

18th AESOP YOUNG ACADEMICS CONFERENCE

Book of Abstracts

Bridging Gaps: Urban Planning for Coexistence

Department of Architecture and Urban Studies – Politecnico di Milano 19–22 March 2024



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Bridging Gaps: Urban Planning for Coexistence

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CONFERENCE

THEME

**Bridging Gaps:
Urban Planning for Coexistence**

How can planning reinvent itself?

Which are the tools and practices that will ensure human well-being & coexistence with the world?

Urban planning as a discipline has been continuously evolving in the past decades, aiming to become the response to diverse issues through transdisciplinarity, innovation, creativity and justice. As a result of an ever-accelerating pace of life, we constantly witness worldwide transitions and turbulences, from environmental crises to socio-economic struggles, that challenge cities, regions, and the nature of the planning discipline itself. Climate change and both natural and man-made disasters render territories fragile and force humans and species to migrate, while the growing urban population requires solutions for sustainable transformation for life in the city and beyond. In this context of increasing uncertainty, the planning discipline attempts to suggest ways forward, yet often lacks in providing tangible examples of how to bridge theory and practice.

Within this framework, the conference focuses on the predominant discontinuities that currently characterise the planning field. Those are articulated into two directions of discussion that are in dialogue with and between each other: the urban-rural divide (**Track 1** and **Track 2**) and the academia-practice divide (**Track 3** and **Track 4**). The conference aims to create space for these dialogues to emerge, and to ultimately bridge these gaps by reflecting on our role as researchers, on our position towards, and in relationship with, society and on the effectiveness of practice. The questions that arise are timely and crucial, contemplating on the complexities inherent in a perpetual endeavour for coexistence between humans, species and the environment (**Track 5**). How can planning reinvent itself? How can we reconcile a holistic perception of territories? Which theories, strategies and methods should planning adopt so as to contribute to a better future for the human and natural species? Which are the tools and practices that will ensure human well-being and coexistence with the world?

TRACK 1

Looking Towards a Sustainable Urban Future: Transition & Challenges

Urban Energy Transition
Climate-Neutrality
Decarbonizing, Adaptation, & Resilient Cities
Biodiversity, Ecosystem Functions & Services
Green & Blue Infrastructures
Urban & Transport Planning
Urban Livability, Human Health & Well-Being

Chairs: Eugenio Morello (DASU, Politecnico di Milano), Gilles Desthieux (HES Geneva)

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Problems connected to urbanity are nothing recent. Armed conflicts and wars, massive displacement, urban sprawl, land consumption, pandemics, congestion, inadequate services, and many more, have always impacted cities and the way we live and interact in urban spaces. However, with the hypergrowth of urbanized areas and urban inhabitants, societies are witnessing an unprecedented number of obstacles, some of them being more specific to our era, such as labor shortages, energy transition complications, lack of affordable housing, rising temperatures, decline in the purchasing power... just to name a few. With the backdrop of geopolitical fractures, cities are the first to bear the brunt of these challenges.

When projecting the future, it is anticipated that the current trend of population growth and urbanization will continue and is unlikely to stop. Facing the above cited challenges and looking towards a transition for a sustainable and livable future, urban studies proposed numerous solutions tackling different scales and fields of studies. By researching the present city problems and elaborating on solutions aimed at a prominent urban

future, this track invites contributors to **re-examine the current urban challenges, the planning methods aligned and supported by international agendas for effective action in the world's cities and regions, and all the basic forces driving change.** The track proposes to promote broader sustainable development scenarios of urban development by providing pathways to low-carbon, livable, and equitable cities.

Submissions may cover but are not limited to the following topics: What are the most relevant sustainable urban transition strategies, actions, and programs? How to develop integrated tools and approaches of action facing these challenges? How does the built environment and urban morphology impact on the climate and vice versa? What are the main trends related to sustainable urban mobility and how are they integrated into transport planning and the city fabric? How are energy transition and climate-neutrality tackled in urban research and discourse, and what is the role of the economy in incentivizing the transition? How can planning become a health and well-being generator so as to help people thrive in urban environments?



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**The “Spanish ways” towards a sustainable urban future.
Researching the relationship between Integrated Sustainable Urban Development Strategies
and the Spanish Urban Agenda**

Co-authors: Lucas Álvarez del Valle, Ana Díez Bermejo, Iván Rodríguez Suárez

Keywords

international agenda, strategic planning, integrated tools, sustainability, urban development

This study evaluates the correlation between the Integrated Sustainable Urban Development Strategies (ISUDS) and the Spanish Urban Agenda (SUA), which are two tools developed under international agendas aimed at devising strategies, actions, and programs for sustainable urban transition in Spain. The fundamental proposition of this study is that the ISUDS and SUA can facilitate the harmonization of a comprehensive outlook on territories and cities and enable inventive planning from a socio-political vantage point, in turn enhancing the connection between communities, practitioners, and policy-makers. Our approach aims to identify the main characteristics of Spain’s transition from the 2014-2020 to the 2021-2027 EU programming periods, which correspond to ISUDS and SUA, respectively. By doing so, we can detect the fundamental scenarios for sustainable urban development in Spanish cities. To achieve this, the methodology comprised analyzing official documentation concerning ISUDS and SUA (programs, strategies, monitoring, and evaluation) from 2019 to 2023 through desk-based research, along with reviewing existing literature and

conducting particular fieldwork and interviews. The analysis focused on 32 capital cities where ISUDS have been implemented in the 2014-2020 programming period and their relationship with SUA was evaluated using a proposed synergy table by the Spanish Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda (MITMA). While ISUDS promoted a broader reflection at the municipal level and proposed the intervention area based on the need to rebalance urban disparities, SUA relied on the diagnosis elaborated by the ISUDS to promote common guidelines among the stakeholders involved for sustainable urban development interventions. This inquiry yields a nationwide framework that identifies the fundamental factors propelling urban development processes at varying scales in Spain, alongside an overview of the state of current challenges and solutions being developed by Spanish cities with the aim of a sustainable urban future.

Looking Towards a Sustainable Urban Future: Transition & Challenges

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Low-Carbon pathways for Resilient Cities: A Geospatial Analysis for assessing Solar Energy Potential

Keywords

Urban energy transition, Urban Energy Assessment, Decarbonizing, Solar Energy Potential, climate change

With the urban population projected to reach nearly 70% by 2050, urban energy consumption is poised to increase significantly. This upward trend in energy demand presents urban planners and stakeholders with formidable challenges encompassing energy, traffic, and resource management. Foremost among their concerns is the development of sustainable energy generation, distribution, and storage systems, coupled with the pursuit of greater energy efficiency and reduced reliance on non-renewable energy sources. A pivotal strategy for achieving these objectives involves the minimization of energy demand in urban buildings, a domain rich in energy-saving potential. However, the energy demand of urban buildings is influenced by a complex interplay of factors beyond their intrinsic characteristics. These factors include the urban heat island effects at meso- and micro-scales, as well as interactions with neighboring buildings at a local scale. In comparison to standalone structures, buildings within urban environments experience a range of effects that impact their energy consumption (Santamouris, 2001) (Rasheed, 2009).

Using Process-driven modeling which relies on physical principles to calculate and predict the energy performance of buildings. They require a complete set of data for a detailed description of the physical phenomena. Usually, they are based on energy balance equations between the buildings and the outdoor environment, considering buildings' geometry & characteristics, people's behavior, urban environment, and climate data.

This study delves into the energy potential of Torino by analyzing various sectors within the city. It identifies the regions with the greatest capacity for solar energy generation while also examining the connectivity of electric cabins. Factors considered in this analysis include aspects such as topography, slope, digital surface models, digital elevation models, and weather data for the metropolitan area of Torino. The study employs QGIS to provide a comprehensive understanding of Torino's energy landscape.



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Operationalizing Circular Construction:

The TU Delft campus as proxy for the complex urban Circular Built Environment

Keywords

Circular cities, campus development, circular construction and renovation, public commissioning

Circular cities promise a sustainable urban future, addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and geopolitical challenges. Despite a decade of efforts, significant change remains elusive due to the evolving concept of a circular economy (CE), persistent linear practices, and the complex nature of urban regions where numerous CE-subsystems such as the energy- and building sector interact.

We need more effective methods to operationalize a circular built environment. This paper explores the implementation of the Delft University of Technology's (TUD) "circular campus" initiative from two perspectives. First, with its manageable size and governance (161 ha, 35.000 users), the campus provides a simplified model of a city. Second, the TUD is a significant client in the polluting construction sector. To increase our understanding of the operationalization of circular cities, and to define drivers and barriers and potential strategies, we propose an analytical framework that combines urban circular actions with the much-used, but arguably

technical oriented R-ladder that is often used in the construction sector. Our empirics focus on four construction practices, and we employ semi-structured interviews next to the analysis of campus policy and project documentation.

Our results indicate that while TUD aspired for integrated and regenerative approaches, it adopted a more segmented strategy, causing some ambition conflicts between different CE subsystems, for example energy gains versus material impact or ecological regeneration. In new projects, there's an evident emphasis on 'future circularity' through higher R-ladder actions. However, many material selections remain in the lower R-Ladder stages, following common Dutch construction practices. TU Delft faces obstacles in achieving mid R-ladder actions, which demand more structural process- and role shifts, both internally and externally. The paper concludes by discussing how these insights benefit other large (semi)public real estate owners and how our insights can help to operationalize circular cities.



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Assessing Plural Values Anchored By Public Stakeholders for Safeguarding Social-Ecological System: The Case of Atatürk Urban Forest

Keywords

Social-ecological system (SES), Value pluralism, Participatory mapping, Landscape change, Atatürk urban forest

Today's landscape planning must balance the preservation of natural urban ecosystems while supporting human well-being. Social-ecological system (SES) represents highly interconnected social and ecological components in which people play a vital role. Sustainable management of SES identifies the values that people associate with ecosystems. In addition to the ecosystem services framework, which has reinforced the dichotomy of the instrumental and intrinsic value of nature, the relational values concept emerged to better capture the many intuitive ways that people facilitate relations and perceive their well-being involving the environment. This study explores human-nature relationships using a value pluralism approach, encompassing intrinsic, instrumental, and relational values, within the Atatürk urban forest SES in Istanbul. This longstanding, biodiverse forest, with publicly accessible recreational amenities, faces a threat of landscape change due to zoning changes in the 2003 master development plan, allowing the construction of a hotel on part of the forest. This change would disturb the forest ecosystem integrity and increase

inequality in nature access, affecting human-nature relationships and associated values. This research aims to characterize the Atatürk urban forest by its underlying values at the landscape scale. By combining the value pluralism concept and participatory mapping, an in-situ web-based survey (N=113) was conducted with random visitors. The objectives are to understand which values are appreciated by the public across various socio-demographics, patterns of use, familiarity with the site, and place of residency. By analyzing the spatial distribution of different mapped value points this work illustrates the landscape's importance for people's experiences. Accordingly, the inconsistencies of the planned landscape change with these values will be discussed.

This research advocates the principle of managing lands in line with the values held by the public stakeholders and emphasizes their integration into planning frameworks to ensure mutually acceptable and sustainable outcomes, thus enhancing socio-ecological resilience.

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Planning for Climate-Resilient Infrastructures and Communities. Background, data, methods and first application

Keywords

urban planning, climate change, adaptation and first application

The research explores the issue of climate change-induced risks to promote climate-resilient infrastructures and communities. The urgency of taking action in this direction is internationally recognized, although cities do not yet seem ready to face this challenge.

In this research the background analysis is supported by a systematic literature review process. It covered the main risks induced by climate change in urban, rural and coastal areas. The in-depth analysis included risks from heat waves, risks for agricultural production, risks of scarcity of water resources and risks produced by a greater frequency and intensity of floods. Based on the state of the art, this research proposes the definition of an innovative method for mapping climate risk through processing of data to support planners in increasing climate resilience in urban, rural and coastal areas. In this research phase, GIS systems allow to facilitate informed decision-making processes by automating the management and integration of heterogeneous data for practical applications.

