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# **URBAN CO-PRODUCTION**

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE BARRIERS TO THE CO-PRODUCTION  
OF PUBLIC SPACES—A CASE STUDY OF AURORA, TURIN**

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# URBAN CO-PRODUCTION

*An investigation of the barriers to the co-production  
of public spaces — a case study of Aurora, Turin*

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# ABSTRACT

## KEY WORDS:

*Co-Production*

*Knowledge co-production*

*Institutionalized co-production*

*Citizen participation*

*Sustainable Urban Development*

*Inclusive public space*

*Social innovation*

*New Governance tool*

## Abstract

This thesis explores the mechanisms, challenges and potential of urban co-production in the creation of public spaces, with a focus on the Aurora district of Turin, Italy. As cities increasingly adopt participatory governance models, the study examines how co-production can move beyond fragmented and symbolic participation to become a systemic governance tool. Through an in-depth case study of three public space projects in Aurora—the Giardino Cardinale Pellegrino, the Giardino di Via Saint Bon and the Trincerino railway trench—the study examines how different levels of governance interact, how citizens contribute to planning processes, the role of the academic community and what institutional barriers hinder effective collaboration. The theoretical framework draws on the literature on co-production, considering three aspects—personal interaction, knowledge co-production and institutionalized co-production. The empirical results highlight critical gaps in coordination between city and district administrations, the absence of facilitator roles, and the limited integration of citizen input into strategic urban planning. The study argues that effective co-production requires both institutionalization and professional facilitation to bridge governance levels and ensure meaningful citizen participation. It concludes with practical recommendations for embedding co-production into urban governance structures to create more inclusive, responsive, and sustainable public spaces.

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spaces. Using international experience and the knowledge gained during my Master's program, I strive to adapt new approaches to the Russian context. Developing interdisciplinary innovations requires active communication and cooperation between many departments. And implementing innovations requires coordination at several levels. My work experience has shown that the quality of communication, whether between individuals or departments, has a huge impact on the quality of the final project.

Diving into the issues of internal corporate organisation and management methods, it seemed to me that cities and corporations are very similar. They are characterised by complex networks of interconnected departments, which are influenced by various internal and external factors.

Continuing the parallel, in urban planning public urban spaces can be considered as products, and citizens not just as consumers but also as active participants in their creation. Contemporary approaches such as co-production emphasise that citizens play a key role in shaping urban spaces, just as users are increasingly involved in product development in corporate practice. Increasing structural complexity and the number of parties involved at every stage of a project requires more sophisticated coordination. One of the key lessons from corporate governance is the importance of project and product managers, whose ability to organise processes and facilitate collaboration directly impacts the success of projects. This raises an important question: are there similar roles in urban planning management, especially in Italy? And if they exist, how effective are they?

The issue of coordination quality is multifaceted. It covers structural aspects, legislative frameworks, managerial approaches and personal qualities of leaders. This is why managers, moderators and facilitators who are able to combine knowledge of the context, understanding of all parties involved, strategic vision with the ability to organise high-quality dialogue are an important element in creating successful interactions. Their main function is not to create projects, but to organise a process that will ensure the sufficient result align with the long-term strategy.

It could be said the focus of this thesis is to investigate how corporate practices, especially those related to governance and facilitation, can be adapted to Italian urban planning. Because, according to my observations, problems in the area of interconnectedness and organisation of effective vertical and horizontal interaction still exist today. And I would like to believe that the outcomes of this thesis can become a step towards creating methods for a more integrated and collaborative work on spatial planning.

## Author's notes

This thesis explores the intersection of two areas of my professional and personal interest: urban planning and corporate governance strategies. For several years, I worked as a landscape architect in a large development company. My team designs residential areas, where I contribute to the integration of sustainable development principles into urban public

# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

Cities are dynamic spaces where diverse interests, perspectives and needs converge. Modern societies face a large number of challenges: accelerating urbanization, climate change, economic instability, growing social inequality, migration and integration issues—all requiring innovative approaches to decision-making and problem solving. These problems are particularly noticeable in cities, which are epicenters of demographic diversity, political negotiations, and economic activity. The complexity of urban environments exposes the limitations of traditional top-down governance, where centralized decision-making often fails to reflect localized needs and knowledge (Ansell and Gash 2008), new approaches are needed to take into account the diversity of interests and relationships between participants (Nadin et al. 2021).

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approaches recognize that no single actor has all the knowledge and resources needed to solve complex public problems, and that including multiple perspectives—from institutions, professionals, and citizens—is essential to developing policies and services that are contextually relevant and widely accepted (Bovaird 2007). Democratization of urban governance through citizen engagement in complex decision-making processes is becoming not only a social but also a systemic innovation (Bragaglia et al. 2024).

One of the most prominent models in this shift towards participation is co-production, a governance approach that involves multiple stakeholders in the planning, design, implementation and management of public services and urban projects (Brandsen et al. 2018). Co-production is usually called an umbrella term covering a wide range of processes and approaches related to the joint creation of solutions in the field of management and planning (Brandsen and Pestoff 2006). “We define co-production as an

In response, participatory and collaborative governance models have gained increasing attention in an effort to bridge the gap between policymakers, experts, and the public (Sorrentino et al. 2018). These



(Source: Photo by the author)



umbrella concept that captures a wide variety of activities that can occur in any phase of the public service cycle and in which state actors and lay actors work together to produce benefits (Nabatchi, Sancino, and Sicilia 2017, 769). One of its key pioneers (Ostrom 1996, 1073), defined co-production as “The process through which inputs used to provide a good or service are contributed by individuals who are not ‘in’ the same organization”. The concept of co-production emphasizes the need for interaction between government and civil society—citizens, academia, organizations and the third sector—to make the best use of their resources (Parks et al. 1981). The term co-production itself is quite vague and used in different ways, one of the reasons for this is the fact that research on co-production has developed separately in three academic fields: public administration, science and technology studies, and sustainability science (Miller and Wyborn 2020). (Nabatchi et al. 2017) note that in the literature on public administration, there is no single clear definition of co-production; however, a systematic literature review allows for the identification of three levels of participation—individual, group, and collective. Furthermore, the complexity of the approach should be emphasized, as co-production can encompass different stages: co-commissioning, co-design, co-delivery, and co-assessment. Unlike traditional participatory methods, where citizens are consulted at selective stages, co-production includes them as active partners throughout the process, sharing responsibilities and decision-making powers (Voorberg et al. 2015). By combining professional knowledge with local knowledge, co-production helps to create solutions that are not only technically sound but also socially legitimate and respond to real needs (Hemström et al. 2021; Polk 2015). Bandola-Gill et al. (2023) show that although the definition of co-production may vary and is viewed from different perspectives, all its forms reflect a change in the social and epistemic structure of knowledge, which is important for solving complex global challenges.

*"Co-production is an umbrella concept that captures a wide variety of activities that can occur in any phase of the public service cycle and in which state actors and lay actors work together to produce benefits"*

Co-production can take different forms depending on the level of institutionalization and the nature of citizen participation. It can emerge spontaneously through grassroots activism, structurally through long-term part-

nerships between governments and communities, or digitally through new tools such as participatory platforms and deliberative forums (Escobar

2020; Fung 2015). Regardless of the form, the ultimate goal of co-production is to democratize governance, increase trust between citizens and institutions, and make decision-making more adaptive to complex, changing urban realities (Healey 2020). State reforms must take into account the role of local knowledge and community self-organization (Ostrom 1996).

## THE GLOBAL RELEVANCE OF URBAN CO-PRODUCTION



At a European level, the European Commission, within the framework of the Urban Agenda for the EU initiative, emphasizes that citizen participation in the creation of urban spaces is a tool for achieving sustainable urban development. This approach aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 11, "Sustainable Cities and Communities," which calls for making cities more inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. By fostering active resident involvement in strategy development and decision-making, the European Commission aims to create cities that better reflect the real needs of their inhabitants. This, in turn, strengthens trust between citizens and authorities, enhances social cohesion, and improves governance (European Commission 2019). Democratization of urban governance through citizen engagement is not only a tool for social interaction, but also a form of democratic innovation. Such approaches not only help solve current urban problems, but also transform the ways in which citizens and government agencies interact (Smith 2010), thus contributing to stronger institutions and more transparent decision-making processes, in line with SDG 16.

At a global level, co-production is gaining traction as both a governance strategy and a necessity. In the Global North, it is promoted to enhance public trust, governance efficiency, and democratic participation (Ansell and Gash 2008), yet its implementation often remains fragmented and constrained by bureaucratic structures (Turnhout et al. 2020). In the Global South, co-production frequently emerges from grassroots necessity, as communities fill governance gaps left by under-resourced public institutions (Mitlin 2008; Castán Broto et al. 2022). Despite different driving forces, both contexts face challenges in institutionalising co-production to ensure long-term impact (Torfing et al. 2019). These challenges also highlight the need for building effective cross-sectoral and multi-level partnerships, in line with the goals outlined in SDG 17.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Although co-production is recognized in academic discourse and actively discussed in European urban policy, its practical implementation remains challenging. Many theoretical frameworks advocate co-production approaches, but real-world applications face significant obstacles (Sorrentino et al. 2018). A key challenge is understanding who organizes co-production and how it functions across different levels of governance. Multi-level governance involves interactions between national, regional, municipal, and district governments, creating bureaucratic and institutional complexities (Torfing et al. 2019). Furthermore, existing governance structures can create systemic barriers to the institutionalization of co-production. For example, in Italy, the rigid and prescriptive nature of urban planning systems limits the ability of co-production to become an integral part of decision-making, often leaving it outside the formal governance framework (Bragaglia et al. 2023). Traditional planning relies on a centralized approach, where decisions are

*Practical implementation of co-production remains challenging* made by authorities and professionals, ignoring local knowledge. Authorities and administrations often do not perceive citizens as full participants in planning (Albrechts 2013). The lack of systematic coordination mechanisms often results in fragmented participation and disjointed urban policies (Sicilia et al. 2019). Moreover, public skepticism and low trust in authorities hinder meaningful citizen participation, which can make co-production efforts seem more symbolic than meaningful (Papadopoulos and Warin 2007). “Co-production is an inevitable and ubiquitous feature of modern societies. It cannot not happen. The only question is how it is designed and practiced, what practices and processes get used, and therefore which producers play what roles (i.e., how power is allocated) and what products (i.e., knowledge, people, and socio-ecological arrangements) emerge as a result” (Miller and Wyborn 2020, page 94).

In order to trace how co-production unfolds in practice and the obstacles it faces, this thesis focuses on public spaces. Public spaces serve as highly visible and socially significant arenas where multiple interests intersect. Their everyday use, symbolic value, and accessibility to diverse groups make them tangible environments in which both the potential and challenges of co-production become particularly apparent. As such, they provide a productive lens through which to examine the effectiveness and limitations of co-management in urban planning.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

*How does co-production happen in practice and what are its limitations?*

## STARTING HYPOTHESIS

Co-production of public spaces depends on strong interactions and collaboration between multiple stakeholders, where the quality of relationships directly influences the outcomes. Effective co-production requires coordinated collaboration across all levels of governance. This study hypothesizes that the lack of structured mechanisms for integrating citizen perspectives into higher levels of governance in Italy prevents co-production from functioning as a systemic governance tool. Although local co-production initiatives are relatively common, they often remain isolated and citizen input has difficulty reaching city and metropolitan strategic decision-making processes

## THESIS OBJECTIVE

The objective of this thesis is to analyse the mechanisms and barriers that shape co-production in urban planning, particularly in multi-level governance systems, in the Aurora district of Turin, Italy. Through this case study, the research will analyse:

*To identify institutional barriers that limit the integration of co-production as a systemic approach into urban governance*

*To analyze how different levels of governance coordinate co-production efforts in the Aurora district, identifying existing mechanisms as well as possible gaps*

By closely examining who initiates, facilitates, and sustains co-production in Aurora, this study aims to identify effective tools for participatory governance and propose strategies to strengthen co-production processes in urban planning. Ultimately, it seeks to move beyond theoretical discussions and provide practical recommendations for ensuring that co-production contributes to the creation of responsive, inclusive, and sustainable public spaces.

This thesis is structured into three main chapters, moving from a theoretical exploration of co-production to a practical case study and concluding with guidelines for improving co-production processes in urban planning. The structure is designed to first establish a conceptual foundation, then examine how co-production functions in context of the Aurora district, and finally propose practical recommendations based on the findings.

The Aurora district is a post-industrial neighbourhood undergoing urban transformation. It is characterized by social and spatial vulnerabilities, including high marginality, contested public spaces, and fragmented governance structures (Aurora-a-sud-di-Torino-nord\_0 ). Despite these challenges, the district has become a testing ground for co-production initiatives, driven by both institutional efforts and grassroots efforts. Aurora presents contrasting realities: on the one hand, it has been the site of multiple co-production initiatives, including Co-City, ToNite, Participatory Budgeting, and the Aurora Urban Living Lab (ULL). The research examines co-production through the lens of public space interventions, assessing how participatory processes have influenced the redevelopment of spaces such as Giardino Alimonda, Giardino di Via Saint Bon, and the

former Trincerino railway trench. These three projects have different sizes and illustrates different dynamics of development, what provides complex understanding of co-production processes in the district. While small-scale projects have demonstrated successful citizen engagement, this study investigates why co-production remains inconsistently applied at the broader strategic level.

## STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis is structured into Four main Chapters, moving from a theoretical exploration of co-production to a practical case study and concluding with guidelines for improving co-production processes in urban planning.

### CHAPTER I

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

What is Co-Production?

Chapter 1 is a literature review, providing a theoretical framework for understanding co-production. It explores the key characteristics, mechanisms and challenges of co-production, examining how it has been conceptualised in various ways. The chapter critically analyses existing research to identify gaps and contradictions in the discourse, laying the groundwork for the analysis of case studies in the following chapters

### CHAPTER II

#### METHODOLOGY

How was the research designed?

Chapter 2 outlines the methodological approach used in this research. It includes three main components: desk research, field observations, and semi-structured interviews. Desk research involved the analysis of strategic planning documents and official publications at metropolitan, municipal, and district levels. Field observations were conducted at three co-produced public spaces in the Aurora district: Saint Bon Garden, Cardinal Michele Pellegrino Garden, and the Trincerino railway trench. Finally, semi-structured interviews with local authorities, experts, and residents provided qualitative insights into coordination practices, power dynamics, and the perceived effectiveness of co-production across governance levels.

### CHAPTER III

#### CO-PRODUCTION IN PRACTICE

How co-production happens in context of Turin ?

Chapter 3 presents the empirical core of the thesis, using a mixed-methods approach to examine how co-production functions in Turin's multi-level governance system. The chapter progressively narrows the analytical lens: it begins with an analysis of co-production at the metropolitan, municipal and district levels, identifying the institutional frameworks and actor roles and assessing all three aspects of co-production. It then moves on to the Aurora district, exploring its urban, social and governance features that shape the dynamics of co-production. The focus narrows further to three public space projects—the Sant Bon Garden, the Cardinal Michele Pellegrino Garden and the Trincerino Trench—analysed in terms of actor participation, decision-making and outcomes. The chapter concludes with findings from semi-structured interviews that enrich the analysis by providing information on actor relationships and coordination at all levels of governance.

### CHAPTER IV

#### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

How can the co-production process be improved?

The final chapter synthesizes theoretical and empirical insights to propose recommendations for strengthening co-production in Turin. It addresses both its application in local projects and its institutionalization as a long-term governance strategy, focusing on coordination, citizen participation, and better integration into planning practices.



# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

p 23—44



# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The main keywords for the literature review were co-production and knowledge co-production. Due to conceptual overlaps, the review also included related terms such as participatory governance, co-governance, social and democratic innovations, and their links to strategic planning.

Sorrentino, Sicilia, and Howlett (2018) distinguish between 'traditional' and 'non-traditional' co-production. This distinction guided the literature analysis. Traditional forms involve real-time, in-person collaboration between citizens and the state, while non-traditional forms use digital tools to broaden participation and enable more flexible service models. Although these categories are not widely formalized, their elements appear in many works. Bovaird (2007) argues that co-production goes beyond traditional citizen participation. Unlike consultation or basic engagement, it involves the active co-creation of public services by users and government agencies. Another key aspect is the creation of common knowledge—knowledge co-production—which seeks to integrate diverse forms of knowledge and experience to address complex issues in sustainable urban development. Hemström et al. (2021) emphasize the value of a transdisciplinary approach and the involvement of experts in producing shared knowledge.

Thus, in order to systematize the different aspects of co-production, to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the approach, and the methods of implementation, three stands of discussion are highlighted:

- *Face-to-face engagement*—"traditional" forms of interaction based on direct participation
- *Knowledge co-production*—the role of experts and transdisciplinarity.
- *Institutionalised co-production or a new governance tool*—analysis of methods and tools used to integrate the form of co-production into modern models of urban governance, and examples of "non-traditional" forms of co-production



(Source: Photo by the author)

## 1.1 CO-PRODUCTION AS FACE-TO-FACE CITIZENS ENGAGEMENT

### 1.1.1 DEFINITION AND RELEVANCE

The face-to-face citizen engagement approach is the most practical aspect of co-production. According to Nabatchi, Sancino, and Sicilia (2017), in person interactions such as workshops and seminars are effective in finding compromises between different stakeholders. (Bovaird 2007) notes that long-term relationships between citizens and professionals, based on shared contributions, strengthen social ties and increase trust in the governance process. Such interactions create the basis for deliberative governance, where citizens play an active role in discussing public issues (Friedmann 1993).

Co-production is crucial when local authorities are unable to meet infrastructure needs, enabling small-scale urban projects that focus on place-making and community interests (Castán Broto et al. 2022). (Mitlin (2008) emphasizes that grassroots organizations in cities of the global South often start as self-organization initiatives, but the most sustainable results are achieved when they move to co-production, engaging with government structures. Such initiatives are more adaptive to the local context and better reflect the real needs of communities. Grassroots self-organization can become the basis for further co-production, especially in conditions where the central government doesn't have institutional capacity for co-production. It is at the local level that forms of citizen-led co-production are often observed, involving active personal interaction and bottom-up initiatives (Pill 2022; Mitlin 2008).

Lee, Feiertag, and Unger (2024) describe co-design as a key tool for co-production. This method involves citizens in the planning and development of services or spaces, allowing for local knowledge and needs to be taken into account. For example, public space improvement projects are often carried out with the participation of local residents, who make suggestions for functional and aesthetic design. Mitlin and Bartlett (2018) also mention successful cases of co-design in urban areas, where citizen participation allows for the creation of more inclusive spaces. The Mistra Urban Futures project is an international research platform established in 2010 to promote transdisciplinary co-production for sustainable urban development, with local hubs in cities such as Gothenburg, Cape Town, Kisumu and later also in Sheffield and Malmö. The following methods of working with city residents were used during the work: focus groups, seminars, public workshops, student projects, workshops, stakeholder meet-

ings, design workshops (Polk 2015). The Grandangolo project in Turin used such methods of working with the local population as community dinners, where people could share their problems and ideas in a more informal way. Social art performances events drew attention to abandoned public areas and contributed to their restoration. Tactical urban planning activities were carried out with the participation of school and university students to co-design and physically transform the school yard, rethinking its functions and spatial organization in accordance with the needs of the local community (Bragaglia 2023).

### 1.1.2 CHALLENGES AND WEAKNESSES

Face-to-face co-production, despite its potential to strengthen social trust and include citizens in decision-making, is associated with significant challenges. These difficulties touch upon both structural issues of inequality and the practical aspects of organizing participatory processes, which ultimately may undermine the inclusiveness and effectiveness of such interactions.

#### *Unequal representation*

The formal openness of co-production processes does not always mean that they are truly inclusive. In European cities, co-production initiatives often face difficulties in involving socially vulnerable groups. Despite institutional attempts to create open platforms, participation remains predominantly accessible to active citizens and those who already have resources (Bragaglia et al. 2024). Resource asymmetries and time commitments often result in participation being dominated by resource-rich groups, so co-production risks reproducing inequalities unless processes are adapted to the needs of vulnerable communities (Chambers et al. 2021). (Polk 2015) notes that the involvement of citizens in participatory processes does not always ensure the representativeness of diverse social groups. Active groups with high levels of trust in authority and resources are often involved in collaborative work, while marginalized groups do not participate due to mistrust, lack of time and knowledge (Fledderus, Brandsen, and Honingh 2014). Language barriers, cultural and religious factors can also become exclusion factors (Hanhörster et al. 2022). As a result, a dominant discourse can emerge within the discussions, set primarily by educated, economically powerful participants. Their agenda begins to determine both the content of the debates and the results themselves, which leads to the marginalization of alternative views and a decrease in the pluralism of the process. (Fledderus, Brandsen, and Honingh 2014).



### *Resource load and time costs*

“Traditional” co-production requires significant time and organizational resources from both citizens and municipal structures (Sorrentino, Sicilia, and Howlett 2018). Processes built on broad discussions and multi-stage coordination of decisions, as a rule, turn out to be longer than traditional vertical-hierarchical decision-making mechanisms, due to the need to take into account diverse interests and seek compromises (Turnhout et al. 2020). For citizens, participation in regular meetings requires free time, which is not always possible for those in the working class, especially women with family responsibilities or people with low incomes (Pettican et al. 2023). Research shows that in co-production of such communities, so-called participatory fatigue often occurs, especially in conditions of long discussions and slow achievement of results (Polk 2015). On the other hand, for government agencies, organizing such processes is also associated with additional costs. Deliberative interaction requires multi-stage coordination, which slows down the decision-making process compared to traditional management, which creates a burden on administrations that are forced to organize meetings, coordinate participants, and manage discussion processes (M. A. Hajer and Wagenaar 2003). In conditions of insufficient funding or personnel shortages, this often leads to the simplification of participatory formats or their abandonment in favor of faster administrative decisions (Rosen and Painter 2019).

### *The risk of symbolic involvement*

In cases where co-production is initiated by top-down, government structures, there is a risk that citizen participation becomes formal, serving more as a legitimization of decisions already made. This phenomenon is described as tokenism, when citizens are involved in discussing minor aspects, such as the choice of street furniture, while key management decisions remain with government structures (Rosen and Painter 2019). In such conditions, common meetings during the co-production process lose their potential for redistribution of power and become a tool for preserving existing power asymmetries (Watson 2014).

### *Need for facilitation / intermediary-actors*

The effectiveness of face-to-face meetings, gatherings, workshops and similar stakeholder events is largely determined by the level of training of facilitators, who determine the balance of power in the group and the ability to ensure equal participation of all stakeholders. (Sicilia et al. 2019) emphasize the importance of professionals who should act as facilitators of co-production and act as leaders of the process, possessing skills in active

listening, facilitation and conflict management, clearly defining the roles of process participants. (Forester 1987) argues that conflicts are not only problems to be solved, but also opportunities to learn, strengthen communities, and create more effective solutions. Mediators can help stakeholders find common ground, overcome mistrust, and create sustainable solutions. (Polk 2015) emphasizes that transdisciplinary co-production processes are often dominated by technical specialists and municipal officials, while local communities and their knowledge are left on the periphery of decision-making. (Turnhout et al. 2020) note that facilitation focused solely on consensus can lead to the depoliticization of co-production processes, obscure power asymmetries, and suppress critical voices.

A recent contribution by Bragaglia and Parker (2024) introduces the concept of intermediary-actors to describe professionals—particularly planning consultants—who operate across the boundaries of government, civil society, and the private sector in collaborative planning contexts. Drawing on actor-network theory (ANT), the authors distinguish actor-mediators from passive intermediaries, emphasising their active role in brokering relationships, knowledge and procedures. In the case of neighbourhood planning in England, such advisers support community groups by translating technical requirements, interpreting policy frameworks and managing planning procedures. The term recognises that these actors do not simply facilitate dialogue but also help to structure how planning processes unfold. While the article does not present this role as inherently problematic, it highlights the need for greater attention to how such actors operate, particularly given their increasing involvement in shaping participatory outcomes and their position between public and private interests.

### 1.1.3 SUMMARISE ABOUT FACE-TO-FACE CO-PRODUCTION

The Face-to-Face aspect of co-production enables residents, officials and professionals to jointly identify problems and co-develop public service solutions through lively dialogue and collective action (Nabatchi, Sancino, and Sicilia 2017; Bovaird 2007). This form of co-production is often particularly visible in grassroots, bottom-up initiatives where local communities self-organize to address pressing urban issues and improve their neighbourhoods, especially when local authorities lack the capacity or resources to act (Mitlin 2008; Pill 2022). Working together face-to-face can build trust, create social cohesion and enhance civic responsibility for decisions by promoting deliberative forms of governance (Lee, Feiertag, and Unger 2024; Bragaglia 2023; Polk 2015). However, open dialogue without facilitation risks being controlled by resource-hungry, vocal groups, marginalizing vulnerable residents and reinforcing existing power asymmetries (Polk 2015; Turnhout et al. 2020), and without professional attention, such aspects of interaction as conflicts, social and language barriers can make the process ineffective and non-inclusive (Bragaglia et al. 2024; Hanhörster et al. 2022). In addition, face-to-face processes are resource-intensive: they require time and organizational capacity from both citizens and local authorities (Sorrentino, Sicilia, and Howlett 2018). Local co-production in urban projects does not always lead to more inclusive participation or transformation of power if municipalities retain control and set the agenda. There is a risk that such processes may be limited to symbolic participation, becoming “tokenism” (Rosen and Painter 2019), without changes in governance structures (Lee, Feiertag, and Unger 2024; Sorrentino, Sicilia, and Howlett 2018).

## 1.2 KNOWLEDGE CO-PRODUCTION

### 1.2.1 DEFINITION AND RELEVANCE

Knowledge Co-Production is a process in which different actors pool their knowledge and expertise to solve complex social and environmental problems. In contrast to traditional academic knowledge production, this approach focuses on the integration of scientific, practical and local knowledge to create sustainable solutions in urban management and social problems (Polk 2015). “Co-production broadly seeks to connect researchers with diverse societal actors to collaboratively and iteratively produce knowledge, action and societal change” (Chambers et al. 2021, page 983). Knowledge is seen as a process of collaborative learning, where each participant is simultaneously a bearer, creator and user of knowledge. The process of knowledge co-authorship involves the inclusion of diverse types of knowledge—academic, practical and popular, examples show how the participation of local communities in the co-design of solutions makes them more applicable and sustainable (Hemström et al. 2021).

