



CALL FOR PAPERS

CONTESTI

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Journal

Contesti. Città, Territori, Progetti is the Journal of Regional and Urban Planning, studies and design of the Architecture Department of Florence University.

The Journal, considering its editorial structure and the quality of the contributions hosted, represents since many years a credited voice in the field of the urban and regional studies and of the related policies and practices of planning and design. The peculiar profile of the Journal particularly draws on its critical-reflexive approach and remarkable attention paid to the “thickens” and relevance of the cross-disciplinary dialogue in the context of urbanism and planning as contribution that can feed and contour a wider “**territory and urban sciences**” theoretical and operational domain.

Moreover, such an approach reflects with peculiar effectiveness, in the attention paid by the Journal to the opportunity to grasp with –either in interpretive/analytical and design terms- the complex “bundle” of intertwined connections and feed-backs occurring between the current territorial transformative processes, underlying global change drivers entailing new challenges and social demands and the – material, socio-economic and cognitive – endowments that constitute the long-lasting “genetic pool” of –and for- the urban and territorial evolution. In this framework, through the different section – *Essays, Researches, Readings* – the Journal accounts for a plurality of topics and studies, research/action, policies, planning and design experiences with the aim to render in reflexive and critical terms the multifaceted complexity of the transformative processes that affects built environment and human settlements.

Editors: David Fanfani, University of Florence

RURALITIES

Edited by Antonio di Campli and Catalina Mejía Moreno

Since the early Eighties, architects and urban planners have been trying to redefine the sense and meaning of rural territories, in an attempt to identify logics of reconfiguration of its various environments, of planning strategies, as well as of the diversity of imaginaries and expectations that are projected on these contexts. The result of this effort is the construction of an image of contemporary rural spaces as a mosaic of situations in which collisions, conflicts, but also possible alliances between transformation strategies, visions, desires are produced. The rural is a composite place where it is possible to observe new hybrids and combinations of: *traditional rural societies / new inhabitants; processes of abandonment / intensification of uses and values; traditional knowledge / new technologies; deterritorializations / reterritorializations.*

However, these systems of dualities are not to be conceived as absolute ways of interpreting the rural, as these pairs of terms are continually crossed by adverse expressions, by different modeling, by specifications, by involutions, by subdivisions and by argumentative shifts.

Western urban thinking has tried to deal with this opaque condition through simplifications in which the rural has almost always been called to solve the problems of the city, or observed according to urban values. These approaches, which look at the countryside as a public space, reservoir of naturalness or identity infrastructure, seem to be unable to produce interpretations and solutions up to the issues posed by rural territories as they are unable to identify characters and problems of situations marked by frictions between social groups or different forms of spatial production.

In the countryside, the solution of problems of spatial poverty, social justice or heritage governance are different from those of the city. Here the relations between the public action and the dweller acquire a different socio-spatial character. The forms of rural dwelling, and its forms of spatial production, have a reticular, 'orbital', 'gravitational' dimensions; they are linked to complex and often opaque relationships of dependence between subjects and ecologies. Therefore, here, where is the public action aimed at? Who is the beneficiary? (Roy, 2015). Reflecting on the rural therefore requires the adoption of a deurbanized and not nostalgic gaze, an effort in identifying rural complexities similar to those recognized in the urban.

The rural is not static. The rural is not disappearing. The Rural is not new. It is necessary to look at the rural as an identifiable but not definable condition. The rural is a multitude and it is dynamic, it can be linked or not to a certain geography, it can be a mentality, a certain practice or a shared identity. It is a common term without being precise.

This issue proposes to see rurality as an element in constant oscillation between otherness and static identity, not a simple geographical space but a sort of political 'position'.

Through this call we want to start a useful reasoning not only to grasp what distinguishes the rural from the urban or to define some critical rural theory, but to understand how we produce the body of knowledge that we use in our discourses and rural design practices.

Starting from this framework, the 'Ruralities' call for paper proposes a reconceptualization of the Rural, meaning by this term a 'place of crisis' within contemporary design and planning practices.

This call for paper intends to collect contributions focused on five main points:

1. Rural spaces as a safety 'infrastructures'.

The term safety today indicates a 'threshold' between postpandemic and prepandemic conditions. This concept alludes to the search for new dwelling conditions, forms of social interaction, nutrition, use of free time and open spaces. The search for safety is essentially a desire to separate from everything that could bring with it unhealthy conditions. From the design point of view, this means thinning out, dilation, dilution, distancing from the density and traditional forms of urbanity. In this sense, in recent times, various archi- stars have spoken out for a withdrawal from the urban to the advantage of rural territories and villages, supporting the hypothesis that the pandemic crisis can be an opportunity to redefine the meaning and value of marginalized rural contexts. How can this new rural demand be managed in terms of planning? Can it be the rural a productive, an ecological and a safety infrastructure?