The first application concerns the urban area of the Municipality of Lamezia Terme in the Calabria Region (Italy). In this case, appropriate data on climate exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity have been taken into account in order to identify the priority parts of territory at risk. In fact, in light of the climate crisis, urban areas are those that are most affected by climate change, both in terms of increased temperatures and the increase in the frequency and intensity of floods.

To transform the city, it is necessary to define development policies that take into account the potential for adaptation, especially of public spaces. Therefore, the future phase of the research consists in the consequent definition of an action plan containing the schedule of appropriate adaptation measures.



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Neighborhood-scale cool space mapping methodology: the case of Corvetto in Milan IT

Keywords

Urban Adaptation, Cool Spaces, Neighborhoods, Spatial Analysis

The built environment, comprised of concrete, asphalt, glass, and steel in urban canyons, acts as a heat-absorbing machine. During hot days, heat is trapped and slowly released at night, differentiating urban areas from their cooler surroundings characterizing the so called urban heat islands (UHI). The concentration of people in these heat islands is a formula for disaster, evident in the higher death toll observed after heatwaves compared to other environmental disasters like floods and landslides (World Health Organization).

Temperature records are broken almost yearly (as highlighted in the latest IPCC report from March 2023, portraying a bleak future), specially in urban areas. Heat disproportionately affects older and young groups, as well as lower incomes and the chronically ill. In the case of densely built European cities facing severe heatwaves, such as Milan in northern Italy, municipalities struggle to find an effective starting point to intervene in the urban fabric and assist citizens in the short to medium term. This paper outlines a methodology that can serve as guide: (1) it starts by analyzing

and intervening in a socially and environmentally vulnerable neighborhood (Corvetto in the city's south east periphery); (2) mapping existing outdoor cool spaces for citizens during hot days; (3) identifying areas requiring new cooling outdoor public spaces within 5-minute walk-sheds; (4) studying a proposal for a new cool space using thermal simulation software. This work extends recent studies from the Netherlands to Milan, Italy, contributing to the author's PhD thesis funded by the European Commission's Marie Curie ITN SOLOCLIM programme.



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Serial refurbishment as a major transformation to sustainability – Application of the ‘Multi-Level Perspective’

Keywords

energy transition; refurbishment measures; building stock; multi-level perspective; urban sustainability

Serial refurbishment could play a crucial role in advancing urban sustainability by addressing challenges such as cost increases, resource constraints, and labour shortages. ‘Energiesprong Deutschland’, led by the German Energy Agency (dena), is pioneering the refurbishment of 1950s–1970s multi-family housing, with the aim of introducing serial refurbishment as a mainstream solution and promoting low-carbon urban innovation. The approach focuses on cost- and time-efficient solutions using industrial prefabrication and standardised components.

Within the study, the role of serial refurbishment as a transformative innovation in the energy transition is assessed using Geels’ multi-level perspective. The aim of the study is to consider the establishment of the approach and its potential for future system change in the context of the ‘Great Transformation’.

Serial refurbishment is a bottom-up innovation driven by niche pioneers and is in early stages of diffusion in the German refurbishment market. To expedite market implementation, various

measures are required at political, institutional, social, cultural, research, and market levels.

Serial refurbishment is a future-oriented and innovative solution for transforming the building sector in line with the political agenda. By combining technical, economic and social efforts, it can make a significant contribution to the decarbonisation and sustainable development of the building stock.



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Modelling urban building energy with activity-based approaches: The influence of Flexible working patterns

Keywords

urban building energy model, activity-based model, occupant behaviour, activity pattern, urban energy management

The rapid progression in productivity and technological innovation is causing a shift in the traditional activity patterns of residents. Emerging patterns, such as flexible working and online shopping, are altering the interactions between residents, buildings and cities. The majority of existing urban building energy model (UBEM) studies utilise fixed schedules for building occupant occupancy and activities, which poses a challenge for traditional models in capturing the impact of these new trends on energy demand in urban buildings and various sectors. This paper concentrates on building occupant behaviours (OB) and activities, systematically reviewing UBEM studies conducted between 2012 to 2022. The study initially discusses the roles of OB in building energy demand and summarises the primary occupant-related inputs in UBEMs. It then outlines the main techniques for modelling OB, categorising them into static-deterministic schedules, rule-based models, stochastic models, and utility-maximising models. The technical characteristics of these models are discussed, along with their scope and limitations

in application. The study also summarises the limitations and challenges associated with occupant-related data relevant to building energy modelling. The paper concludes by discussing research gaps and future directions for occupant-centred UBEMs. This includes expanding model scenarios beyond residential and commercial buildings, using residents' activities to connect and integrate spatial and temporal changes in energy demand between different types of buildings and between buildings and other sectors, as well as considering the influence of psychological and environmental factors on behaviour and activity pattern preferences. The findings of this study will aid urban digital twin researchers and urban energy modellers in understanding the different approaches to OB modelling available in tools, thereby contributing to more accurate simulations of urban energy demand and improved energy management scenarios.

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Urban retrofit:

exploring the opportunities and challenges of transition to an age-friendly community

Keywords

Age-friendly community, Urban transition, Accessibility, Urban open space, Age-in-place

In recent years, with the acceleration of the ageing of the global population, the transition to urban age-friendly communities has received widespread attention, which has brought new opportunities and challenges to sustainable urban development. To this end, this study analyses the current status of urban age-friendly community renovation on an international scale in recent years, and summarizes the main problems faced by building urban age-friendly community. In view of the potential conflicts between building urban age-friendly communities and the principles of sustainable development, we investigated the views of different age groups on living with the older people. Our survey asked participants to provide their personal views on three dimensions: neighbourhood relations, living experience and neighbourhood environment. Our dataset includes local residents which are young people, older people and families with children in Porta Genova district in Milan. According to the above research, we referred to the research results on the impact of urban public space on residents' physical and mental health based on structural equation

modelling (Chang et al., 2020; Dash & Thilagam, 2021; Luo et al., 2022; Sarhadi & Rad, 2020; Wang et al., 2022) and the research results on the impact of accessibility on neighbourhood vitality based on social sustainability theory (Banchiero et al., 2020; De Luca et al., 2021; Jacobs, 1993; Mouratidis & Poortinga, 2020; Sung & Lee, 2015), to explore the possibilities for achieving diversity and inclusion in age-friendly communities.

Our research aims to create communities that not only can meet the needs of the older generation, enabling them to age in place, but are also suitable for residents of all ages. We hope to break down age barriers and build an inclusive and harmonious community while improving the resource utilization efficiency and environmental sustainability of the community environment, making the transition to urban age-friendly communities more in line with the current concept of sustainable urban development.



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Machine Learning-Based Prediction of Carbon Emissions from Built Environment Elements in Urban Neighborhoods of Beijing

Co-authors: **Yunshan Wan**

Keywords

carbon emissions, neural network, spatial form, functional characteristics, neighborhood built environment factors

Accurately predicting urban carbon emissions based on the spatial elements of the built environment is an effective way to help cities mitigate carbon pollution. In this study, a machine learning method (back-propagation neural network - BPNN) is used to predict the impact of different functional and morphological characteristics of urban neighbourhoods on carbon emissions. The results show that neighbourhood carbon emissions are significantly influenced by neighbourhood-built environment factors such as agglomeration, density, extension, and open space ratio. The neural network approach demonstrates good prediction performance for different functions of neighbourhood carbon emissions, with a stable mean absolute percentage error (MAPE) of 10% to 20%. The prediction results also reveal significant variation in the mean values of different functions related to carbon emissions, and the spatial distribution map of carbon emissions indicates that high carbon emissions are mainly concentrated in the central city. The accuracy of this method is demonstrated by comparison with other studies, and it can be used to predict the carbon emissions

of urban planning schemes. Optimizing the spatial form and functional characteristics of urban neighbourhoods is crucial for reducing carbon emissions.

TRACK 2

Beyond the Urban Rural Divide

Planning & Inhabiting the Rural
Rural Ecologies & Rural Planning
Urbanization in Rural Territories
Rural Practices in the Urban Environment
Multispecies Planning
Productive Landscapes
The “Rural” in Feminist & Postcolonial
Perspectives
Urban-Rural Ecosystem Services

Chairs: **Luca Lazzarini** (DASU, Politecnico di Milano), **Nitin Bathla** (ETH Zurich)

Coordinators: **Anita Martinelli, Anna Fera, Antonio Jose Salvador, Beatrice Olga Meloni**

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In urban studies, the 'rural' has been defined as a subordinate space of contradictions, an uninhabitable place to tame, of depopulation to contrast, of idyllic countryside and nature to protect, a place for leisure, a productive platform, or an expendable resource, often flattened and objectized, overlooking and underestimating its complexity. The 'rural existence' is often legitimized by planning mechanisms considered outdated in urban contexts. The notion of 'rural' is proposed not as a defined place but as a lens from which to study territories, phenomena, and conditions. Even those that appear as strictly 'urban problems' have an effect elsewhere. Researchers are challenged to understand these effects, to look at less studied territories, and to bring alternative perspectives from 'known' issues. Therefore, we should not consider what happens in the rural and the urban as separate phenomena but instead as reciprocally intertwined. The urbanization process is closely related to agrarian and production transformation, while rural elements are present in urban settings and vice versa: in this light, we can assert that the urban question is a rural question. In order to contribute in deconstructing universalist

theories that perpetuate the urban-rural divide, we need theory generated from geographic areas where the rural is much more than the non-urban: territories where the rural is vital to the livelihood of many and essential for the understanding of socio-spatial dynamics.

This track addresses the complexity of rural territories by including research methodologies and approaches, new epistemologies, planning scenarios and proposals for large-open spaces, productive and natural landscapes, climate and just transition, multispecies planning, and urban-to-rural migration, among others. The track proposes to open a dialogue and debate on emerging visions of planning and inhabiting the 'rural.' It aims to explore, beyond an obsolete view of the division between the city and the countryside, places where rural practices occur inside agglomerations and where forms of urbanization are happening in natural and agricultural territories. The track aims to enrich this discussion by welcoming experiences from the Global South and Global East.

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**Urbanism and peasant agriculture in French hybrid territories.
Limits and counter-trends of contemporary planning in the Vendée Bocage.**

Keywords

hybrid territories, peasant agriculture, agroecology

The urban debate in France has long focused on the study of metropolitan and urban contexts, implicitly endorsing the rhetoric built around the image of the Urban Era. This image refers to the United Nations statistics announcing that more than a half of the world's population nowadays lives in cities and that the manifest destiny of the humankind lies in a gradual process of urbanisation and concentration towards larger metropolises.

However, in recent years in France a renewed interest has been emerging around those inhabited territories that present conditions of hybridization of urban-rural characteristics. This interest is arising from the awareness of the evident limits of the metropolitan city model, and in the face of the new challenges linked to the agro-ecological transition process underway and emerging new forms of peasant agriculture.

Starting from this theoretical background, this contribution collects some reflections developed on the French case of the Vendée Bocage in the context of a doctoral research. This territory is

characterized by a condition of hybridisation of urban-rural patterns which is very different from the radiocentric tissue of the dense and compact city. In this sense the Vendée Bocage can be considered as one of the European territories of dispersion.

In particular, this contribution focuses on the analysis of the local development plan of Saint-Fulgent Les Essarts inter-community, situated at the heart of Bocage, and which settings planning objectives within a ten-years horizon. The contribution focuses above all on the analysis between recently undertaken and planned urbanization processes, illustrating some limits and counter-trends related to the current dynamics of peasant agriculture and back-to-the-land phenomena. At the end, the contribution opens some important questions that these hybrid territories must face in the light of the contemporary agro-ecological transition.

