

Emerging bioregional urbanization in inner areas

Francesca Giangrande, Luciano De Bonis, Giovanni Ottaviano
University of Molise, Department of Biosciences and Territory

Keywords

Alter-urbanizations, Inner areas, Territorial heritage, Place knowledge, Social-ecological systems

Many contemporary authors have already proposed an interpretation of rural-urban interaction in terms of spatial configurations that are neither properly urban nor rural. On this basis, it is time to definitively overcome the entrenched, but now obsolete, dichotomy between urban and the ‘rest of the world’.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that the processes of ‘planetary urbanization’ (Brenner and Schmid) generally exhibit a deficit of ‘urbanity’, that is, the capacity to embed both ‘convivial’ relationships among humans (Choay) and ‘coevolutionary’ dynamics between human actors and the non-human entities (Magnaghi) that mediate such interactions (Anderies et al.). Consequently, the challenge lies in delineating the conditions necessary for the emergence of new forms of ‘alter-urbanizations’ (Brenner), i.e. ‘urbanizations with urbanity’. Transcending the urban–non-urban dichotomy, this paper employs the Alto Medio Sannio inner area (Molise, Italy) as case study, developed within the framework of the PRIN 2022 (Research Project of National Relevance) RE-PLACE, REframing PLace-based Approach through the Cultural Ecosystem services of inner areas. The analysis focuses on practices that exemplify diverse modes of reconstructing co-evolutionary relationships between human settlements dynamics and environmental processes.

Particular emphasis is placed on conceptualizing these interactions as social-ecological systems à la Anderies et al., while their governance structures are scrutinized through the lens of Ostromian commons theory. This approach facilitates a critical discussion on the potential for territorial self-governance within an urban bioregional planning framework (Magnaghi), examined in relation to formal public institutional planning. Finally, the practices are evaluated from the perspective of immanent ‘place knowledge’, i.e. the tacit expertise embedded in inhabitant’s actions, that may catalyze self-sustaining territorial development (Magnaghi). Taken together, these elements delineate a framework for the collective management of territorial commons, operating in a synergistic and subsidiary manner with public policies for the management of public goods.