

## Abstracts

### **Cycles, fashions and international circulation in urban mega-projects**, *Matti Siemiatycki* (p. 7)

A growing body of literature highlights how urban mega-projects often end up neglecting the expectations of town planning effectiveness, financial return, infrastructure improvement and social inclusion. Nevertheless, this type of intervention is becoming more widespread and more ambitious in scale in many parts of the world. Why, therefore, do these projects continue to receive such favour, especially in cities and in sectors where the signs of past failings are clear to see? This article spotlights various phases in mega-projects' development, identifying stakeholders and interest groups at urban level and noting the potential areas of innovation. And it maintains that urban mega-projects are still pursued partly because of rhetorical positions and ideas fashionable among administrators and decision-makers that promise immediate benefits and are based on powerful political and symbolic messages.

Keywords: policy transfer; innovation; mega-projects

### **Peri-urban space and urban agriculture: a new challenge for metro-regions**, *edited by Luisa Pedrazzini* (p. 16)

The future of marginal peri-urban areas is a very sensitive issue for regional and city planning and design of mature metropolitan regions. In many European regions, citizens daily affect their life with the peri-urban environment. In Europe, peri-urban areas are more or less the same as the built-up areas. These spaces are now recognized for their own peculiar character and potential for multi-functionality. In mature economy countries many important experiences have been carried out. The present issue includes the papers presented at the international meeting: «Periurban areas as a main issue of the mature metro-regions», held at Politecnico di Milano on June 7, 2013 in the context of the Workshop «Spatial and Landscape Planning and Design in EU and Lombardy». The issue explores experiences underway in the European Union, in Ile de France, Lombardy and Usa, putting in evidence peculiarity and potential of peri-urban landscape and agriculture.

Keywords: peri-urban areas; metropolitan region; multi-functionality

### **Strategic issues for mature metro-regions**, *Luisa Pedrazzini* (p. 18)

The future of marginal peri-urban areas, no longer agricultural in a full productive sense and not yet urban, is a very sensitive issue for mature metropolitan regions and particularly for

European ones. In Europe peri-urban areas are more or less the same as the builtup areas. These spaces are now recognized for their own peculiar character and potential for multi-functionality. Important experiences have been carried out in EU and in Lombardy. The present paper, as opening article of the contributes to the international workshop «Periurban areas as a main issue of the mature metro-regions», explores experiences underway in the European Union and in Lombardy, putting in evidence the peculiarity of the peri-urban space and landscape in the metropolitan region of Milan.

Keywords: integrated policies, urban agriculture; metropolitan region

### **Settlement patterns between Lombardy and Ticino Canton 1900-2010: a thematic map comparison**, *Gian Paolo Torricelli* (p. 26)

The objective of the experience presented in the paper is to represent and compare the settlement changes patterns through time in Lombardy and Ticino Canton (Switzerland). This was modeled with the aid of thematic maps representing population density changes by municipality in the twentieth century and the first decade of this century. For each specific period maps help to understand and to describe the historical changes in the settlement patterns of the population in the border area: polarization, peri-urbanisation (urban sprawl) and metropolitanization. At the end of the paper, there is an analysis of the municipalities demographic balance 2006-2010 that show also remarkable similarities between Lombardy and Ticino Canton.

Keywords: thematic maps; density; Lombardy

### **Food and planning: reimagining the city of tomorrow?**, *Rositsa T. Ilieva* (p. 35)

After briefly introducing the theoretical contours of the emerging sustainable food planning field, the present paper critically explores three major phenomena denoting the gradual reconceptualization of the relationship between food and urban planning taking shape in the global north over the past decade: the recognition of food as an urban and territorial system and key area of competence not only in rural, but in urban studies as well; the reframing of cities' position as players and not mere reproducers of the system, through the introduction of new tools for food system governance at the subnational level such as the sustainable food system plans and strategies; and, last but not least, the emergence of new actors and institutional

spaces to sustain the process of urban food system knowledge recovery and identification of the strategic actions pursuable at the local level.

Keywords: global cities; food systems; urban policy and planning

**To organize agriculture in urban regions. For a sustainable food governance, Roland Vidal e Chiara Santini (p. 43)**

In major European metropolis such as Paris, London or Milan, who have experienced important population growth in recent history, the long-term efficiency of the food system is a cause for concern around three major issues: security of supply itself, food product quality and ecological footprint of transport system. Local projects are often presented as the responses to these concerns. This paper attempts to show what are the right criteria to build a sustainable food governorship suitable for a today's large city of Europe as Paris.

Keywords: sustainable agriculture; food-city; urban planning.

**The Agricultural District of Milan (Dam) and the peri-urban agriculture at 'Parco delle Risaie', Gioia Gibelli (p. 49)**

Agriculture has been an important resource for the development of Milan and its surrounding area since remote times. Milan is a metropolitan city in a changing world, and its development still depends by services and supplies coming out from its outskirts; this condition allows the city of Milan to face environmental problems and critical situations, catching benefits by the closeness to agricultural land. This is the reason why Milan's agriculture increased significantly in importance during the last years. Rural land is able to generate resources (not only feeding the city), to provide ecosystems and landscape services for the whole urban metabolism and citizens' life quality. Agricultural areas close to the city can provide non material cultural services, and material ones, as provisioning services, regulating services, and supporting services, improving the resilience of the city. In this scenario, two main experiences have been carried out in the city of Milan since 2008: the Agricultural Milan District (Dam) and the 'Rice Park'.