Beyond the Urban Rural Divide

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Unveiling the Dynamics of Rural Creativity: A Case Study of New York's Creative Economy

Keywords

creative economy, rural communities, rural creativity, creative occupations, regression analysis

The concept of the creative economy has gained significance recently, with New York City standing out as a premier creative hub in the United States. This study aims to delineate the defining characteristics of the creative economy in rural communities, using New York as a case study. Previous research indicates that creative individuals gravitate towards areas with specific attributes such as technology, talent, tolerance, lifestyle, and originality. These attributes are examined through a regression model to identify key variables contributing to the rise in the percentage of creative occupations in rural areas of New York State. The study further investigates the potential of these variables in predicting and explaining economic growth in rural regions.

In the rural communities of New York, the creative class is influenced by a combination of factors. Technology serves as a vital infrastructure and tool for creative development, while the presence of diverse talent and educational opportunities contributes to the nurturing of a skilled workforce. Tolerance fosters an environment where diverse

perspectives are accepted, allowing creative minds to flourish. Additionally, the local lifestyle and originality, encompassing cultural amenities and unique characteristics, enhance the overall appeal of the region.

This research employs a robust regression model to comprehensively analyze these factors. By isolating their individual impacts, the study aims to pinpoint the elements that significantly influence the percentage of creative occupations in rural areas. Moreover, it investigates the relationship between these creative attributes and economic growth within rural regions.

This study not only enhances our understanding of the creative economy in rural areas but also provides actionable insights for policymakers and regional planners. Identifying the crucial factors that attract and sustain creative professionals in non-urban settings can inform strategies for rural development, economic growth, and community enhancement.

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Peasant perspectives on city forms: a counter-narrative from Southern Mali

Keywords

Africa, peasantry, city-form, territory, everyday

In Mali, West Africa, to speak of peasantry is to refer to culture. This culture defines a way of inhabiting the territory that eludes the laws of the neo-liberal market, especially in its relationship with the land. It is linked to a family economy of subsistence and community, open to commercial production, but whose essential purpose is the reproduction of life and dwelling. In West Africa to name peasant culture means thus to recognize its existence and the way it defines specific 'territorial figures', images of the spatial-ecological frames in which living is immersed.

In this context, discussing rurality and urbanity acquires a relative value. It means questioning the assumption of overcoming the opposition between urban and rural by the extension of urbanism to the entire territory as a consequence of the disappearance of the peasantry as such and the percolation of market laws into every aspect of life, of the vivants.

This article proposes a peasant perspective to reflect on settlement transformation processes

in Southern Mali. The capital city of Bamako is considered as a case study, to grasp its 'piecemeal urbanization' from a counter-narrative beyond the urban-rural divide. With this purpose, the article seeks to encounter the 'hyper-generative dimension of daily life', manifesting itself in the practices and imaginaries of the everyday, and the territory of southern Mali as a spatial horizon of reference. By doing so, it considers in particular the multipolar character of urban expansion which challenges a simple core-periphery binary, from a peasant perspective to retrace the conceptual and spatial forms of the city from the rhythms and necessities of the reproduction of everyday life.



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Territories of monocultures as assemblages.

A research agenda from the Italian and Catalan cases of fruit production

Keywords

Territories of monocultures, Actor-Network Theory, Assemblage, Urbanization, Planning

This contribution calls for a re-framing of the dominant and essentially positive mythology that structures discourses and planning policies as regards rural territories. In the long run, a taken-for-granted seductive narrative has led to the construction of the imaginary of the countryside almost as an “Eden” (Vallerani, 2021), with planning tools conceiving rural areas primarily as contexts to be protected from the growth ambition of cities and infrastructures (Basso and Vettoreto, 2020). Yet, today this vision is being severely challenged in territories that have undergone massive land use and socio-economic changes as a result of the intensification of specialized, export-oriented agricultural productions (Brenner and Katsikis, 2020).

Within this framework, the work stands as a research agenda to interpret the supply chain in so-called ‘territories of monocultures’ through the case study of Val di Non (TN) and Terres de Lleida in Catalonia (Spain). Exploring in depth these mechanisms, the operation suggested turning to the Actor-Network Theory’s framework. From the

new analytical position, the focus is to understand what research avenues may emerge. Through the supply chain deconstruction, three main elements of translation come to light: the network metaphor, the radical symmetry, and the material turn. The three elements will guide the narrative of the Trentino and Catalan case. Finally, the manuscript opens around some questions yet to be explored that would prompt planning to ask how and to what extent to re-engage the active role of planning in the fruit’s assemblage, to overcome the division between nature and society, while remaining adherent to practices. In conclusion, different interests and values have led to an evolution of the meaning of rural. Territories of monocultures can no longer coincide with the idyllic imaginary but with a context where a process of infrastructure and urbanization of the landscape also generates impacts on human settlements and needs thus to be regulated.



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Rural informality

Keywords

Rural, Informal, Marginality, Mediterraneo, Sicily

Is it possible to establish a virtuous relationship between informal settlements and environmental emergencies in southern Italy? Southern Italy is often underestimated in discussions regarding the production of conflicting, collision-prone, and opaque spaces generated by operations related to the movement, extraction, and production of the foods we consume daily (Rondot 2022).

Agricultural production, always a major economic driver in the province of Ragusa in Sicily, with fruit and vegetable cultivation, has changed the characteristics of this geography, giving shape to a unique case called the “Fascia Trasformata” Growing steadily since 1960, with its 5700 hectares of agricultural land used (ALU), approximately 75% of the regional total and 30% of the national total (Istat, 2016), this soil segment contains 3,330 agricultural businesses primarily dedicated to greenhouse tomato cultivation. Some productions reach a high market value and become excellence for the entire national territory; however, this result does not correspond in any way to the living and working conditions inside the greenhouses and

the exploitation of the territory.

Through a critical analysis of the relationships between social and housing conditions and the environmental context, the research aims to provide an interpretative framework for the process of rural informality in the southern area to outline design frescoes capable of tracing a development path oriented towards recycling through Ecological Urbanism.

Beyond the Urban Rural Divide

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The political ecology of post - wildfire spatial development: The case of the Greek island of Evia

Keywords

wildfires, political ecology, neoliberalization, nature

As wildfires in the Mediterranean area and elsewhere in the globe are more and more frequent and severe, they often become the vehicle for broader land policy transformations. An indicative case is the one of North Evia island (Greece) regeneration plan which was formed in the aftermath of extensive wildfires that took place there in the summer of 2021. The plan aspires to create a new development narrative for North Evia, structured around tourism, forest use 'optimization' and boosting cultural and natural resources for the promotion of the area. However, local communities, organizations and forest producers have raised serious concerns about the plan and its implications to their lives and their long-standing relationships to land and nature. Through the lens of political ecology, my thesis will study the post-wildfire planning processes in North Evia and their implications. Its main aim is to trace their impact on forest and land re-appropriation and the socio-economic transformations local communities and the forest producers are undergoing as a result of these developments. This will further entail the exploration of worldviews, discourses

and conflicts arising by different stakeholders, in the wake of environmental regeneration and new development plans for the area. Since the 2008 public-debt crisis Greek urban and regional planning and environmental frameworks have undergone massive transformations with profound implications in the appropriation of land and nature, the redefinition of boundaries and property and access rights to its assets. In the wake of socio-environmental catastrophe the rural comes at the epicenter of new urbanization plans and scenarios for new cohabitation-with-nature modes of living. This contribution aims to present the main theoretical framework of the thesis and discuss the early findings from my ongoing fieldwork period in Evia island.

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Peripheralisation in post-Ondoy Metro Manila: collective life on the edge and resilient futures that “keep all the same”

Keywords

peripheries, peripheralisation, city making, urban futures, resilience

The contiguous process of clearing and fortifying Metro Manila’s fluvial and littoral landscapes as a flood management, disaster resilience, and climate adaptation intervention has resulted in the eviction of at least 52,000 households since 2012. Whilst this large-scale displacement is indeed tied to more familiar neoliberal urban processes, the resilience agenda as a driver of dispossession is key to understanding the scale and politics of the peripheralisation that followed the devastating 2009 Ondoy flood disaster that catalysed shifts in disaster and housing governance in the Philippines. Building on Kristian Saguin’s (2022) concept of the urban edge as a location, relation, and condition, I trace the edges produced by resilient city making by following the flows of displacement and emplacement from Metro Manila’s waterways. I situate the edge in and beyond the city. In the former, the edge pertains to the ‘danger zone’, the ‘staging areas’, and the community-built in-city relocation housing along riparian and coastal corridors; whereas in the latter, it refers to resettlement villages in the suburbs of Manila. In these spaces, I enquire into

evictees’ dreams of the good life and consider the timid intimations of their desires. Reflecting on people’s ideas of *ginhawa* (i.e., breath, relief, well-being) in deathscapes on the urban edge, I attend to the forms, practices, and agencies that produce collective life (Bhan et al., 2020). Taking stock of these accounts, I juxtapose them first, with Philippine urban, development, disaster, and climate frameworks and plans, and then with the multilateral agendas that underpin them, to distil the kind of life they envision and the urban futures they prefigure. I argue that the aspirations these texts yearn and the transformations they seek intend to “keep all the same” (Westman & Castán Broto, 2022), thereby dulling the capacious promise of the edge and thwarting emancipatory resilient futures.

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Beyond the Urban Rural Divide

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'Her' land (Acknowledging feminine wisdom to conserve floodplains and initiate a female-led agroecological community)

Co-authors: Matteo Umberto Poli, Franca Maria Luisa Neonato

Keywords

Ecofeminism, rural ecology, flood resiliency, productive landscape, women empowerment

In a capitalist world, the 'mechanistic worldview' has expedited dominion over nature and oppression of women, interconnecting different forms of exploitation in a single string. In contrast, the concept of ecofeminism asserts a direct biological and philosophical connection between the female and the earth body, addressing feminine forces as primary protagonists of reviving the soil. However, female knowledge is not yet formally addressed in conservation initiatives and safeguarding natural environments.

This research attempts to connect the issues of land, women, and climate change, while empowering nature and women simultaneously by unleashing the positive forces of a creative Anthropocene.

This paper examines the floodplains of rural regions in Sylhet, Bangladesh, where river control, replacing women's farming skills with modern agriculture and imposing quarry activity have sequentially degraded the landscape's moisture content. These have led to extreme flood vulnerability, long-term land destruction, and food insecurity in both urban and rural territories. While

male figures take the liberty to migrate from the affected landscape searching for jobs, females are left behind to endure the consequences.

'Her land' first explores flood mitigation measures by collaborating with water. Therefore, it follows the techniques of building with nature to slow the flood. This restores the feminine of the land by letting the moisture grow.

After securing agronomy, the proposed structure explores the spontaneous farming activities carried out by rural women to uncover the gaps between modern agricultural practices. The strategy concentrates on a permaculture-based self-sufficient habitation led by women climate leaders. The potential of the vision includes but is not limited to wetland conservation, permaculture farms and socio-cultural spaces in several scales of interventions. In this gender-sensitive planning, eco-structures are proposed for human and other lively agents to perform their respective roles to preserve the land, nurture the seeds, and ensure food security. This feminine dimension of space can provide nourishment and formulate a recipe for co-existence.

