

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
FIRST SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture (Urban and Territorial Design)
Honors theses

The territorial policy of the Italian Communist Party and the urban growth of Turin: 1945-1985

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The thesis is about the urban growth of Turin from 1945 to 1985 and the debate of the administrations surrounding town planning. It focuses on the role the Italian Communist Party has had in this debate: it was a significant role, even if the Party was in the control of the city only from 1945 to 1951 and from 1975 to 1985. During the long time in which it was in opposition, the Italian Communist Party assumed a strong consciousness around the importance of the quality of the urban ambient as a fundamental aspect of the social welfare.

The main goal of the research is to understand how much the Italian Communist Party has been able to affect the urban growth of Turin by elaborating an administrative culture.

The research develops by integrating data from bibliographic sources and from primary sources, obtained through the analysis of the municipal acts, belonging to the Historical File of the City of Turin, and of the Communist Party's congress documents, belonging to the Foundation Antonio Gramsci Institute of Turin. Besides, some questions which emerged during the research have been dealt with the actors, such as architects and politicians, who had direct experienced all the events covered by the study.

The historical period of the research is characterized by a substantial political stability of the Administrations which followed in the guide of the city, and which have faced its fast development. My study is about this last aspect, or better about the decisional, political and technical processes which led to the physical model we have inherited, and tries to answer to the question I put at the beginning of my research: how can the public sector, and particularly the municipal administration, control and plan the urban growth for the general good?

From the research emerges how Turin had in the second half of the twentieth century an exceptional convulsive growth, escaped from the public control: the quality of the urban environment was overwhelmed by the land profit. The Town-planning scheme of 1959 itself, with its complex course of adoption, was unable to contrast the construction speculation which was so strong during that historical period.

A few discontinuity has been noticed between the first administrations, belonging to the left side, and the following moderate administrations.

It was only from the second half of the 60s that the Italian Communist Party started to elaborate political proposals for a government alternative in Turin, put into concrete form in the following decade. The urban planning choices of the Communist administration carried on the Town-planning scheme revision, which preliminary project was adopted in 1980. The adoption of such an innovative Town-planning scheme was possible because of the coeval legislative situation which, separating the property right from the building right, gave to the local government explicit powers of negotiation with the private actors.

But the sentences of the Constitutional Court in 1980 and the economic and industrial re-establishment marked a very hard blow for the suggestion of Novelli Committee. The same majority went on crisis, really divided on the strategic choices in urban planning.

So, if the Italian Communist Party seemed to have been able to elaborate an administrative culture, it was not so strong to stand up to the climate of hard changes with which it had to compare.

From my research I can conclude that the public Administration actually has the possibility to govern urban expansion when it has the cultural ability as well as, obviously, the economic and legislative possibilities. The instruments it can use are the control on the land profit and the economic and legislative power to be a strong actor in the collective bargaining with the private actors, and consequently vouch for the collective welfare.

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