Keywords: peri-urban agriculture; ecosystem services; citizens participation

**Rururban project: a good governance in the Milan rural urban area, Filippo Dadone, Maria Grazia Pedrana (p. 59)**

Rurbance is a European cooperation project co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (Erd) in the frame of the Etc Alpine Space Programme. Partners are committed to support the governance of complex processes for the promotion of a balanced and sustainable development that recognizes the importance of the rural-urban linkages as a factor of competitiveness and resilience in the metropolitan areas. Lombardy Region is supporting governance actions in the Milan metropolitan region where the development has been historically marked by an intertwined integration of rural and urban areas and nowadays new forms of governance and cooperation are emerging, such as public-private protocol agreements. In particular, the Vettabbia valley is at the heart of the process of the so called 'new ruralisation' of the Milan metropolitan area and of the farms system of the Rural District of Milan.

Key words: urban-rural relationship; sustainable development; governance

**Re-inhabiting the twentieth century. Franco Albini's housing estates in Milan, edited by Pierfranco Galliani and Luigi Spinelli (p. 67)**

In early twentieth-century planning theory and practice, new relationships emerged between the housing unit and the formation of the urban space. Hand in hand with studies and experiences concerning public housing in central and northern European countries, a significant change occurred in Italy with the projects by Albini, Camus and Palanti. They built three 'rationalist' housing estates of highly unified character in Milan between 1936 and 1941. Their distinctive features – as 'minimal dwellings' with open green spaces – are now enmeshed in critical problems. The real and inhabited space suffers from various physical defects that impact on the current levels of use of the dwellings, the internal communal areas, and the open spaces. These contributions present some results from the study '*Riabitare il Novecento*' (Re-inhabiting the twentieth century), which focuses on redeveloping the 20th century's public housing stock.

Keywords: redeveloping the 'modern'; critical continuity; active protection

**Re-inhabiting the twentieth century: an idea of 'active protection' for rationalist public housing, Pierfranco Galliani (p. 69)**

In the early decades of the twentieth century, public housing emerged in Europe as central to the renewal of the culture of living and the construction of new settings. In Italy, the morphological and typological principles introduced by rationalism marked out the new housing estates as innovative structures in the urban landscape. What can be considered elements of identity – from their roots in a method and their application to different urban settings – are now seen, however, as critical issues affecting these residential units' meaning and continuity of use. The problematic internal distribution of the dwellings and their accessibility, the lack of collective services, and the poor-quality external spaces are the presenting challenges. But they also offer the most concrete potential for overall redevelopment initiatives, from adapting the buildings to redesigning the open spaces.

Keywords: rationalist public housing; continuity of use; architectural redevelopment

**Projects for the «city of tomorrow», Luigi Spinelli (p. 77)**

From 1932, public housing research took a new direction, with the projects for Milan by Albini, Camus and Palanti. Between 1936 and 1941, they built three estates of highly unified character based on juxtaposing elements of the same type, following an economic and aesthetic principle of «maximum unification». The compositional variety lay in the buildings' differing heights, in forward-looking environmental concerns, in the quest for modernity through experimenting with new materials and a primitive use of light prefabs. In this group of young rationalist architects, Franco Albini was closest in clarity of purpose to Giuseppe Pagano. The latter, head of 'Casabella', was then fighting his battle for the "city of tomorrow" on issues such as the indivisibility of town planning and architecture, construction standardisation, and the mechanical and speculative relationship between suburban growth and the redesign of the historic city.

Keywords: Franco Albini; Casabella; public housing estate

**Innovating the configuration of the rationalist housing block**, *Mario Scaglia* (p. 86)

In the disciplinary thinking of the 1920s and 1930s, the dependence between the housing unit's connotative elements and the urban space's morphological features became complete. This development reflected the theoretical foundations and the most advanced research in central and northern European countries on updating the tenets of composition for the residential space. These experiences hinged on the collective dwelling and its role relative to the aspects that most directly influenced the development of the city's physical form. These reflections sought to outline visions for planning and development that could offer a real spatial response to the social dynamics of the time and to the pressures of change, so that architecture could at once serve and represent the individual and collective needs.

Keywords: modulation; reiteration; principle of spatial layout

**From the drawing board to moving in. Living in 'San Siro'**, *Francesca Cognetti* (p. 112)

This article considers the public housing estate of San Siro in Milan, beginning from a reading of the residential practices and the dynamics of bottom-up transformation, thematising the house and urban renewal. Adopting a viewpoint firmly grounded in everyday life and its constituent spheres, the original design is examined through different criteria, in a meditation on how architectural structures and urban space have changed over time. This contribution proposes an approach not only for analysing project outcomes but also for launching learning mechanisms for future research projects and developments, in contexts where the practice of dwelling is less and less associated with any tradition that can offer established pathways and where radical change in expert roles is required.