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Effects of Migration to Rural Areas on Rural Gentrification

Co-authors: **Özge Ekinci**

Keywords

Rural Gentrification, Gentrification, Migration, Rural Areas

In the Anthropocene era, as the relations between rural and urban areas become closer, socioeconomic, cultural and physical transformation in rural areas becomes inevitable. The transformation of rural areas significantly affects rural production methods, economic structure as well as social structure. This study aims to investigate the impacts of migration on rural gentrification in the rural districts of the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Marmara regions. The primary focus is on examining the change in housing m2 unit prices (TRY/m2) as a representative indicator of rural gentrification. The research questions addressed in this study are: (1) Is there evidence of rural gentrification in the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Marmara regions based on demographic and spatial indicators? (2) What is the best predictor of rural gentrification? (3) Which regions exhibit a higher degree of rural gentrification, and how can we determine their geographical distribution? The dataset used in this study covers 126 rural districts within these regions, with a specific focus on the year 2018. To explore the research questions and gain a

comprehensive understanding of the relationship between migration and rural gentrification, the main methods of inquiry employed are linear regression and descriptive statistics. The main results of the regression analysis reveal that both the Population Growth Rate and the Socio-Economic Development Index (SEGE) have a positive and significant impact on the change in housing m2 unit prices. This study contributes to the existing literature on the socio-spatial impacts of gentrification by focusing on rural areas in the aforementioned regions. Investigating the relationship between migration and rural gentrification, it provides insights into the factors driving changes in housing prices and their implications for rural communities. The findings can inform policymakers and researchers about the dynamics of rural gentrification and guide the development of targeted strategies to manage its consequences.

Beyond the Urban Rural Divide

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Urban or Rural? An everyday life approach to urban youth's return-to-village practices through social media videos

Keywords

neo-villagers, counter-urbanization, social media, rural practice

In China's post-urbanization and post-pandemic era, a large group of young "neo-villagers" choose to move to the near-natural countryside after living in the city for a long time. These neo-villagers transplant their urban lifestyle into rural regions, which spontaneously urbanizes rural physical space through the reappropriation and personalizing of their inhabited environment. Meanwhile, given that most of them are equipped with high technical skills, they usually record their daily transforming process with video blogs shared on social media such as YouTube and TikTok, which draws increasing interest and curiousness among the urban youths. This return-to-village spectacle has stimulated a fusion of vernacularity and urban modernity that in a sense breaks the stereotype of the urban-rural dichotomy.

In light of this, we aim to use a humanized approach to exploring this emerging phenomenon by observing and analyzing neo-villagers' practices in rural China through social media videos. Unlike traditional methods, social videos not only provide us with a considerable amount of data materials on

various people's detailed daily life without space-time restriction, but also enable us to interpret neo-villagers' self-expression being the subject of their own narratives. More precisely, this article conducts a qualitative analysis of selected videos to make explicit neo-villagers' daily behaviors/activities and the underlying ideology, along with their influences on the urbanization of rural spaces, and vice versa. Further, this article identifies the critical factors that seduce their urban escape and rural location choice making, which helps optimize the current planning in rural environment for younger generation. In sum, the findings of this research bring a human-centric insight into urban-rural integration through a deeper understanding of neo-villagers' intentions and activities, and thus to boost a more diversified co-development between urban and rural areas in the future.

TRACK 3

Challenging the Role of Academia: The Impact of Research

Universities & Institutions
Democratizing Research
Research Methodologies & Practices
Epistemological Enquiry
Critiques on Knowledge Production
Geographies of Theory, Knowledge & power
Transdisciplinarity
Bottom-up Initiatives & Inclusivity
Participatory Action Research & Research
Activism
Civic Engagement
Social Impact

Chairs: **Gabriele Pasqui** (DASStU, Politecnico di Milano), **Julia Wesely** (BOKU Vienna)

Coordinators: **Dafni Riga**, **Giulia Oldani**

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In a context where research in the planning field is becoming highly transdisciplinary (integrating fields spanning from data analytics and technology to sociology and environmental psychology) academia has the possibility to obtain a more holistic approach, acquire a broader range of insights, produce knowledge stemming from a wider variety of sources and addressing a wider audience. However, due to the recentness of this approach, the planning field today appears to be little concerned with the role of researchers and rarely adopts in-depth epistemological perspectives, while transdisciplinarity frequently remains a mere conceptual framing or a marketing catchphrase. Moreover, the dynamics of research within the academic milieu are growingly questioned in terms of hierarchy, formality and lack of engagement of researchers beyond academia. This entails an impact on society as a whole: academia is often either self-referential, producing policies and strategies that remain on paper, or detached from society, speaking jargon and not being able to communicate effectively. Considering citizens as critical participants in the process of decision-making and space-making, the challenge for academia is to engage with practice and society through less rigid processes; to assume a more active and inclusive position; and to rethink and politicize

research so as to impactfully address current challenges.

This track invites contributions that research diverse and innovative methods of research and knowledge production, and their eventual effect on society as a whole. How can we overcome disciplinary discontinuities and the continuous overproduction of knowledge that oftentimes remains too vast, theoretical, and less immediate? How can we ensure that academia asks the right questions and addresses matters of urgency? How can university-produced knowledge become more democratic and communicative towards civil society? As early-career researchers and planners, how can we achieve being less self-referential within our fields and foster a professional and cultural shift? How can we attain more hands-on interaction with civil society? How do universities' off-campus activities contribute in the dialogue and to what extent do they generate an impact in society? How far do processes involving citizens (such as experimental and tactical urbanism, participatory processes, DIY urbanism, bottom-up initiatives and so on) bridge the gap between academia, practice, and society? How to ensure that they are effective and inclusive enough?



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All talk, no action: Addressing some of the current tensions between planning epistemologies and methodologies

Keywords

planning epistemology, research methodologies, critical theory, institutional conventions

Tensions between the ‘world of practitioners’ and the ‘world of theorists’ are nothing new. Over the past six decades, planners have sought to identify and address these tensions, moving from wicked problems to argumentative planning in the 70s, to mediated negotiations in the 80s-90s, and then to working relationships in the 2000s-10s. Yet, many of us continue to struggle with the growing division between what we teach, debate, and research and how we practice. We recognize that critical questioning should not be seen as a separate activity to answer-evoking practices, yet, presently, we are stuck in a seemingly on-going cycle of ‘all talk and no action’ which, in turn, has been undermining our working relationships. This paper aims to address how we might couple our assumptions of certain efforts ‘helping’ with a critical account, both drawing inspiration from a diversity of spaces while also being self-aware.

Building from Forester’s (2020) perspective essay, this paper will first characterize five generations of theory-practice tensions in planning, outlining their topics, objections, and risks, so that we may

situate ourselves within (what I argue is) our field’s present-day dilemma: improvising in unique, changing settings. Although this current focus entails working between multiple contexts and realities, we cannot neglect that we still remain subjected to a dominant institutional framework which has impacts on our broader practices. As the contexts are more nuanced than simply exposing malpractice or advocating for more political spaces, this paper confronts the complexities and contradictions between what we currently tend to question (e.g., technological advancements, collective actions, and academic thinking) and how we are expected to practice (e.g., accepted aesthetics, narratives, and discourses). By doing so, it addresses some of the predominant ways we create an illusion of ‘criticality’ or ‘collaboration’ in our works yet still fail to disrupt dominant claims.

Challenging the Role of Academia: The Impact of Research

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Engaging with research: challenges of an academics/civil society partnership

Keywords

engaged research, civil society, university, collective learning

Over the past decades, complexity theory, postmodernism, contemporary hermeneutics, American pragmatism, and neo-Aristotelian theories have challenged in different ways applied fields, such as planning, to account for the loss of linearity in the relationship between knowledge and action. In the planning debate, such a loss has produced two major effects: on one hand, it encouraged scholars to investigate and test strategies to enact a more holistic, transdisciplinary approach; on the other, more and more academics explore and experience engaged research practices, looking at the relationship between universities and civil society as an opportunity to produce more democratic knowledge as well as durable and equitable spatial transformations.

In this respect, the paper presents how young and less young academics from three universities (University of Catania, University of Massachusetts Boston, and University of Memphis) are trying to cope with both transdisciplinarity and engaged research within the framework of CoPED (Community Planning and Ecological Design)

Summer School, an intensive research training using an approach commonly identified as participatory action-research. Since 2012, CoPED has worked with one or more organizations operating in the eastern Sicily (Italy), experimenting with a research process that becomes an opportunity for collective learning, aimed at identifying strategies for addressing a specific territorial issue and, in general, effective for local development.

The aim of the paper is pointing out both challenges and opportunities of CoPED Summer School, focusing on three specific thematic areas: 1) the role of the university and its chances to support long-term and meaningful partnerships with groups of the civil society; 2) the role of local organizations and their challenges/opportunities when it comes to organizational aspects, resources, and willingness to change; 3) the role of students and trainees, who experience a learning context that is highly intensive and significantly different from the one they are used to.



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Embodying transdisciplinarity: open challenges toward new epistemologies at the University of Bahia

Keywords

Embodied research; situatedness; creative methods; decolonial approaches

Contemporary research in the planning field increasingly advocates for a rigorous critique of positivist Eurocentric epistemology that claims to offer objective and neutral knowledge. Within urban studies this critique highlights the distance between researcher and researched, which entails the prioritisation of abstract theories over practised knowledge, and denies contradictions and uncertainty (Sandercock, 1998). This paper fits into this framework by considering the implications of the systems of power and thought production within academia, which dominate over marginalised epistemologies, and questioning the limits of an often disembodied and a-spatial knowledge.

Drawing from research experiences at the Federal University of Bahia in Salvador, Brazil, conducted within experimental contexts, the paper showcases concrete possibilities for adopting transdisciplinary approaches, for both the production of new knowledge and the research on territories. Implementing such transdisciplinary positions requires researchers to shift setting, methods and

attitude, fostering situated, creative and relational research. Additionally, they are urged to invert their gaze on the subjects involved, employing autoethnography and politics of identification (Sweet, Sanders & Peters, 2021). Emphasising the body as a central reference point, embodied research emerges as an inclusive channel for capturing dimensions of knowledge that are often overlooked.

Taking into account the contributions of disciplines embracing postmodern and decolonial approaches, this reflection encourages the exploration of alternative academic trajectories, urging researchers and planners to trace descaminos (di Campli & Boano, 2022) and venture into unprecedented paths.

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Challenging the Role of Academia: The Impact of Research

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Evaluating the Dynamics of Citizen Participation through the Case of Ankara Yüzüncü Yıl Çarşısı

Keywords

Ankara, Critiques on Knowledge Production, Decision-Making Processes, Public participation, Turkey

In response to criticisms of urban planning without involving citizens in decision-making, the planning process has adopted a participatory planning approach. Participation has been considered and accepted as a “good” method within planning practice (Tippett & How, 2020). However, participation’s form, scope, and stage are crucial considerations. Effective participation should not only be about involving citizens but also about understanding how individuals evaluate issues and build capacity throughout this participation (Cornwall, 2008). This article aims to provide a framework for how the involvement of citizens in decision-making processes can be more effectively achieved. The study discusses the question of whether citizen participation constantly improves urban planning and design decisions or sometimes leads to conflicting results with professional assessments, in the case of Ankara Yüzüncü Yıl Çarşısı. The results and reports of the urban design competition opened for the area, media coverage (news, social media), and literature sources have been examined to address this question. In the competition, Yüzüncü Yıl

Çarşısı, a significant element of civil architecture and an essential part of urban memory in Ankara, 54 out of 64 participating teams developed projects emphasizing the preservation of the area. However, in a post-competition public vote, 69% of participants preferred demolishing the building, resulting in its destruction. This situation, where public preference contradicts professional opinions, raises questions about the lack of interaction between academia and the public. It necessitates discussing the implications of societal detachment when citizen participation is included in terms of urban values. The research reveals the challenges behind directly placing citizens in decision-making mechanisms to increase participatory processes. Given these challenges, the study emphasizes that participation is not merely an action but also brings forth a series of difficulties, highlighting the need to enhance communication and knowledge transfer between academia and society and supporting participation with various processes.

