

Abstracts

Luca Gaeta / IMAGINING THE WORLD CATASTROPHE IN SCIENCE FICTION

The paper aims at reviewing the main strategies for surviving a world catastrophe in science fiction. The underlying assumption is that science fiction can provide insight into unspoken social attitudes towards global risks as well as towards the effectiveness of disaster planning. The review covers a broad selection of fiction published in the US and UK since the end of WW2, featuring three types of human-caused world catastrophes: nuclear, biological and environmental. The results highlight that the imagination of what is helpful to survive the apocalypse has evolved towards patterns of individual actions instead of governmental or collective actions and towards the ability to face unexpected events rather than planning ahead. Such imagination can be approximated to underlying feelings as regards planning in the British and North American society at least, although the extent to which fiction reflects actual values and beliefs is open to dispute.

Elena Ostanel / CULTURES AND URBAN REGENERATION. THE CASE OF THE MULTI-CULTURAL NEIGHBOURHOOD OF CHARLOIS, ROTTERDAM

In Italy and Europe different community based actions describe themselves as catalysts of urban regeneration and territorial development: project and practices realized with small investments where the focus is the direct involvement within the territory and the focus on the action, rather on the project design phase, is central. They are practices that usually interact with the institutions, sometimes generating mutual understating and new formal or informal institutional arrangements, but in other cases producing a de-empowering process by the public actor or support to gentrification processes. Based on this framework, the article analyses the case study of Rotterdam Charlois, the Netherlands.

Daniela De Leo and John Forester / ITALIAN PLANNING OVERVIEW AND PERSPECTIVES THROUGH STORIES AND PROFILES. NOTES FROM A CRITICAL PRAGMATIST RESEARCH ON PLANNING PRACTICES

During a recent joint research period, applying Forester's method for creating "profiles of practitioners" and gathering "practice stories" in the Italian context, the authors explored the work of thirty Italian practitioners. They have come to call this research work no longer just "doing interviews" but more specifically "investigations into practices of creating change". By exploring not "espoused theories" but "theories-in-use", the authors have tried to close the epistemological and political gap between pragmatism and critical theory in the direction of a "critical pragmatism". Moreover, by considering the direct voices of these Italian practitioners, authors find relevant and pressing to discuss research outcomes in this journal where challenges about planning perspectives and the overcome of deliberative democracy are under discussion.

Paolo De Pascali and Michele Reginaldi / INCLUSIVE ENERGY AS MODEL OF SHARING SUSTAINABILITY FOR PLANNING

The paper is about an ongoing research on the eco-energy values of the local plan and deals with the possible evolution of sustainability paths towards principles of diffuse social sharing affecting territories and settlements. In this perspective, the article focuses on the development of decentralization processes resulting from the energy liberalization, in relation to local planning practices. Such a theme is developed in four subsequent steps concerning (i) a problematic context of sustainability policies and the energy liberalization process; (ii) an interpretive overview of current European and Italian experiences towards forms of energy localism and signals for sharing sustainability; (iii) the energy district as a territorial projection of energy inclusive community: the active and dialectic role of energy district in the planning process; (iv) conclusions and research proposals regarding the integration of decentralized energy in local planning.

Giulia Sonetti / WHAT THEY TALK ABOUT WHEN THEY TALK ABOUT URBAN RESILIENCE

Resilience is the new black. Overworked as the previous fashionable adjectives for XXI century cities, now more than ever self-labeling smarter or greener according to the available market levers, we should try to frame this term also outside the functionalistic rhetoric. In the first part of the paper, we highlight the main current resilience translations into facts, narrated and dragged up in the theoretical frames of the disciplines more or less related to the urban dimension. In the second part, risks connected to the perverse use of the resilience metaphor are stressed. Cities - and citizens - may be honoured for being adaptable to changes, but this could have been done in order to preserve the current state of equilibrium among powers and stakeholders of the actual urban governance.

Luca Garavaglia / THE GOVERNANCE OF LOCAL SYSTEMS IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY: A CONTRIBUTION FROM ORGANIZATIONAL STUDIES

The explosion of urban forms in new trans-territorial models, spurred by the advent of the Information society (Castells, 2002), had a strong impact on the governance of local systems: social and economic processes once contained in the same space reorganized themselves in original spatial and scalar arrangements (Brenner 2004).

This essay approaches the analysis of local systems as complex networks, applying methodologies developed by organizational studies in order to highlight their dynamic and open nature and to provide some indications for a more efficient governance of local processes.

Libera Amenta and Anna Attademo / CIRCULAR WASTESCAPES. WASTE AS A RESOURCE FOR PERI-URBAN LANDSCAPES PLANNING

The alarming data on the consumption of resources, waste production and the inability of ecosystems to absorb and metabolize them, necessitate a rethinking of the role of waste in traditional planning instruments. The research work adopts Circular Metabolism as a model, proposes to revert the perspective on waste management, towards Circular Economies to preserve the life of ecosystems, adding value at the local level. In this sense, the Living Labs seem to be an innovative instrument for urban planning, which is capable of merging the skills of researchers and policy makers together with the involvement of local communities.