

Scienze del Territorio / Territorial Sciences

Issue no, 10: “Territories and power, a two-way relationship”

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Call for papers – deadline: July 31st, 2021

Issue no. 10 of the journal focuses on *the relationship between power and territories*: powers on the use of territories and powers to transform territories. Exerting a power does not necessarily implies violence, oppression or hegemony: ¹ all forms of government, even the most democratic ones, use power – the more shared, the more effective. Rather, it is important to see the different natures of power. To paraphrase Byung Chul Han, the power exerted through violence, in a coercive way, is actually a weak power. As countless historical and contemporary examples may confirm, “the ‘higher-order’ power is such that those who undergo it *want* openly what its holder wants, so the subordinate accepts the will of the powerful *as if it were his own*, or even *anticipates it*”.² Consider e.g. the pervasive and shaping impact of this kind of power exerted by mass or market dictatorships, or by Smart City algorithms.

Finally: power transforms territories, but territories also affect power and shape its forms. This two-way relationship is implied in the very concept of territorial heritage that, the more firm and lively is, the more affects (or should affect) horizons and limits of possible or desirable transformations.

In its section named “Science in action”, issue no. 10 of the journal intends to deepen some topics already addressed, albeit from a different perspective, in the issues no. 6 “The economies of territories as common goods” and no. 8 “Democracy of places: actions and forms of community self-government”. The articles submitted will preliminarily undergo a double blind peer review process. The journal will accept articles consistent with its scientific and cultural objectives (<https://oajournals.fupress.net/index.php/sdt>), written in Italian, English, French or Spanish, which refer to experiences, studies and projects related to the following thematic areas.

¹ An example of this kind of power are the events related to the Lyon-Turin high-speed rail. Here, a brutal power lacking any scientific or economic validation is opposed by a trans-local community defending a territorial heritage for all.

² “It is not the ‘I must anyway’, but the ‘I want’ what reveals that a higher-order power is playing. Indeed, the answer to this kind of power is not an internal ‘no’ but an emphatic ‘yes’” (Byung Chul Han, *What Is Power?*, 2005).

1. *The construction of territories by local communities, in history and today.* Of interest are specific studies investigating origins and nature of communitarian powers. A question to deepen: to what extent a communitarian power, when institutionalised, preserves its original democratic nature? An example are the vicissitudes related to the construction of Dutch polders and their various forms of management adopted between late Middle Ages and today. Other examples of ancient productive vocations, re-adapted and developed in modern and contemporary times, are certain economic districts of the ex-Communal Italy, such as textiles in Prato and Carpi, ceramics in Sassuolo and mechanics in Modena.
2. *Processes of re-appropriation, reuse and enhancement, by settled communities, of territorial heritages generated by a 'violent power'.* An example: Roman centuriations – a formidable work for the rationalization of lands, usually belonging to *ager publicus* but often already arable and farmed by small local communities. Centuriations were an authoritative action but, for many centuries and until recent times, countless agricultural communities have been working on their structure, enhancing and making it more complex through an unremitting 'DIY' action. From such communities or commonalities, new cooperative forms have emerged which are still operating: the local dimension, which sprouts and grows from below, sometimes seizes, takes possession of and transforms structures handed down from above; thus shaping and exerting its own power.
3. *New technologies of power on territories and cities.* Smart City represents a monitoring apparatus and a system of 'driven participation', a set of algorithms aimed at facilitating the management of city, traffic, access to services, efficiency of infrastructures. One of the main goals of Smart City is to become Safe City, a secure city, equipped with security systems more and more complex and integrated, where the monitoring and the surveillance of citizens (and the exclusion of others) detain a pivotal role. More generally, the pervasive and increasingly powerful use of algorithms in the management of cities and territories is marked by a "mounting opacity combined to an outstanding concentration of power".³ Similar considerations could be extended to the use of 'big data' to monitor, forecast and influence consumers' choices; consumers of goods and services and, indirectly, consumers of cities.
4. *Power transforms territories, but territories also affect power and shape its forms.* That territories, in their forms of existence, use value and resistance, have influenced – sometimes even modelled – local societies is a

³ Gilberto Pierazzuoli, *La città invisibile*, April 2021.

historical truth. An example is the extraordinary importance of territories for the social structures and historical behaviours of Alpine valley dwellers. It is a coevolution materialized in different forms of communalities and that characterized the “centrality” of mountain territories, in their socio-politic autonomy, until modernity: form of self-government virtually destroyed, in Italy, since the 1927 Law on commons. Also significant, in this context of grassroots democracy, are the experiences inspired by the “territorial principle” stated by Olivetti, where the local community self-government grounds a reversal of powers from bottom to top, most of the times as a clash in political decision-making processes. The current topic is in which situations and conditions this connection, allowing territories to exert a true power on humans, is still lively, obviously in much more problematic forms and not out of necessity, but rather as the outcome of a laborious cultural mediation.

Submission deadline and procedure

Articles – written and to be published, in case of acceptance, in Italian, English, French or Spanish – should be

- sent, via e-mail only, to the address rivista@societadeiterritorialisti.it, or
- submitted, after the due registration, through the digital platform accessible from <https://oajournals.fupress.net/index.php/sdt/about/submissions>.

Deadline: July 31st, 2021.

To avoid risks of exclusion, articles should strictly comply with the submission guidelines accessible at the web address <https://bit.ly/2RyHRlp>, with a special attention to the part concerning the darkening of authors’ personal data, and contain any additional elements required therein. Since the first submission, an English version of the abstract is required.

For any further information: rivista@societadeiterritorialisti.it.