Keywords: social dwelling; San Siro estate; urban renewal

**Incremental transformation of a traditional China's Pearl River Delta**, *Peter Bosselmann, Francesca Frassoldati, Haohao Xu, Ping Su* (p. 121)

In China's increasingly urban society the work of urban designers is intertwined with the transformation of metropolitan landscapes. Former agricultural villages are encapsulated by recent urban development. Such villages contain traditional dwellings that are frequently regarded as obsolete, thus deemed unsuitable for modern lifestyles. However, because of their different regulative framework many villages have become enclaves of migrant workers, as only in villages it is possible for them to access low-cost – although not necessarily decent – accommodation. In a 2013 workshop the authors experimented with design concepts that would achieve incremental renewal of housing in villages and would provide much needed living spaces for a large group of migrant workers that is currently left out of the conventional housing market.

Keywords: traditional village; rural-urban migration; low-cost housing China

**An integrated approach to renewing residential housing**, *Anna Delera* (p. 130)

Europe has a rich and very extensive heritage of public hous-

ing estates. They frequently represent a fabric that is still vital for the future of cities, although now often obsolescent and run down through protracted neglect. Its physical and social renewal is also needed, to stimulate urban and environmental regeneration. Various advanced experiments in Europe focus on interventions that integrate technological and structural aspects with social and energy-related ones. They alter the architectural image of anonymous structures by removing or adding architectural elements that fragment the buildings, making the individual dwellings more spacious and, ideally, more numerous, through volume increases to the façade or roof. In Italy, too, some efforts in that direction have become an opportunity to convert public housing estates into social-housing projects by enriching the social and economic mix among the residents.

Keywords: urban regeneration; building renewal; energy saving

**Wittgenstein's ashes**, *Alessandro Rocca* (p. 140)

Parody as a predominant contemporary form of expression is a recurring theme in various experiences. These range from the more conceptual, from Marcel Duchamp to Ludwig Wittgenstein, to the overtly ironic, as with Le Corbusier revisited at Saint-Cloud by Rem Koolhaas, and the imitative, which find their muse in nature. After the modernist phase, which denied humans their once central role, the digital era opens up new scenarios where non-standard figurative elements can be used again. Garden design – reduced by modernism to an exercise in abstract composition – is seeking a new fusion with the natural world, embodying both artistic experiences and environmental cultures. And when the garden becomes a central feature of an architectural design, new vistas open up towards a goal that had seemed lost forever: the monument, the symbolic experience wherein architecture, as prophesied by Adolf Loos's celebrated pronouncement, achieves its potential for transforming the world.

Keywords: architecture; monument; countryside

**Belonging to the setting and global disorientation: considerations on architecture**, *Warner Sirtori* (p. 149)

Now more than before, the architecture world and its practitioners must balance two tensions that seem divergent but are actually complementary. On one hand, architects sustain settings or situations, feeling responsible for the cultural and social value of the places where they work. On the other, architects are involved in the globalisation process, inspired by convictions about visibility and participation in the «society of the spectacle» re-imagined on a planetary scale. These two approaches fear misunderstandings that need to be overcome, or at least to be understood, in the firm belief that listening and dialogue are the very means to find positive directions for research that can nourish architectural invention and the processes of transforming and democratising the contemporary city.

Keywords: architecture; setting; disorientation

**Assisted self-building: two cases compared**, *Francesco Minora and Micol Bronzini* (p. 156)

In recent years, in Italy and other European countries, residents groups have become active in building their own dwellings. Through these self-help community projects, the home reac-

quires the role of a local welfare service and spurs the creation of new community-care services. During the present recession, this type of intervention seems sure of success, albeit in an experimental form and despite a series of attendant difficulties. In some local contexts, indeed, it is a real policy option. In this contribution, the authors compare two experiences of assisted self-building, one in Italy, the other in Britain. The cases differ in the respective communities' levels of self-organisation, thus making it possible to probe and compare the complex dynamics that have informed the processes studied.

Keywords: community housing; self-build; community care

**The other paradigm of Spas collective spaces design. Reflections rediscovering a *Ville d'eau*, M. Fiorella Felloni (p. 163)**

The design of the open space and collective spa towns he has

been driven by circumstances and opportunities 'other' than the needs of the quantitative growth of the industrial city of the XX century. Spa towns traditional materials of public space and collective, parks, streets and squares have been declined in the types and forms designed to achieve a high quality urban environment. The urban project is being driven by an idea complex idea of well-being that involved the entire organization of the urban system. The ideas for the redevelopment of the central open space of Salsomaggiore Terme, the subject of the Laboratory of Urban Planning for the environmental quality, as well as an exhibition and a conference Participatory planning shared with the City Council, have been the occasion for a reflection on the project space contemporary collective of these places to high identity.

Keywords: collective space; urban design; Spa