

Religious Rituals and Territorial Transformations

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Keywords: Rite, Territory, Sacred, Profane, Religion, Saint, Beliefs, Pilgrimage, Pious, Symbol, Feast, Body, Actors

1. Introduction

This type of research has developed around the case of a party known exceedingly, both in its size folklore, and in its social implications: that of Saint Rosalia in Palermo held on separate days between July and September of each year. Such an analysis is developed both through the support of documents or through a series of field observations carried from 2007 to 2013.

The case of Saint Rosalia in Palermo has several special features that place it in the foreground on the issue of territorial changes. The festival brings together different expressions and turns out to be a real container in which converge religious devotion, penitential rites, local identity, ecclesial and institutional presence. The feast of Saint Rosalia is also a stage on which transit institutions and civil society, a terrace from which one can admire the society in which this Palermo and admires herself. His being part of a centuries-old tradition raises questions about its significant transformation: this road the Feast of Saint Rosalia also functions as a detector, another, of the processes of cultural change that cross the society and culture of Palermo.

The hypothesis on which orients the entire research then see the Feast of Saint Rosalia as a real container in which an institutional dimension secular converge, a playful and popular, an institutional dimension of the Church, and finally a form of devotion. These different dimensions take a dynamic and make it explicit through processions, altars, and the pilgrimage. The institutional dimension (secular and ecclesiastical) on one side and the popular play (also secular and ecclesiastical) on the other, are in mutual dependence between them and are constantly traced to a shift still provisional. For a change in institutional languages, which is expressed through a constant change of conceptual frameworks with which the event is reinterpreted, is counterbalanced by a similar transformation of languages recreational and devotional ones. These so end up opening new dimensions and new profiles constantly redrawing of the party.

2. Conceptual framework of reference: The places and the sacred

The sites are a construction anthropological; they always have their own history, and are therefore historical. But they are also the result of the relationships between people, they are relational, and finally, possess their own lives: they are born, are well founded, modify, change, or decay may die,

they are abandoned, destroyed and can be rebuilt: for this road end up being identity.

With the transformation of the place, also change the perceptions, the relationship with the space and with the past; the latter can no longer rely on visual perceptions to be remembered. Behind the culture of the place, there is the multi-ethnic identity of a society that has undergone various dominations that have fuelled the cultural richness of which today can do shows. It has passed through the popular traditions, the meaning and value of the parties and of the seventeenth-century cult of the "Feast" from Palermo to this day. The case of Saint Rosalia, analysed in the context of territorial Palermo has significant and symbolic elements, which provide grounds for believing: the importance of the passage of the sacred in the different areas of the city, and the organizational transformations that have characterized this as a party generation to another.

The relationship with the territory acquires its physical size in the pilgrimage of the first week of September, where the logic of the event on 14th and 15th July are reversed: in a sacred function that passes in the town, and almost serves as a counterweight to "return" a city that went from the sacred space and crosses. The pilgrimage of September sets in motion a different dynamic, that of the "sacred immovable", where is the subject, "the devotee" to move according to a specific ritual form (praying or singing) and resorting to the use of symbols specific (the lighted torch during the night pilgrimage to Monte Pellegrino, the chaplet rosary used for prayer, the "flag" of Saint Rosalia...). The "Feast" of July 14th, procession and pilgrimage of 3rd – 4th September work as expressive as many containers in which converge, in addition to widespread devotion, the visibility requirements of associations, informal groups, the brotherhoods, but also by the administrative authorities in a hierarchy of social presentation where everyone, in the end, are called to be located. Alongside these visibility requirements are clearly perceivable economic ones related to the armature of the small tourist business operators and those of cultural events: the feast of Saint Rosalia circulates private and public funding availability.

3. Method of Research

The main object of analysis is to determine the route of interaction between a territory which, through its various components, conditions - in more or less relevant - the religious ceremony and places constraints on the functions that the latter is reputed to exercise (functions that we can generally coincide with those of protection from evil and

insurance of the property), and conversely, the devotional rite which, in turn, sets its constraints to the transformation of the territory, changes the path of development.

The main purpose of this research is to: 1 - Reconstruct the profile of the party (so much secular as religious). 2 - Identify and describe the socially shared vision that sets the scene. 3 - Awareness of the specific division between playful and devotional practice that is stated throughout the whole of the celebrations and at different times in these are characterized. The research is therefore aimed at the reconstruction of specific forms of structuring of social interaction. That way the research aims to outline: 1 - The social dimension of religious expressions; 2 - The plot that combines / opposes the constituent parts of the party and sees placed on the same level on the one hand and on the other those devotional expressions playful - celebratory, 3 - Times and places; 4 - The interaction of institutional actors and laity, religious, 5 - Transformations of the rite in the various editions; 6 - The old paths and new routes; 7 - Old and new forms of celebration; It is in this case to recover and describe the evolution of the rite both organizationally and on the symbolic, as it has emerged since the war, to the present day. The use of the documentation is available at the institutional structures (example: the theological library of Palermo). Next to the collection of documents, research also intends to carry out participant observation, the plane where the observation is not separated from the participatory dimension. It is therefore to create a direct relationship with the social actors, staying for the fixed period of two months of holidays. The ethnographic method is a typical qualitative observation. With such a term can understand the description of the life of peoples, or of specific subcultures, cultures present within a broader cultural reality. A staunch proponent of the qualitative approach, such as Franco Ferrarotti summarizes such a methodological principle as follows: "Read a company through a biography". A tale of life, according to this view, is not limited to the history of one person because there are some other intertwined destinies, and are also represented institutions and micro - micro and macro social processes. The person is considered to be the mirror of his time, his environment, and witness and be a collective component. Roberto Cipriani points out in a methodological research: "there is only the (representation) of a strictly statistical sample that reproduces the numeric characters in the universe considered, but also the Thematic, which incorporates the crucial aspects of a phenomenon through the experience of some peculiar subjects, who express their own guidelines and behaviours that also belong to larger groups of people". In addition, the testing of a representative, must at the same time issue and categorical, is linked to specific problems and specific social groups. So you can say that about social representation, for which it is necessary to adopt a criterion of adequacy between life and told the objectives of the research, in order to make the search for answers to the question that arises. The scope of observation can be more or less extended, not only by the number of people to observe, but also to the magnitude of the observed phenomena and the duration of observation. Unit of observation is the case, which is the set of facts that revolve around the problem in analysis. The number of people and time of the observation depend on the circumstances and the social actors, their

