievements are recognised on housing units and communal spaces**.

---

1 962 questionnaires were collected out of 2717 housing units, with a participation rate of 35.4%.
2 The tenants' union is a non-profit organisation. Led by Ms. Franca Caffa, it brings forward the instances of social housing tenants. It expresses 'right to the city' aspirations, by spotting the inadequacy of the public administration in dealing with social issues, and at the same time self-organises and supports various group of tenants (immigrants, elderly, un-employed, most disadvantaged).

Part of the positives are referred to the role of the tenants' union: it regularly gathers in a community space, and has an open door policy so tenants can get in touch with their representatives. It also organises language classes for immigrant children and other social activities. However, housing estates maintenance is not sufficient yet, and issues in terms of squatting, safety and lack of social cohesion are consistently reported.

While the original survey delivered in 2004 focused mainly on housing units and estates, and their immediate surroundings including public spaces and services (library, communal space), **this papers aims at understanding which urban spaces the tenants uses most and which are their needs at the neighbourhood/city scale**. This is achieved by including, for example, both public and private services and a full range of activities including leisure in the questionnaire and in the open questions.

In terms of urban infrastructures and services, tenants appreciate the quality of public mobility and connections to the town centre, the presence of green areas and communal orchards at walking distance, and the weekly street market. A few go to cinemas and museums or cultural centres, even if these are not within the neighbourhood.

So, **to what extent the recent art and cultural led bottom up initiatives have been recognized or acknowledged by local communities?**

A significant number of tenants are actively involved in activities delivered by the union, but among those interviewed none is active with other NPOs and other cultural or creative activities in general. For example, the tenants' union (through their representatives) was involved only three times in the activities organised by Macao, and they feel the role of the union was not significant for the events and there has been no significant outcomes (Caffa, 2017).

Some tenants' volunteered to run a cognitive mapping exercise, consisting in drawing the urban form and functions in the neighbourhood, followed by the identification of regularly visited places and walked routes on a city map provided by the interviewers. The first is able to report which are the most significantly perceived buildings and spaces in the neighbourhood (Lynch, 1966), as well as contributing to define which are the spatial edges of the everyday experience. During the workshop, the participants have been invited to take part in two main activities: first, they have been asked to sketch the 'cognitive map' of the neighbourhood, where the urban space resulted distorted according to the individual perception. Inspired by Robinson's exercise (1981), the process of developing a cognitive image served to develop the ability to gain a spatial understanding of the place and reflect on the meaning that the individuals associated to that place (Bertolino, 2017). The cognitive images varied from person to person and were shaped heavily by past experiences, personal perceptions and their everyday lives: 'Cognitive mapping is a process of a series of psychological transformations by which an individual acquires, stores, recalls, and decodes information about the relative locations and attributes of the phenomena in his everyday spatial environment' (Downs and Stea, 1977:7).

Even if the sample is too small to draw definite answers, the outcomes are consistent in showing the Molise Calvairate neighbourhood as a quite enclosed space around the housing estates. The area that is represented includes one or more squares, some public spaces and the main park. The detailed mapping shows the relevance of public parks and gardens, of local transport stations (bus) and of local shops (supermarket, market square, pharmacy).

* * *

Figure 3. Cognitive mapping of activities and places regularly visited by the tenants. Source: Authors' original work, 2017.

Therefore, **we recognise a gap in between the newly established neighbourhood-based offer of cultural and creative practices and the local community**, which mainly consists of low-income tenants and immigrants. The gap is bidirectional: cultural providers does not fully engage with NPOs including the tenants' union (Braga, 2017), while these do not recognise the value and the importance of recently established bottom-up initiatives for cultural peer production (Caffa, 2017). The official network established by the public administration through its funded scheme (Neighbourhood Contract) matches with this picture as the mapping of social spaces is uncomplete.

The cognitive mapping shows how the spatial dimension and range of dwellers is often limited by various reasons, and includes only basic services and some public spaces. The former slaughterhouse buildings are not even included in the range of places recognised by the tenants, and so the cultural production is not fully acknowledged. Therefore, we recognise how the activities hosted by Macao do not fit with those reclaimed by 'right to the city' agencies as the tenants' union.

