

POLITECNICO DI TORINO  
FIRST SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE  
Master of Science in Architecture (Construction)

**Honors theses**

---

**Guido Radic's "integral" design from the plant to the city. Professional history of an architect at Fiat Engineering (1952-1983)**

by Caterina Barioglio

Tutor: Carlo Olmo

Co-tutor: Michela Comba

When reflecting on the professional career of an architect, belonging to the circle of the technician-intellectuals in the city of Turin during the Second post-war period, the researcher has to face methodological issues arising from the characteristics of the historiographical production of the twentieth century. Although the number of studies of the protagonists and events of the last fifty years is notable, nowadays the literature on the Italian scene, especially on the dynamics of an evolving profession, is still rather incomplete. Moreover, the widespread success of monographs as genre has fostered a historiographical production of local narratives, not always comparative, insufficient to delineate the overall picture of a *local history*.

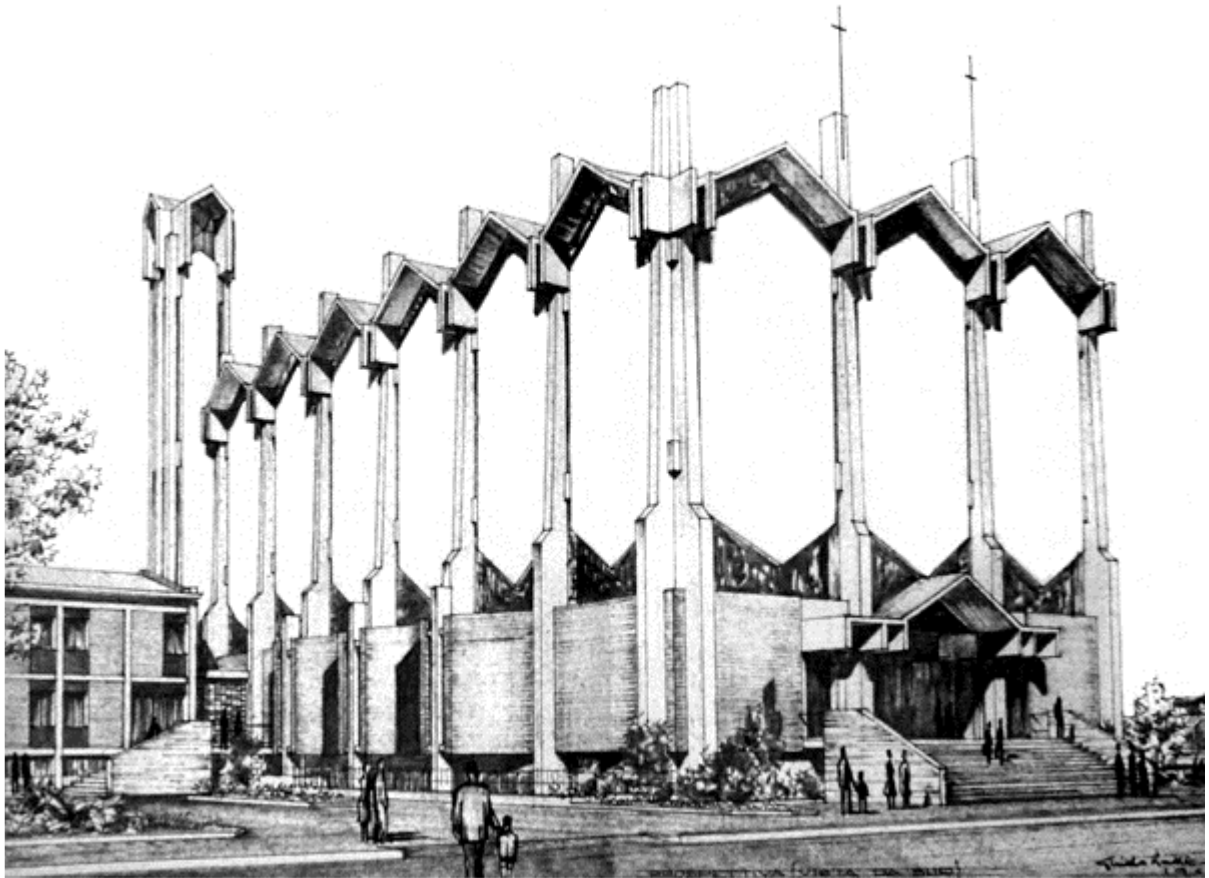
Aware of these factors, this research starts from a meticulous reconstruction of architect Guido Radic's design experience, whose career develops almost entirely at the Fiat department of design and construction during the years of economic boom. This survey among the papers of the first and most important Italian engineering company of the Second post-war (a company without equal to its connection with the Fordist industry and construction of the city) is not an isolated work, but it's part of a wider research project, coordinated by prof. Carlo Olmo. The project originated in a collaboration between the Politecnico of Turin and the company Maire Tecnimont, which aims to catalogue the documents (over than 255.000 drawings) preserved in its archives and lay the foundation for a survey carried out by a team of lecturers and researchers.



Polytechnic of Turin, 1952, design by Guido Radic

The aim of this research is wider than a monographic vocation: the study of Radic is considered a sort of expedient to deep into some form of professional practice, in a cultural context in which the edges of the respective responsibilities of engineers and architects tend to blur. The professional experience of Guido Radic stimulates a reflection on the roles of the different actors in the building production during the *long reconstruction*, focusing on those elites of architects, engineers and entrepreneurs partly neglected by historiography over those intellectual elites who are always central in the debate over the city.

The study extends its boundaries on the dynamics and synergies that were established between technicians of Fiat Engineering office during the years 1952-1980. Radic's work in a study that in 1976 had over 500 subordinate reveals how the design ability of the architect and his entourage consolidated over time on a wide range of activities, demonstrating a more complex role than simply supporting the core business of the motorization industry.



Church of the village Fiat in Settimo Torinese, 1962, design by Guido Radic

The progressive growth of technical skills of many professionals from the Fifties to the Eighties at the "Fiat school", is found especially in designing industrial plants in Italy and abroad (including Mirafiori and Togliattigrad). By training and working in close collaboration with the great figures of the engineering culture of those years (as Bonadè Bottino, Ravelli, Pugno, Danusso), the career of Radic, from designer to head of the Division of Architecture and Urban Planning of Fiat Engineering outlines an unusual model of professional practice, which, while absorbing some technical skills on engineering, tries to re-establish some boundaries of legitimacy of the architect's work, giving relevant position in the building process to those projects where construction and productive components are dominant.

With Guido Radic, this research fits into the delicate issue of history of professions related to the project, adding a piece to the complex mosaic of post-war Italian scenery, where history of architecture and history of enterprise are closely intertwined.



Factory VAZ in Togliattigrad, Russia, 1966, design by Guido Radic

For further information, e-mail:  
Caterina Barioglio: [caterinabarioglio@gmail.com](mailto:caterinabarioglio@gmail.com)