

Uniscape en Route International Seminar “Recovering river landscapes”

Federico II University of Naples

Track b. Resilient spaces of river fruition

Bringing river landscapes back to life. Notes from a survey on the Sarno River

Gilda Berruti, PhD

Federico II University of Naples, Department of Architecture

In the last years we can observe the decline of the “bacteriological city” and a shift towards riverfronts’ transformation, from industrial areas and urban backs to public spaces belonging to the connective and recreational fabric of the city.

Engineered interventions of the past on rivers start to be denounced in favor of their removal in order to bounce rivers forward to a state not so far to the natural one, depending on the context’s situation. The awareness of the role that river corridors have with respect to the health of urban ecosystems is rapidly growing. In many cases, local communities contribute to the process of turning toward rivers reimagining their future.

The paper aims to explore the issue of the reclamation of river landscapes, mainly pointing out the value of site-specific measures allowing to design dynamic landscapes, which respond to weather conditions and the porosity of river corridors. At the same time, the paper shows the significance of adopting a storytelling approach, which make possible not expected narratives about places, working as hints to change the current damaged situation.

The study area is the basin of the Sarno River, in the Campania region of Italy, which is a laboratory where it is possible to test how to study and plan degraded river landscapes, aiming to construct a policy relevant knowledge.

The paper reports on the ongoing national interest research entitled “the defense of landscape between conservation and transformation. Economy and beauty for a sustainable development”, carried out by a group of researchers from Federico II University of Naples, which is based on the idea of a dynamic and multidimensional landscape, able to be converted into a resource for local development.

With respect to the current research, this contribution focuses on the images of the Sarno region and the relationships between resilience and resistance in the Sarno valley, adopting a methodology inspired by Kevin Lynch’s image survey.

The outcomes of the image survey can be identified as a first step in the direction of constructing a river agreement, as a tool to restore both ecosystems and the sense of community, including inhabitants in the decisions about the future of the Sarno region.

Key-words: community based development, resilient/resistant spaces, Sarno river land mosaic

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