Site-specific commoning and governance for cultural peer production
We recognise how urban transformations interpreted through the lens of commons (Stavrides, 2014, 2016; Ramos, 2016) reveal the role of social practices in modifying the spatial dimension of the city. This connection underpins the potential for further investigating commons, and related practices of commoning, through or in relationship with disciplines including architecture, urban design and planning (Müller, 2015).

In this respect we acknowledge that Macao has implemented practices of commoning in different places (D'Ovidio and Cossu, 2016), by reclaiming vacant buildings for the benefit of a wider urban community.

However, the five years period spent into the former slaughterhouse show specific commoning features that need to be further analysed. In fact, the social movement found for the very first time a physical place in which to gather on a daily basis (even if the squatting was not for housing purposes) and significantly increase the volume of events as well as the quantity of people involved. This circumstance challenged the existing organisation and governance of the movement (Lefebvre, 2003) as it had to manage on a long-term

basis an asset in need of maintenance and care, and the core group of activists find themselves 'surrounded by many new people who simply did not know each other' (Braga, 2017).

This unexpected condition reveals the opportunity of analysing Macao in the former slaughterhouse from two different perspectives: one is referred to the physical environment (as a site-specific urban common), while the other is rather focused on the community and the local and activities organised within the space (trans-local practices of commoning). This matches with the intended original aims of the movement that are 'reclaiming the importance of workers in the creative sector, and the fight against real estate power' (Braga, 2017), and reinstate one of the mottos created after the Galfa Tower eviction stating that 'Macao is not simply a space'.

With reference to the physical space, the former slaughterhouse exchange building is as an un-complete form of site-specific urban common. The resource (Ostrom, 1990) of this urban common is defined as a building (non-renewable) with physical boundaries: the entrance is the threshold; the inside and the outside are clearly identifiable (Stavrides, 2016). Moreover, the community is a 'self-defined social group' (Harvey, 2012).

However, the spatial governance is not clearly stated, and this poses challenges in terms of access and definition of the community and its members (Delsante and Bertolino, 2017). As a matter of fact the activists restricted the access to the building to avoid un-expected evictions in light of the continuous frictions with the property and the city council: by doing that, the access is limited to members showing limitations in terms of excludability and competition over the use of resources (Bollier, 2012). Communities define for themselves the set of rules through which they access and use space (De Angelis, 2010), and Macao has an open door policy during the weekly assembly and hosted a number of residency programmes with external partners and stakeholders. However, the set of rules of the urban common are not published and accessible to the wider public: it is not clear who owns the rule-making rights, and if those affected by the rules can participate in modifying the rules (Ostrom, 1990).

On the other hand, the social movement has established a specific governance to support, manage and sustain forms of cultural peer production in the former slaughterhouse. The core principles of the governance are: share the profit, socialising the cost, promote interactions, open governance and access to the means of production. These are translated into practice through two schemes, one dealing with the open assembly mechanism while the other is focused on the management of peer production.

As a matter of fact, Macao is intended as a 'decentralised autonomous organisation based on a political assembly' (Braga, 2017) called weekly (usually on Tuesdays) and based on an open door policy. Moreover, the recently established 'ComeIn' initiative allows members and externals to propose the organisation of events and activities in the spaces of the former SEB. The assembly discusses and votes on each proposal, and decides how to better manage and/or produce each project.

