

TERRITORIAL CONTROL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTERS: FROM "BUON GOVERNO" TO CIVIL PROTECTION

For over 20 years the Centre for the Study of Policing and Territorial Control (CEPOC: www.cepoc.it) has held seminars devoted to the issue of territorial control as a matter of public order; in other words, as a matter that falls within the jurisdiction of the police force. The very notion of territorial control, however, affords us a chance to examine a far more extensive range of scenarios.

This year's seminar will therefore focus on the connection between territorial control and the burgeoning area of research into the history of the environment, particularly in relation to environmental disasters, whether natural or caused by human activity and interference. More specifically, the emphasis will be on one particular aspect which, until now, has been relatively neglected by historians; namely, the recorded responses of humans in the face of such disasters, both in terms of assistance and prevention. It is not our intention therefore to reflect upon the history of disasters in order to revisit their dynamics, causes and consequences. Nor do we wish to dwell on macroscopic issues revolving around the perception of disasters as a sign of divine retribution, or as an inevitable expression of the force of nature. Our aim, rather, is to delve into the organizational and institutional aspects of disasters with a view to analysing the conscious choices of communities and governments (either conscious or stemming from long-term memory) made for the purpose of preventing or, at least, containing the effects of such manifestations of natural forces, taking into account location, expectation and fear of the event.

For examples of such phenomena one need only recall outbreaks of major fires, flooding, pandemics, storms, earthquakes and landslides, etc. Our research will focus on events that are likely to reoccur, and thereby encourage societies and communities to evaluate preventative measures, as well as ways in which to limit their effects and/or to contain them, both during and after the event.

In keeping with CEPOC's customary procedure the focus of the seminar spans many centuries, ranging from the Middle Ages to the present time. Hence, there will be opportunities for contributions both at the local level and on a national scale. It is not by chance that the title of the seminar speaks of "Buon Governo" and "Civil Protection", terms that conjure up images of both the medieval/modern and the modern/contemporary ages.

The seminar will be held on 11 and 12 October 2019 in the picturesque setting of Palazzo Feltrinelli in Gargnano del Garda. Day One (Friday 11th) will be entirely reserved for contributions from individual speakers. The following morning (Saturday 12th) will be devoted to a free-ranging discussion among all participants.

Participants are invited to arrive at Gargnano for dinner on the evening of Thursday, 10 October. The seminar will conclude with a farewell luncheon on Saturday 12 October. Wherever possible the organizing committee will provide travel from Milan to Gargnano, and vice versa, for those arriving at airports or train stations in the Milan area, whether from abroad or from within Italy. The committee will provide participants with board and accommodation but is unable to meet travelling costs.

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