

Stadtluft Macht Frei? Partecipazione urbana e rurale nella formazione di storie e memorie/ Stadtluft Macht Frei? Urban and rural participation in shaping histories and memories

Original

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SU

LA CITTÀ GLOBALE

La condizione urbana
come fenomeno pervasivo

THE GLOBAL CITY

The urban condition
as a pervasive phenomenon

INSIGHTS

1

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a cura di

Marco Pretelli
Rosa Tamborrino
Ines Tolic

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**URBANO/RURALE: IDENTIFICAZIONI,
CONTAMINAZIONI, POLITICHE,
EREDITÀ CULTURALE**

**URBAN/RURAL: IDENTIFICATIONS,
CONTAMINATIONS, POLICIES,
CULTURAL HERITAGE**

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STADTLUFT MACHT FREI? PARTECIPAZIONE URBANA E RURALE NELLA FORMAZIONE DI STORIE E MEMORIE

STADTLUFT MACHT FREI? URBAN AND RURAL PARTICIPATION IN SHAPING HISTORIES AND MEMORIES

PETER STABEL, ROSA TAMBORRINO

In the increasingly multicultural world of today, attempts at defining the role of urban memory and identity have become complex involving many stakeholders, from city governments promoting and financing established players such as museums or bourgeois cultural associations to local bottom-up, informally organised initiatives taking care of urban space and linking different urban subcultures to mainstream urban identities (the recent surge for example of garden guerillas which fits in the interest shared by more official stakeholders in different forms of urban gardening and short circuit supply systems). Various groups in urban society have to navigate this complex and diverse field, and initiatives that stimulate the promotion of heritage, which hitherto have primarily been limited to top-down organisations have to deal with these bottom-up initiatives, pay more attention to spatial divides in the urban landscape and work together with various “subgroups” in urban society, migrant organisations, LGBTQ+-communities, etc. These attempts have not always been successful and many bottom-up initiatives have not always been taken seriously.

This clash of different worlds with each their own rules and interests, has however also pushed heritage actors to become more creative in dealing with urban memories, and has stimulated them to ask new questions about what urban society is, what it does to its stakeholders, and how urbanity relates to subcultures within the urban fabric and to the outside (peri- or extra-urban) world. It creates new paradigms, therefore, also about the traditional readings of the relationship of cities and urbanity with their rural hinterlands. This chapter aims at reflecting about some of new and old initiatives. How does the urban fabric and its relations with urban and non-urban actors (pushed by processes of suburbanisation, industrialisation, economic growth and neo-liberal ideology) affect this relationship? How do social developments in cities influence it (places of pauperism and cultural backwardness, for example, and their relation with the urban economic, social and cultural spaces dominated by middle-class values and conventions)? The differing ideas about urbanity, suburbanity and rurality are expressed

unevenly by policies, international recommendations and practices of heritage. For example, if city museums have played an important role in the creation and dissemination of urban memory and urban identity, similar institutions have not experienced a parallel development in rural or suburban areas and have pushed away the specific urban and non-urban memories in these places. City museums nowadays are investing in innovative urban readings and actions addressed to include in their narratives different groups and minorities, but the lack of similar narratives in rural and suburban surroundings does not facilitate processes of integration of, for example, migrants to the city (which tend to settle in the poorer outskirts of cities).

It is our firm belief that a greater openness to participation by all these different groups holds the key of transforming such shortfalls. Recently notions of co-creation and participatory approaches have come more to the forefront in the world of cultural heritage. They foster a sort of global phenomenon aimed at reshaping histories and memories by including plural (ethnic, groups, gender) perspectives and perception by contemporary city users. This trend is pushing museums and heritage collections to rethink their narratives and their roles in society. At the same time historians also seem to be looking for other categories aimed at including these new readings and open them to larger audiences (e.g. public history, ecology and environmental history, climate change, migration trajectories). This chapter presents four case studies aimed at articulating such innovation. They discuss how cities, suburban regions and rural areas have offered or are offering different opportunities for integrating heritage and historicity in democratic processes, generating different attitudes towards the megalopolis or urban sprawl, developing new narratives of cultural identity that are especially important for fostering processes of regeneration or social inclusion.

The contribution by Casonato and Greppi highlights methods for mapping memories and storytelling in hybrid areas (suburbs and recently urbanised areas) as a way for improving the understanding of locals of the territory and community where they live. It also links these approaches to new education formats. Stroffolino deals with the cultural reading of the Irpinia-region as a region of passage and movement, introducing the train, and therefore, movement itself as a key to understand the development and interpretation of landscapes in a region where economic decline and depopulation have become categories of identification. Two contributions, by Caja and Dinler, create a dual path questioning the meanings and the political role of heritage and collective memory in urban identities processes. On the one hand, the Frankfurt case (Caja) shows how after successive waves of urbanisation linked to nostalgia after the war and to brutal modernism when the city became a financial hotspot, a third wave tries to combine these urbanistic dreams by respecting historical shapes and forms, but without the desire to rebuild what was there. In Istanbul (Dinler) it is the brutal force of power play that transformed the city in a period of rapid growth, rural immigration and increasing social disarray, when traditional buildings were demolished and replaced by a “modern” city under the pressure of the Cold war. Modernism and Haussmanization however also met its opposition in local communities of architects.

The matter of questioning and rethinking heritage on the urban/rural *continuum* with their heritage remains open however. The urban has in European history always defined itself as non-rural. In the increasingly urbanised world, the “urban” now appears consolidated, while the *rural* becomes undefined as an opposite of *urban* (for instance the United States Census Bureau literally defines *rural* as encompassing all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area). New policies towards the integration and cooperation within the urban, suburban and rural continuum are therefore desperately needed. This chapter wants to be a steppingstone to develop further strategies that can be used to identify and characterise rural, peri-urban, suburban and urban areas and identify and revalue their heritage and their memories.