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Brenda Case Scheer, FAIA, FAICP  
University of Utah  
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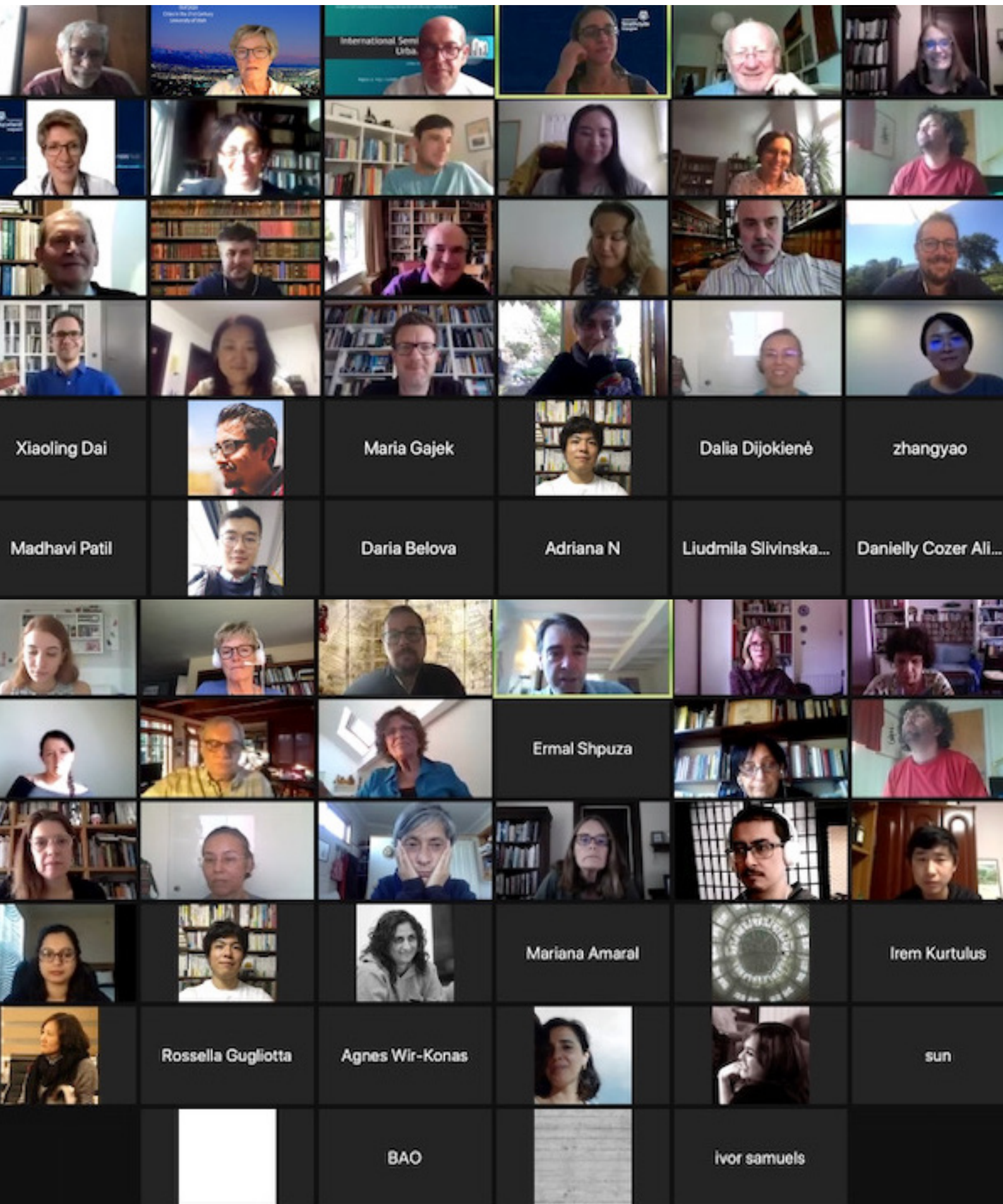
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## SELF-ORGANIZATION, SPONTANEOUS CONSCIOUSNESS, CRISIS AND TERRITORIAL CYCLES. AN INTERPRETATION OF SAVERIO MURATORI THOUGHT