- *Scientific* (academic knowledge) is the result of research by universities and institutes.
- *Practical knowledge* is the knowledge of architects, urban planners, social workers.
- *Local knowledge* is the knowledge of local residents, activists, and community representatives.

In recent years, knowledge co-production has become an important strategy in areas such as urban planning, environmental regulation, sustainable development (Frantzeskaki and Kabisch 2016), as well as within the framework of global knowledge management initiatives (van der Hel 2016). Co-production as a transdisciplinary interaction between research organizations and other actors in the field of sustainable development can have two motivations: a more effective solution to pre-defined problems, and a second, more complex one—rethinking and formulating problems (Chambers et al. 2021).

Knowledge co-production processes can be initiated by different actors, each of which brings its own specifics to the organization of interaction (Miszczak and Patel 2018). Governments and local authorities can initiate knowledge co-production to develop more inclusive governance and sustainable development strategies, but conflicts of interest often arise between the scientific community and the government, especially if data and findings diverge from political priorities (van der Hel 2016). Academic

institutions play a central role in Knowledge Co-Production, especially in the area of transdisciplinary research. Universities often act as initiators and facilitators of the process, linking authorities and local communities (Miszczak and Patel 2018). However, universities often have funding problems, as co-production requires flexible and long-term financial mechanisms, which are not available in most academic grants. Universities do not have strong institutional support for such projects, as they do not always correspond to academic productivity metrics, such as the number of publications (Polk 2015). Urban Living Labs (ULLs) are important examples of co-production platforms as they bring together researchers, municipalities, local communities and businesses to co-create knowledge and develop solutions for urban development (Evans et al. 2015). However, in many cases, ULLs remain experimental projects without becoming long-term strategies (Bulkeley et al. 2016). Their influence on urban policy is limited unless they are integrated into formal governance structures (Nesti 2018). The private sector is also getting involved in knowledge co-production, especially in the areas of innovative technologies and sustainable development. Future Earth research has shown that corporate structures are interested in co-production if it helps them optimize business processes and increase public trust. However, companies often seek to quickly commercialize results, which may conflict with long-term societal goals (van der Hel 2016).

In a case study of knowledge co-production in urban environmental management in Rotterdam and Berlin, the authors analyze how scientists, municipal authorities, and citizens worked together to develop strategies for urban adaptation to climate change (Frantzeskaki and Kabisch 2016). In Rotterdam, workshops were held where citizens shared empirical data on flooding, infrastructure vulnerability and adaptation strategies. In collaboration with experts, sophisticated water management models were developed that combined academic research and knowledge from local residents. The authors also examine the interactions between experts and urban planners, highlighting that scientists are oriented towards long-term forecasts and research tasks, while planners are forced to work within administrative processes and political priorities. The main institutional barriers for planners are budgetary pressures, regulatory constraints and political interests, which affect the degree to which scientific data can be integrated. This creates a time mismatch, as scientists work decades in advance, while planners are bound by short-term budget cycles. The authors highlight that despite citizen engagement, their knowledge was not fully institutionalized and their influence on urban strategies remained limited.

The other example from San Juan, Puerto Rico, illustrates how knowledge co-production was used to analyze the circulation of knowledge between different interest groups in urban governance (Muñoz-Erickson, 2014). The study relied on the Knowledge-Action Systems Analysis (KASA) method, which allowed identifying barriers to the integration of scientific, administrative, and local knowledge into decision-making processes. The central part of the study was knowledge mapping, which aimed to study what data and information politicians, urban planners, and community leaders use when governing the city. This process showed that there is a significant asymmetry in access to knowledge: municipal authorities and politicians have key information, but use it selectively. Planners depend on administrative frameworks and regulations, which limits flexibility in decision-making. Community leaders and residents are often excluded from decision-making processes, their knowledge is not perceived as significant. Deliberative dialogues discussed ways to reduce information inequality and increase citizen participation in urban governance. The authors emphasize that despite the existence of knowledge co-production initiatives, the process remains limited by institutional barriers and power asymmetries between the municipality and communities. This example shows that knowledge co-production in urban governance not only allows for the pooling of knowledge from different actors, but also reveals barriers to their integration into formal governance mechanisms.

### 1.2.2 CHALLENGES AND WEAKNESSES

#### *Possible conflicts of interest*

If the opinions of experts and local residents differ, authorities may not take into account popular knowledge, which reduces trust in projects (Turnhout et al. 2020). At the same time, contradictions between academic and municipal priorities also make it difficult to implement long-term projects (Trencher et al. 2014). In addition, business participation in knowledge co-production often leads to a conflict of interest between commercial and social goals (Bulkeley et al. 2016).

#### *Authorities selectivity in the perception of knowledge*

Policymakers tend to use scientific evidence selectively, focusing on those results that fit their existing priorities (Chambers et al. 2021). In cases where scientific or local knowledge conflicts with the political agenda, it may be ignored or its influence on decision-making minimized (Albrechts 2015). Even with the active participation of citizens in knowledge co-production, authorities are not always ready to take their opinions into account (Turnhout et al. 2020).

#### *Lack of institutional support*

Successful examples such as ULLs require funding and political support (Bulkeley et al. 2016). Without long-term mechanisms, co-production remains an experimental, but not a systemic process (Frantzeskaki and Kabisch 2016). Successful integration of scientific and practical knowledge requires clearly structured mechanisms of interaction between researchers, city authorities and local communities (Iwaniec et al. 2020). Institutional recognition of knowledge gained through co-production is required (Polk 2015).

#### *A demanding process: institutional and resource challenges*

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At the same time, representatives of the academic world are in a difficult situation because traditional ethical standards for academic research are not always suitable for transdisciplinary projects. Here, the emphasis shifts from privacy to openness and publicity. Confidentiality issues are complicated because project participants are often publicly known, and researchers' access to internal information of partner organizations challenges the usual norms of data protection and intellectual property. Also, co-authorship processes require constant reflection and emotional involvement, and are time-consuming. Researchers experience an identity crisis when working simultaneously in an academic environment and in partner organizations. This requires a high degree of emotional labor and the development of new forms of relationships based on trust and reciprocity (Hemström et al. 2021).

### 1.2.3 SUMMARISE ABOUT KNOWLEDGE CO-PRODUCTION

Knowledge co-production is not just a methodological approach, but also a tool for creating more inclusive and sustainable urban planning strategies. Its value lies in the integration of different forms of knowledge, scientific and empirical, and in the ability to involve a wide range of stakeholders in the decision-making process. Today, the driving force behind the development of this approach are experts, academic researchers and some city administrators who recognize the value of transdisciplinary and inclusive methods (Frantzeskaki and Kabisch 2016). However, institutional structures are often not flexible and adaptive enough to implement the results of such initiatives in a systematic manner (Trencher et al. 2014). Although knowledge co-production is actively used within Urban Living Labs, transdisciplinary research programs and participatory planning, its impact on long-term strategic decisions remains limited (Nesti 2018). Thus, successful implementation of the method requires not only institutional support mechanisms and sustainable funding, but also a change in academic and political structures that promotes recognition of the value of co-production of knowledge. Otherwise, it will remain an experimental practice without systemic impact on urban planning (Polk 2015).



## 1.3 INSTITUTIONALIZED CO-PRODUCTION /CO-PRODUCTION AS A NEW PUBLIC GOVERNANCE TOOL

### 1.3.1 DEFINITION AND RELEVANCE

The main difference between the co-production approach and the participatory approach is its complexity; it becomes not just a mechanism for improving the quality of public services, but also a tool for redistributing power and increasing social justice in urban governance (Mitlin and Bartlett 2018). As was said *"Institutionalized co-production is the provision of public services through a regular, long-term relationship between state agencies and organized groups of citizens, where both make substantial resource contributions"* (Joshi and Moore 2004). This aspect of co-production can also manifest itself as "non-traditional" co-production, and in contrast to "traditional" co-production, which involves direct participation of citizens in the provision of public services through face-to-face interaction, use digital platforms, mobile applications and crowdsourcing tools to expand citizen engagement and create more flexible interaction models (Sorrentino, Sicilia, and Howlett 2018). This approach involves creating structures, policies and procedures that allow citizens not only to participate but also to actually influence decision-making. Co-production changes strategic planning by making it an open and more adaptive process where different groups engage in dialogue about the future of the city (Albrechts 2013; Nadin et al. 2021).

Co-production can be seen as a new public governance tool (Sorrentino, Sicilia, and Howlett 2018). New Public Governance approach replaced New Public Management (NPM), which was inspired by business approaches, focused on market orientation, competition, and performance (Ferlie et al. 1996). This was a big step forward from the Old Public Administration, where citizens are passive recipients of services (Alford 2009), however, this approach has also been criticized, in particular for its overemphasis on market mechanisms, which has often led to a neglect of justice in favour of economic efficiency, undermining the core values of public service delivery (Dunleavy 2006). New Governance rose to prominence in the 1990s, particularly in Western democracies, as governments began to deal with complex issues of inter-organizational collaboration and multi-stakeholder policy making in areas such as urban planning and social services (Bingham, Nabatchi, and O'Leary 2005). New Public Governance emphasizes networks, inter-organizational collaboration, and multi-actor

decision-making (Hansen 2001). In such a system, the citizen acts as a co-producer, endowed with knowledge, resources, assets and opportunities that can be used to create greater social value (Moore 1995). The key role of administration representatives in the New Administration is coordination, not command (Rhodes 1996). According to (V. Pestoff 2011), co-production is becoming a central element of New Public Governance, promoting the democratization of services through the active involvement of citizens and the third sector.

Moreover, co-production plays a key role in strategic development. As noted in (Ferlie et al. 2019), co-production serves as a foundation for strategic planning, facilitating the integration of long-term vision and tactical response to changing conditions. This approach emphasizes the importance of co-creation of public value, where all participants, including citizens, public organizations and government agencies, interact as partners. Co-production not only increases the flexibility and adaptability of strategic management, but also strengthens public relations, providing a platform for innovation and interaction (Ferlie et al. 2019). Thus, co-production and strategic development become complementary processes that reinforce each other.

If co-production can be fully realized and become institutionalized, it can bring vast benefits. Citizen involvement makes governance more transparent and accountable, thereby strengthening democracy (Smith 2009). In a context of decentralization and multi-level governance, it promotes more personalized and efficient services focused on the needs of local communities (Sicilia et al. 2016). Research shows that institutionalized co-production increases trust between citizens and government structures, which is especially important for the sustainability of democratic institutions (Victor Pestoff 2018). Moreover, co-production can reduce the costs of public services through a more flexible, distributed model of governance, where citizens can act as volunteers (Ostrom 1996). In urban governance and strategic planning, co-production leads to the formation of more inclusive and democratic mechanisms, where decisions are made not within the framework of traditional hierarchy, but through cooperation between the state, business and civil society (Albrechts 2013). Speaking about co-production as a new governance tool, two examples will be considered: the first example of "traditional" co-production, which is a complex multi-level program - Participatory Budgeting, the second example of "non-traditional" co-production, the digital platform Decidim.



### 1.3.2 EXAMPLES OF INSTITUTIONALIZED CO-PRODUCTION

#### *Participatory Budgeting (PB)*

Introduced in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1989, Participatory Budgeting is an instrument of institutional co-production, which allows citizens to distribute part of the municipal budget. Since then, it has been adopted in numerous cities worldwide, including New York, Madrid and Barcelona, becoming a widely recognised method for citizen participation in public budgeting (Baiocchi and Ganuza 2014). It has enabled the inclusion of citizens at various stages of a project, such as co-commissioning, co-design, co-delivery and co-assessment, and has also enabled the inclusion of citizens' opinions in a multi-level urban planning system (Escobar 2020). In Porto Alegre, meetings were held with citizens in each district, also called "Popular Assemblies" (Smith 2009). At these meetings, residents could propose projects and vote on them, identifying priority projects for funding. (Baiocchi and Ganuza 2014). After district meetings, citizen-elected delegates presented the results of higher-level discussions in the Regional Budget Forums (Sobottka and Streck 2018). At this stage, no final decision was made, but representatives were elected to participate in the city council, where all proposed projects were considered. At this stage, the Council of the Participatory Budget (COP) was in operation (Smith 2009), delegates from all regions, together with local government representatives and experts, determined how to distribute the budget among all the proposed projects (Baiocchi and Ganuza 2014).

PB has enabled the implementation of infrastructure and social projects, directing funds to more vulnerable and needy areas. The main achievements of the program include (Escobar 2020; de Sousa Santos 1998; Baiocchi 2005; Marquetti, Schonerwald da Silva, and Campbell 2012): Investment reallocation, Improved social services, Infrastructure development, Increased transparency and governance, Increased citizen participation. Up to 100,000 people participated in PB each year, especially women, ethnic minorities and low-income citizens.

