

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
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Soil sealing and urban planning tax system: the need of a fiscal reform for the ecological government of the territory

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Writing the word “soil sealing” in a web search engine, millions of results come out. Not only city planners, economists, environmentalists, aware administrators, but also a lot of common people through social networks, blogs, forums, specialized magazines and associations show more interest in issues related to their territory. It's important to speak about it. It's fundamental that everybody understand that increasing environmental warnings are a direct consequence of excesses, bad government of the territory and of a planning victim of the “cement's party”. To deeply understand this matter it's necessary to analyze not only the phenomenon's dimension, but in particular its causes, examining links with urban planning tax system.

Starting from XVII century, due to demographic trend and the resulting urbanization, the biggest Italian cities are involved in process of renovation.

Today as yesterday the right way to follow is that of urban renovation, in order to make more liveable our cities following the changed needs of the community: it should be encouraged a city planning less stiff and restrictive, that doesn't promote the urban sprawl, but that pursues a policy of good government of the territory (Title V of the Constitution) in order to follow a model of sustainable and equilibrate development, that aims to safeguard at the same time economic, territory and community interests.

In the same way is essential making available for administrator, technician and all the involved community, new instruments more fitting and flexible.

The thesis has been organized in four main parts, divided into various chapters that deepen the themes debated. In a cd-rom are attached the “town cards” and working charts developed during the research carried out at Provincia di Torino.

In the first part are illustrated the urban changes that interested Italy since Second post-war to present and that lead to the need to preserve environment and landscape, stopping soil sealing of the extra-urban territory and, at the same time, making urban regeneration of consolidated cities.

The first part also describes the evolution of normative and fiscal bureaucracy, dedicating one entire chapter to the relation between unlawful building, building amnesty and soil sealing.

In the end are illustrated the various decline and use of soil processes, with particular reference at the most intensive and irreversible one: waterproofing.



Vicious circle of soil sealing

In the second part is illustrated the research realized with the support of Provincia di Torino. The study carried out is constituted by the analysis and the following elaboration of a remarkable mass of data concerning ICI, urbanization taxes, building taxes, private investments, housing stock, soil sealing trend, demographic trend, current costs, urban transformations incomes and the use of this proceeds.

So, it's not just a matter of understanding which municipality has consumed more soil or which are the tendencies of town financial statement, but if the building expansion is correlated with tax regime. For this reason, for the municipalities studied nine indicators have been elaborated; they are summarized in the final indicator, that gives back an overall vision of relations between urban sprawl and the taxes connected to it. Very often the results obtained have been themed in geographic maps realized with GIS software ArcGIS 9.3 by ESRI.

The third part is divided in two sections. The first describes the possible solutions in order to contrast soil sealing, defined by studios, researchers, professionals and "works personnel" which are present in literature.

The issues analyzed relate to both town planning thematics and public finance ones. The second gathers a series of national and international best practices, that illustrate contexts where have been carried out actions and policies aimed to contain urban sprawl phenomenon, operating both at the urban planning level and the financial one.

A rich and exciting chapter follows, completely dedicated to some policies and actions developed beyond national borders, instruments and projects adopted by other States, in order to contrast soil sealing and support a tax regime more efficiently, incisive, and equitable.

The fourth and last part has been written in order to include all the considerations coming out from the analysis done, to be used for future researches and in-depth analysis. Starting points, personal proposals have been formulated, not only in the last parts of this research, in order to support future analysis and diffuse more awareness not only among “works personnel” but among neophyte citizens too, in order to answer in an adequate way to soil sealing.

So, this research is inserted in a public cultural debate which is continually changing, hoping that it can stoke the debate and support the creation of instruments, policies and actions aimed to contrast urban sprawl and improve the local tax structure in order to support an ecological government of the territory.

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