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And they lived happily ever after (when the Urban Living Lab was finally over)

Keywords

transdisciplinary research, conflict, neighborhood, urban transformation, Munich

As a transdisciplinary research project, the urban living lab “aqt” in Munich aims to find answers to show how the livability of a neighborhood may be increased by reducing privately used cars in street space. During the project, parking lots on street space were exchanged for temporary green spaces. The experience gained from this project shows that urban living labs reveal various conflicts in a neighborhood, going beyond the project’s intention. The conflicts can create positive dynamics, such as livelier community and neighborhood support, and negative dynamics, like social polarization, that entail risks for democratic societies. Urban living labs are discussed as a promising strategy for addressing wicked problems and accelerating urban transformation, offering more experimental and collaborative approaches in research and urban planning. However, the impact needs to be more easily evaluated to increase the acceptance and applicability of urban living labs and other action research formats. Therefore, this paper discusses the potential of conflict analysis for measuring the impact of transformative research and uses the

example of the “aqt” project to show how to better understand which conflict issues are more prone to foster the risks of increasing social polarization. To achieve this, two qualitative text analyses of the collected data will be conducted to identify what people name as relevant in their feedback on the “act” street experiment, whether their opinions are consensual or controversial, and identify indicators of social polarization by sentiment analysis. Accordingly, the better understanding of conflicts can improve transdisciplinary collaboration and communication, allowing for more constructive approaches to resolving conflicts. This will enable future researchers to prevent social polarization and improve the impact assessment of urban living labs, and thereby, strengthen transformative literacy of all stakeholders involved and knowledge transfer between different projects.

Challenging the Role of Academia: The Impact of Research

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TEMP-: a bottom-up knowledge network as a research method for a dialogue between theories and practices in the emergency field.

Co-authors: Ilaria Tonti, Giovangiuseppe Vannelli

Keywords

Inter-university research network, Research method, Critical disaster studies, Post-disaster temporary housing, Fragile territories.

The inter-university research network TEMP- was founded during the COVID-19 pandemic as a bottom-up response to the need for dialogue in the doctoral field. The spontaneous need for exchange between research runs parallel to the will to investigate issues in depth, right down to their roots, which is why “TEMP-” is a prefix.

The common factor among the young researchers within this network is their scientific interest in the topic of post-emergency temporariness in Italian marginal territories. The issue, complex and apparently intractable, requires not only attention but also reinterpretation, especially concerning environmental impacts and socio-territorial disparities.

The problematic legacies of past policies addressing the need for transitional housing – evidence from Friuli to Central Italy, from Messina and Belice to Irpinia – show the urgent need to reframe the project within emergency management. The decline into which permanent temporariness sinks, bringing with it disadvantaged contexts, intersected with the high degree of risk

of the territories and the lack of awareness in the communities, places the project in front of a challenge with strong ethical, civil and, therefore, political implications. Beyond providing technical solutions, there’s a necessity to activate networks of knowledge.

Faced with the almost total absence of design in current emergency responses, the TEMP- network aims to act as a game changer by bridging the current gap interpreted as a fertile space for dialogue.

The network stands as an enabling cultural mediator to overcome conventional practices by overturning the assumptions of the problem around trans-scalar/sectorial/disciplinary tables.

Finally, as a method, TEMP- attempts to problematise the cognitive framework and systematise shared perspectives. Going beyond theoretical boundaries, the network interacts with practitioners to collectively test methodologies and results, opening up a spectrum of possible action trajectories.



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Sharing knowledge among academia, civil society, and inhabitants in Belgrade: potential of participatory and activist research on housing alternatives

Keywords

participatory research, activist scholarship, democratic knowledge production, housing alternatives

In the context of a global shortage of affordable housing, niches of citizen-initiated housing processes act as incubators for an alternative housing system to the real estate market. In order to trigger a transition in the current (hyper) neoliberal housing regime, 'niche cumulation' strategies (Geels 2001) need to be developed. By presenting fieldwork conducted in Belgrade, where housing abruptly shifted from being a common good during Yugoslav socialism to a personal struggle after transition in the 90s, the paper discusses how participatory and activist research can contribute to the formulation of those strategies. The method used is based on a twofold approach to community-engaged scholarship. On the one hand, it focuses on individual experience through in-depth interviews and the building of a multimedia 'Atlas of Housing', which narrates inhabiting by assembling personal stories. On the other, it looks at joint action by working together with the Collaborative Doctoral Award partner Ministry of Space (MS), a collective based in Belgrade committed to a fair and democratic development of the city. While supporting the

argument that research and political engagement can be mutually enriching (Hale 2008), I claim the need to go beyond the dichotomy of 'academia vs. civil society' by embracing the complexity of inhabitants' everyday. Informed by Warburg's Mnemosyne Atlas, the 'Atlas of Housing' is a tool that builds on this complexity by incorporating oral history and visual and poetic sensitivities. It challenges established knowledge by moving beyond ideological reduction of dominant narratives and making Belgraders' voices heard.

Drawing on fieldwork experience, the paper argues that research that positions itself as a platform of iterative exchange between academia, civil society and inhabitants can contribute to a better understanding of existing and potential housing processes. Moreover, it activates awareness and takes a role in politicising the housing issue.

Challenging the Role of Academia: The Impact of Research

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Transdisciplinary Collaboration for Livable Urban Environments through Cycling Initiatives.

Co-authors: Cyprine Odada

Keywords

Livable cities, Academia-society disconnect, Policy influence

Urbanization presents challenges, notably traffic congestion and health issues stemming from pollution and obesity, largely due to an over reliance on vehicles. Despite extensive research promoting cycling as a sustainable alternative, a significant gap between academic insights and practical implementation slows progress.

This research explores a dynamic collaboration between Edna a researcher, mentor, and assistant transportation lecturer at the Technical University of Kenya, and Cyprine, founder of the Critical Mass Nairobi Movement, a civil society organization dedicated to empowering cyclists and transforming urban areas. The initiative focuses on challenging academia's role in urban planning and enhancing urban livability by prioritizing health and well-being.

Edna's active engagement in cycling infrastructure research, alongside her students, merges seamlessly with Cyprine's grassroots efforts. Together, they work to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical challenges

through ongoing interactions between academia and the cycling community. Cyprine's talks to university students on cycling promotion and the students' active participation in cycling activities further enrich this collaborative endeavor.

In a notable instance, Edna played a key role in the road manuals review for Kenya, contributing insights to enhance cycling infrastructure design. This collaborative effort exemplifies a transdisciplinary approach, merging academic research with grassroots initiatives to reduce car dependency and address associated health complications, ultimately striving to create more livable cities.

The research underscores the transformative potential of challenging academia's conventional role in urban planning. It emphasizes the significance of transdisciplinary collaboration, illustrating how academia and grassroots efforts can converge to shape urban environments for the well-being of both residents and the broader community.



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Why do practitioners find theory not useful?

Keywords

planning theory, epistemological enquiry, critiques on knowledge production

The persistent gap between planning theory and practice has been a long-standing issue in the field. Since the ebb of the rational planning paradigm, planning theorists have consistently worked towards a more nuanced understanding of planning practice, emphasising communication, power, complexity, and institutions. There are also novel attempts to bridge theory and practice epistemologically, evidenced in Bent Flyvbjerg's phronesis approach and Charles Hoch's introduction of pragmatism. However, despite their efforts in narrowing the gap between theoretical interpretation and practice, the reality remains largely unchanged: most planning practitioners express low interest in planning theory, and in academic theory, in general. One key reason for this is clear – planning practitioners do not see current planning theory as immediately useful. By 'not useful', I suggest that incorporating pragmatist conceptualisations could be beneficial. 'Not useful' here implies that the theory does not align well with practitioners' experiences, nor does it guide them towards their desired futures. Led by this conception, this paper has reviewed the current

landscape of planning theory and finds that there are three prevalent approaches in theorising that make academically produced planning theory not immediately useful for practitioners: (1) the generalisation of the concept of planning without adequately considering the practical realities of practitioners; (2) the assumption that the aim of planning theories is inherently to facilitate 'good' planning, which often does not align with practitioners' everyday motivations; and (3) the attempt to materialise planning theory through educating individuals, without considering that planning is an organisational behaviour. Based on this critique, a new theoretical and empirical research agenda will be proposed in the end.

Challenging the Role of Academia: The Impact of Research

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Exploring Emotions in Planning Conflicts – Methodological Approaches and Reflections

Keywords

Emotions, participatory research, planning conflicts, methodology

Emotions have become a topic of interest for planning theorists in the last decade. Planning processes, especially when they are conflictual, often evoke emotional reactions from both citizens and planners. Advocates of an emotional turn in planning argue that the emotional aspect of planning is often neglected in theory and practice. They challenge the prevailing emotion/rationality ontology and argue that planners should acknowledge and reflect on emotions as an existing reality of planning processes. Likewise, academics should consider the emotional dimension of planning in their research.

However, existing research on emotions in planning often remains normative and theoretical. Empirical contributions are scarce and so are methodological reflections. In qualitative approaches, researchers rely on individuals to share their emotions in some way. This requires a level of trust and can be challenging in a professional context that, in the case of planning, is dedicated to a rationality understood as unemotional. Moreover, researchers face the challenge of interpreting

the involved emotional dynamics while taking into account their own emotional state.

The contribution reflects on the methodological challenges of researching emotions in the context of planning conflicts. Informed by a sociology of emotions, it draws on insights from different approaches to researching emotions in planning conflicts. In addition to insights from interviews and ethnographic approaches, this contribution focuses on insights from a participatory workshop with researchers and planning practitioners that aimed to open up spaces for mutual reflection on the emotional dimension of planning conflicts. Further, it reflects on the aim to establish a transdisciplinary discussion between practitioners and researchers on an equal footing, thus attempting to dismantle hierarchies in the research process that prominently come into question when researching emotions.

TRACK 4

Planning Tools & Techniques, Bridging the Gap Between Theory & Practice

Planning Tools
Digital Tools
Applied Research
Urban Design
Experimentation
Innovative Planning Approaches
Best Practices

Chairs: **Israa Mahmoud** (DASU, Politecnico di Milano), **Adriano Bisello** (EURAC Research Center)
Coordinators: **Abdallah Jreij**, **Jaime Sierra**

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Research is fundamental for the evolution of science—social and applied—and for catalyzing innovation and crafting better technologies related to our cities and beyond them. Social sciences, in general, and urban planning in particular, range from theory to practice and from policies to design and implementation. In a time where urbanity, which was once seen as the solution, is becoming more problematic (or at least being shaped by complex problems) and facing growing challenges in diverse forms and on different scales, urban research becomes more fundamental for finding solutions—through innovative planning tools—and responding to the timely challenges, tackling different aspects of our everyday urban and beyond-urban life. However, if research fails to be translated into practice, the impact of the work and effort risks having an impaired effect.

This track aims to endorse the implementation and applicability of research, firstly as an experimentation tool and, secondly, on a more diffused scale to solve rapidly growing problems that challenge the natural processes in which urbanity is formed. It invites contributions developing beyond theory and translated into design and practice. It aims to answer the following questions: How

are urban theories translated into design, and how is design translated into practice? What are the tools urban planners and urban designers use? What are the best practices and the most prominent applicative research approaches, and what urban challenges are being addressed? Does the applicability of research give it more legitimacy? Does innovation emerge from the work of private studios, institutions, firms, and private research centres, or must it be developed within the core of academia? Are we witnessing a time when interdisciplinary research is becoming more crucial, as well as the collaboration between the university bodies (university-based research) and private entities?

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Eyes on practice, feet in theory. A research experience exploring crossings between nature-based solutions and tactical urbanism

Co-authors: **Beatrice Galimberti**

Keywords

Nature-based Solutions, Tactical Urbanism, Urban Planning Tools, Urban Design

When dealing with an understudied phenomenon in urban planning and design, one possible way to investigate it is to keep ‘eyes’ on its characterizing practices while supporting research steps with ‘feet’ planted in concepts and theories. This is what happened in this research activity when we—the two authors of this contribution—attempted to examine potential intersections between our respective objects of research: Nature-based solutions (NBS) and Tactical Urbanism.

