

# ALMED



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COMUNICAZIONE E SPETTACOLO

## Smart Cities. The Urban Space as a New Medium

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# 1. The Standard Framework

The power management (as authority) is linked to a territory. In the modern era, this territory was a local and physical area: the National State. The contemporary era sees both a process of de-nazionalization and a process of re-territorialization (and therefore new forms of power). The new territories are “assemblages” of local and global, physical and virtual elements (Sassen, 2006)

Media are instruments of power mainly because they are tools of networking. The power is today linked to the networks and expressed as networking / network / networked / network - making power (Castells, 2009)

# 1. The Standard Framework

The global / virtualized city is a site that manifests the new dynamics of power through the appropriation of spaces by both institutional and non institutional subjects (grassroots movements, social activists, etc.) (Sassen 2001, Body-Gendrot 2007, etc.)

**This theoretical framework, useful though,  
fails to fully explain  
(a) the role of the media  
into the new processes of power establishment and  
(b) the connections between media and the city**

## 2. Toward a Revision of the Standard Framework

Many examples of smart city fits the theoretical framework key assumptions. They cross many dynamics of “mediatization” of the city and represent cases of

- ✓ Appropriation of a territory &
- ✓ Establishment of an institutional and / or anti-institutional power
- ✓ By displaying a network – making power &
- ✓ By setting up an “assemblage” of local and global, physical and virtual elements

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On the other hand, however, many examples of smart city present a central feature that is beyond the theoretical framework: they

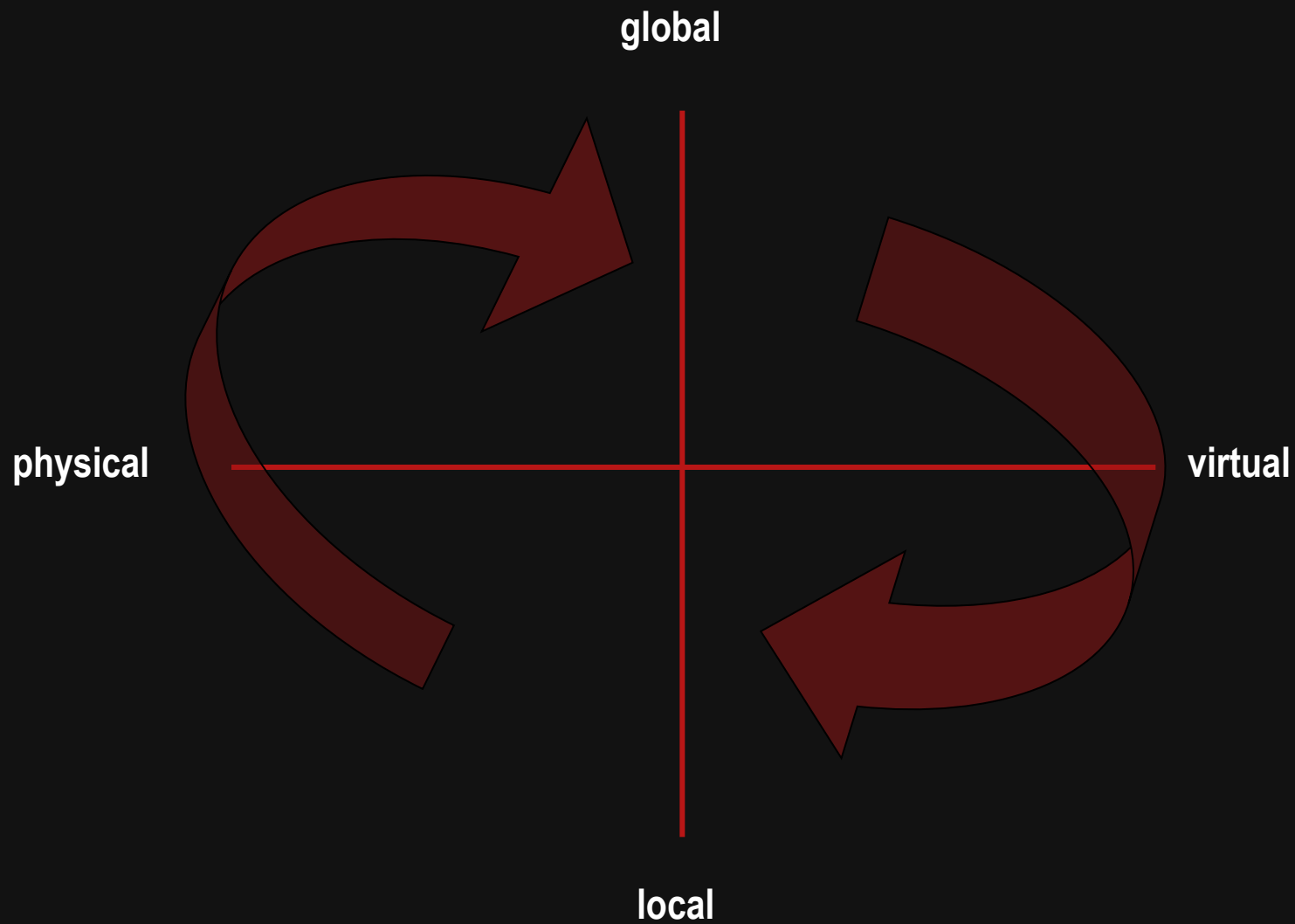
- ✓ Act the appropriation of the urban spaces by *enacting* it at different levels
- ✓ Make the processes of power establishment sensible and perceptible
- ✓ Highlight the key role of the aesthetization of social and political processes into the dynamics of globalized / virtualized city

