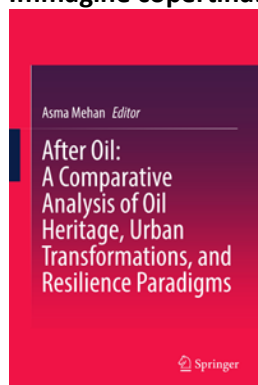


Scheda sintetica descrittiva Premio INU Letteratura Urbanistica 2025 contributo in libro collettaneo

Autrice	ELISA PRIVITERA
Titolo contributo	MAPPING TOXIC LEGACIES TO ENVISION ALTERNATIVE FUTURES: COMMUNITY-BASED EXPERIENCES TOWARD JUST TRANSITIONS IN AN ITALIAN INDUSTRIAL RISK LANDSCAPE
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Abstract:

This chapter contributes to the theoretical discussion on sustainability transitions from oil-based to post-oil society by focusing on the democratic process that accompanies such transitions in industrial risk landscapes, i.e., areas that are characterized by socio-ecological transformations unfolding gradually over time and dispersed across space. As emblematic observation and action sites, industrial risk landscapes prompt inquiry into how the toxic legacies of the past can evolve into heritage and opportunities for the future. I maintain that researchers should reverse their gaze in a methodological and epistemological sense to obtain a deeper comprehension of the tangible and intangible, human and more-than-human legacies, while also opening spaces for “decolonizing the imaginaries.” To illustrate these concepts, I present heuristic reflections derived from a series of experimental community-based experiences in Gela, one of Europe’s historical and most significant petrochemical towns. Suffocated by the legacy of its history, Gela seems like a “town without a future beyond oil.” Despite the greenwashing rhetoric promoting the conversion of the plant into a biorefinery, Gela currently grapples with a chronic lack of alternative perspectives. By drawing from urban planning, critical heritage studies, environmental justice studies, and community-based research, I argue that community-based initiatives, such as collaborative mapping, are a powerful tool for unveiling the effects of years of pollution but also for triggering conversations about alternative developments. In particular, the chapter emphasizes that mapping toxic legacies collaboratively delivers counter-cartographies of territories while also serving as a starting point to envision an after-oil future. The chapter explores industrial risk landscapes in the “after-oil” context (section 1), links just urban transitions with community roles (section 2), presents the case study and the applied methodology (section 3), discusses findings (section 4), and concludes with final remarks (section 5).