



**POLITECNICO
DI TORINO**

Honors thesis

MSc degree program in Architecture Construction and City

Abstract

Planning postwar Turin during the building boom years. The case study of Piazza della Repubblica 17-19.

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The research work presented here aims at the reconstruction of some urban and architectural processes that have affected the city of Turin during the years immediately after the Second World War, through the analysis of a specific case study: a 1954 building situated in Piazza della Repubblica. Since the first months after the liberation of April 1945, Turin is in fact one of the cities which was the most damaged by the wartime bombing; therefore the need for a real urban reconstruction plan to face the lack of housing and primary services immediately occurs. Among the many areas in need of intervention and selected by the ministerial decree of 1947, the area of Piazza della Repubblica is given particular attention, located in the north quadrant of Turin and included in zone 1 of the reconstruction plan. Analyzing the projects proposed for the square, taking into account both those foreseen by the reconstruction plan and those predating the world war, we note a strong continuity of design, from which the will and need to take care of the area to turn it into a traffic node are evident, following the growing needs of a city that is designed more and more frequently for cars and wants to appear monumental in one of its most important entrances. A process that stops definitively only after the approval of the 1956 master plan, which remains irrelevant as regards the operations intended for the square. Consequently, the only real architectural evidence to the innovation intentions planned during this period for Piazza della Repubblica is the skyscraper building located to the north-west of the area considered: designed in 1954 by Nello Renacco, an important planning engineer of the post-war Turin architectural and urban landscape, it remains a legacy of tangible modernity in the consolidated historical fabric of the square.

The building is in fact inserted in the urban context as part of that post-war phenomenon that triggers the rise of the so-called skyscrapers in the historical center: this *modus operandi*, favoured mainly by the uncontrolled release of licenses by the public administration in regard to the private organisations and companies that built with speculative purposes, allows that the central core of Turin is surrounded by tall buildings similar to each other, but strongly disconnected from the urban fabric. Therefore, following a theoretical framework of this type, realized thanks to the in-depth study of the bibliography and archival sources, the construction of the skyscraper of Piazza della Repubblica is not only important from an architectural / urbanistic point of view, but is interesting also in social terms. For this reason, the development of a critical analysis to find out how those who live in this place have perceived the urban context and its transformations over the time takes on a fundamental role for the development of the research. Through the preparation of a series of interviews aimed at understanding the relationship between the inhabitants and the neighborhood, and assuming the skyscraper as an intermediate point between the two realities, questions arise about what the interactions between them have been, opening a reflection on ways of living and on the perceptions that the building has prompted from the time of its construction to the present day.

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