## 2. Toward a Revision of the Standard Framework

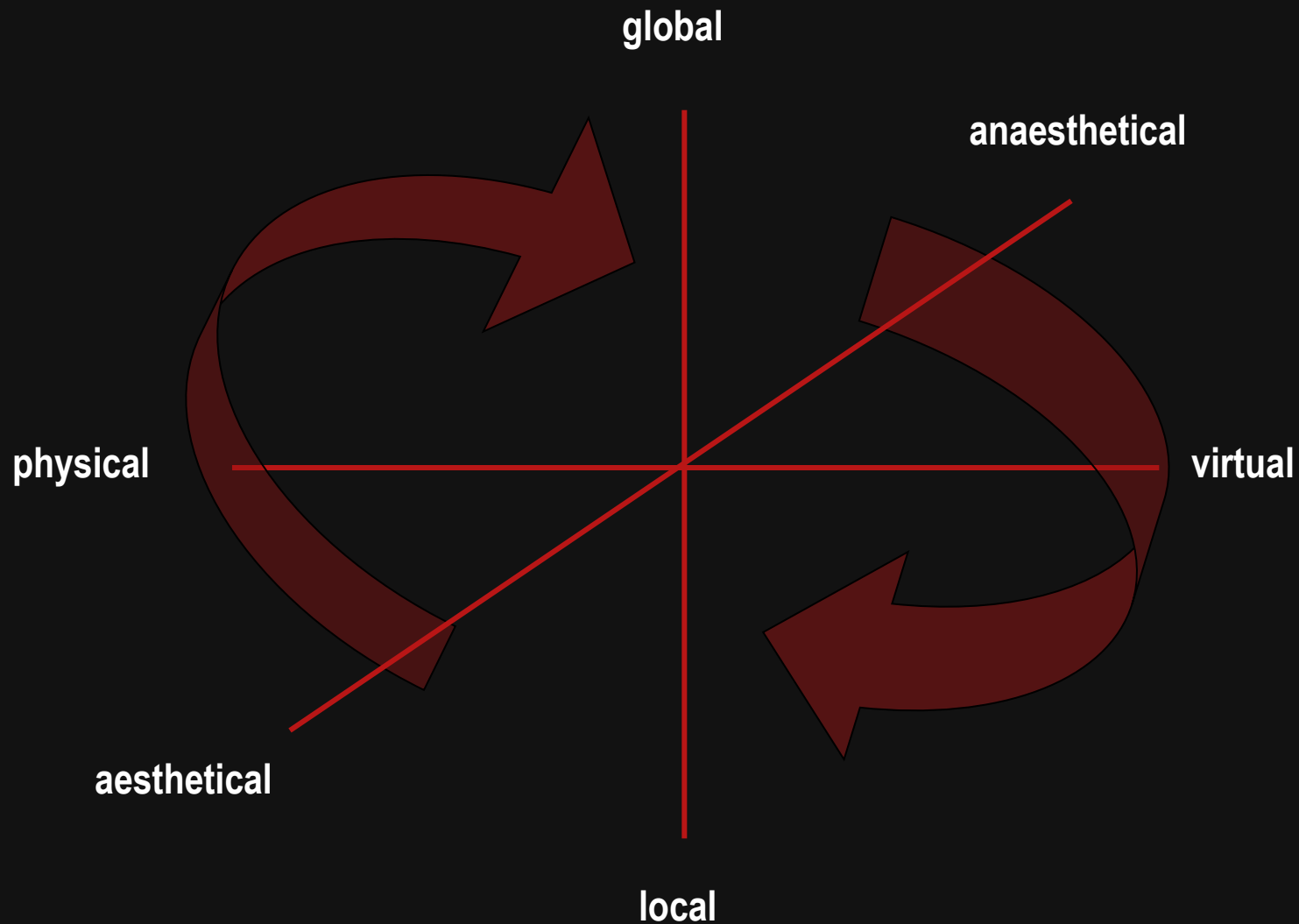
A full understanding of the dynamics of territory appropriation and of power establishment in the globalized and virtualized society requires an improvement of the theoretical / analytical framework. The framework must take into account the aesthetical / anaesthetical dimensions of these dynamics



## 2. Toward a Revision of the Standard Framework



## 2. Toward a Revision of the Standard Framework





### 3. The Revised Framework

From this point of view the role of media in power establishment processes must be articulated on three levels:

- ✓ On the *local vs. global* axis, media are instruments of connection (Sassen, Castells, etc.)
- ✓ On the *physical vs. virtual* axis, media are instruments both for physical appropriation of spaces and for shifting from one term of the axis to the other
- ✓ On the *aesthetical vs. anaesthetical* axis, media are instruments both for representing the processes of power establishment and for naturalizing it

### 3. The Revised Framework

In this context the city is not conceivable as an environment / background of media processes anymore: today “the media is the territory”.

Smart cities are:

- ✓ Instruments to connect people, Institutions, Companies, etc.
- ✓ Devices to occupy new territories
- ✓ Stages where power and rights claims are enacted

### 3. The Revised Framework

In this context the city is not conceivable as an environment / background of media processes anymore: today “the media is the territory”.

Smart cities are:



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Thank you for your attention!

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