Participatory budgeting increases trust in government through open discussion of budget decisions (Baiocchi and Ganuza 2014). In Porto Alegre, thousands of people attended PB meetings, creating a new political culture (Smith 2009). However, a number of weaknesses prevented the program from developing sustainably. Following a change in administration, PB funding decreased after 2004, leading to its decline in Porto Alegre and has effectively ceased to exist in 2017 (Escobar 2020; Baiocchi and

Ganuza 2014). PB was not enshrined in law and the process depended on the political will of local authorities (Barbera, Sicilia, and Steccolini 2016). And also many PB projects remained unrealized due to the slowness and resistance of officials (Wampler 2000). Slowness and bureaucracy create serious obstacles, (Cabannes 2015) says that in Brazil, as well as in Italy, the implementation of PB is hampered by bureaucratic procedures, which reduces citizens' trust. Participatory budgeting illustrates how institutional co-production is realised, (Escobar 2020) emphasizes that PB not only affects individual projects, but also changes the governance system as a whole. However, political instability, reduced funding, and weak institutional support have been serious setbacks and have prevented the program from fully continuing in Brazil (Barbera, Sicilia, and Steccolini 2016). Nevertheless, the PB trend itself has developed worldwide, especially thanks to the possibility of expansion through digital platforms, for example in Spain and France (Escobar 2020).

#### *Digital platform, Decidim*

Decidim is an open platform for digital participation developed in 2016 in Barcelona contributing to the deliberative democracy paradigm. The project was initiated by the Barcelona City Council, civil society organizations and academic researchers (Barandiaran et al. 2024a). It was launched within a broader political transformation led by the municipal government under former housing activist Ada Colau. Her administration promoted a model of digital governance based on participation and transparency, with Decidim becoming a flagship project in this agenda (Cardullo et al. 2023). This platform is one of the leading platforms in the field of digital civic participation, especially in the participatory budgeting area, which has produced great results in Spain and has spread to other countries (Escobar 2020). In the context of multi-level governance, the use of digital platforms (e-democracy) allows for the collection of public opinion and its transmission to a higher level of decision-making, supporting multilevel governance processes (Fung 2015).

Decidim is organized as a decentralized platform with a flexible participation system, the functionality of which includes forums and discussions, voting, participatory budgeting and implementation (Barandiaran et al. 2024a). The platform helps the decision-making system to be more transparent and accountable (Satorras et al. 2020). The decision-making process consists of several steps: first, residents submit initiatives via the platform. If the proposal gains support (1000+ votes), it is submitted for analysis. Municipal experts evaluate the implementation possi-

bilities, then the decision is financed and implemented by the authorities (Satorras et al. 2020).

Speaking about the positive results that the Decidim platform has brought as a co-production tool, it is worth noting its scale: in Barcelona, 10,000+ initiatives were proposed through Decidim, a significant part of which were implemented (Satorras et al. 2020; Fuster Morell and Senabre Hidalgo 2022). The Decidim platform has been implemented by more than 20 public organizations, including the city administrations of Helsinki, Paris, New York and Zurich, and has become an important tool for digital participation and governance at the municipal level (Suter et al. 2023). Thus, thanks to the platform, it helped create institutional inclusive mechanisms. Research confirms that using Decidim increases civic engagement, especially among groups that have not previously participated in the political process (Barandiaran et al. 2024b). And thanks to new technologies such as artificial intelligence, the platform aims to make decision-making even more open. Decidim uses open source code, which makes the decision-making process transparent and auditable (Barandiaran et al. 2024b). Each decision made through the platform is associated with unique identifiers and is displayed in the public interface. Users can see what initiatives were proposed, how many votes they received, and what decision the administration made. This reduces the likelihood of manipulation, since the history of changes is available to all users (Calzada 2018). Decidim automates the process of collecting proposals, voting and monitoring, which reduces the bureaucratic burden on municipal authorities and increases their efficiency (Errandonea 2023).

However, the implementation of the project has its shortcomings and challenges. The first is the problem of citizen engagement and inequality. The main activity comes from digitally literate users, which limits the participation of the elderly, the poor and migrants, and consequently reinforces socio-technical inequalities (Cardullo, Ribera-Fumaz, and González Gil 2023). Engagement of people with low levels of digital literacy remains low (Fuster Morell and Senabre Hidalgo 2022). There are also risks of manipulation and possible distortion of voting if user groups organize to promote initiatives to the detriment of minorities (Leal García, Calleja-López, and Linares-Lanzman 2023). Also, a specific feature of digital platforms is their risk of hacking, strong cybersecurity measures are needed, since the system can be subject to attacks (Errandonea 2023).

To summarize, Decidim is a powerful tool for e-democracy that allows residents to participate in city governance, budgeting, and be involved

in the process of decision making about urban environments. It is an example of institutional co-production, providing a tool to consolidate citizens' opinion and base future development on it. Digital technologies allow for scaling up engagement, thereby making the decision-making process more inclusive. The proposals are reviewed and costed by officials before the voting stage; 45,000 people participated in the first year and there are now over 400,000 registered users (Escobar 2020). Digital platform for operating big data, allows making decisions based on real citizens' problems (Fung 2015). With the help of new AI technologies, digital platforms are becoming an important tool for organizing the co-production process. However, despite the successes, the platform faces challenges: digital inequality, risk of manipulation, technical barriers.

### 1.3.3 CHALLENGES AND WEAKNESSES

#### *Lack of legitimacy*

Cornwall (2008) emphasizes that civic participation, even if formalized, often remains symbolic if citizens' views are not integrated into institutional decision-making structures. Unlike representative democracy, where basic principles such as elections are generally accepted, co-production has no clearly agreed upon standards (Fung, 2006). Formal involvement in governance processes does not guarantee a real redistribution of power. Without clear mechanisms for the redistribution of resources, it remains state-controlled co-production, in which power and basic resources remain in the hands of state institutions, and citizen participation remains limited (Mitlin and Bartlett 2018). The effectiveness of co-production depends on the existence of a clear administrative structure, effective coordination mechanisms and sufficiently qualified staff. Many public services lack such resources and skills, which limits the potential for co-production of services (Sorrentino, Sicilia, and Howlett 2018).

#### *Gaps between levels of governance*

Torring, Sørensen, and Røiseland (2019) indicate that successful implementation of co-creation in the public sector requires clear coordination mechanisms, but problems with knowledge sharing and coordination of priorities often arise between different levels of government, which complicates the implementation of joint initiatives. Instead of effective partnership, there is a dominance of central institutions, which prevents an equal distribution of power and the formation of genuine joint policies. Multi-level governance leads to coordination difficulties, since different levels of

government have different bureaucratic procedures, priorities and access to resources (Milio 2014). In the context of multi-level governance, participatory co-production requires feedback mechanisms, the transfer of data from the local to the regional and national levels must be transparent and systematized (Torfing, Sørensen, and Røiseland 2019). For successful co-production, it is necessary to create special structures, offices and positions that will be responsible for facilitating interaction between citizens and government bodies (Sicilia et al. 2019). Ansell and Gash (2008) note that the lack of clear coordination between local and central governments can lead to duplication of efforts or conflicts of interest, especially when local projects are integrated into national strategies.

#### *Traditional administrative structures*

Co-production requires a change in political and administrative structures, otherwise it remains on the periphery of governance. Public services must implement adaptive bureaucracy, which allows for a more flexible response to citizen participation, instead of adhering to rigid administrative procedures (Durose and Richardson 2016). In the Italian context, Bragaglia, Caldarice, and Janin Rivolin (2024) mention that co-production remains "outside the planning system" because the system strictly regulates land rights and leaves no room for flexibility. In the Italian system, land use and urban development are fixed in advance in the Master Plan ("Piano regolatore generale"). This means that co-production initiatives cannot formally influence the redistribution of land rights and change urban planning decisions. In Italy, the principle of horizontal subsidiarity allows for interaction between citizens and authorities through administrative agreements, such as Collaboration Agreements, but these documents have limited impact because they do not revise the official mechanisms of urban regulation and remain outside the formal planning system.

#### *"Magic" concept*

Co-production is seen as a social innovation (Voorberg, Bekkers, and Tummers 2015). Nevertheless (Bragaglia 2021) points out that social innovation is used not only as a tool for bottom-up initiatives, but also within institutional strategies for top-down approaches to urban governance. Social innovation therefore risks becoming simply a "magic concept" (Pollitt and Hupe 2011) attractive to politicians who include it in their political programs and urban strategies primarily for rhetorical purposes and to shift responsibility.

#### **1.3.4 SUMMARISE ABOUT INSTITUTIONALIZED CO-PRODUCTION**

Therefore, institutionalized co-production represents an effective approach to urban governance development that promotes democracy, transparency and accountability (Smith 2009). As a tool of New Public Governance, co-production transforms traditional administrative processes, improving the flexibility and adaptability of strategic planning (Ferlie et al. 2019). Despite significant benefits such as increased civic trust (Ostrom 1996), improving the quality of services (Sicilia et al. 2016), the implementation of co-production faces a number of barriers: lack of legitimacy and formalism of participation (Cornwall 2008; Fung 2006), problems of multi-level coordination (Torfing, Sørensen, and Røiseland 2019; Milio 2014; Sicilia et al. 2019), slow-moving traditional bureaucratic structures (Durose and Richardson 2016; Bragaglia, Caldarice, and Janin Rivolin 2024), as well as the risk of turning social innovation initiatives into a purely rhetorical, "magical concept" without real influence (Bragaglia 2021). It is also worth noting that the use of "non-traditional" co-production methods, such as digital platforms and e-democracy tools, allows for the participation process to be scaled up and involve a significantly larger number of people, expanding opportunities for civic engagement and increasing the transparency of the decision-making process (Sorrentino, Sicilia, and Howlett 2018; Barandiaran et al. 2024a).



## 1.4 RESEARCH GAP

The literature review has highlighted three key aspects of co-production: face-to-face engagement, knowledge co-production, and institutionalized co-production. Together, these aspects illustrate the complexity and versatility of co-production, demonstrating its intersection with participatory approaches and its distinctive features.

Face-to-face co-production often emerges from grassroots initiatives, fostering social cohesion and engaging citizens in urban development at a local level. This form of participation provides positive outcomes, such as community empowerment and citizen involvement in urban care (Bovaird 2007; Nabatchi, Sancino, and Sicilia 2017). However, these initiatives often remain fragmented and are not systematically integrated into institutional decision-making processes (Rosen and Painter 2019). As a result, citizen voices may not have a significant impact on governance and long-term strategic planning (Mitlin 2008). However, workshops and public meetings, and other joint activities play a crucial role in the co-production of knowledge, enabling transdisciplinary collaboration between citizens, experts, planners and authorities (Chambers et al. 2021; Polk 2015).

Interaction between citizens, planners and experts contributes to the development of sustainable urban projects by integrating scientific and local knowledge (Frantzeskaki and Kabisch 2016). However, institutional barriers and selective use of knowledge by policymakers often prevent the full implementation of co-produced knowledge in decision-making (Turnhout et al. 2020; van der Hel 2016). Despite the potential for collaborative learning, knowledge co-production remains underutilized due to a lack of formal mechanisms for integrating transdisciplinary research into governance structures (Polk 2015; Mees, Crabbé, and Driessen 2017).

The institutional aspect of co-production is what distinguishes it from traditional participatory practices. Institutionalized co-production goes beyond one-time citizen participation in local projects and instead establishes long-term relationships in which citizens actively contribute to the formation of urban policy and strategic planning (Joshi and Moore 2004). Mechanisms such as participatory budgeting (Escobar 2020) and digital platforms (Barandiaran et al. 2024b), illustrate ways of formalising co-production. However, they have not yet been widely adopted and remain limited in scale, often lacking integration into wider urban planning systems (Fuster Morell and Senabre Hidalgo 2022; Cabannes 2004).

*Two major problems remain in observing all aspects of co-production: lack of institutional integration and lack of professional facilitation.*

Co-production often remains disconnected from formal governance structures, limiting its impact on strategic urban development (Torring, Sørensen, and Røiseland 2019; Sicilia et al. 2016). It remains unclear how to effectively integrate co-production into existing urban planning structures. While examples such as participatory budgeting and digital platforms provide institutionalized mechanisms for co-production, they have not yet been widely adopted and require further adaptation for wider adoption (Escobar 2020; Sorrentino, Sicilia, and Howlett 2018). The role of the coordinator, facilitator is important in different aspects of co-production. At the level of face-to-face communication, mediators are needed to ensure productive discussions, conflict resolution and power balance between different stakeholders (Nabatchi, Sancino, and Sicilia 2017; Turnhout et al. 2020; Chambers et al. 2021). At the institutional level, intermediaries play a critical role in addressing fragmented governance by bridging gaps between different administrative levels and ensuring coordination across sectors (Mees, Crabbé, and Driessen 2017). However, many management systems do not have dedicated intermediaries or departments responsible for managing co-production processes (Sicilia et al. 2019).

A gap that is visible in current research on co-production concerns its practical implementation and institutionalization. Several key questions remain unresolved, such as how co-production is implemented in practice, what mechanisms facilitate interactions between different stakeholders, which legal instruments and regulatory frameworks support co-productive processes, and whether activities are sufficiently coordinated across different levels of governance.