Initially we saw significant correspondence between NBS and Tactical Urbanism, such as attention to time, incremental implementations, participatory processes, and qualities of places. Then we observed that practices combining tools and techniques from NBS and tactical approaches are progressively emerging, although only a few studies have already examined these two sectors together.

Thus, we decided to delve into this understudied phenomenon. On the one hand, we kept our eyes on a number of these practices, analyzing them

and interviewing their authors. On the other hand, we held our feet planted in theory in pursuit of concepts that could support us in interpreting these practices, their techniques and tools, and we discussed them by interviewing specialists. We adopted a qualitative approach, looking for parameters and frameworks to recognize and evaluate the phenomenon, establishing priority observations and recommendations and returning to practice. Indeed, the aim was to examine which challenges and benefits arise from integrating NBS and Tactical Urbanism approaches to support urban planners and designers in the process of regenerating cities.

Interviews and desk analysis form the basis of this work, whose presentation will be supported by drawings, pictures, and short videos related to case studies, as well as conceptual maps to unpack the reflections that emerged around bridging the ‘gap’ between theory and practice in urban planning and design.

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Implementing energy retrofits in buildings in Spanish cities: connecting citizen everyday needs to delivering 2030 decarbonization goals?

Keywords

urban climate governance; innovative planning approaches; carbon-neutral cities; applied research; building retrofitting

Climate action in cities is increasingly recognized as of strategic importance to accomplish the global governance of climate change (Bulkeley 2021; Hölscher, 2019). In European cities, energy retrofitting of existing buildings is one of the main climate policies under implementation, having been further supported by the stimulus package NextGenerationEU to build a greener Europe. The building sector is pointed as a key lever to speed up the energy transition and deliver emission reductions by 2030 – in fact, 40% of Europe’s energy demand comes from buildings (UNEP,2022). Spanish cities are translating these objectives into local action by investing in energy retrofits in residential buildings. However, despite policies encouraging the deployment of retrofit interventions in the past decade, retrofitting rates remain low –demand from citizens does not take off at the speed required to meet 2030 objectives (GBCe, 2021). Urban climate governance literature covers enabling factors for local action but the empirical base on the results of climate interventions remains thin (Van Der Heijden, 2019; Wolfram, 2019). Outlining differing implementation

strategies to accelerate retrofits in cities that integrate the “EU Mission of Climate-Neutral Cities” such as Madrid and Vitoria-Gasteiz can provide a better understanding of the effectiveness of their corresponding methods of governance. In what ways are they connecting citizens’ everyday needs with the intended material transformation of the residential building stock?

This research employs the institutional analysis and development framework to analyse the networks and innovative planning tools aiming to accelerate citizen demand for retrofits –which include collaborations between universities and city councils. The study examines through qualitative analysis from participant observation and interviews with city councils, community organizers, members of the Collaboration Platform for Climate Neutrality of Spanish Cities, reports and public documents. Expected outcomes are a combination of centralized and decentralized governance networks, complementary to current financial incentives.



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Stakeholders' perceptions on alternative financing for green infrastructure

Co-authors: **Chris den Heijer**

Keywords

stakeholder perception, alternative financing, green infrastructure

In adapting cities to a liveable and climate proof future, policymakers are continuously struggling to find sufficient funding for green infrastructure (GI) projects. Exemplary is the ongoing multi-billion euro “lidding” project in Antwerp, Flanders. This megaproject seeks to construct a green roof over the ring road surrounding the city to reduce sound and air pollution while creating novel urban green spaces. As the project faces severe budget shortfalls, there is a significant impetus within the project for exploring alternative modes of financing and funding (AF). The interest observed in the Antwerp project aligns well with recent research calling for a need to draw in private capital resources to GI via different types of financing and funding methods beyond traditional public finance. To date, this field has however lacked insights into how the various types of stakeholders that are directly involved in GI projects, perceive the feasibility of these novel financing and funding methods. This research paper aims to address this gap by examining the perceptions of stakeholders on the practical feasibility of alternative financing mechanisms by asking; How do stakeholders

perceive the feasibility of using alternative financing for the lidding of Antwerp’s ringroad? In this case-specific research we first conducted a societal cost-benefit analysis followed by a financial feasibility assessment of pre-selected AF instruments. The financial feasibility assessment serves as input to be discussed during a focus group with a wide range of the project’s stakeholders, among which included are public administrators, citizen movements, urban planners and experts in finance and urban planning. The focus group aims to gather stakeholder perceptions regarding the political, economic, social, legal, and institutional barriers and opportunities of AF. Using these insights, this research contributes to closing the gap between the theory and the practice of alternative financing for green megaprojects like the “lidding” initiative.



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Rethinking Design Priorities:

Toward Human Scale and Sustaining Culture in Disadvantage Neighborhoods.

Co-authors: **Karolina Krośnicka, Piotr Lorens**

Keywords

Informal settlements, Culture, Urban Design, Sustainable development, eco-friendly, human-center approach

Cities are an accumulation of strategies of profiteering, encirclement, privatized development, institutional division, and control. They are antagonistic forces and are the result of fundamental social struggles linked to events such as migration, poverty, discrimination, violence, and corruption. Cities are constantly evolving, producing different types of built environments that impose their vision and characters on users. These contradictions generate spaces categorized as formal or informal, rich or poor, and inspiring or frustrating. One of the pressing issues in this paper is closely related to disadvantaged neighborhoods. These are defined as precariously built environments and homes for vulnerable communities that lack access to basic facilities and services. Furthermore, they are threatened by the greed and visions of state projects and developers for economic purposes. Within this framework, the research emphasizes the concept of democratizing the power of space development by rethinking design priorities through a humanistic, culture-based approach. The article highlights a disadvantaged neighborhood located

south of Beirut's municipal borders. This region is an example of a complex urban and socio-economic structure. As a result, this research aims to provide the best possible set of transformation design guidelines as recommendations based on the competence of architecture and urban design tools as a force for positive change that contributes to the creating potential at the social, economic, and environmental levels. To achieve this, the research relies on quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the urban characteristics and social context of this settlement. In addition, involving residents in decision-making regarding the future of their settlement. The research highlights cultural values and focuses on daily activity and the relationships between users and spaces. In conclusion, this research work can direct efforts toward an ethical approach to transforming disadvantaged neighborhoods, preserving the core of space, and protecting vulnerable communities from intrusions that lack knowledge and understanding of the critical relationship between the cultural foundation, space use, and design processes.



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Lost in Transitions: Experimental Approaches in Renovating Public Housing Neighbourhoods. Insights from Turin and Bologna

Keywords

urban transitions, experimental approaches, public housing, neighborhoods

Climate and energy issues raise several questions about the spatial and policy conditions that might guide just and sustainable transition processes. Transitions are considered contingent and politically contested processes that imply a multiplicity of systems, agents and scales that relate to each other and give rise to the reconfiguration of social interest, political arrangement and technology. In this context, public housing neighbourhoods have become a specific object of interest in addressing energy transition processes in urban policy and research. This is primarily due to the fact that the existing public building stock in Europe represents an energy-consuming heritage in need of renovation.

The present contribution aims at discussing different experimental approaches to the energy renovation of public housing neighbourhoods. More specifically the research adopts relational and institutional perspectives to investigate in-depth two Italian case studies, based in the cities of Bologna and Turin. The investigation relies on multiple sources of evidence including document review, semi-structured interviews with the actors

involved in two projects (including municipalities, public housing providers, universities, etc.) and on-site observations.

The investigated cases are emblematic for several reasons: first of all the attempt of both projects to combine urban, social and energy issues at a neighbourhood scale; the attention to contextual conditions and existing energy infrastructures in the rethinking of different public housing neighbourhoods; the building of a network of actors and interests operating at different scales and levels of government of the territory where specific actors act as mediators of information and resources all along the processes.

The results of the research move from understanding the actor's relations along the decision-making process to the identification of levers and catalysts to trigger process innovation in the shaping of urban transition policies and practices. Overall the research offers some reflections and practical insights about different configurations of institutional frameworks, contextual conditions and actors' relations for the renovation of public housing neighbourhoods.



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The gap between ambition and reality: understanding the role and responsibility of the municipality in sustainability-profiled districts in Sweden

Keywords

Sustainability-profiled districts, roles, responsibilities, municipality, implementation

Urban development projects have been defined as key areas to implement sustainability goals. New urban districts are therefore increasingly being planned with high sustainability ambitions. In Sweden, municipalities take an active role in initiating, driving, and managing formal planning procedures, using different planning instruments and tools. However, the municipalities are dependent on developers and other local actors for the actual implementation of the sustainability ambitions. This paper seeks to understand the role and responsibility of the municipality during the planning, implementation, and follow-up of sustainability ambitions in new urban districts. The focus is on two case studies in Sweden, the urban development projects of Brunnsbög in the municipality of Lund and Vallastaden in the municipality of Linköping. Brunnsbög and Vallastaden are both sustainability-profiled districts, meaning districts that are designated to serve as models for sustainable urban development and as testing grounds for innovation. Both sustainability-profiled districts are currently under development, making it possible to investigate the process. Data

consists of planning documents and interviews with urban planners from the municipalities of Lund and Linköping. The analysis of the empirical material indicates that there is very limited formal follow-up from the municipality during the later phases of the urban development process and that the municipality is struggling with its role in the implementation of sustainability ambitions. The paper aims to contribute to a better understanding of the progress of sustainable urban development processes and the ability to capture lessons learned to close the gap between ambition and reality, assuring to achieve sustainability ambitions.



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Placemaking as an instrument for urban regeneration. Bridging the gap between citizens and local authorities in the regeneration of public spaces in Bulgaria - the case of Plovdiv.

Keywords

placemaking, democracy, participatory planning, urban living labs, governance

By focusing on the process of placemaking, the research work uncovers its potential as a democratic socio-spatial instrument for urban regeneration, simultaneously bridging the gap between local authorities and citizens, people and institutions. Using the city of Plovdiv as a test-ground, the work implements the action-research methodology of the urban living labs in conducting placemaking workshops and adapting the approach for the regeneration of public spaces in Bulgaria. In addition, the research involves carrying out a series of interviews with citizens, experts and representatives of municipal administrations, investigating the attitudes and expectations of various stakeholders regarding public space, the processes of communication and integration of the approach in the governance of public spaces in relation to local planning processes and tools.

The spatial planning system in Bulgaria refers to the systems of transition and is part of the group of Eastern European countries, for which the significant role of an efficiently and transparently conducted processes of spatial development is

emphasized. The transition is from a totalitarian state with a centralized economy with the associated clearly structured, hierarchically developed and relatively closed expert system to a democratic state with a market economy with an unconvincingly developing and not entirely open system for citizens. In this context, the principles of placemaking based on the inclusion of citizens and their views in urban planning processes reveal how the process has the potential to contribute to the democratic conceptualization of the urban fabric.

The results of the research are planning to provide an indispensable source for the political and democratic aspects of urban planning and governance in Bulgaria, reveal how the placemaking process can be integrated into the existing urban planning practices, as well as contribute to the development of more inclusive and emancipated working methods for architects, town planners, policymakers and local authorities.



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Virtual Reality as a Conduit for Urban Theory and Cinematic Narrative in Cairo's Transformation

Keywords

Urban Imageability, VR Urban Analysis, Cinematic Narrative, Lynchian Theory Application, Cultural Heritage Preservation

In an evolving city like Cairo, where the landscape continuously alternates between demolition and construction, this study presents a novel approach to urban analysis. Utilizing Virtual Reality (VR) integrated with cinematic depictions, the research explores Cairo's rapid urban transformation. Grounded in Kevin Lynch's 'imageability' concept, it investigates the impact of urban sprawl on the city's visual and spatial identity. The city, grappling with high population density and a general unawareness of its urban significance, is losing its architectural heritage and identity. This transformation renders Cairo both a victim and a perpetrator in the erosion of its urban fabric, as iconic sites vanish and new ones emerge.

