

International conference

DESIGNING IN DISORDER - DESIGNING DISORDER

Reorganizing Urban Fragility

Florence, November 8, 2024

CALL FOR PAPERS

In a recent book titled *Designing Disorder: Experiments and Disruptions in the City*, the architect Pablo Sendra and the sociologist Richard Sennet explore tools and case studies capable of activating a city open to 'disorder' as a provocative critique to the excessive planning and rigidity of urban spaces dictated by traditional prescriptive tools. The authors argue that disorder, traditionally considered a negative aspect of urban planning, is an essential component of the urban experience, as it requires individuals to expand outwards rather than inwards, and that it plays a vital role in the smooth functioning of the social, cultural, aesthetic and economic aspects of cities.

If it is true that one of the highest goals of urban planning is to design and implement quality urban environments that are lively and pleasant, inclusive and accessible for all citizens, it is also true that, in times of uncertainty, formal regulatory tools and predetermined models, such as traditional urban plans, are not sufficient to achieve this goal. To do so, they must be combined with sophisticated design strategies and mechanisms that enable the political decision-making system, administrative apparatuses, citizens, entrepreneurs and all kinds of technicians to formulate a shared vision and to adapt development to the passage of time.

From this point of view, exploring more open modes of informal regulation (soft policies) and new forms (soft power) becomes a necessity, even in an experimental form, as various experiences in Europe demonstrate. Modalities and forms that, while lacking coercive value, can directly lead planning and project activity.

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In the last decade, the European administrative landscape has made increasing use of soft policies and soft power practices applied to the management of the territory and its transformations. Informal tools are, for example, the various forms that characterize design competitions in both the public and private spheres, applications of research by design also in collaboration with academies, temporary uses of public facilities and spaces, assisted by the public administration, or the definition of new figures, such as that of the Bouwmeester [architect – master builder] in the Netherlands and Belgium, endowed with special powers with the task of guiding decision-making processes. These instruments have progressively flanked the ordinary, more formal and constraining tools and processes of planning and design, allowing for a greater variety of possible outcomes, a reduction in time and an increase in the final quality of the results.

The Italian experience, considering the particular legislative, administrative and historical planning framework, the general complexity of the bureaucratic apparatus, is instead characterized by a strong and deep-rooted recourse of hard policies (general conforming urban plans, regulations, technical standards, detailed or sector plans that are often very detailed); with the result that especially in situations of urgency or for particularly complex and divisive issues, decision-making processes and procedures are lengthened indefinitely and the best possible solution is not always found, also due to the many and often discordant legislative and administrative constraints on planning and design activities.

Also in Italy, in the last few years, an increasing number of voices, including the interests from stakeholders often conflicting between them, have been pointing out how the current system is a deterrent not only to private investment but also to the achievement of common interest objectives, such as the provision of innovative and high-quality services and infrastructure. This must be confronted by the necessary innovation of the plan with the application of principles of coherence and consequent sustainable flexibility, instead of the principle of conformity and its unnecessary rigidity.

The international conference aims to rise up these experimental practices and explore how much of this modality can be a pathway to update the discipline of managing of space in Europe.

Conference Objectives and Outline

In re-proposing the formula that has been successfully experimented in previous editions of Urbanpromo, INU and Urbit intend to provide working hypotheses and contributions of ideas to the scientific community through the organization of a conference of international importance that will be held in Florence during the 21st edition of Urbanpromo, from November 5 to November 8, 2024. The one-day Congress is addressed to researchers, scholars, administrators and professionals working in Universities, Businesses and Public Administration, and is supported by the collaboration with the magazine URBANISTICA and INU Edizioni. INU Edizioni will ensure, in a book of the “Accademia” series, the full and timely publication of the submitted *papers*, which will therefore be disseminated and submitted for a discussion already during the event. The magazine URBANISTICA, on the other hand, will host a selection of the *papers* of greatest interest.

In order to target the reflection of those who wish to send a *paper*, the following articulation is proposed:

1. Diversity, differences, inequalities. How to respect and value the diversity and differences present in contemporary urban territories using urban design, and how to address the fragility intrinsic to the inequalities present by recognising the value of cultures, traditions and perspectives, including spatial ones, addressing the issues of universal accessibility and social inclusion through the redesigning of public and private space.
2. Minimum benefits, services, citizenship rights. In what ways is it possible to achieve just, fair and inclusive urban environments that guarantee all citizens the fulfilment of fundamental social and civil rights (including health and the environment, education and culture, mobility) and equal social dignity.
3. Listening, involvement, right of forum. In planning and design processes, it is important to listen to the concerns, needs and opinions of the community. How and in what practices useful feedback can be gathered and how this translates into spatial designs.