While all of these issues are relevant, this dissertation will primarily focus on two dimensions:

- *the institutional arrangements that enable co-production*
- *the facilitation of stakeholder interaction.*

The remaining issues are addressed more briefly and suggested as areas for further research in the conclusion. Answers to these questions will provide a full understanding of how co-production can move from a fragmented collaborative effort to a sustainable governance tool that ensures long-term citizen participation in urban decision-making.



## CHAPTER II

# METHODOLOGY

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# METHODOLOGY

## 2.1 OBJECTIVE

This study examines the dynamics of co-production in the multi-level governance system of Turin, seeking to understand how collaboration between institutions, experts and citizens is shaped and practiced at different administrative levels. The main objective is to identify how co-production is implemented, supported or constrained at the metropolitan, municipal and district levels, and how these different levels interact with each other, as well as to explore the role of experts, Urban Labs and citizens in this process.

The study follows a step-by-step structure: it begins with an institutional overview of the frameworks and responsibilities of co-production at each level of governance; it then narrows the focus to the Aurora district as a socially and spatially significant context for experimenting with co-production in urban planning. In Aurora, three public space projects are examined in detail to explore the interactions of actors, institutional instruments and participatory dynamics. The study is based on the principle of transition from the general to the specific, with the most detailed analysis of the context. A combination of primary and secondary research methods were used, including desk research, field observations and semi-structured interviews.

This multi-level approach allows to identify systemic barriers and gaps in coordination, and highlights bottom-up strategies and local innovations. Ultimately, the research aims to develop context-specific recommendations for improving institutional capacity for co-production—both in terms of day-to-day project implementation and long-term planning strategies.



(Source: Photo by the author)

## 2.2 RESEARCH METHODS

### 2.2.1 DESK RESEARCH

The first stage of the research consisted of a comprehensive desk review aimed at mapping how co-production is conceptualised, formalised and implemented at the three levels of governance in Turin—metropolitan, municipal and district. The aim was to identify institutional responsibilities, planning instruments and citizen engagement mechanisms, with a particular focus on how coordination and knowledge sharing are addressed at the different levels.

The desk research covered:

*Metropolitan Level:* strategic plans such as the PUMS (Urban Sustainable Mobility Plan) adopted in 2022, and PSMT 2021–2023 (Metropolitan Strategic Plan of Turin) approved in 2021, which outline long-term visions and funding structures for mobility, sustainability, and participation.

*Municipal Level:* the PRG (Municipal Master Plan), originally approved in 1995, was reviewed alongside the ongoing discussions on its revision, including public events and participatory meetings. In addition, strategic urban programs such as Co-City, ToNite, and Turin-Cambia were analyzed to understand how the municipality promotes citizen participation through innovative projects. These programs are partly funded by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), adopted in 2021, and reflect broader policy shifts toward inclusive urban regeneration. Reports from Urban Lab and materials from public platforms were used to trace how municipal strategies are implemented in practice.

*District Level:* the main sources included the Documento Programmatico della Circoscrizione 7 (2021–2026) and the Piano di Sviluppo Locale Condiviso (PSLC) for Aurora, Rossini, and Valdocco. These documents outline local priorities and participatory planning approaches. Additional materials from Aurora Lab were reviewed, including reports and articles published on its website. Information from the Circoscrizione 7 web portal and the Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo was used to reconstruct the redevelopment process of the Cardinal Pellegrino Garden. News and online content were also analysed to trace the development of the "Trincerino" project.

### 2.2.3 FIELD OBSERVATIONS

Field observation played an important role in the study and lasted for three years. It involved systematic walks, visual documentation and informal monitoring of how public spaces in Aurora were used and transformed over time.

All three selected case studies—Giardino di via Saint Bon, Giardino Cardinale Michele Pellegrino and the Trincerino trench—were observed multiple times across seasons and times. In the case of the Pellegrino garden, I observed the site both before and after its physical renovation, allowing for a direct comparison of spatial layout and patterns of use. In the case of Trincerino, I walked around the entire trench several times to assess its spatial atmosphere, accessibility and surrounding urban conditions. The format of in-person site visits allowed for a deeper immersion into the everyday atmosphere of each public space. Observing how people used and inhabited these spaces provided a more grounded and nuanced understanding of social dynamics and spatial practices that cannot be captured by documentation alone.

The Saint Bon Garden was the only place where I participated in activities related to co-production. In the spring of 2023, I attended a local planting event organized by residents in collaboration with representatives of Circoscrizione 7, which also included volunteers from Torino Spazio Pubblico and representatives of Aurora Urban Lab. In addition to planting, the event included informal discussions about the future of the space, including an invitation for participants to make proposals using post-it notes. A subsequent meeting took place at the headquarters of Circoscrizione 7, where a small group including local residents, district officials and representatives of Aurora Lab discussed preliminary design solutions for the transformation of the site.

During these events, I acted as a non-interventional observer, focusing on how the dialogue was organized, how institutions and citizens interacted, and how proposals were formed. However, it is important to note a methodological limitation: all activities were conducted in Italian, which limited my ability to fully participate in the dialogue and informal exchange of views.



### 2.2.3 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the interactions between the participants in the process. The objectives of the interviews included:

- Identifying the roles and responsibilities of the different actors.
- Analysis of the coordination of joint work and the use of institutional instruments.
- Identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the current co-production processes.

Interviews were conducted with three main groups:

- Active citizens involved in project initiatives.
- Experts, including representatives of academia and professional communities.
- Representatives of the administration at district, city, and metropolitan levels.

A snowball sampling method (Parker, Scott, and Geddes 2019) was used to find respondents, which allowed new participants to be recruited through recommendations from previous respondents. Based on the collected data, an analysis of the current organization of co-production processes was conducted.

15 interviews were conducted. On the one hand, this is a rather modest number relative to the number of participants involved in co-production processes in Turin, but even this volume allowed for a more detailed and realistic assessment of the existing relationships between different actors in the creation of the urban environment. The respondents were divided into three groups: representatives of local authorities, experts and citizens.

Interviews were collected during November and December 2024. To simplify communication, it was decided to conduct a written interview in the Google Forms format. This made it possible to create questionnaires in Italian, which made them easier for respondents to understand, since the author of the diploma is not a native Italian speaker. For each group of respondents, a separate form was prepared with a different set of questions, which will be discussed below. The list of interview participants was formed as follows: representatives of departments at various levels of government were found in open sources, and, based on the experience of studying the case studies, a list of experts involved in co-production processes was compiled. For example, the names of some of the Metropolitan

level representatives were found in official documents, which greatly simplified the search process. However, not all respondents responded to the initial email inviting them to be interviewed. To address this issue, two approaches were used: respondents were asked to recommend other people knowledgeable about the topic of the thesis; secondly, I sought help from professors at the Polytechnic University of Turin, who provided useful contacts. This approach allowed the Snowball Sampling strategy to be used, gradually building a comprehensive database of respondents.

#### *Respondents' Representatives*

#### *Local Authorities:*

##### Metropolitan Level:

- Architect  
Department: Pianificazione Territoriale, Urbanistica ed Edilizia  
*She leads the Planning Project Unit. She has been directly responsible for the PTGM (Metropolitan Territorial General Plan) and has been actively involved in both the PSM and PUMS*
- Former Head of the Project Unit for Transport Policy and Sustainable Mobility  
Department: Viabilità e Trasporti  
*Responsible for directing the structure in charge of drafting and monitoring the PUMS*

##### City Level:

- Technical Manager (Responsabile Tecnico)  
Department: Grandi Opere, Infrastrutture e Mobilità  
*He is leading the redevelopment of the Valdocco area in Aurora*

##### Circoscrizione 7 (District 7):

- President of the District
- Member of the Second Commission on Territorial Planning, Public Spaces, and Mobility  
*Both representatives are actively involved in collaborative work with local residents*



#### Experts:

- Representative from Turin Urban Lab  
*Actively participated in co-production projects during the implementation of the PUMS*
- Representative from Aurora Urban Lab  
*University professor*
- Two Representatives from R3C, DIST Department  
*Organizers of the MainCode project, currently being implemented at a school in the Valdocco area in Aurora. The project includes co-production practices. Their opinions were considered as one since both belong to the same research group*
- Researcher from the DIST Department  
*His PhD dissertation focuses on studying the governance of Turin's Metropolitan City: "Characters in search of an author. Unfolding the territorial governance of Italian Metropolitan Cities," 2024*
- Vice President of INU Piemonte and Valle d'Aosta  
*A lecturer and collaborator from the DIST Department, Architect, and Territorial Planner at META, actively involved in the PUMS.*

#### Citizens:

- Representative of the organization "Turin Spazio Pubblico"
- Member of the committee "Nuovo Giardino Saint-Bon"
- Member of the Fondazione Comunità Porta Palazzo

#### *Justification of the structure of questions*

The list of questions was presented in the format of a semi-structured interview. The main goal was not only to obtain structured data, but also to motivate respondents to describe their experience in as much detail as possible. For this purpose, both open and closed questions were compiled, such as single-choice questions, multiple-choice questions and rating scale questions. This type of questions also helped to compare answers between different groups of respondents.

In order to better understand the existing attitudes and methods, tools of interaction between actors, a strategy was chosen to compose paired questions for different groups of respondents. For example, representatives of local authorities answered questions about how they interact with citizens, while citizens had questions regarding their perception of cooperation with the administration. Such cross-questions were compiled between each pair of interacting parties. The questionnaire for local authorities had a unique section, the purpose of which was to clarify inter-level interaction, in order to study how knowledge from the district level is integrated into higher strategic documents. The questionnaire for citizens was more compact, as the questions concerned their trust, motivation and experience of interaction, without the need for detailed knowledge of the city management system.

One section was dedicated to the project Trincerino, but not all respondents were informed about the project in detail. The last part was dedicated to coordination. This section was necessary since one of the hypotheses of this paper is the lack of management/coordination/moderation/facilitation in the organization of co-production processes of large projects related to inter-level interactions. The purpose of this part was to understand how project participants see organizational processes today.

Each section of the questionnaire included an introductory part, which helped respondents understand the essence of the sections.

The appendix at the end of the thesis contains the lists of the questionnaire, as well as the respondents' answers to the closed questions. The answers to the open questions are not published, for the sake of greetings. This chapter analyzes the generalized results obtained from the respondents' answers, in order to identify key trends and conclusions.

# METHODOLOGY

## 2.3 LOGIC OF THE RESEARCH

The main part of the thesis, the third chapter, Exploring Co-Production in Practice—dedicated to the analysis of co-production in practice—directly draws on the theoretical framework developed earlier. In particular, it is based on the recognition that co-production encompasses three main aspects: personal interaction, co-production of knowledge, and institutionalization within governance structures.

The study applies these three aspects as analytical lenses to examine how co-production unfolds in the urban context of Turin. This approach is combined with an understanding of Italy’s multi-level governance system, which distributes planning responsibilities between the metropolitan, municipal, and district levels. Together, these two dimensions—the internal structure of co-production and the vertical articulation of governance—form a conceptual matrix. And moving from the general to the specific, the implementation of co-production in practice is examined.

## CO-PRODUCTION

### FACE-TO-FACE ENGAGEMENT

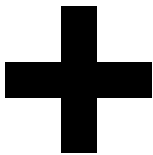
“traditional” co-production involves citizens directly through meetings, workshops, and public events. It builds trust, strengthens local ownership, and supports decisions adapted to specific needs. However, it demands skilled facilitation to balance power dynamics and ensure fair representation

### KNOWLEDGE CO-PRODUCTION

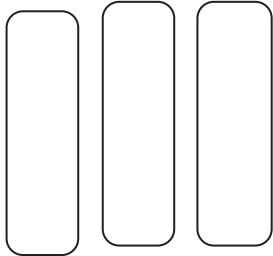
combines expert, institutional, and local knowledge to co-create more contextual and inclusive solutions. It supports mutual learning, strengthens innovation, and improves decision-making. However, it requires trust, long-term engagement, and recognition of all actors’ contributions

### TOOL OF NEW GOVERNANCE

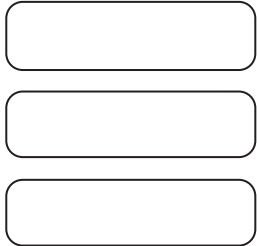
Institutionalized co-production embeds participation into formal planning, making collaboration a stable part of governance. It ensures continuity and wider reach, but risks becoming symbolic if not backed by real power-sharing and responsiveness to community needs



## CO-PRODUCTION



## MULTILEVEL SYSTEM



## MULTILEVEL SYSTEM

**METROPOLITAN CITY OF TURIN** plays a strategic role in coordinating territorial development across the urban region. Beyond its administrative function, it acts as a key interface with European funding, helping align long-term strategic planning with funding opportunities and multilevel governance processes

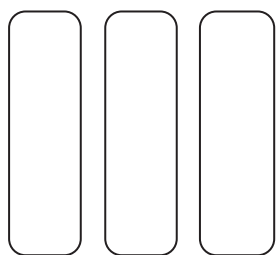
**CITY OF TURIN** as the primary authority for urban development, the municipal level leads spatial planning, public services, and the design of local policies. It is responsible for drafting and implementing the Master Plan and other planning instruments that guide land use, infrastructure, and urban regeneration

**DISTRICT (QUARTIERE) AURORA** is a part of Circoscrizione 7, a decentralized unit within the Municipality of Turin. While it has no formal planning authority, it serves as a key link between residents and the city, supporting social, cultural, and environmental initiatives and encouraging local engagement in small-scale urban projects

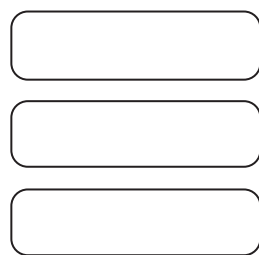
The first stage (Chapter 3.1—Co-production in the Context of Turin) applies a cross-analysis of the three co-production aspects across the three main governance levels: metropolitan, municipal, and district. This part uses desk research to review official documents and publicly available materials in order to identify how each level addresses citizen participation, collaborative planning, and institutional support for co-production. The analysis focuses on the presence or absence of concrete co-production projects and on how institutional discourse frames collaboration with citizens.