Giampiero Lombardini, Assistant Professor of Town and Regional Planning, Department of Architecture and Design, University of Genova (I),

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### ABSTRACT

*In the thought of Saverio Muratori, the territory is the organic unity that defines the meaning and limits of reality. In the built environment, nature (interpreted and modified by human activity) and cultural processes achieve the maximum levels of synthesis all those processes that, together, define a civilization. The territory, in its ongoing rebuild, continually redefines the materials and the logic inherited from previous eras. The evolution of territorial structures that arises from this dynamic can be seen as a cyclical process in which the succession of different crisis cause, from time to time, change in the structures of a civilization. In this process, we can identify the dialectic between nature and culture and between technology and ethics. In this paper, we will investigate the role that the processes that the "self-organization" play into this cyclical and relational dynamic of territorial transformation. New forms and patterns (physical and social) emerge through a relational process. The self-organization processes characterize the period when a settled population build its environment through the spontaneous consciousness. Conversely, historical periods characterized by "crisis" are those in which the self-organizational processes lose their impulse and the control technologies (physical and social) arise together the critical consciousness. The creative role of liberating self-organizational processes so is opposed to the processes of a "planning" authority. The dynamic between freedom and control, and between spontaneous and critical consciousness can be a key by which to read the transformations of territories in the present age of globalization and radical urban transformations.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The method of reading and project of the territory that Saverio Muratori had painstakingly built in a long journey of personal reflection that had gradually touched the themes of architecture, philosophy, history (with several other articulations of thought) has aroused since the beginning wide and heated debates about its disciplinary correctness and about the possibility and usefulness of its application. Although the reflections on the territory and on the ecumenes almost exclusively affected the long final period of his life, it may in some sense surprise that Muratori not only never participated in his life, if not very laterally, in the drafting of any "instrument urban planning", but the problem of how to translate his reflections on the city and the territory never arose. His thinking was clearly placed on another level and the effort was aimed entirely at trying to steal the "structuring" elements of man's ways of settling on Earth. The problem of how to act in a world that appeared screwed around an epochal crisis and of planetary dimensions could have been answered, interpreting some passages of his last writings, only in full awareness of this crisis, which appeared to him with all ethical evidence and therefore political and therefore not within easy sector shortcuts.

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### BACKGROUND

The post-metropolitan territory (and the territory in general) can be read as a succession of cycles of territorial settlement. The material history of the territory is the history of the forms of its

settlement and is not linear, but it's characterized by cycles of innovation / consolidation, centralization / dispersion, employment / abandonment, colonization / restructuring. Sometimes these settlement dynamics act simultaneously (they are synchronous), in other cases they alternate over time and are differentiated in space (diachronic changes). The geographical space (the physical and morphological characteristics of the territory), condition the different territorial cycles (above all the first cycles) that are always the result of an uncertain and unstable equilibrium between population and environmental resources. The forms of settlement inherited from the past also condition future developments, sometimes posing as constraints sometimes as opportunities (reuse of previously shaped structures).

Despite the objective difficulty in approaching the complexity of his thought and, however, to some extent, the areas of reflection that belong to strands of thought (philosophical, historical, architectural) now clearly overcome, remains a "hard core" of thought that continues to arouse interest, evidenced by several contributions that have appeared in recent years that have confronted this thought trying to detect the elements potentially heralding further developments (RAVAGNATI 2012, CATALDI, 2013 MARETTO, 2012, TAGLIAZUCCHI, 2015). Without wanting to anticipate conclusions that would in any case be hasty, we can read in this recent recovery of interest the attempt to recover that unitary (holistic one would say today) vision of the man-environment relationship so pervasive in Muratori's thought and at the same time so current (and increasingly felt as necessary).