The study's methodology involves reconstructing select cinematic scenes in VR, offering a unique vantage point to compare historical and contemporary urban forms. This technique allows for a deeper understanding of the city's physical metamorphosis, highlighting the stark contrasts between the city's past and present states. Cinema, in this context, serves as a vital

repository, capturing the essence of old Cairo and its identity—essentially, it encapsulates what the city once was.

As Cairo's original urbanscape becomes a ghost of its former self, replaced by new structures, this research enables a visual dialogue between what was and what is. It not only assesses the city's physical transformation but also encourages public engagement in urban planning discussions. The research yields multiple benefits: it provides a new tool for assessing urban design changes, offers insights into public perception of these developments, and demonstrates the practical application of urban theories in an academic context. Serving as both an empirical instrument for urban strategy validation and a digital repository of Cairo's transient urban heritage, this study is pivotal for advancing urban planning practices, cultural heritage preservation, and fostering interdisciplinary cooperation, especially in rapidly changing urban environments like Cairo.

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Mapping narratives and spaces of coexistence

Keywords

Urban Identity, Mental Mapping, Participatory Research

This paper explores the dynamic interplay between identity and urban space, focusing on the assessment of research tools that foster a dialogical relationship between the researcher and citizens. It examines how narratives of identity are expressed and shaped through territorial use and landscape representation, particularly among specific population sharing common culture and language. The question posed is how these groups interact with urban landscapes, navigating between both natural and built elements, and how this interaction influences their coexistence within the urban environment.

A key methodological tool employed in this study is mental mapping, which reveals the intricate patterns of how people perceive, use, and engage with their urban environments. These mental maps provide deep insights into the relationships inhabitants have with their surroundings, uncovering the ways they adapt to or transform their spaces. This approach not only highlights the intangible issues sometimes missed by researchers, but also interrogates the dynamics of

cultural adaptation and space production in urban settings.

Central to this inquiry is the concept of continuous dialogue between researchers and citizens, utilizing visual narratives to understand and interpret urban realities. This paper argues for a participatory research process that is responsive to the perspectives and needs of urban dwellers, particularly newcomers adapting to new urban territories, today in reality of increased migration. The aim is to translate these findings into actionable guidelines for urban planners, promoting development that encourages inclusion and reflects the diverse narratives of city inhabitants.

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Bridging the gap between NBS-planning and implementation: a framework to identify NBS beneficiaries as potential co-investors

Keywords

nature-based solutions, implementation strategies, co-financing

To develop more resilient cities nature-based solutions (NBS) are being put forward as important measures to mitigate climate change related risks. While policies addressing NBS are well-established, a noticeable gap persists between policy development and effective implementation. Numerous barriers to implementation have been documented in the literature. A lack of resources or funds is often named as an important barrier, especially for local municipalities. Various solutions are being explored within the literature, including valuation methods, toolkits or NBS-centric business models, yet these often fall short in identifying which stakeholders should ultimately contribute.

This paper explores a spatial mapping framework as a tool to help identify NBS beneficiaries and therefore potential NBS investors, as an initial step in establishing financial arrangements to support NBS. Ecosystem services and benefits provided by NBS measures, such as enhanced water quality or biodiversity, are notoriously diffuse in nature, resulting in numerous beneficiaries. The

goal of the framework is to assist in the process of identifying beneficiaries who would be willing to invest. The framework consists of 4 steps; identifying the delivered ecosystem services of the NBS, assessing the impacts based on policy targets or on deliverable goods (public or market-based), determining the scale(s) of impact and matching stakeholders (public, in-between and/or private) based on impact and scale.

Based on research within an Urban Living Lab setting in the city of Genk (Belgium), the spatial mapping framework was tested and discussed with identified public beneficiaries, including provincial and regional administrations. Drawing on the empirical insights, we argue that the framework can be employed as an additional tool to developing co-financing arrangements for NBS; (1) by identifying beneficiaries as potential co-financers, (2) by forming a tool for dialogue between stakeholders and (3) by shedding light on overarching regulatory frameworks possibly preventing the uptake of NBS investments.

TRACK 5

Towards Coexistence: Contested Social & Spatial Landscapes in Transformation

Land Use & Land Rights
Planning & Place Narratives
Borders & Proximities
Place Power, Borders, Migration,
Ecological & Territorial Justice
Ecosystems & Ecology
Place attachment, Placemaking &
Community Empowerment
Critical Landscapes & Critical Mapping

Chairs: **Gloria Pessina** (DASU, Politecnico di Milano), **Nikos Katsikis** (TU Delft)

Coordinators: **Aamina Shahid**, **Busra Ince**, **Danila Saulino**

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Increasing globalization, mobility, acceleration of production and consumption and the contestation of territories are profoundly affecting territorial, social, and ecological equilibriums, posing a threat to the existence of many species, including human beings. Adding to this, it has been estimated that by 2050, climate change and extreme weather will force more than 200 million to migrate. Nonetheless, today we are witnessing a great paradox: on one hand, the increase in frequency and impact of climate events demonstrates an urgency to work towards more holistic and shared solutions; on the other, new boundaries, borders and ideological wars are spreading from South to North and East to West, limiting the mobility of people, goods and ideas. These simultaneous phenomena are not merely physical, but also conceptually divisive. It is necessary to observe such phenomena beyond their inner nature, in order to understand the relationships between them. By doing so we can unveil the question: Who is gaining and who is losing in large scale landscape transformations? In today's complex societies, shaped by factors such as culture, ethnicity and gender, places of interaction between different societal components have a particular symbolic significance. In this context, scholars and planners play

key roles in addressing the challenge of planning territories for coexistence rather than exclusion. The track aims to raise critical reflections on environmental and landscape transformations to explore the socio-spatial effects they generate and the power dynamics behind them. Considering territory as a contested place, it also aims to investigate the relationship between identity, territorial use, landscape representation and narratives. How to plan territories for coexistence in today's complex societies? How can urban and spatial planning contribute to bridge gaps rather than building borders between people-people and people-territories? How do new ways of living transform the landscape and what effects do they have on local communities? Is it possible to establish a limit within which the modification of landscape is still sustainable for a territory? By whom and for whom is the sustainability of a landscape transformation defined and assessed? How does identity affect the use of space and place and vice versa? How is landscape used as a means and representation of power? This track welcomes theoretical and practical contributions with an approach on various research methodologies, including participatory and creative tools to study and represent territories and landscapes, their transformations and uses.



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Beyond Boundaries:

An Exploration of Migration Agency in the Liminal Spaces of Ararat, Rome.

Keywords

migration agency, urban dwelling, liminal space

The recent materiality turn in migration studies has opened a vast literature on how migrants live in and inhabit cities globally. This literature focuses on migrant agency, examining practices such as makeshift camps, squatting, and political activism. Drawing from this literature this research explores the Kurdish socio-cultural center of Ararat, a longstanding migrant outpost in the city of Rome with 30 years of history.

Ararat is characterized as a 'liminal' space, existing in the interstice between a robust network of local and global relations and the precariousness of being an occupied space devoid of institutional support or affiliation. This setting serves as the backdrop for a feminist exploration of migration agency, approaching the subject from a privileged perspective (Duplan & Craston, 2023). The study unfolds across three interconnected levels: political activism, global mobility, and local connections within the city of Rome. The research seeks to unveil the multifaceted ways in which migrants shape their lives in the lived experience of the urban realm. The study aims to contribute

nuanced insights into migration agency across diverse dimensions by employing Ararat as a lens.

Towards Coexistence: Contested Social & Spatial Landscapes in Transformation



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Contested Floodscapes:

The gap in empowering minority ethnicities for urban flood resilience

Keywords

Placemaking, Urban Flood Resilience, Transformation, Minoritised Ethnicities, Socio-spatial Landscapes

Global flood risk is increasing due to climate change, rapid urbanisation and population growth in cities. The city of Hull, UK's second most flood-risk area, is fast transforming due to growing minoritised ethnic communities. This presentation discusses how placemaking for flood resilience in Hull results in contested socio-spatial landscapes for the growing minority ethnic communities. The presentation argues that the current flood risk management culture disempowers minoritised ethnic communities in building flood resilience. The research employed a participatory methodology to connect minoritised ethnic experiences to the city's past and ongoing flood resilience practices. Data was collected between January and February 2023. It involved six walking interviews, three virtual interviews, and a serious game approach, fostering iterative co-development through seven gameplays, seven in-game logs, seven debrief interviews, 36 post-game surveys and five follow-up discussions. The participants included three Flood Risk Management authorities, three political and administrative leaders, one flood-focused organisation and 29 minoritised ethnic

representatives. Findings revealed that the historical context and experiences shape value systems, influencing actors' ideas and actions, such as flood defences and concepts such as 'living with water'. However, these value systems create contested socio-spatial landscapes, which marginalise minoritised ethnicities through cultural factors like language, justice factors like restricted choice of residency, and limited knowledge of flood risk in the city. These factors affect their decision-making linked to investment in flood risk management, which diminishes their capacity to reduce flood risk and its impacts. The research recommends inclusive approaches such as using serious games in community engagement, knowledge sharing and decision-making to bridge the gap between minoritised ethnic communities and existing urban flood risk management practices. Overall, the research suggests a transformative shift in urban flood resilience, which empowers newly marginalised communities living in contested urban socio-spatial landscapes.



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The Geography of Northern Italy's Logistics Renaissance. Financialized Growth and Governance of Logistical Hinterlands in a Global City-Region

Keywords

geography of logistics; financialization; growth coalitions; real estate; operational landscapes

Logistics urbanization has surged to satisfy the demand of globalized trade. Logistics facilities are especially prevalent in the sprawling hinterlands of global city-regions, where cheap land plots along transport infrastructure can be found (Dablanc and Ross 2012). In these often-deprived locales, logistics facilities are portrayed as an instrument of territorial development through land-based growth, reuniting the interests of local business and political elites in growth coalitions (Molotch 1993) that orchestrate the construction and governance of logistics hubs (Raimbault 2022).

The present study reconstructs this constellation of governmental and non-governmental actors in the case of Northern Italy, where capitals channeled through the global city-region of Milan touch down on a polycentric 'operational landscape' (Brenner and Katsikis 2020) scattered with logistics facilities. It also speculates on the links between finance-enabled logistics facilities growth and the metabolisms of extended urbanization (Brenner and Schmid 2015).

A preliminary GIS-based study of logistics facilities

locations is used to single out the case study of the provinces of Alessandria and Piacenza, poorly industrialized but strategic areas for goods flows generated by the port of Genoa and the rich manufacturing sector of Northern Italy. The process behind logistics facilities development is subsequently reconstructed through semi-structured interviews with key experts such as logistics operators, government officers and real estate agencies. This exposes a financialized growth machine stretching from the global to the local scale, as the strategies of global investment funds are channeled down to outer-suburban municipalities through multinational real estate agencies. Regional land governance is weak and ultimately in the hands of revenue-seeking municipalities, leading to the unplanned development of logistics landscapes as an investment for global capital. The study explores an uninvestigated aspect of Northern Italian urbanization and informs urban planning and territorial governance in a region where land consumption is rampant.

Towards Coexistence: Contested Social & Spatial Landscapes in Transformation

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Reconnecting with landscapes in trouble: Towards co-existence?

Co-authors: **Irene Bianchi**

Keywords

landscape fr(agility), practices, co-existence, hybrid projects

The environmental and climate crisis has led to the emergence of major factors of territorial fragilisation, which have relevant spatial impacts and entail major phenomenal implications: It is not the material condition only that exhibits a certain degree of vulnerability, but the landscape itself, particularly when we view it as a perpetual “state” of transformation. In this perspective, the need emerges to re-imagine and re-signify our way of being in the world and observing it, of relating to the ecosystem and communities to which we belong, and - finally - of acting.