The second stage (Chapters 3.2 and 3.3—Aurora Context and Three Co-production Projects of Public Spaces) narrows the focus to three specific public spaces in the Aurora district. These cases are analysed in detail to understand how co-production processes were organized, who was involved, how coordination functioned, and to what extent each of the three co-production aspects was present. Attention is also paid to the role and interaction of different governance levels in each case. This part combines desk research with field observation, including regular on-site visits, participation in events, and long-term monitoring of how each space was transformed and used.

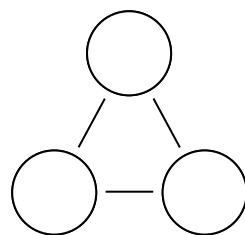
## CO- PRODUCTION



## MULTILEVEL SYSTEM

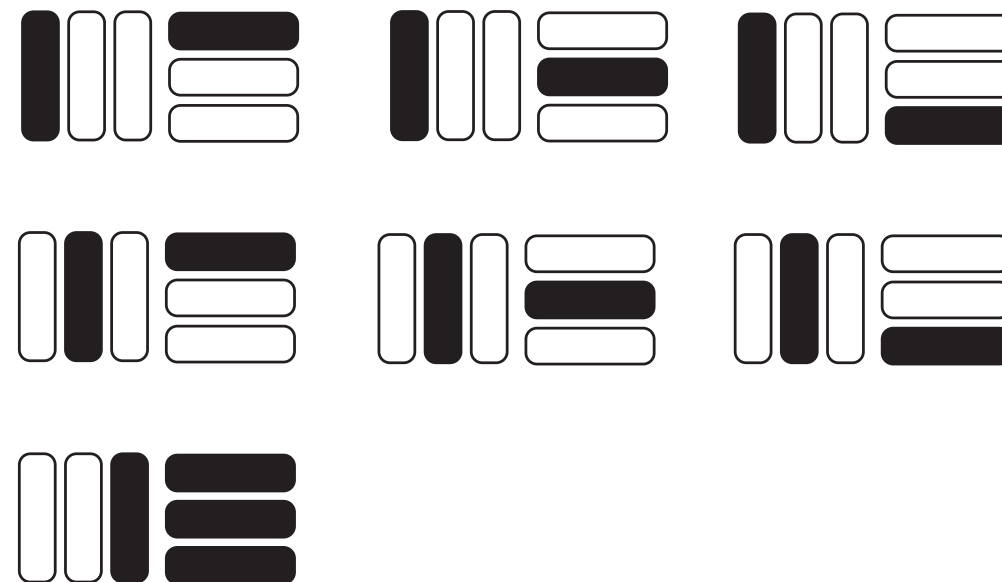


## COORDINATION



The third and final component (Chapter 3.4—Semi-structured Interviews) presents findings from a series of interviews with stakeholders across all levels: public officials, experts, and local residents. This step offers an internal perspective on governance dynamics, providing a deeper and more realistic understanding of inter-level coordination and cross-actor relationships. The interviews help to validate and enrich the previous findings by revealing less visible, often informal, aspects of co-production.

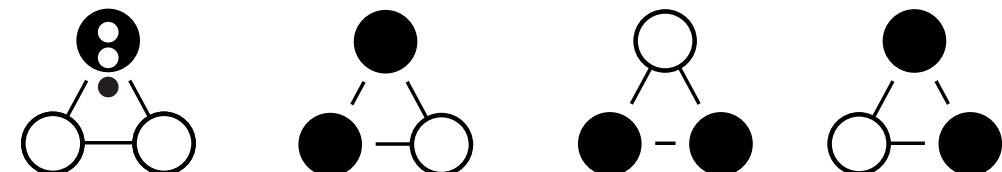
## *Analysis of Co-Production in Turin's Multi-Level Governance System*



## *Exploring Co-Production through Three Public Space Initiatives in*



## *Interviews with Different Actors Involved in Co-Production*



## CHAPTER III

# CO-PRODUCTION IN PRACTICE

p 61—176



# CO-PRODUCTION IN PRACTICE

This chapter shows the results of the data collection—it examines how co-production functions within the multi-level governance system of Turin, with a specific focus on the Aurora district. The third chapter includes three parts:

## 3.1 Co-production in the context of Turin

—A broader analysis of participatory governance in Turin, exploring how citizen engagement is structured across different levels of administration.

## 3.2 Three co-production projects of public spaces in Aurora

—A detailed study of the Aurora district, analysing its social, economic, and urban characteristics and how co-production initiatives are implemented.

—This section presents three real-life cases of public space co-production, evaluating their successes, challenges, and long-term impact.

## 3.3 Interview analysis

—Insights from stakeholders, including local authorities, experts, and citizens, providing a qualitative understanding of how co-production operates on the ground.

This chapter provides empirical evidence of how co-production unfolds in practice, helping to identify institutional gaps and structural barriers.



# CONTEXTURIN

## 3.1 CO-PRODUCTION IN CONTEXT OF TURIN

This chapter explores how co-production practices are implemented and coordinated in the context of Turin. It begins with an analysis of the city's multi-level governance system to provide the necessary framework for understanding how different levels of government contribute to the development and management of urban space. The chapter then presents selected results from a desk study highlighting where the three main aspects of co-production – personal interaction, knowledge co-production and institutional integration – have been identified in key documents, strategies and initiatives at metropolitan, municipal and district levels. This section presents representative examples that illustrate how co-production is currently present in the governance structures shaping urban space in Turin.

The structure :

- Overview of Italian Multilevel Governance System
- Examples of Face-to-Face Co-Production Across Governance Levels



- Examples of Knowledge Co-Production Across Governance Levels



- Examples of Institutionalised Co-Production



### 3.1.1 MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

The national level defines strategic priorities and legislative frameworks. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and within the framework of the European initiative Next Generation EU, Italy has developed a National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), known as "Italia Domani". This plan includes investments aimed at digitalization, ecological transition, social inclusion and infrastructure modernization. To coordinate and implement the PNRR at national level, a PNRR Implementation Department has been created within the Ministry of Economy and Finance (Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza ). At local level, including the Metropolitan City of Turin and the City of Turin, dedicated structures have also been created to manage PNRR projects, ensuring that national strategies are adapted to local needs.

In this thesis, the regional level (Piedmont level) is not considered, since it does not play a key role in the design and management of public spaces in the city of Turin. Moreover, its functional powers largely overlap with the activities of the metropolitan level, which has assumed a leading coordinating role in the territorial development of the agglomeration.

#### Metropolitan level: Città Metropolitana di Torino

The Metropolitan City of Turin was established on 1 January 2015 by Law no. 56 of 7 April 2014, known as "Legge Delrio". This law transformed the former provinces into metropolitan cities, granting them expanded powers in the areas of strategic planning, coordination of municipalities and management of territorial development. Città Metropolitana di Torino includes 312 municipalities and plays a key role in coordinating regional initiatives, including the implementation of PNRR projects in its territory.

CMTo's (Città Metropolitana di Torino) administrative structure is organized into several departments (Direzioni), each responsible for specific thematic areas and the development of key policy documents.

Administrative Organization and Departments :

- *Department of Territorial Planning, Urban Development, and Building* (Dipartimento Pianificazione territoriale, urbanistica ed edilizia): Oversees spatial planning and urban development policies. This department is responsible for drafting the General Metropolitan Territorial Plan (PTGM), which will replace the previous Territorial Coordination Plan (PTC2).



- *Department of Transport and Sustainable Mobility*  
(Dipartimento Trasporti e mobilità sostenibile):

Manages transportation policies and sustainable mobility initiatives. It developed the Urban Sustainable Mobility Plan (PUMS), adopted on 1 June 2021 and approved on 20 July 2022, outlining strategies for sustainable transport across the metropolitan area.

- *Department of Environment and Environmental Surveillance*  
(Dipartimento Ambiente e vigilanza ambientale):

Focuses on environmental protection, ecological transition, and climate policies. It implements tools such as the Catalogue of Environmental Redevelopment and Compensation Interventions (CIRCA) to support ecological initiatives. The Agenda Metropolitana per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile (ASvSCmTo)—a strategic framework that operationalizes the UN Agenda 2030, the EU Green Deal, and the Italian National Strategy for Sustainable Development (SNSvS).

- *Department of Economic Development and European Projects*  
(Dipartimento Sviluppo economico e progetti europei):

Coordinates economic development strategies and manages European-funded programs. This department is responsible for the Metropolitan Strategic Plan (PSM) 2024–2026 (previously 2021–2023), which outlines priorities such as digitalization, social cohesion, and sustainable development.

- *PNRR Technical Support Unit* (Unità tecnica di supporto PNRR):

Operating under the Department for Public Works Programming and Monitoring (Programmazione e monitoraggio OO.PP. Beni e servizi), this unit supports the planning, management, and monitoring of projects financed through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) at the metropolitan level.

### **Municipal level: City of Turin**

The City of Turin plays a key role in the planning and transformation of the urban environment. The main instrument for territorial planning in Turin is the PRG, Master Plan (Piano Regolatore Generale), a master plan that defines the long-term strategy for the spatial development of the city. This document includes zoning, building regulations, protection of historical and cultural heritage, transport structure, green space system, as well as

guidelines for the reconstruction and reorganization of urban areas. The PRG serves as a basis for all urban planning decisions, including the allocation of areas for public spaces and the control of their transformation. The municipality is currently working on updating it, taking into account sustainable development and the principles of an inclusive city (Guarino 2023).

As part of the implementation of the PNRR, the City of Turin launched the "Torino Cambia" initiative in 2023, a comprehensive program aimed at implementing strategic projects to transform the urban environment. The program includes actions in seven key areas: sustainable mobility, education, culture, social inclusion, ecology, digitalization and access to services. One of the important components of the program is to ensure transparency and citizen participation through an online platform and open data on the progress of projects (Torino cambia).

At the city level, public consultations (Consultazioni Pubbliche) are held, which provide residents with the opportunity to express their opinions on issues related to urban development. Such consultations are held on individual projects and initiatives. Although citizen participation is primarily advisory in nature, these processes allow for the consideration of the views of various stakeholders (Consultazioni pubbliche (Beni Comuni)).

Area 3 of the City of Turin includes the departments most directly involved in the management and transformation of the urban environment. It brings together planning, infrastructure, environmental, and mobility services under one operational area.

Administrative Organization and Departments Responsible for Urban Development (Area 3—City of Turin) (Articolazione degli uffici) :

- *Department of Urban Planning and Private Construction*  
(Dipartimento Urbanistica ed Edilizia Privata)

Division of Private Construction (Divisione Edilizia Privata)  
Division of Urban Planning and Built Environment Quality  
(Divisione Urbanistica e Qualità dell'Ambiente Costruito)

This department oversees zoning regulations, building permits, and the ongoing revision of the Municipal Master Plan (PRG – Piano Regolatore Generale).

- *Department of Environment and Ecological Transition*  
(Dipartimento Ambiente e Transizione Ecologica)

Division of Environmental Quality (Divisione Qualità Ambiente)  
Division of Environmental Services (Divisione Servizi Ambiente)

This department manages environmental policies, waste services, and green transition strategies at the municipal level.

- *Department of Major Works, Infrastructure, and Mobility*  
(Dipartimento Grandi Opere, Infrastrutture e Mobilità)

Division of Infrastructure (Divisione Infrastrutture)  
Division of Parks and Green Areas (Divisione Verde e Parchi)  
Division of Mobility and Viability (Divisione Mobilità e Viabilità)

This department implements large infrastructure projects and manages public space upgrades, parks, and urban mobility.

- *Department of Maintenance and Technical Services*  
(Dipartimento Manutenzioni e Servizi Tecnici)

Division of Municipal Building Maintenance (Divisione Manutenzioni Edifici Comunali)  
Responsible for routine maintenance of public buildings and urban facilities.  
Coordination of European and PNRR Funds

- *Department of European Funds and PNRR* (Dipartimento Fondi Europei e PNRR)

Division of PNRR Fund Coordination (Divisione Coordinamento Fondi PNRR)

This unit oversees the integration and technical coordination of projects financed by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), ensuring alignment with local strategic priorities and administrative processes.