The assembly scheme does not vote on any members' rights but rather manages forms of peer production: how to share resources, including use of space, technical infrastructures and human resources, in light of the support that Macao's core members group provide to the whole project. The ComeIn initative demonstrate the will of engaging at a trans local scale: creative activities and cultural events can be proposed by Macao's activists as well as by others (individuals, non for profit organisations, private companies).
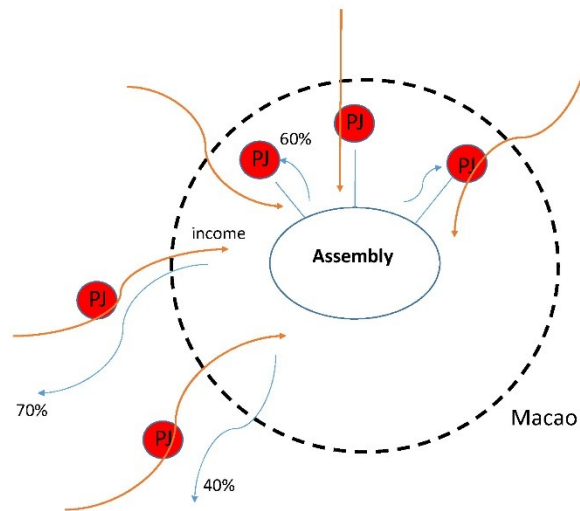
Fig. 4 Open assembly scheme, and ComeIn projects management
Source: Authors' original work, based on information gathered from Braga, 2017

Once the assembly approves a project, it comes through with a specific governance for peer production. The governance model is horizontal and based on three interlaced tools: sharing means of production, organisation and management, solidarity fund for mutual aid.

A project can be entirely developed by Macao's members, or can be peer-produced with others. In terms of sharing means of production these are meant to be the physical space, the web space and the technical infrastructures. Most of these projects take place in the SEB that acts as a common (Delsante et al. 2017), but they can also take place in other places in town so it is trans local in principle. The organisation and management of each project is usually shared in between peers, and various options are available (including the case the organisation is entirely on the project promoters). Macao aims at sharing the profits, that are then redistributed to those that actively engage with Macao and projects' organisation, independently from the time committed to one individual project. This is a form of minimum wage and it is paid in Bitcoins so that members can easily reinvest into Macao.
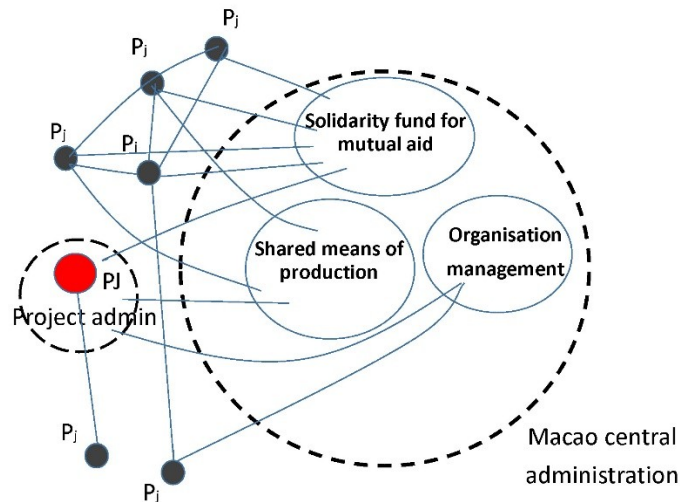
Fig. 5 Macao's peer production governance.

Source: Authors' original work, based on information gathered from Braga, 2017

The SEB as an urban common lacks of adequate membership rules and governance, and this circumstance may affect the relationship with the local community. However, Macao has defined a specific governance for cultural peer production, that allows local and trans local practices of commoning. As the governance is open and horizontal, the community that contributes to cultural peer production is malleable, and varies over time.

Macao as agency for trans local cultural peer production

We now aim at better grasping the scale (local or trans local) and provenance of interactions (audience and peers) related to SEB based events.

As Macao promotes its events primarily via webpage and the Facebook group, we run an open data collection. It looks at events over a period of four years (2012-2016), and witnesses the increase of on-line interactions and participation in events. The number of people willing to attend the events, for example, is rising significantly and consistently over the period of time.