interactions, and attitudes that follow. You can also use the method of observation focused compared, since we are interested in content circumscribed by comparing times and in different contexts.

The problem of observation can often imply - and often in fact implies - a relationship with the object observed. Not all cultural realities love to be observed. In certain cases, when the cultures are sufficiently organized within them (Religious orders, confraternities, but also any company or any party organization) may require approvals and permits. The problem is obvious: it is for them to authorize the production of an image of themselves that they can not control, an image that does not show up as a witness private (and therefore subjective) of an observer, but as an ethnographic account, thereby potentially objective. It's important to predict and understand such a difficult time building a presentation of the research project. This allows you to have a correct approach with institutions, such as to permit acceptance of the observer. A role that the latter, as is known, in several cases, it develops in one of the interviewer. The methodology to be adopted is therefore that the observation in the field through the use of technological tools ordinary detection (camera, tape recorder). It is here that you can return as much as possible, the spatial dimensions, symbolic and relational, a ritual event for which the simple narrative description proves to be dramatically insufficient. Precisely because the field observation finds the facts directly, without the mediation of the descriptions, stories and answers to questions, it must necessarily be supported by an ethnographic and filmic. This leads to the emergence of all the contextual elements that characterize the space and the relations regime that develops and that, more often than not, it remains overlooked by the "narrative account". Are discovered in other words, the mode of action and expression that really exist, that people do, but for which you do not speak. This is the main advantage of the observation supported by audio-visual material. By comparing the data obtained through interviews focused with the results of observations, there is the phenomenon in much of its range. A particular problem when you are faced with informal groups and poorly institutionalized is the transformation of the path of acceptance. For an informal reality are necessarily linked strategies as informal. The need to be accepted by the group is a personal need of the researcher more than the necessity imposed by the group noted. In fact, a lot of information, but also many peculiarities, which do not emerge once acquired the language, knowledge and ways of relating to the group. At this level only the interactions that take place inside actually become understandable. Usually "middlemen" can facilitate the inclusion informal learning, that is, by people who know both the researcher and the research in progress. The realities that are beyond the narratives of the event (from the journalistic to the institutional, passing through the same financial reports that can make participants rite took place) and that the observation can reveal are of various kinds.

In general there is a process of reconstruction and representation of the event that is already a transformation to what has actually happened: it is a question of an orderly and controlled. The fundamental problem is not, as you might mistakenly think, to detect possible conflicts between the

ritual and its narrative. The question is not to discover secondary aspects and possibly deviant. It is instead of retrieving the different dimensions of the rite, which may be the organizational (from the institutional and informal), the representational (narrative and symbolic at the same time) the relational between the different categories present (the organizers, the filmmakers, the viewers).

4. The entire research is subject to an identification of the major plans of social interaction, namely

- 1) A definition of the social space, from which you define geographical and social (social hierarchies of places, lay and ecclesiastical, the different accessibility, their placement of the joint universe ritual of celebration).
- 2) A recovery of the history of recent events that govern the time of the festival, one of the two institutions (secular and civil) and the city (city of devotion / party town).
- 3) The identification of the different social actors, institutional (secular and religious) and non-institutional (volunteers, members of the brotherhoods), the role they occupy, the networks of relationships and the corresponding production of meaning. It is believed that as the clergy "produce" the canonical definition of the religious festival and the political-administrative institutions "produce" the canonical definition of the public holiday, so the other associations present, the brotherhoods to street performers, to the same audience, they also produce a "reinterpretation" of both the religious holiday, because of the civil, enriching it with additional elements of devotion and spectacle.

Of people to interview (priests, fraternities, artistic director of the "feast" - a term which indicates the specific day of 14th July - and collaborators) must be recognized as the position or role within the community, as detailed knowledge the issues on which they are called to cooperate;

The documentation techniques provide, in addition to the notes a final report at the end of the day. It feels so the need to keep, initially, a record of observations, where you write down the events considered, and a personal journal.

Also in this phase involves the detection and screening of audio - visual and printed documentation prior to the realization of direct interview to the institutional and social actors, I mean doing the interview an example to the rector of the brotherhood or town to interview pastor of the church of Saint Rosalia on Monte Pellegrino.

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