### **District level: Circoscrizione 7**

In the administrative structure of Turin, the district level (Circoscrizione) represents the most localized form of governance. Although districts do not possess independent legislative authority or planning powers, they play a crucial role in mediating between residents and the city administration, particularly in matters related to local services, small-scale public space projects, and citizen participation. Circoscrizione 7 is one of the ten

administrative districts of the City of Turin. Geographically located in the northeastern part of the city, it includes several neighborhoods: Aurora, Vanchiglia, Sassi, Madonna del Pilone, and part of Regio Parco. Among them, Aurora is one of the most complex areas in terms of socio-economic diversity and urban transformation, and is a central focus in this research due to the number of co-production initiatives active in the neighborhood.

The administrative structure of Circoscrizione 7 is organized into a district council (Consiglio di Circoscrizione) and a series of thematic commissions (Commissioni), which focus on specific domains of local concern. These commissions serve in an advisory and preparatory capacity, analyzing proposals and facilitating discussion before decisions are made at the council level.

In recent years, Circoscrizione 7 has also taken steps to articulate a more strategic vision for its territory. Two key documents were published by the district administration that outline local priorities and development goals:

Documento Programmatico 2021–2026: Approved on 21 October 2021, this document defines the strategic and political guidelines for the current administrative mandate. It outlines institutional intentions regarding public services, participation, and urban regeneration (di Torino).

Piano di Sviluppo Locale Condiviso dei quartieri Aurora, Rossini e Valdocco (Shared Local Development Plan): Developed in 2023 through participatory processes, this document identifies specific goals and actions for improving living conditions in three neighborhoods within Circoscrizione 7, with a strong emphasis on co-design, community engagement, and environmental and social sustainability.

Administrative Organization (Articolazione degli uffici):

- President of the District
- District Council (Consiglio di Circoscrizione):  
The elected representative body of the district, responsible for making recommendations, allocating district-level budgets, and supporting local projects and services.
- First Commission (Prima Commissione)  
Budget and Planning—Assets—Procurement—Office Organization—Demographic Services)
- Second Commission (Seconda Commissione)  
Local Spatial Planning—Public Works—Mobility



- Third Commission (Terza Commissione)  
Social Policy—Health—Housing—Youth Policy—Equal Opportunities—Integration
- Fourth Commission (Quarta Commissione)  
Education—Culture—Leisure—Sports—Public Events—Communication
- Fifth Commission (Quinta Commissione)  
Commerce—Employment—Productive Activities—Safety—Civil Protection—Municipal Police
- Sixth Commission (Sesta Commissione)  
Environment—Urban Quality—Green Areas—Animal Welfare

### **Summarise. Multilevel governance system**

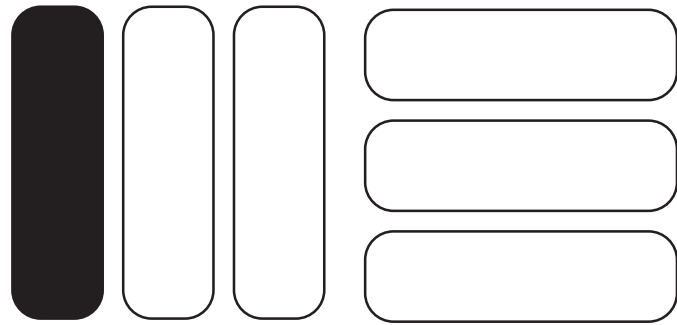
The complexity of Turin's multi-level governance system is particularly evident in the field of urban planning, where competencies are distributed across metropolitan, municipal and district levels. At the metropolitan level, broad strategic visions are developed for the entire territory, including the city of Turin. Although these documents rarely focus on the detailed design of public spaces, they nonetheless influence the city's future urban form and the principles that guide the transformation of the built environment. The City of Turin, as the main implementing entity, is responsible for translating these strategic orientations into concrete projects. In contrast, districts such as Circoscrizione 7 do not have autonomous decision-making powers or independent budgets. Their intervention is often limited to small local initiatives. However, they play a decisive role in interacting with residents and gathering local knowledge.

Most planning documents are interdisciplinary in nature and often require coordination across several administrative departments. Despite efforts toward more integrated and collaborative planning, vertical relationships within the governance structure remain strong, and in some cases, certain levels or actors continue to exert dominant influence.

This chapter now turns to an analysis of how co-production unfolds at these levels of governance. The aim of the study of co-production in the context of Turin is to analyse the different aspects of co-production at the metropolitan, municipal and county levels, and to identify, in general, the presence of participatory practices there.

# FACE-TO-FACE ENGAGEMENT

*Analysis of co-production practices in context of Turin*



## 3.1.2 FACE-TO-FACE ENGAGEMENT

// METROPOLITAN LEVEL

## IDENTIFIED EXAMPLES OF FACE-TO-FACE CO-PRODUCTION AT THE METROPOLITAN LEVEL

### 1. Participatory Process in the Development of the Urban Mobility Plan

The Piano Urbano della Mobilità Sostenibile (PUMS)—the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan of the Metropolitan City of Turin—is a key strategic document aimed at guiding sustainable transport and mobility policies across the metropolitan territory. Officially adopted in July 2022, the plan directly affects the area of the case study, as it includes the proposed reuse of the Trincerino railway trench for tramway infrastructure (CMTorino 2022a). The participatory process that led to the drafting of the plan was reconstructed through desk research based on official reports published by the Metropolitan City of Turin. It began in February 2019 and was structured in three official phases (CMTorino 2021a).

Organisation of participatory process:

*Phase 1: Listening to the Territory (Ascolto del territorio)*  
*December 2019*

The first phase consisted of a public forum held in-person. It brought together more than 170 participants, including institutional representatives, municipal administrators, and civil society actors from all 11 homogeneous zones of the Metropolitan City of Turin.

- Participants were divided into 11 working tables, each representing one zone.
- Discussions were guided by three central questions:  
What are the priority goals for your territory?  
What actions are needed to reach them?  
What are the key obstacles or weaknesses to consider?
- The working sessions were moderated by facilitators, and outcomes were compiled and summarized in an official report, which fed into the next planning steps.

*Phase 2: Strategic Orientations (Orientamenti strategici)*  
*November 2020/April 2021*

The second phase aimed to identify strategic directions and policy interventions to be included in the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (PUMS). It was conducted in a hybrid format due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and involved structured online events and thematic consultations with stakeholders and municipalities

- On 27 November 2020, an online forum was held. During this session, preliminary strategies and action lines were presented for each metropolitan zone.
- Participants provided real-time feedback through an online televoting system, which helped prioritize policy areas and gauge support for various intervention types.
- A report was published with disaggregated data about participants by zone, including general demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and stakeholder category.
- In April 2021, four follow-up online meetings were organized specifically for local municipalities. During these sessions, participants were asked to evaluate three alternative exploratory scenarios, each illustrating the potential impact of different policy mixes. The goal was to collaboratively define which interventions should be prioritized and integrated into the plan.

*Phase 3: Thematic Workshops*  
*April 2021*

The final phase consisted of a series of online thematic workshops aimed at evaluating different future scenarios for mobility. These workshops were designed to stimulate focused feedback on possible directions for the plan.

- Three workshops were held, each dedicated to a distinct scenario:  
Proximity Scenario  
(Reducing travel distances and promoting local accessibility)  
Cooperative Scenario  
(Inter-municipal coordination and integrated governance)  
Interactive Scenario  
(Digital innovation and civic engagement)
- Each session began with expert presentations followed by open discussions.
- Written feedback and suggestions were submitted by participants and appended to the final report.

Despite the broad outreach of the participatory process, the quality and inclusiveness of the engagement have been subject to criticism. Although representatives from all 11 territorial zones of the Metropolitan City were involved, the territorial scaling of dialogue made it difficult to ensure the inclusion of context-specific knowledge, particularly from districts like Aurora, directly impacted by proposed interventions such as the reuse of the Trincerino trench. A critical perspective is provided by Silvia Saccomani,

professor at Politecnico di Torino and representative of AuroraLAB. In her public commentary, she emphasizes that the discussions were largely unidirectional and technocratic, focusing on pre-defined transport priorities. According to her, the planning process overlooked the urban regeneration potential of the Trincerino, and failed to create space for meaningful input from citizens or local institutions in Aurora. Instead of a co-productive approach, the process was seen as top-down and consultative in form but not deliberative in substance (AuroraLab 2021). In an effort to raise awareness, the final version of the PUMS was presented publicly at Urban Lab Torino during Mobility Week 2022. However, this event functioned more as a presentation than a space for active discussion or feedback, demonstrating a continued emphasis on communication rather than co-creation (Urban Lab Torino 2022a).

An interesting case of facilitation and process coordination during the development of PUMS is the involvement of Avventura Urbana, a consultancy specializing in participatory planning. In 2021, the City of Turin commissioned Avventura Urbana to design and implement participatory pathways to support the integration of local input into the PUMS process. Their role included structuring consultation formats, engaging stakeholders, and collecting feedback to inform the drafting of the plan (Avventura Urbana n.d.).

## 2. Participatory Process in the Development of the PSMT

The Piano Strategico Metropolitano (PSMT) is the official medium-term planning instrument of the Metropolitan City of Turin. It outlines strategic priorities related to innovation, territorial cohesion, sustainability, and social inclusion. This thesis is based on the analysis of the 2021–2023 version of the plan, a more recent edition of the plan for the years 2024–2026 has since been published, but it is not the focus of this research. In developing PSMT, a 3-month program was organized, which was systematically prepared and at each stage used the results obtained at the previous one (CMTorino 2021b).

Organisation of participatory process:

### *Phase 1: Preliminary Analysis* *October 2021*

This first stage aimed to identify key issues, local strengths, and strategic opportunities to be addressed in the plan.

- 26 semi-structured interviews were conducted with institutional representatives, stakeholders, and experts

### *Phase 2: Territorial Consultation* *October/November 2021*

This phase combined online consultation tools with structured dialogue formats.

- 1 preliminary meeting and 11 online meetings, each focusing on one of the omogenee territorial zones (homogeneous zones) of the Metropolitan City.
- In parallel, participants could contribute via an online platform by filling out a dedicated questionnaire and submitting written proposals.
- Online questionnaire made available on the official CMT website for public input

### *Phase 3: Thematic Project Tables* *November–December 2020*

This phase was structured to co-design strategic priorities and project ideas based on earlier inputs.

- 24 focus groups organized around key convergence areas, project hypotheses, and role of CMT.
- 30 in-depth interviews (“colloqui di approfondimento”) focused on current and future initiatives.
- All outcomes contributed to a structured framework of 111 proposed actions under 6 strategic axes and 24 strategies.

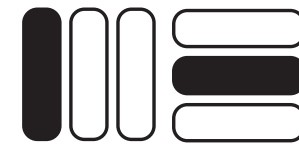
### *Final Phase: Public Presentation and Feedback* *January–February 2021*

The concluding stage included the public presentation of the draft plan.

- Feedback was collected from participants and incorporated into the final version
- The revised plan was formally approved by the Metropolitan Council.

The participatory design of the PSMT was methodologically coordinated by Prof. Stefania Ravazzi, a professor of Public Policy Analysis at the University of Turin. Acting as scientific coordinator, she was responsible for defining the structure of the participatory phases, ensuring procedural coherence, and integrating stakeholder input into the planning framework in alignment with institutional objectives. Her role is explicitly acknowledged in the official documentation of the Metropolitan City of Turin.





### **3.1.2 FACE-TO-FACE ENGAGEMENT**

**// CITY LEVEL**

## IDENTIFIED EXAMPLES OF FACE-TO-FACE CO-PRODUCTION AT THE CITY LEVEL

### 1. Participatory Process for the Revision of the Master Plan of Turin

The revision of the General Regulatory Plan (PRG) was accompanied by a series of face-to-face engagement activities aimed at raising public awareness and collecting proposals and feedback. These initiatives were promoted within the framework of the Torino Cambia programme and financed through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR). They were organized by the City of Turin in collaboration with Torino Urban Lab, functioning as a key facilitator of public engagement (Torino Cambia 2025a).

Organisation of participatory process:

#### *Mini-festival June 2023*

7 and 8 June 2023, the Urban Lab hosted the first important listening event on the new Master Plan of the City. Two days dedicated to discussion, structured in 12 working tables, where over 250 local actors (representatives of local institutions and organizations, stakeholders) were able to express their positions and suggest work perspectives on the future of the city (Torino Cambia 2023a).

#### *District-level Meetings October 2023*

- On 20, 21 and 22 October, the City of Turin and Urban Lab, in collaboration with the eight District Councils, organised a three-day series of participatory events. These meetings aimed to collect insights and proposals from citizens, local associations and organisations across the entire city. (Torino Cambia 2023b).
- Over 724 people attended the events in the eight districts, representing 93 local groups, associations and neighbourhood organisations, while the online questionnaire collected input from 4,646 participant (Torino Cambia 2024a).
- The structure of the meetings included (Torino Cambia 2024b):
  - A public meeting where the district president and representatives of local organizations presented new local issues. Citizens had the opportunity to ask questions and receive immediate feedback.