This piece of information is linked with the transition of Macao from being nomadic to its consequent settlement in the SEB, and its increasing agenda of events. Moreover, it is consistent with the lack of progresses in the interaction with local community (Braga 2017; Caffa 2017). We can assume Macao has been increasingly targeting a trans local and city wide audience, rather than focusing on locally based and/or community driven forms of participation.
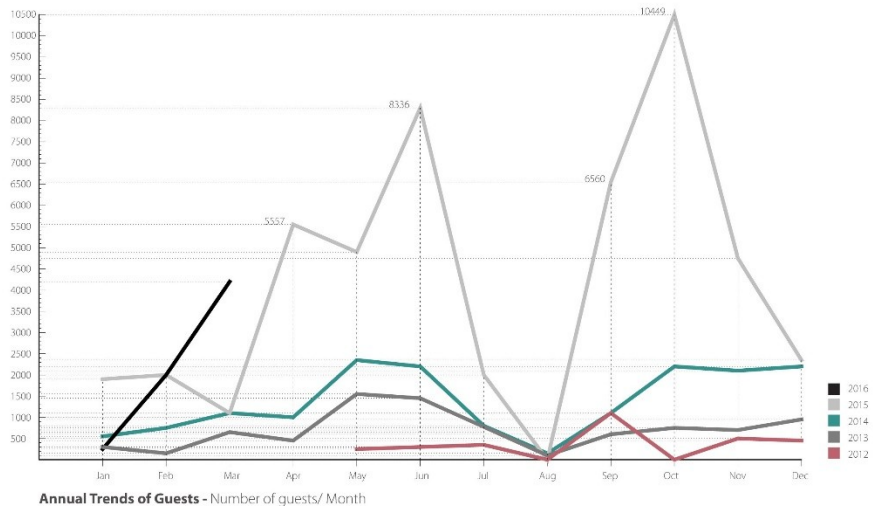
Fig. 6. Number of participants to Macao's events, from June 2012 to February 2016. Source: Haddadian and Bertolino, 2016

Furthermore, we aim at better understanding the scale and provenance of peer production by mapping where the peers (agencies) are based in town. We performed an open data collection that demonstrate how the agencies are usually based outside the neighbourhood, within the city boundaries and well beyond them. Macao, thanks to its governance for cultural peer production, attract more trans local peers than locally based ones.

∗∗∗

Fig. 7. Mapping peers at different scales (neighbourhood, city, beyond)

We can conclude that Macao, through its open and horizontal forms of governance, can accommodate local and trans local audiences and peers. However, there is evidence the focus has been increasingly set on trans local audiences and peers.

<u>Conclusions</u>

The paper has sought to deepen understanding of how Macao's governance enables forms of cultural peer production. Functional to the investigation is the better understanding of the grade of interaction and the mutual relationship with local community.

Given a critical perspective on real estate driven urban transformations, we recognise Macao has spotted the incapacity of the public administration in re-using vacant spaces and areas in town. Moreover, since 2012 changes in local governance and policies have enabled bottom up initiatives and temporary agencies.

However, we acknowledge a gap between the newly established cultural and creative agencies in the neighbourhood and local community driven agencies, including those focused on 'right to the city' aspirations as the Comitato Inquilini Molise Calvairate.

Looking at Macao and beyond, various reasons underpin this circumstance. These include the lack of adequate rules and governance of the former SEB as an urban common, the different agendas driven by locally based agencies, and the lack of an inclusive network for peer production set at neighbourhood level. The mapping of spatial practices confirms that Macao adequately support forms of peer production in space. Moreover, Macao has defined a specific form of governance for cultural peer production. As this is open and horizontal, the community that engages with it is malleable, and reflect the original feature of Macao being a trans local agency.

As a matter of fact, the cross-reading of consumption/production spaces with attendees/peers-led initiatives suggests the capability to reach a city wide audience. By recognising the trans local focus of cultural peer production in Macao, we aim at providing better interpretation of its contradictions (D'Ovidio and Cossu, 2016).

Further investigations of this kind and comparative studies may represent a way forward to fruitful research of the mutual relationship between commoning practices, cultural peer production and forms of alternative urbanisation in cities.

