



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA



Seminar on

Prefigurations of Water Shortage: an institutional mobilisation



22 May 2023 9.30 am-5.00 pm (venue Rovigo, Italy)

Il seminario serve a mettere a fuoco se e come avvenga la mobilitazione in vista di un secondo anno di siccità in una area tradizionalmente ricca d'acqua come la Pianura Padana. L'ipotesi di partenza è che siano solo alcune istituzioni, sostenute dai media, a mobilitarsi, mentre cittadini e società civile siano ignare, frastornate o indifferenti al problema. Silente anche il mondo delle imprese. La prefigurazione politica e la metafora del gioco vengono proposte come chiavi

*interpretative delle reazioni alla scarsità d'acqua
From movie 'Siccità' 2022*

Rationale. According to Törnberg (2021), the term *prefigurative politics* was used initially by Carl Boggs as an alternative category to how the political change was conceived at his times (1970'): revolution versus reformism. He described prefiguration as the attempt to create change 'here and now' through the construction of 'local and collective structures that anticipate the future liberated society' (Boggs 1977, 103). Then many authors combine prefiguration and radical political change; the election terrain are the social movements, like the indignados (Asara, Kallis 2023). Other authors look more to methodological aspects, like how the passage between cognition and action comes, not only in the public sphere but also in private, daily sphere. They use the summary terms of practices or lifestyle. Spaargaren (2011, p. 817) talks of "prefigurational relationships' (that) are interesting when studying environmental change (...). These relations refer to the kind of future figurations that are particularly feasible and possible given the existing state of affairs". In fact, prefiguration is used for energy transition (and for food Tornaghi & Dehaene, 2020) through a three steps process: *Thinking, doing, organising* (Wittmayer et al. 2022). Without this kind of formalisation, the "thinking" has been imagined for the rivers in the cities (Osti 2021). "Doing" represents the practical moment, while the "organising" is, according to Wittmayer et al. (2022), the relational moment, codified in associations or institutions.

Such sequence can be an initial framework for surveying and interpreting how the water shortage forecast is happening in Italy now. This is the scope of the seminar: to catch and understand the ways inner waters shortage is perceived, lived, and politically acted. In Italy we register really few studies on this, with some exceptions for Sardinia (Meloni, Borelli 2012). There is a wide knowledge gap especially for less organised people. Water institutions, it is evident looking at media, are more able to communicate their discomfort for the probable drought. We arrive to a situation in which are *some* institutions to mobilise. A sort of oxymoron, as institutionalisation and mobilisation are considered antithetic in socio-political literature (on roots of prefigurative politics see Gordon 2018). What really would be interesting is understanding not so much the analysis of watercourse levels or the (nefarious) forecasts for the summer as *how people and organisations prefigure solutions, remedies, adaptations in other words mobilise for the issue*. In such a verb – to prefigure – there are the three mentioned steps. Clearly without focused research, it is difficult to answer to specific Italian and northern Italian case of water shortage. The seminar, therefore, will collect experts of water and social sciences asking them how they figure their own commitment and that of others actors. It is desirable as well that a further prefiguration could emerge from the seminar itself.

Program-Programma

mattino (in italiano), ora/time 9.30, sede presso il Consiglio di Bacino Polesine, Via A. Casalini, 2 – Rovigo

Saluta il presidente del Consiglio di Bacino Polesine, prof. Leonardo Raito

Presentazione del seminario, *Giorgio Osti*

- La voce della società civile, *Daniela Padoan, curatrice degli [Stati generali dell'acqua](#)*
- Il piano invasi dei Consorzi di Bonifica, *Francesco Veronese, Consorzio Bacchiglione, Padova*
- Situazioni ed esperienze in Sud Italia, *Aurelio Angelini, Università Kore di Enna*
- Previsioni e azioni delle autorità idriche, *Alessio Picarelli, Agenzia Interregionale per il Po-Aipo*
- Le opinioni dei consumatori e la ricezione delle utility, *Michele Tettamanzi, REF Ricerche, Milano*

Moderator/chair: Gianpaolo Milan, Consiglio di Bacino Polesine

h. 13.00 Pause/pausa

Afternoon (in English), time 2.30 pm, venue: Master WGRE, Rovigo via Badaloni, 2 (Room 2- II floor)

- the water experts' perspective and involvement, *Marco Borga, hydrologist, teacher at the Water and Geological Risk Engineering, University of Padua*
- A new problem for Northern European and other rich countries: *Sander Meijerink, prof Water governance, Planning and Environment, Nijmegen School of Management, Radboud University (NL)*
- New games on unexpected drought: preconfigurations for water use, *Giorgio Osti, Nicola Stocco, Mohammad Koohi, Social scientists, University of Padua*

Chair/moderator: Paolo Giardullo, University of Padua



Participation needs registration/per partecipare bisogna iscriversi [here/qui](#)

Method: seminar session with invited speakers and wide discussion; issues: a) probably, there are scarce empirical materials of institutional mobilisation on water shortage, b1) prefiguration pattern must be declined in sub-dimensions and indicators, b2) if we assume the change comes mainly from water institutions, then a pattern of institutional change (and related indicators) must be provided, c) language would be English in the afternoon and Italian in the morning d) dilemma on using a laboratorial method or a more traditional lecture + discussion. All issue depends on what knowledge resources we can collect.

Partners: [Consiglio di Bacino Polesine](#), [Pastis-FiSPPA/UniPd](#), Master [Water and Geological Risk Engineering/UniPd](#), [Associazione Aree Fragili](#), [Associazione Nazionale degli Enti di governo d'Ambito per l'idrico e i rifiuti-ANEA](#), [Course Social Dynamics in Local Development](#), [Master Local Development/Unipd](#)

Local committee: [Giorgio Osti](#), [Paolo Giardullo](#), [Nicola Stocco](#), [Mohammad Koohi](#)

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Sitografia

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