

Introduction*

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Nell'introduzione si chiariscono le ragioni d'interesse di un numero interamente dedicato alle città iraniane chiarendone la struttura generale ed i contenuti dei singoli contributi. Questi affrontano temi quali la vita quotidiana delle donne nelle città satellite e le loro interazioni con le strutture spaziali; il fallimento sostanziale della strategia nazionale delle città satellite; l'ascesa delle pratiche di partecipazione civica e urbana nel contesto iraniano ed i loro limiti; la complessità dei nessi fra formale e informale e la loro rilevanza nell'analisi delle pratiche micro-imprenditoriali, dello spazio pubblico e delle relazioni sociali in ambito urbano; il carattere innovativo e politicamente trasversale della campagna *"the other city"* condotta per le elezioni amministrative di Tehran; infine la risignificazione di spazi urbani già simbolicamente rilevanti nel contesto dell'ascesa di nuove manifestazioni e movimenti di piazza a Tehran.

Urban development
Iran
Socio-political change

Sviluppo urbano
Iran
Cambiamento socio-politico

In the call for papers for this special issue of *iQuaderni di Urbanistica3*, we mentioned the reconciliation of Iran and the "West" as the latest episode of a chain of events pushing towards a new wave of transformations in the life and spatial structures of Iranian cities. However, now that we are writing the introduction to the issue, heavy shadows are casting over the future of this reconciliation yet adding one more episode to such chain. But if these appear to be just episodes, a deeper set of crucial political and economic transformations in the last five decades have had a direct and significant impact on the material and non-material dimensions of Iranian urbanization. Shifts in the country's national urban agenda have come hand and in hand with changes in the behaviour of individuals, enterprises and the civil society contributing to the shaping of a new field of tensions that urban scholars are just starting to grasp and address.

Urbanization in Iran has been tumultuous since the conception and launching of modern spatial planning in 1967. Deep political fractures such as the 1979 revolution and its aftermaths disrupted the newborn planning agenda and, after several years of halt, reframed and reorganized the entire state planning apparatus. The situation of extreme instability characterizing the revolution and the subsequent war period (1981-89) did not only hinder the consolidation and further evolution of planning but also favoured a central, technocratic agenda that was seen as the only feasible method for recovering from these successive shocks. However, centralization and technocratic approaches did not mean in any way that Iranian cities' growth followed a coherent logic. Against the backdrop of massive internal displacements caused by the war and a population boom encouraged by government incentives, such an approach did not prevent processes of informal urbanization and spontaneous growth in and around large cities.

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