

Scienze del Territorio / Territorial Sciences

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edited by **Chiara Belingardi** and **Daniela Poli**

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In the face of ecological, social, territorial, economic and democratic crises our planet is going through, territorialist culture has aimed at an integral re-thinking of the forms of production and reproduction of life worlds, not stopping at a mere technical renovation of the urban planner's toolbox.

In these years of reflection and experimentation, great attention has been paid in particular to two aspects: on the one hand the founding recognition of long-lasting characteristics and rules of the territory, understood as the outcome of co-evolutionary processes between nature and culture; on the other the inclusion of social practices and community self-government in the architecture of planning tools to support society's transition towards a new civilisation of care and regeneration of the territory, redefining territorial planning and design first and foremost as a “social practice that implies the enhancement of different kinds of knowledge, the consideration of action as an essential mode of knowledge, social mobilisation and conflict as forms of collective learning” (BARBANENTE 2020, 27). Such an approach is based on the assumption/metaphor of the ‘living being territory’, a large, complex and interconnected body produced by the interaction of human and non-human elements that needs constant attention and care to ensure the reproduction of the many human and non-human life forms it embodies.

Following often parallel, rarely interweaving paths, and even starting sometimes from conflicting assumptions, such aspects have also affected other forms of knowledge. Topics like production/reproduction, care, the body, interdependence of humans and the environment, have also long characterised the reflection of the feminist thought, which has addressed the debate on the city through specific studies on urban spaces adopting a gendered perspective (CORTESE ET AL. 2006; KERN 2020; SÁNCHEZ DE MADARIAGA, ROBERTS 2013; MUXI 2020) and often remained unknown.

For example, the aspects of *longue-durée*, of the history of places and people, may represent one of the possible conflict areas between the territorialist and feminist approaches. While *longue-durée* is interpreted by the territorialist thought as an element of richness, the reading of which helps us to understand the rationality and the judicious and harmonious settlement rules arising from co-evolution of societies and places, in the feminist thought the past is at the same time a place of disconnection and of rediscovery. In a feminist view, the revival of the past can be read as the annihilation of struggles for

self-determination, as the exaltation of forms of patriarchy which crushed the expression of female horizons by denying freedom and rights through a misogynistic rhetoric. Therefore, we can historically read “witch hunts” as a tool for women persecution, disintegration of communities and enclosure of the commons (FEDERICI 2004), a mechanism still used in some countries of the Global South (FEDERICI 2018). Likewise, we can point out prejudices that have historically prevented women from entering the world of work (especially for certain professions) or have devalued and belittled their contributions: think for instance to women architects that, due to biases on women’s skills, were forced to sign their projects with the name of their husband or a male relative or colleague. At the same time, under a different investigation outlook, the past can be read as complexity, as a reservoir of practices, relations, reflections and little-known (and often marginalised) knowledge forms. The history of the relationship between women and territory may thus become a research field aimed at rediscovering and enhancing what has been hidden (misrepresented, misattributed or obliterated) as a construct to be reinterpreted in relation to past and current historical and social contexts.

Today, diverse and contradictory social practices are shaping a new and articulated urban mosaic, woven on dynamics that escape any precise and ultimate definition. New phenomena related to subtle distinctions among inhabitants, of a non-traditional kind, are emerging and consolidating, produced by the diversity of life and work styles, of patterns of use and consumption of the city, of times and ways of relating to different urban social groups, in which the “living infrastructure of care” represents a special glue and an important connective tissue of new forms of urbanity. In our increasingly mobile, composite, and fragmented society, which expresses urban needs that are difficult to delegate to state mediation for land regulation or production of public goods and services, it therefore seems imperative to turn to unusual ways of sharing and managing the urban commons (Dardot, Laval 2015). Unprecedented places based on deep care relationships are reviving cities and relationships between the urban environment and its territory, and many of these have in common practices and reflections that may be inscribed in the strand of feminist thought and practices. In *The care manifesto* we read:

we need policies enabling co-operative housing, collective housing and rent caps, as well as imaginative architects and planners who can facilitate forms of connective care and infrastructural sharing. This means [...] creating the resources to cultivate caring communities based on a notion of the commons: owning and sharing together. Put differently, we need the “right to the city”, a slogan widely used to reclaim cities as co-produced spaces to be extended everywhere, for everyone – as well as the right to the suburbs and the countryside. Communities, then, need a wide range of outdoor and indoor, online

and offline public zones in order to flourish. [...] Creating communities that can care means amplifying the spaces that are public, that are held in common, that are shared and cooperative, rather than those designed for or hijacked in the interests of private capital. To do this is to create what we term a *sharing infrastructure* (CARE COLLECTIVE 2021, 60).