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#### MURATORI'S THOUGHT ABOUT TERRITORY AND ENVIRONMENT

Among the other ways that have recently been suggested to re-read Muratori's thought, we can try to reconstruct some of Muratori's lines of thought starting from the considerations elaborated in his last contributions around the concept of environment. Muratori makes a very occasional use of the term environment (MURATORI, 1963b, 1967, MARINUCCI, 1976), whose definition is changing, affected by the shifting of interests that sees the attention move from the building object, to the fabric and from this to the city and finally to the territory. If initially the environment was considered by Muratori in a strictly architectural environmental sense and was linked to a 'typifying' vision of the creation of the urban fact, moving towards the concept of territory also changes the role and definition of the environment. If in fact the territory is finally defined a 'global architecture', a concrete manifestation of a civilization within its living space, in parallel, the environment becomes the inextensible heritage of man, the stable heritage of civilization once it has reached its maximum. A civilization which, once it has reached a balance with its own life support, can from that moment grow only from within, that is, in content. The transformation that can be made - said Muratori as early as 1967 - will not be so much on the side of the territory-environment as, primarily, on the side of human consciousness, called to administer the former as conservation, understanding, adequate use and no less mindful of its history. The territory of the ecumenical world must be increased with new experience, that is, with new freedom and new responsibility, from which to derive any hypothesis of transformation of the environment itself. In the long Muratorian reflection, the arrival to a form of organicism is almost inevitable, if you retrace the meaning of its reflection. For Muratori, in fact, not only the city is an environmental organism, that is, an individual in a conservative and historical sense, homogeneous in the fabric and unitary in the system, supportive-integrative and inseparable from its natural environment, but the whole regional civil territory has the same characteristics of historical-environmental individuality and proceeds for fundamental functional structural typicalities. Civilization itself has this character: something opposed to the causal determinism of the analytical sciences in which there was a

negative and limiting tendency to quantity and linearity, while on the contrary the environment-territory proceeds in its evolution through internal modifications of its typical structures -organics differentiated in an individual and historical-environmental sense.

Muratori, while giving the territory-environment the value of an individual, never resort to the concept of identity: in general, he prefers to adhere to the concept of individuation of Jungian derivation which can be defined as that evolution of the state of consciousness that allows the human being to recognize the environment and to recognize it. The concept of typical-organic structures is very close to it, albeit with the limits (but also with the suggestions) that we can highlight today in such a deeply organicistic reading (between territory and organism, Muratori does not establish at all a metaphor or even an analogy, but it recognizes a perfect identity: the territory is, in itself, an organism, the result of the combination of a law of permanence with a law of cyclicity. The environmental element therefore has a prominent role, because, in its quality of fixing, testing and preserving historical variations and transmitting them as the basis and condition of future variations (not unlike what happens for a living organism), presents itself as the substantial space-time synthesis that indicates a clear indication to operate and defines its limits. The environment constitutes the face of the world of man, whereby it becomes the mirror of man's consciousness, indeed his own experience and his memory, both in the singularity of his moments. It is such a total and substantial process that every demolition and replacement, even a radical one, is not enough to eradicate it. In the self-conscious process that occurs in times of crisis, the method of transforming the territory is basically made up of operating only as awareness, knowledge, responsibility and therefore 'freedom in preserving, enjoying and enjoying while conserving' (MURATORI, 1967).

In being every environment first of all a direction, a preference and a choice already made many times, the Muratorian idea (source of many discussions) of historical reading as an operating history is manifested. In reading Muratori's writings, however, it can be observed that the concept of operating history (also present in the hypothetical title of his last unfinished work) changes substantially, when the object of analysis is no longer the building episode but the territory. If, in fact, in the Muratorian logic, at building level, to find the rules for the future development of urban fabrics (MURATORI, 1960), as known, it would have been necessary to resort to a conscious use of the "a priori type", in the case of territory, this "having to be" fades into the search for that virtuous relationship between man and the environment which should provide not already a preordained system of rules, but a variety of "sustainable" settlement principles, if only because in the environment they are sedimented and there it is a reminder of past failures and inconsistencies.

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#### KNOWLEDGE, CONSCIOUSNESS, TERRITORY

The reversal that Muratori operates in the categories of consciousness that lead him to a "reversal" in the cyclical process of aesthetics with logic (CATALDI 2013) leads not only to the re-evaluation of architecture as a mirror of civilization (architecture-territorial), but also to the territory as a collective work of art, as such less subject to the individual inventiveness and therefore more representative of the civil world of man, of which it constitutes, on a larger scale, a sort of artificial second nature to be protected with the utmost care. As an art fact, therefore, the territory is by its nature a heritage and sediment of creative and creative practices of new meaning, even in the dimension of constant maintenance of balance with the environment. Indeed, it is precisely the changing (but 'typical') forms of this relationship that constitute the essence of the 'territorial' artistic fact.