The research adopts a practice-oriented standpoint, assuming that practices can establish new balances between disconnections brought by systemic changes and their local manifestations, and they can enlighten new forms of “mutual aid” among species from a coexistence perspective. This contribution looks at experiments that hybridize different action forms and languages (including artistic, professional, civic, and institutional ones) to reimagine human nature

and human-community relationships. The projects selected developed in territories whose transformations are made visible in the “fragility” of the landscape, understood in its material and immaterial dimensions.

Selected experiments are explored through a triangulation of qualitative research methods, which considers: (i) how they look at the landscape and its fragilities; (ii) how they participate in ongoing transformation processes; and (iii) what possible changes they illuminate in a perspective of coexistence and mutual aid.

Reflecting on the results, the research aims to work in the “present time” of the self-making of the practices themselves. In this way, the investigation can be placed into the “landscape acting moment”, monitoring and experiencing the present material agency of every environment. Finally, the article reflects on the role of practices as “boundary objects” for building a common ground in the search for new alliances, and on the specific contribution of hybrid forms of action.



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The seascape as an actor in offshore wind farm exploration.

Keywords

seascape, maritime landscape, contested places.

This paper explores the role played by the seascape in the public acceptance of nearshore and offshore wind farms, where it can be interpreted as being an actor capable of influencing the outcome of the project. Although considered an option for the much-needed energy transition towards new forms of clean sources, resistance to the development of wind farms is increasing in some countries, and it has been noticed that large-scale undertakings fail due to a lack of support in society. The transposition of onshore wind farms to the sea has been defended as an alternative to mitigate resistance, assuming that, by locating them offshore, opposition would be halted. However, the literature notes that this is a misconception, as offshore sites are not problem-free surrogates for onshore farms and conflicts can persist even when wind turbines are planned to be installed over the sea and away from populations. Thus, it is discussed here how the seascape can be related differently to different audiences and, therefore, should be considered an actor worthy of consideration for the success of the planned exploration. The proposal of offshore wind parks

along the coast of Portugal is used as a case study to analyse how it was received by different sectors of society. Findings reveal that, in contrast to the best practices recommended in the literature, stakeholders with strong ties to the seascape were not included in the decision-making process from the very start, which led to fierce opposition in areas where sea uses are deemed to be in conflict. In conclusion, it is demonstrated that the maritime territory is also a contested place as the urbanization process affects both its ecological and social status quo. It is suggested that a broad understanding of the multiple seascapes could help mitigate impacts and build better-informed decisions.

Towards Coexistence: Contested Social & Spatial Landscapes in Transformation



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Insurgent practices and colonial power relations in mixed cities- the case of Haifa City in Israel

Keywords

insurgent planning, settler colonialism, urban citizenship

This paper investigates the reconstruction of Palestinian urban identity by focusing on informal practices. This study aims to broaden the understanding of settler colonialism in the Palestine-Israel region by examining the role of marginalized Palestinian minorities in reshaping social dynamics and establishing insurgent urban spaces in mixed cities. During the British Mandate, Arab-Jewish shared municipal governance in the city, enhancing the entrepreneurial cooperation between Arabs and Jews in constructing residential and urban buildings and fostering a sense of coexistence between the two communities. However, the establishment of the state of Israel destroyed Palestinian urban infrastructure through the confiscation and demolition of residential neighborhoods, and reusing urban buildings as part of modern Israeli society challenged the social fabric of the city. Despite Haifa's longstanding municipal policy attempting to nurture an "Israeli model of coexistence" by launching bilingual cultural programs and events, these actions were perceived by the Palestinian residents as superficial projects characterized by a master-

subject dynamic. Furthermore, the Palestinian-Israeli national conflict has posed a significant obstacle to the sense of coexistence in Haifa since the Intifada in 2000, the Israeli-Palestinian crisis in 2021, and the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip today. Nevertheless, over the past decade, private entrepreneurship and activist programs have managed to establish a Palestinian urban identity, separate from the Jewish-Israeli identity. Practices such as reviving historic buildings and emphasizing Palestinian folklore, language, and art in neglected parts of the city have allowed the freedom to create autonomous urban citizenship supported by international collaboration, which has successfully transcended the limitations imposed by the state. This paper examines the rebirth of Palestinian urban identity in Haifa and explores the implications of creating new urban spaces on national colonial dynamics.

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Territories of Ecological Justice in the Coastal Habitation of Mangalore: Indigenous Planning Paradigms

Co-authors: Apoorva Caroline, Shoumik Desai

Keywords

Ecological regenerative urbanism, indigenous planning, ecological justice, local area planning, community participation

The importance of rivers in shaping the Indian civilization is a deep-rooted saga. These rivers not only shape the geographical landscape but also influence settlements, land use, traditions, culture, spiritual practices, and economic dynamics of the region. In the riverine and coastal expanse of Mangaluru lies the Bengre Estuary, a particularly ecologically sensitive zone serving as a distinctive case study owing to the myriad of complex issues it confronts. This location grapples with distinct challenges, undergoing the dual pressures exerted by the Coastal Regulation Zone policies which comprise the Top Down policy framework in conflict with the indigenous planning paradigms of the native communities, and the economy-driven land transformation (mal-development) as envisaged by the Master Plan. Because of this developmental trajectory, the coastal habitation in the vicinity of the estuary is significantly affected. This situation has led to increased vulnerability of the community for ecological sustenance. Additionally, the indigenous communities find themselves grappling with the issues of relocation and displacement. It is worth noting that despite

the presence of traditional infrastructure and regenerative development initiatives of the local communities, the development discourse and implementation are consistently overshadowed by the macroeconomic model. This tends to undervalue the significance of ecological and cultural considerations, potentially compromising the long-term well-being of the ecology and indigenous communities.

This reveals a significant issue in coastal development known as the “Top-down vs. Bottom-up Dilemma.” In response to this issue, our methodology employs research by documentation and design to unravel the coastal segment’s unique historical, cultural, social, ecological, economic, and occupational traits. The research results in placemaking-centred design for Mangaluru’s coastal region, negotiating various practices local and Master Planning based. The designs and frameworks evolved have emerged from community involvement, stakeholder collaboration, ecological sustainability, cultural preservation, participatory planning, and co-creation ethos for implementation.

Towards Coexistence: Contested Social & Spatial Landscapes in Transformation



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How did Unilever penetrate Istanbul's public spaces with its unique greenwashing strategy?

Keywords

Neoliberal governance, Greenwashing, Shadow property rights, Turkey

In 2020, Unilever, through its kitchen/bathroom cleaning sub-brand Cif, announced the launch of a social responsibility project called “Beautiful while Clean” in collaboration with the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and the Turkish Red Crescent. Several low-cost spatial interventions aimed at the areas of the Bosphorus shores with the highest human circulation were realized. However, the company chose not to participate in any operational processes after the intervention, instead leaving all operational responsibilities to the municipality. Notably, the company not only equipped these venues with huge “non-advertisement ads” but also carried out extensive advertising campaigns on TV and social media, capitalizing on the positive perception of the project. In fact, certain valuable sections of concrete urban public space were allocated for the partial use of the company without a transparent process that involved the public. In fact, the municipality could have easily been realizing the projects with its own resources. The primary empirical findings of this nearly completed research are based on semi-structured in-depth

interviews with representatives from Unilever, the local government officials (including the Istanbul Metropolitan and district municipalities), and the Red Crescent workers. The research also encompasses the examination of contract and project documents, spatial planning decisions, on-site measurements, and consultations with experts and citizens. At a time when the regime of exceptional laws has become the norm in ruling AKP's Turkey, the unique aspect of this research is that it shows that such exceptions are also resorted to by opposed local governments following a similar line. Amidst the backdrop of Turkey experiencing a series of turbulent political changes, the fact that an opposition municipality has chosen such a questionable mode of governance, which goes beyond the conventional and legitimate ways of conducting business in the public interest, underscores the hegemonic power of the established paradigm. On the other hand, the fact that opposition from NGOs known for their sensitivity to public concerns did not oppose these projects can be interpreted as a sign of national consensus.



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Landscape of Ethnic Economy : The Turkish Kebab Restaurants in Milano

Keywords

ethnic entrepreneurs, cultural landscape, ethnic economy, migration, ethnicity

The ethnic/cultural landscape embodies the visible cultural traits of ethnic groups, encompassing both tangible and intangible aspects such as architectural styles and the name of places, streets, and towns. It is through the contributions of ethnic groups that the cultural landscape emerges, serving as a medium for social expression of symbols, icons, and metaphors, as described by McDowell (1994). The landscape assumes significance as a platform for ethnic and local groups to exercise power within the socio-cultural and political spheres (Mills, 2010). In the context of ethnic businesses often choose to sell existing products due to the familiarity and acceptance of these products in the market. This leads many ethnic businesses to follow and replicate economic processes established by earlier waves of immigrants (Waldinger, Aldrich, & Ward, 1990). Ethnic groups tend to strategically establish and control specific zones within cities, employing spatial strategies such as the establishment of restaurants. With changing patterns of immigration, the landscape undergoes transformations influenced by socio-cultural factors.

Turkish kebab restaurants are an example of ethnic representation. The focus of my research is to delve into the landscape of the ethnic economy through an exploration of Turkish kebab restaurants in Milano. The self-identification by ethnic restaurants' impact on the Italian multi-ethnic landscape will be evaluated. By doing so, I aim to analyze the distinctive features that contribute to the Turkish kebab restaurants' role within the broader landscape. Additionally, I seek to understand how Turkish identity is constructed within these ethnic businesses. Turkish restaurants' visual language enables us to analyze the significance of Turkish kebab restaurants' concept in determining the image of the restaurants in Milano society. The foundation of my research is based on personal observations made within these ethnic restaurants and interviews conducted with self-employed and employees of Turkish kebab restaurants in Milano.

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Towards Coexistence: Contested Social & Spatial Landscapes in Transformation



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Building Under Shadow of the Oil: The Formation and Development of Oil Company Towns in Southwestern Iran

Co-authors: Saeid Khaghani, Rouhollah Mojtahzadeh, Asma Mehan

Keywords

Colonialism, Colonial Architecture and Urbanism, Oil, Abadan, Masjed Soleyman

Following Darcy's concession in 1901, Britain began oil exploration in the southwest of Iran. In 1908, economic oil was discovered, and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC) was established. This company from its establishment was under the influence of the British Government, to extend that, Britain became its major shareholder in 1917 which continued until the nationalization of Iran's oil in 1951. In the meantime, the concession and following agreements prepared an almost autonomous status for the company. Generally, Iran had never been a British colony, however; this status had evidence of colonialism and let the company build the artificial environment in Iran's southwestern, based on its attitudes and values, as well as hierarchical structure, racial-class segregation, and closed society, which experts consider it as a type of social engineering.

According to this, the building formed by the company could manifest the upstream ideas, specifically in towns that were completely shaped by it. Therefore, Masjed Soleyman and Abadan, the two main company towns of the British-owned

Anglo-Persian Oil Company, which were quite isolated from other parts of Iran, could be suitable platforms for displaying the company's attitudes and values. Therefore, this research by interpretive-historical methodology, based on both primary and secondary sources from desk research and archival research, investigates the manifestation of the company's attitudes and values in its quiet a half-century (1901-1951) building in Masjed Soleyman and Abadan, in five periods. These periods were shaped based on the most important happens including periods of exploration (1901-1908), formation (1908-1917), primary development (1917-1933), secondary development (1933-1939), and leading to the nationalization of oil (1939-1951). In the first period, there is no evidence of architecture or urbanism, in the second and third periods, architecture, specifically bungalows appeared company values and in the fourth and fifth periods, urbanism especially, garden cities represented company values.



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