Bibliography

Bertolino, N. (2017), ***Towards a definition of 'place'. Cross-disciplinary methodology for integrating architectural and sociological data in Claremont Court, Edinburgh.*** In: A Panel on Inter and Transdisciplinary Relationships in Architecture, 3-6 July 2017, Athens, Greece. (In Press)

Bollier, D. and Helfrich, S., (ed. by) (2012) *The Wealth of the Commons: A World Beyond Market and State.* Levellers Press: Florence, MA.

Braga, E. (2017), *Introduction to Macao*. In Operative neighbourhood: urban commoning for just cities. Politecnico di Milano, April 2017.

Caffa, F. (2017), *Introducing social challenges in Molise Calvairate neighbourhood*. In Operative neighbourhood: urban commoning for just cities. Politecnico di Milano, April 2017.

Carozzi, I. (2012), *Macao*. Feltrinelli: Milan.

Chatterton, P. (2010) ,*Seeking the urban common: Furthering the debate on spatial justice*. City, 14:6, pp. 625-628. Available: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2010.525304.

Comune di Milano (2004) *Contratto di Quartiere II Molise Calvairate, Allegato 2 - Relazione programmatica*. http://mediagallery.comune.milano.it/cdm/objects/changeme:13751/datastreams/dataStream3921638425119821/content? pgpath=/SA_SiteContent/UTILIZZA_SERVIZI/CASA_ASSEGNAZIONE_SPAZI/Progetti_riqualificazione/Riqualificazione_Quartieri/molise_calvairate

Comune di Milano (2012) *Valorizzazione degli Spazi. Delibera relativa ai nuovi criteri per l'assegnazione degli spazi*. City Council Resolution No. 1978, 28/09/2012 [WWW document] URL *https://www.comune.milano.it*.

Comune di Milano (2014) *Monitoraggio edifici e aree in stato di degrado*. http://www.comune.milano.it/wps/portal/ist/it/servizi/territorio/monitoraggio_edifici_aree_stato_di_degrado

Comune di Milano (2017) *Molise Calvairate*. http://www.comune.milano.it/wps/portal/ist/it/servizi/casa/progetti_riqualificazione/riqualificazione_quartieri/molise_calvairate

Delsante I. and Bertolino N. (2017), *Urban spaces' commoning and its impact on planning. A case study of the former slaughterhouse exchange building in Milan*. In The Public Sector Journal, vol. 43 (1), pp. 45-56 (in press)

De Angelis, M. and Stavrides, S. (2010), *On the Commons: A Public Interview with Massimo De Angelis and Stavros Stavrides*. An Architektur n. 23 'On the Commons', pp. 3–27.

De Finetti, G., Cislaghi, G., De Benedetti, M., Marabelli, P. (2002), *Milano: costruzione di una città*. Hoepli: Milan.

Dellenbaugh, M. *et al.* (2015), *Urban Commons. Moving beyond State and Market*. Birkhauser: Basel.

Downs, R. M. and Stea, D. (1977), *Maps in Minds: Reflections on Cognitive Mapping*. New York: Harper & Row.

D'Ovidio, M. and Cossu, A. (2016), *Culture is reclaiming the creative city: The case of Macao in Milan, Italy*. City, Culture and Society, May (2016) pp. 1-6. Available: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2016.04.001.

Foster S.R. (2011), *Collective Action and the Urban Commons*. Notre Dame Law Review, Vol. 87, p. 57.

Harvey, D. (2012) *Rebel Cities: From the right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. Verso: London.

Hodkinson, S. (2012), *The new urban enclosures*. City, 16:5, pp. 500-518. Available: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2012.709403.

Iaione, C. (2013), *The City as a Common Good*. Aedon 1, 2013. [WWW document] URL http://www.aedon.mulino.it/archivio/2013/1/iaione.htm.

Jeffrey, A., McFarlane, C. and Vasudevan A. (2011), *Rethinking Enclosure: Space, Subjectivity and the Commons*. Antipode 44(4), pp. 1247-1267.

Lefebvre, H. (1991), *The Production of Space*. Blackwell Publisher: Oxford.

Lefebvre, H. (2003), *The urban revolution*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.

Lynch, K. (1966), *The image of the city*. MIT Press: Cambridge.