In this context, the program for the modification of the environment (which is such only in so far as it is inhabited and lived by man: without man, in the thought of Muratori, even the environment would not exist) does not close, and could not to be otherwise, in a predetermined pattern: the environment in fact, by resolutely tightening the process of life, always offers new individual openings. But only as a development of its historical process, from which it cannot be separated, it is conditioned by it, but not bound in an absolute way: it will be the exercise responsible for the management of the territorial environmental heritage to find the solutions, deriving from the past not already the rules preconstituted and perhaps not (or not so much) of the "genetic" rules, but rather a story of successful solutions and man-environment balance that can be the basis for new development hypotheses that today we could define co-evolutionary. The reading of the historical process forming the environment-territory thus understood is therefore fundamental to grasp the field of feasibility of the development and modification hypotheses, but it is not closed: it offers basic schemes on which to engage the transformations and offers the criteria for evaluating their compatibility and organicity. Where Muratori refers (in another step) to the metaphor of the watercourse (already used by Jung for psycho-analytical studies) which in its flow towards the valley, "finds" its best path by digging the bed where the soil structure in the flow of territorial history, the settlement adapts to it, attempting (not always succeeding, also due to the senselessness that each era brings with it) to optimize the process at each step, to a pre-existing structure that does not preorder everything but however it affects development alternatives. In this perspective, Muratorian studies anticipate (and could also find fertile ground for development) in the most recent studies of the life sciences: neo-evolutionism, autopoiesis, self-organization and emergency and, in general, all the studies related to the thought of complexities that tend to make human sciences and natural sciences converge within a single system of thought (CAPRA, LUISI 2014). The vital patterns that characterized (and differentiated) the different "environments", that is the different civilizations before the capitalist homologation (which Muratori had lucidly anticipated), far from having a deterministic origin, constitute the result of processes of co- evolution of man-environment of a very long period which, in current conditions, we also have the right to completely cancel, but which also represent extraordinary opportunities to invent sustainable futures.

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## CONCLUSIONS

One of the most significant results of this long reflection carried out by Muratori on the territory and its natural landing was that of recognizing an environmental limit in every context, a limit that presides over every historical-environmental formation. This recognition is one of the most relevant and anticipatory innovations of Muratorian thought and, although often understood as a deterministic (if not moralistic) variable, it leaves open, if observed more carefully, the possibilities of responsible and critical action (as conscious of the past) but free. The environmental limit of a civilized territory is a concrete reality in constant evolution, but precisely oriented: it is organicity and individuality together; production of ever new individuality precisely because total vision, not element, central vision which is the ever-changing circle and life. It can be objected, quite clearly, that things did not go in the direction desired by Muratori, that is, there was not that responsible awareness of one's environment that would have oriented the settlement developments in the territories of modernity in very different ways . That deep concern for the mechanisms of "dissolution" of the territory (and therefore, fundamentally, of the city and its vital tissues) already evident at the time, and often analyzed in the margins of the maps of the unfinished Atlas of the territory, ended up prevailing in prevaricating on the ways of building the built space. On the other hand, the issue of urbanization and that of parallel abandonment which increasingly intersect

spatially and temporally has already been recognized and analyzed in the cyclical model developed by Muratori: the cycles of expansion and rarefaction traced both in Mediterranean area, but also identified in the history of the Indian and Chinese ecumenes reinforce the theses developed starting from the studies on Rome on the cyclical nature of the settlement processes. In the moments of crisis that such cycles inevitably determine, the only solution has been found from time to time in the adaptive capacities with respect to the environment (not always optimal, but rather often full of errors) elaborated through the accumulation of a critical conscience that in the past, it has already allowed companies to self-recognize the founding traits of their vital environments and to design the consequent adaptive strategies on them, according to a process which, taken back to current paradigms, could be defined as resilient. The size of today's urbanization processes is obviously completely out of scale compared to those known in the past, but the Muratorian method of patrimonial reading of the territory, in some of its anticipatory and still current intuitions, can be the starting point for further reflections.

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#### CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Giampiero Lombardini, Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture and Design, University of Genova (I).  
[giampiero.lombardini@unige.it](mailto:giampiero.lombardini@unige.it)