4. Change, serendipity, affordability. Watching and profiling during and not before the design process changes the ability to detect and correctly interpret a phenomenon because it moves observation into randomness, allowing discoveries to be made by chance and also to find phenomena in a grey 'corner' or the unexpected. In the current climate change this attitude is fundamental. How to transform this approach into value for the urban project, both in terms of adaptation and housing processes. New public policies for access to decent housing, as well as the social housing segment, require linking urban design to degrees of sustainability, social, economic and environmental. How these new degrees of attention influence planning and design practices.
5. Control, derogation. Although there are several cases of good territorial governance, the increasingly widespread use of a derogatory approach aimed at faster and more efficient processes has revealed perhaps unexpected potentialities, but has also opened up practices that have ended up eliminating all intermediate verification systems. How to bring new ordinary meaning to the packaging of a governing urban project.
6. Plans, projects. Cases of good territorial governance have indicated several paths to take in order to give meaning to urban planning action. Which plan and project tools are capable of supporting informal regulatory approaches, prescribing specific qualities for both physical and organisational aspects, and providing variety with harmony, enhancing flexibility and freedom through the different stages of the implementation process.
7. Planners. What are the new actors to be enabled in the process of physical transformation as a social movement, and how does the figure of the professional change from an expert who guides and coordinates the various actors involved in the project, to an active operator who directly guides the design process, supporting it with his or her technique and dressing the shoes of curators, catalysers and facilitators as well as designers.

Participation in the conference and presentation of written contributions

Participation in the Conference is open to all. Those wishing to submit a written contribution are invited to send an abstract in Italian or English (min 300 - max 400 words) by sending an email to call@urbit.it by 15 July 2024.

The paper must indicate the name of the author or authors, the institution to which they belong, and the reference to one or more themes proposed in the call. The text should clearly propose the thesis argued and a concise overview of the arguments and supporting data. After the review of the Scientific Committee, the participants will be informed by July 31 2024 of the acceptance of the proposals. They shall submit the final text (italian or english) of the paper (max 20.000 characters, including spaces), with maximum 4 images or tables, to call@urbit.it by October 11 2024. Abstract and paper layouts will be available on the Urbanpromo and INU websites. It is mandatory to follow the rules, otherwise the paper will be rejected.

The papers of the participants, validated by Scientific Committee and in good standing with the payment of the conference registration fee, will be published in the "Accademia" series of INU Edizioni <http://www.inuedizioni.com> at the same time as the beginning of the conference. It will be the responsibility of the authors to produce the texts in a final version consistent with the INU Edizioni format.

Validation by Scientific Committee of the *papers*

In order to favor a wide and qualified divulgation of the most significant papers sent to the organizers of the Conference, an Evaluation Committee composed by members of the Scientific Committees of the Conference and of INU Edizioni will be set up, which will proceed to select a number of papers not less than 10 to be illustrated by the authors during the course of the International Conference. By means of the same anonymous evaluation, a shortlist of contributions will be selected, to be updated during the debate that will be developed during the Conference, before of publication in a Special Issue of the journal URBANISTICA. It will be the responsibility of the authors to produce the texts in a final version that is

consistent both with the indications of the Evaluation Committee and with the editorial rules and the deadlines that will be indicated by the editorial staff of the journal URBANISTICA.

Registration

The presentation of a *paper* at the Conference, which will last one day, and then its publication is subject to the payment of the participation fee of € 300 (€250 for INU members, €130 for INU Giovani).

The participation fee will be reduced to €250 (€200 for INU members, €80 for INU Giovani) if paid by the September 15 2024. Anyway, the author must submit the receipt of the payment by the October 11 2024 to the mail address call@urbit.it, otherwise as penalty, the paper will not be included in the Conference.

Date and Deadlines

- July 15 2024 abstract submission deadline
- July 31 2024 notification of abstract acceptance
- September 15 2024 deadline for reduced fee registration to the Conference
- October 11 2024 deadline to submit the full text of the *paper*, with the receipt of payment of the participation fee

Scientific Committee

Giuseppe De Luca (president) Angela Barbanente, Gianni Biagi, Carlo Alberto Barbieri, Laura Fregolent, Carolina Giaimo, Valeria Lingua, Patrizia Gabellini, Carlo Gasparrini, Paolo Galuzzi, Paolo La Greca, Roberto Mascarucci, Francesco Domenico Moccia, Simone Ombuen, Pierluigi Properzi, Iginio Rossi, Stefano Stanghellini, Michele Talia, Silvia Viviani.

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