

Scienze del Territorio / Territorial Sciences

Eighth issue: “Democracy of places: actions and forms of community self-government”

Call for papers – Extended deadline: September 30th, 2019

In territories increasingly degraded by boundless urbanisation processes, virtualised by networks, mortified by the economic and welfare state crisis or ‘put at work’ as a robotic social factory, the separate presences of residents and production actors often reconnect each other as aggregations of dwellers, producers and active citizens building communities aimed at taking care of places. Such a reconnection frequently triggers the desire to regain *territorial heritages* through associative agreements for their management as common goods, also through civic actions on behalf of the common and ecosystem dimension of territorial contexts.

Taken together, such processes tend often to push back mercantile production and hetero-directed work, expanding the sphere of voluntary cooperation, freed time and self-determined activities at the productive, political, social and cultural levels.

It is now possible, therefore, to bring out experiences of dynamic and evolving communities that show the ability to generate places, renew their perception, re-embed local economies into perspectives of self-sustainability, question electoral delegation, self-manage decision-making processes, elaborate critical visions of the dominant forms of territorial government, contrast the domination of global economic flows and trans-political governance strategies.

On the other hand, it should not be ignored that such experiences can hardly comply with current practices of national or local government, mostly tending to favour the exogenous interests of strong economic actors, indifferent to deteriorated quality of life and work in metropolitan outskirts, to desertification of inland areas, and to social and environmental degradation in general. Therefore, it becomes vital to question about the fate of democracy in its diverse expressions, about the relationships it can establish with locally experimented social and material transformations, in order to bring them onto a wider scale and favour self-government of places, taking into account that the hegemony of neo-liberalism, its crises and its backfires mostly generate post-democracy perspectives, implying a transfer of decision-making processes to the dimension of meta-political and meta-territorial governance.

The eighth issue of *Scienze del Territorio / Territorial Sciences* intends to investigate such issues, which already represented the focus of analysis and discussion in the Territorialist Society conference held in Bari and Castel del Monte on November 15-17, 2018 (<https://bit.ly/2SpEA2o>). The issue will host, in its “Science in action” section – after assessing them through a double blind peer review – papers focusing on definition aspects and problems concerning the idea of ‘community’, starting with its depiction as an ‘unclosed circle’, formed by the aggregation of proactive players defining themselves as *project communities* involved in *territorial recomposition processes*.

Papers have to be consistent with the scientific and cultural aims of the journal (see <http://www.fupress.net/index.php/SdT>) and may be written in Italian, English, French or Spanish, covering and integrating all or some of the research tracks set off by the conference, with particular reference to experiences, processes and challenges related to the following thematic areas.

1. Forms of grassroots planning and agreements among potential key actors of new organisations mediating with institutions

Experiences of shared actions among social, political and productive actors for the defence and the enhancement of territorial areas and related activities (local neo-agriculture supply chains, multifunctional agricultural parks, organic districts, food communities, eco-museums, city-countryside agreements, river, lake, mountain, landscape contracts, etc.): such experiences often find institutional acceptance but do not always succeed in affecting the administrative machine in creating forms of self-government for the well-being of local communities, being frequently used, instead, as forms of activity complementary to green industry, large-scale distribution, green economy or as a mere support for sector policies.

2. Forms of social self-organisation in urban outskirts and open areas

Practices of socio-territorial self-organisation widespread in urban, rural and mountain contexts (co-housing, eco-villages, laboratories, cultural factories, active citizenship forums, outskirts dwellers committees, occupations of neglected public houses or buildings, experiences of agricultural communities, aggregations and local committees for territorial defence, experiences of repopulation of the mountain, revitalisation of abandoned areas, etc.): such practices, sometimes taking clear antagonistic attitudes, on the one hand respond to the crisis of metropolis and industrial production by reorganising life, income, sense of work, promoting social inclusion and activating forms of technical knowledge; on the other, they collide with bureaucratic complexity, procedural costs, economic, financial or real estate powers, etc.

3. Innovative forms of economy and production for self-enhancement of patrimonial common goods

Experiences of solidarity economy, social and mutual support aggregations (businesses and networks operating in solidarity economies, social and community foundations, time banks, mutual aid organisations, local currencies, microcredit, circular and ‘fundamental’ economies, community cooperatives, experiments of energy self-production, schools of civil economy, open source ICT networks, makers networks, forms of political representation of temporary and self-employment, revitalised factories, self-managed workshops, co-working, metropolitan union of riders, etc.): almost always, such experiences face lack of institutional legitimacy, with problems in setting up claims and embeddedness issues, as well as difficulties in conjugating the opposition to dominant production relationships with the definition of new goals and contents of economy and production.

In each of such cases, it is advisable to understand and highlight challenges and opportunities in addressing the main issues faced by the various experiences.

New submission deadline and procedures

All papers should be submitted, via email only, to the following address: rivista@societadeiterritorialisti.it.

Extended deadline: September 30th, 2019.

All submitted papers must comply with the guidelines accessible at the web address <https://bit.ly/2RyHRlp>.

For any further information please contact rivista@societadeiterritorialisti.it.