2. The other rurals

The rural is not a homogeneous space from the socio-spatial point of view. Inside of it coexist a variety of subjects, social and collective groups that relate to different forms of spatial production. By analyzing and planning rural spaces and landscapes, is it possible to think about the 'other rural'? If so, which 'other rural' do we consider? To recognize the 'other rurals' underlies a basic question is: who is the 'beneficiary' of our research and design preconfigurations? The emphasis on the question of 'other rurals' simply reflects a sense of dissatisfaction with the outcomes of traditional rural planning or is part of an aestheticizing attitude that tends to celebrate diversity without thinking about the power relations that articulate relations between 'others rurals'? Looking at the rural space by putting the question of 'others' at the center aims both to identify the diversity of forms of dwelling and spatial production that characterize contemporary rural spaces and landscapes, and forms and ecologies of their coexistence (Tarsi, 2019).

3. Construction of new relationships between rural spaces and urban contexts.

The issues of the reterritorialization of urban relations with respect to rural contexts of immediate proximity constitute one of the main planning challenges of the so-called 'transition territories'. It is a geography that is confronted with orders of stratified problems such as the decentralization of urban uses and functions, the relationship between infrastructural networks and territorial palimpsests, ecological risks. To these we can add more current issues: the supply of food at the local scale, the use of productive agricultural spaces as implicit parks, the reduction of the processes of fragmentation and social and spatial exclusion that today manifest themselves, in a more or less opaque way , in urban-rural interfaces. The goal is to define innovative co-evolutionary relationships between urban areas and rural contexts in their 'contact areas' (Pratt, 1991).

4. Rural metabolisms in the Global South

Especially in the contexts of the so-called Global South it is possible to reconceptualize the rural as an unequal socio-spatial context in which value creation practices take place through the production of continuous, fractures, wounds. In these contexts extractive socio-spatial phenomena are strongly manifested in which questions of race and gender are central. The term 'extractivism' indicates at the same time a socio-economic system and a model of territorial appropriation, in which processes of subtraction of resources, which can be both material (raw materials, agricultural products), and immaterial (cultures, knowledge, local traditions) , reorganize spaces, ecologies and dwelling practices (Acosta, 2013; Gudynas, 2010; Svampa, 2014). In the rural south, extraction is almost always coupled with neo-colonial discourses and policies in which the state tries to mold its inhabitants, essentially considering them as populations to be 'tamed' (Chatterjee, 2004). How to critically re-read such phenomena? Which rural project strategies can be defined starting from the Global South?

5. Rural relations of production

The rural is the productive space par excellence, a production that is often linked to ecological and social crises. Today it is necessary to rethink the ways in which in particular various forms of food production are conceived and how these relate to wider territorial governance policies. In this sense, it could be useful to field issues related to political agroecology (Dehaene, Tornaghi, 2020) and to the bio-regionalist perspective (Fanfani, 2018), thinking around forms of government and planning of rural spaces, defined according to post-capitalist logic. The aim is also to reflect on the emergence of new agricultural questions in which production logics can be compared with what Bruno Latour calls 'generation practices' (Latour, 2020). Talking about generation means establishing a distinction between the act of producing, which attributes a central role to the human agent, and the act of contributing to generation, which shifts attention to other modes of action. The term generation alludes to that of gender and this is not a coincidence. The repression of everything that has to do with the genesis, care and maintenance of life forms is linked, in Western history, to the deletion, the diminution or even the persecution of the feminine. It is therefore important to think about rural spatial forms of production through the lenses of feminist thought. Is it possible to think of the rural as a place of production and generation at the same time, of combinations of different ecologies and forms of life?

INFO

The call is open until **July 15th, 2021**.

To submit your full paper, please go to our submission platform:

<https://oajournals.fupress.net/index.php/contesti/about/submissions>

Registration and login as Author with the CONTESTI system is required to submit and follow the submission process online. Later, the account is necessary for following the status of your submission.

The proposals have to be unpublished and written in Italian, English, French or Spanish; the article length has to be **between 4000 and 7.000 words**, including spaces, title, authors, abstract, keywords, captions and references.

Please pay attention on how to ensure a **Double Blind Review** when submit your paper.

The proposals can include a maximum of 10 pictures with good definition (at least 300 dpi/inch and 25 cm the smallest side) free from publishing obligations or accompanied with the specific permission.

The selected papers will be published in the thematic section of the 2|2021 issue of CONTESTI.