MACAO (2013), *Commoning: Beyond Public, Beyond Private* [WWW document] URL http://www.macaomilano.org/ .

MACAO (2015), *Guidelines for intervention and discussion of the relationship between common goods and active citizenship* [WWW document] URL *http://www.macaomilano.org/* .

Mason, J. (2011), *Facet Methodology: the case for an inventive research orientation*. Methodological Innovations Online, 6(3) pp. 75-92.

Mayer, M. (2009), *The "Right to the City" in the context of shifting mottos of urban social movements*. City, 13(2-3), pp. 362-374.

Mazzitelli, F. (2016), *Absent territories*. Artistic itinerary in abandoned key-areas in Milan.

Miles, M. (2013), *A Post-Creative City?*, RCCS Annual Review [Online], n. 5

Ostrom, E. (1990), *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Pagano G. (1942), *Due quartieri popolari a Milano*. In: Costruzioni-Casabella, 178, pp. 2-20.

Parker, P. and Johansson, M. (2011), *Challenges and Potentials in Collaborative Management of Urban Commons*. In CCW 2011: 'Multi-faceted nature of collaboration in contemporary world'. School of Advanced Social Studies, Slovenia & Junior Sociologists Network of the International Sociological Association: Novo Mesto, Slovenia.

Pratt, A.C. (2004), *The Cultural Economy. A Call for Spatialized 'Production of Culture' Perspectives*. International Journal of Cultural Studies 7, pp. 117-128.

Pratt, A. C. (2009), *Cultural economy. International Encyclopedia of Human Geography, Volume 2*. In: R. Kitchen and N. Thrift. Oxford, Elsevier. Vol. 2, pp. 407-410.

Pratt, A.C. (2015), *Creative Cities: What's not to like? A critical perspective on the creative cities movement; cultural and creative industries. Or, on not taking R. Florida too seriously*. UrbaNous, 14th Jul 2015

Pruijt, H. (2013), *The logic of urban squatting*. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 37(1), pp. 19-45.

Radywyl, N. and Biggs, C. (2013), *Reclaiming the Commons for Urban Transformations*. Journal of Cleaner Production 50, pp. 159-170.

Ramos, J.M. (ed. by) (2016), *The City as Commons: A Policy Reader*. Commons Transition Coalition: Melbourne.

Robinson, J. L. (1981), *The varied mental maps our students have*. Canadian Geographic, 101 (1), 52-57.

Roggero, G. (2010), *Five Theses on the Common*. Rethinking Marxism 22 (3), pp. 357–373.

Squatting Europe kollective (ed. by) (2013) *Squatting in Europe. Radical spaces, urban struggles*. Minor Compositions: New York.

Stavrides, S. (2010), *Towards the City of Thresholds*. Professionaldreamers: Trento.

Stavrides S. (2014), *Emerging common spaces as a challenge to the city of crisis*. City 18, pp. 4-5, 546-550.

Stavrides, S. (2016), *Common Space. The city as Commons*. Zed Books: London.

Stella, A. (2012), *Palazzo Citterio, museo incompituto da quarant'anni*, Corriere della Sera 20/05/2012 [WWW document] URL *http://milano.corriere.it/milano/notizie/cronaca/12_maggio_20/museo-incompiuto-brera-palazzo-citterio-201261103894.shtml*.

Temporiuso (2016), *Mapping Urban Voids in Milan,* [WWW document] URL *http://www.temporiuso.org/?page_id=8* .

The Art-Workers (2011), *The Art-Workers Document* [WWW document] URL *http://1995-2015.undo.net/it/argomenti/1311856283*.

Tozzi, L. (2012), *Macao: chronicle of an occupation*, Domus Web, [WWW document] URL *http://www.domusweb.it/en/art/2012/05/12/macao-chronicle-of-an-occupation.html*.

Valli, C. (2015), *When cultural workers become an urban social movement: political subjectification and alternative cultural production in the Macao movement, Milan*. Environment and Planning A 2015, Volume 47, pp. 643 – 659. Available *http://dx.doi:10.1068/a140096p* .