
EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT A COMMUNITY RESILIENCE ACTIVITY: THE CASE OF TARANTO

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The research focuses on the crisis context of the city of Taranto, starting by analysing the current state of shock caused by the presence of the steel factory, ILVA. In order to determine whether this presence has really begun to implement a resistance/resilience activity or not is important to understand if the local community has undergone a processes able to face “emergency events” such as the establishment of the above-mentioned steel plant.

The attention is concentrated on the contrast between the government action, which rules the changes of the territory, and the native community, together with its local associations, which is therefore questioning itself about the impacts of the steel plant and about the transformation of the city by means of social actions. The citizens proved to be able to live in life-threatening conditions, awkward conditions they would have never thought to have to cope with. In the writer’s opinion, this is the reason why the only way to achieve the stability of the system is by gaining a sort of balance between resilience and resistance. To this purpose we took on the definition that the two terms have in the language of ecology. In ecology, resilience is the capacity of an ecosystem to respond to a certain amount of anomalies by resisting damage without changing the processes of self-organisation and its basic structures. In addition, it is also considered to be the regaining of a steady state after a disturbance occurred. These two concepts, closely connected one another, contribute to define the whole meaning of the term.

The word resistance, on the contrary, defines the ability of a system to keep its state, despite the pressure exerted by environmental perturbations due to both natural and anthropogenic causes. Although their meaning is different, both denote a reaction to a catastrophic event affecting a socio-ecological system or a community. It can be said that without such an event or shock, which is threatening the existing balance, the process does not even begin, thus being the starting point of an action of resilience or resistance. It is from this viewpoint that we should read the initiatives of the local community, which asks the competent authorities to solve the problems of the city, rejecting the specific positions and ideals of a certain political party. As a result, many single entities without a shared project, cannot act as cohesive communities, neither resilient nor resistant ones. So, the real question is: could it ever be possible to overcome such an emergency event if the project is not truly shared? Can several single communities, unable to group together, try to overcome such a shock?

Keywords

Taranto, Ilva, resilience, resistance, community, shock