



**Politecnico
di Torino**

Honors Thesis

Course
**Pianificazione Territoriale, Urbanistica,
Paesaggistico-Ambientale**

Abstract

**Politics and Territorial Planning in Turin (1951–1993): Between
Municipal Government and Neighborhood Mobilizations**

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This thesis analyzes the relationship between political-cultural debate and urban transformations in Turin at three key moments in which the city undertook the drafting of a Master Plan during the second half of the twentieth century. Turin represents an interesting case study for reflecting on the origins of negotiated and neoliberal urban planning, which characterize the features of the contemporary city.

Scope of the Research

The study investigates the connection between political debate and administrative decisions that guided Turin's urban transformations, from the 1956–59 Master Plan under the Peyron administration, to the proposal advanced by the Novelli administration in 1980, and finally to the Gregotti–Cagnardi plan promoted by the Castellani administration during the post-industrial phase between 1989 and 1993. The analysis highlights how land rent deeply influenced urban planning decisions, often to the detriment of public services and the protection of cultural heritage. A central role was played by neighborhood committees which, between the 1960s and the 1980s, through coordination and decentralization, became political interlocutors capable of proposing a polycentric urban model, with more green spaces and neighborhood services, challenging speculative development logics.

Sources

To define the research framework, the proceedings of the City Council and technical-administrative documentation were examined in order to reconstruct political orientations and decision-making processes. These sources are complemented by materials from the Coordination of Neighborhood Committees, originating from the former Sereno Regis Fund at Via Assietta 13, now transferred to the Biblioteca Civica Centrale and currently being catalogued, which allow for a deeper understanding of grassroots demands and mobilizations.

The research is further enriched by interviews with individuals involved in the processes, integrating written documentation with memories and direct testimonies. Interviews with political actors, technical experts, and activists highlight the conflict between public planning, economic interests, and civic participation. Overall, written and oral testimonies make it possible to analyze the gradual emergence of negotiated urban planning in a city increasingly marked by the reduction of public investment in welfare and territorial development.

Findings and Conclusions

The research interprets Turin's urban transformations as the result of a conflictual and negotiated process in which technical instruments, political choices, and social mobilizations jointly contributed to the production of urban space. Through the analysis of documentation, the thesis shows how Master Plans were not merely technical devices but rather expressions of different visions of the city and of varying balances between public interest and private land rent.

Following the framework of the "generations of plans" described by Campos Venuti, the 1956–1959 plan represents the expansionist phase: planning was subordinated to quantitative growth and land valorization, while the public interest remained marginal.

With the Radicioni Plan proposed by the Novelli administration in 1980, a reformist phase emerged, attempting to integrate multi-level planning and participation by neighborhood committees, introducing the themes of the right to the city and access to services. However, the plan's failure to be implemented reveals the political fragility of this period and the inability to consolidate a redistributive model.

The Gregotti–Cagnardi Plan (1993–1995) marks the transition to negotiated urban planning: the homogeneous building index and the centrality of negotiation with private actors favor urban land rent, transforming it from a problem to be contained into a driving force of public policies. Planning thus loses its regulatory and equitable function, while civic participation declines through a process of institutionalization beginning in 1985, when the city's districts (Circoscrizioni) were reduced from 23 to 10.

Overall, Turin emerges as a privileged observatory of the transformation of territorial governance models in Italy: from the city as a space to be technically regulated, to the city as a shared social project, and finally to the city conceived as a “competitive asset.” The thesis concludes that the democratic quality of planning depends on the ability of institutions to guarantee effective participatory processes and to subordinate land rent to the collective interest. When the logic of negotiation prevails, territory becomes a commodity and the city risks losing its public dimension as a space of substantive equality.

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