A radical rethinking of urban and spatial planning along the lines of life reproduction and of the need to give more space to everyday life is the focus of the broad feminist debate on planning. In the book *Urbanismo feminista* (2019), Collectiu Punt 6 – a historic collective of feminist architects based in Barcelona – issues a “Propositional manifesto for a feminist urbanism” some points of which are quoted below:

1. We cannot think of the urban environment without a direct relationship with the natural environment [...]; 5. Working in a community perspective, recognising the times and spaces of participation beyond the processes started by the public administration and beyond the representative democracy. We must de-gerarchise urbanism to recognise the knowledge of dwellers and communities [...]; 9. Substantial transformations and not patches for the system. You cannot shoehorn a gender perspective into a capitalist system with patriarchal dynamics. It is necessary to discuss the municipal dynamics still imbued with this system: unless they choose to change it, they are unlikely to trigger radical transformations; 10. Recognising feminist genealogies and the collective and evolutionary dimension of knowledge construction. No contribution comes from scratch: it is necessary to give visibility to pioneering women authors and to those who today keep building more righteous societies and urban spaces (ibid., 211-214).

In short, these reflections, projects and practices reveal a broad interchange area for contexts that have often just skimmed each other.

Starting from elements of convergence and divergence, this issue of the journal highlights feminist outlook and practices in dialogue with the research and reflection of the territorialist world, laying the foundations for a confrontation that, we hope, will bring a mutual enrichment in the numerous touch points. The issue, open to a plurality of suggestions, intends to focus on the aspects listed below.

1. *Genealogies and the historical construction of women’s space.* Multiple storytelling opens up new worldviews (ADICHIE 2018), which can break the lenses we usually look at the territory through (DECANDIA 2019). Stories portray the present, ‘how the world is made’, but also the past and the future, ‘how it has always been made’, ‘how it should be’ and thus ‘how it will be’. Therefore, rediscovering the historical bonds between women and the contexts of life, the ways of building and organising space at different scales, means not only bringing little-known stories to light, but also opening up opportunities for

new interpretations, retro-innovations, new ways of reading and narrating the world, of re-bringing the world into the world.

2. *Care as a method of reading and a mode of action.* Care has many uses: it can be understood as a way of acting within the territory, as a mode of respectful knowledge, of values recognition, but it can also be understood as a design goal, thanks to which it is possible to rethink the urban environment giving priority to reproduction practices and everyday life, or else to recognise and strengthen actions of territorial care implemented by the inhabitants.

3. *Inhabiting complexity,* not only as a right to intimacy and refuge – Virginia Woolf's “room of one's own” – but as an action going beyond the home threshold to enter the relational dimension of neighbourhood, of proximity, of solidarity relations practiced to share care work, mutual help, experimentation, to claim one's own individual and collective autonomy.

4. *Reading and representing urban and spatial forms.* Drawing maps is not a neutral operation: it means choosing what to observe, describe, represent. It means emphasising some aspects of the territory to the detriment of others. It means reflecting on the gendered geographies drawn in the city and narrating the often conflicting and alternative practices of collective description of the territory.

5. *Inclusion and exclusion in urban spaces.* Issues like safety and decency are in the spotlight as rhetorical devices excluding unwanted people (PISANELLO 2017; PITCH 2013) and expulsion tools. In the right desire to walk through the city without fearing for our safety, we can offset this rhetoric with key words such as well-being, inclusion, collective appropriation of spaces. Making the city more welcoming and enabling for different urban populations (elderly people, young people, children, migrants) means strengthening bonds of co-existence and belonging, and consequently general urban well-being, without introducing securitarian and repressive devices.

6. *Enabling services, time policies and spaces.* Laws on urban standards, the distribution of services in the city, time policies, mobility and walkability plans are examples of how urban geographies can be modified to allow reconciling the diverse aspects of complexity and richness of the “new everyday life” (SÁNCHEZ DE MADARIAGA 2004): not only production together with care loads, but spaces and times for building relationships, for well-being, for participation in social and cultural life, for everyone to live better and more intensely the architecture of life world.

7. *Urban and territorial policies, plans, projects.* It is necessary to reflect on the techniques and tools we use in transforming urban and territorial contexts, starting from the redefinition of public spaces, with descriptions of consolidated practices, case studies, policies, plans or projects that have employed an inclusive feminist and gender perspective in order to imagine or implement more fair, more equal cities and living contexts tailored to everyday life.

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For any further information: rivista@societadeiterritorialisti.it