- A local workshop dedicated to dialogue with associations and active local actors to explore existing experiences and expectations from the new PRG.
- A special information point, open from 12 to 19, where residents could ask questions, submit proposals and receive information about the current urban transformations and the new PRG.
- An online questionnaire, available from October 9 to November 5, 2023, collecting opinions from across the city on priority issues, problems and visions for the future
- A total of 233 proposals were collected, both in person and online, with a focus on mobility (31.3%), public space (30.5%) and urban regeneration (18.4%) (Torino Cambia 2024a).

#### *Discussion with stakeholders November 2023*

On 14–16 November, the City of Turin and Urban Lab organised a three-day series of stakeholder meetings to collaboratively discuss the future of the new General Regulatory Plan (Torino Cambia 2023c). The initiative engaged a wide variety of local actors through lectures, dialogues and interactive workshops (Torino Cambia 2024c):

- Three thematic sessions: “The City as Innovation”, “The City as Wealth” and “The City as Ecosystem”, each starting with keynote lectures and expert-led discussions.
- Participation of around 450 people representing around 110 organisations, including associations, professional bodies, companies, universities, the third sector and local institutions.
- Interactive workshops (tavoli di lavoro) organised by Urban Lab staff and experts, where participants reflected together on key issues and proposed priorities for the new Plan.

#### *Voci di Quartiere (Neighbourhood Voices) 2024–2025*

A wide-reaching listening campaign through performative walks, interviews, and creative meetings. The events engaged diverse residents and aimed to uncover hyper-local needs and insights (Torino Cambia 2024d).

- The first phase of activity, which took place from April 20 to June 19, Over the course of 43 events, more than 800 participants were involved in a series of performances, neighbourhood walks, and

community meetings across four districts of Turin. The initiative gathered 200 interviews with residents and covered approximately 170 kilometers on foot, fostering direct contact with local contexts and everyday experiences. The program included 10 theatrical performances, 4 guided walks, and 4 public meetings, blending creative tools with participatory inquiry to amplify diverse urban voices.

- The structure of the meetings includes (Torino Cambia 2025b):
  - Welcome and registration of participants  
Distribution of materials and start of the event.
  - Presentation of the results of the hearings  
Video and a short report on the main issues and priorities identified at the district and city levels.
  - Response of the administration  
Representatives of the administration tell how they respond to the identified issues and priorities, and how these results will be used in the new General Plan.
  - Cartographic work in groups  
Discussion of districts "day" and "night" on special maps, where participants mark important places and issues for life. A brief presentation of the results of each group.
  - Communication with representatives of the administration  
The opportunity to directly talk with Assessors and specialists at separate tables.
  - Aperitivo and discussion of the results  
Informal communication of participants and continuation of the discussion of the future of the city.

The participatory process accompanying the revision of the General Regulatory Plan (PRG) of Turin represents the first large-scale structured engagement of its kind in the history of urban planning. With the support of Urban Lab and funding through PNRR, the City of Turin implemented a multi-level participatory strategy, including thematic festivals, neighborhood meetings, stakeholder workshops and creative public outreach initiatives. As of 2025, this process is still ongoing, continuing to involve residents and local actors in shaping the future development of the city.

## 2. Municipal Programme for Public Space Collaboration Torino Spazio Pubblico

An illustrative example of co-production at the city level is the Torino Spazio Pubblico initiative, an active citizenship program launched by the Municipality of Turin in 2013. The project encourages direct citizen involvement in the maintenance and improvement of public spaces through volunteer-led activities. These include the cleaning of urban areas, minor repairs to public furniture, and care for public greenery (Verde Pubblico n.d.). It is institutionally supported by the city administration: volunteers register with the program and receive authorization, training, accident insurance, and equipment from the relevant city offices. Participants can select specific areas (parks, gardens, sidewalks, playgrounds, etc.) and carry out tasks such as litter collection, small repairs to urban furniture, graffiti removal, and basic care of greenery, in coordination with municipal staff. By 2025, the initiative had engaged more than 2,000 volunteers to restore dozens of neglected green spaces, demonstrating the potential for citizen participation in improving urban space with the support of an official city structure. (InterregEurope 2025).

Torino Spazio Pubblico and Verde Pubblico operate as complementary instruments within Turin's approach to citizen participation in public space. While Torino Spazio Pubblico serves as a coordination and facilitation platform — offering guidance, first contact, and institutional access — Verde Pubblico functions as a sectoral authority responsible for the city's green areas. When citizens propose initiatives related to urban greenery, Torino Spazio Pubblico may assist in shaping the proposal, while Verde Pubblico formalizes the collaboration through instruments such as Patti di Collaborazione based on the Urban Commons Regulation.

This initiative is a practical form of co-production, in which citizens are directly involved by physically contributing in improving the city's green and public spaces, collaborating with municipal structures.



### **3.1.2 FACE-TO-FACE ENGAGEMENT**

// DISTRICT LEVEL



## IDENTIFIED EXAMPLES OF FACE-TO-FACE CO-PRODUCTION AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

### Citizen Engagement in the ToNite Urban Regeneration Project

A large number of initiatives in which citizens were actively involved in the transformation of the urban environment took place in the Aurora district under the auspices of the ToNite program. Funded by the European Union's Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) initiative, it was launched in 2020 in the city of Turin and will run until 2023 (ToNite 2023a).

Focusing on the areas adjacent to the Dora Riparia river, in particular the Aurora and Vanquiglietta districts, ToNite was conceived as a response to the problems of urban marginality, low perceived safety and underused public spaces. Rather than adopting a traditional approach focused solely on surveillance or law enforcement, ToNite articulated safety as a social construct shaped by community participation, social cohesion and the active use of public space. The participatory dimension of ToNite was extensive and deeply rooted in local interaction. The preparatory phase included 25 meetings with 92 stakeholders, three large public workshops and a civic hackathon. A public call for proposals resulted in 83 applications, from which 19 projects were selected and funded, representing a wide range of organisations—57 in total—including schools, universities, associations, cooperatives and cultural institutions. The funded projects led to the organisation of over 2,200 events, involving around 30,000 people from different walks of life. Four formalised Collaboration pacts were concluded to ensure the long-term management of public spaces, and 15 partnerships between local associations emerged, 73% of which remained active after the funding period.

The programme has created multifaceted public spaces. These areas have not been simply renovated from above, but rather reimagined through ongoing dialogue with local communities. For example, the transformation of Viale Ottavio Mai, linking the Luigi Einaudi campus with the Edisu student residence, followed a public workshop held on 15 October 2020, where participants imagined the space as a green corridor for social and cultural use. The intervention resulted in the planting of trees, seating, ping-pong tables and a rain garden. Likewise, the reopening of Giardino Pellegrino in Piazza Borgo Dora was preceded by social activation through the Usanze Pellegrine project. The transformation of the place and the role of the Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo are discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Giardini Alimonda has been rejuvenated through the modernization of the infrastructure and a civic pact focused on youth

sports, environmental awareness and inter-cultural dialogue, supported by public activities such as outdoor readings, gardening and peer football, formed through local consultations. Thirty multifunctional elements combining lighting, seating and signage were installed along the Dora river following a collaborative online design session on 4 March 2021, where residents shared their preferences for night-time use. Other interventions followed similar participatory paths. Giardini sulla Dora became a “Garden Coffee” thanks to a collaboration with students and teachers from the Lagrange Institute, combining outdoor learning with evening activities. Via Buscalioni was revived through the “Salotto di Miranda” initiative, including digital literacy, artistic activities and restored pétanque courts, shaped by workshops and dialogues among residents. Art installations at Ponte Carpanini and Ponte del Carbone involved local schools and artists, engaging young people in rebuilding night-time narratives along the river. The Crescenzo Park was activated through “Bocciofila 2.0”, a family initiative developed in collaboration with schools and parents, offering summer workshops and cultural laboratories. In Via Chivasso, a former tailoring workshop was transformed into Yalla Aurora, a multicultural hub created through 13 co-design sessions on inclusion, youth services and Ramadan programming. The courtyard of the Scuola Parini was included in a tactical urbanism program supported by AuroraLab, local school staff and the Aurora Citizens’ Committee, aimed at establishing a permanent pact of collective care. This project is explored in more detail as an example of knowledge co-production in the next section of this chapter. Likewise, in Via Cecchi and the surrounding schools, collaborative lighting projects, courtyard mapping and evening film screenings led by students, parents and teachers were carried out.

Speaking about results, the composite index of perceived safety and livability increased from 4.0 to 4.35 over the course of the project, reflecting a modest but significant improvement. More than €7.6 million in public-private investment was mobilized in 2023, with an additional €20 million planned through programmes such as ReactEU, PinQua and the Integrated Urban Plan (PIU). A cross-sectoral working group of six municipal departments coordinated the actions and data integration, improving institutional learning. This programme has enabled the implementation of most of the participatory design practices in the area, actively involving residents in both the physical and symbolic rethinking of their neighbourhoods, and for many sites – especially those where the “Patti di collaborazione” were signed – it has laid the foundations for deeper and more sustainable forms of co-production in the future (ToNite 2023b).

# KNOWLEDGE CO-PRODUCTION

*Analysis of co-production practices in context of Turin*



## 3.1.3 KNOWLEDGE CO-PRODUCTION

// METROPOLITAN LEVEL

// CITY LEVEL

## IDENTIFIED EXAMPLES OF KNOWLEDGE CO-PRODUCTION AT THE METROPOLITAN AND CITY LEVELS

### 1. Torino UrbanLAB

One of the most important representatives of the organization of interaction with citizens and a participant in the co-production in Turin is the Urban Lab. The organization was not established with the explicit aim of fostering knowledge co-production, however, through its activities, it undoubtedly contributes to the creation of a shared understanding of the city. Initially created in the early 2000s as the Urban Center Metropolitano (UCM), the initiative was designed to inform the public about urban transformation projects and to serve as a neutral interface between public authorities, the private sector, academia and citizens. Founded by the City of Turin in partnership with the Piedmont Region and the University of Turin, the center was conceived as an institutional innovation aimed at the democratization of urban knowledge. In 2017, the Urban Center was restructured and renamed Torino Urban Lab, with a renewed mandate to act not only as an information center, but also as an active participant in co-creation processes in the city. The Lab plays a dual role as a platform for public participation and as a producer of situated urban knowledge, facilitating processes in which citizens, experts and decision-makers reflect together on the spatial, social and infrastructural dynamics of the city (UrbanLab n.d.). The Urban Lab's activities go beyond dissemination. It organizes workshops, public exhibitions, thematic forums and co-design events, systematically involving residents in key urban planning processes. For example, during the revision of the Piano Regolatore Generale (PRG), Torino Urban Lab was tasked with curating and implementing a wide range of activities aimed at opening up the planning debate to a wider audience, discussed in more detail in the Chapter Face-to-Face engagement analysis of the PGR (Urban Lab Torino 2023). Likewise, the Lab played an important role in the PUMS (Piano Urbano della Mobilità Sostenibile) process, hosting the Mobility Week, an intensive programme during which future mobility scenarios and infrastructure projects, including tram line 12, were presented to the public and debated. These initiatives reflect the Lab's capacity to act as a permanent mediator between institutional planning and the civic imagination (Urban Lab Torino 2022c).

Situated in the historic centre of Turin, Urban Lab has gained cultural visibility and authority, becoming a recognizable meeting place. Its ongoing efforts to make technical language accessible, coupled with a strong focus on visual communication and storytelling, have helped to reduce barriers

to participation. By institutionalizing this space, the city of Turin has created not only a tool for civic participation, but also reinforced a model of knowledge democracy, where everyday knowledge, lived experience and local expertise are valued in urban policy and transformation.

### 2. The Role of DIST in Facilitating Knowledge Co-Production

In Turin, one could observe the co-production of knowledge that arose from collaboration between academic institutions and local authorities. The Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning (DIST) – a joint department of Politecnico di Torino and the University of Turin – plays an important role in this regard (DIST n.d.). It is fundamentally an academic entity (the reference structure for both universities in fields related to territorial governance and sustainable development) and it was not created with an explicit mission of knowledge co-production. However, by virtue of its research focus and the nature of many projects it undertakes (often related to urban sustainability and funded by European programs), DIST and its affiliated labs frequently engage in processes that integrate expert knowledge with local knowledge. DIST researchers and practitioners are keenly aware of the importance of citizen participation, and this spirit is reflected in the way they design and implement their projects. In practice, even if co-production is not a stated goal, it becomes a *de facto* outcome of their work: as DIST teams tackle complex urban problems, they collaborate with municipal authorities, NGOs and community stakeholders, thereby contributing to the creation of shared knowledge that combines scientific, technical and local perspectives. It is also important to note that DIST itself is a collaborative structure (bringing together two universities and various experts), making it well-suited to the role of mediator between institutional silos. Although comprehensive citywide co-production initiatives are still relatively rare in Turin, DIST's involvement in planning processes shows how academia can embed participatory practices in formal projects, gradually normalising a more inclusive approach to knowledge generation.

Among the examples previously discussed, the co-design process of the Piano Strategico della Città di Torino (PSITO) also illustrates knowledge co-production (FULL 2021). In this case, researchers from DIST and UniTo worked together to organize participatory workshops aimed at collectively identifying urban challenges, engaging citizens as active contributors to the generation of local knowledge. Another relevant initiative is Aurora Urban Lab, which forms part of DIST's "third mission" and reflects the department's commitment to socially engaged research and the democratization of urban knowledge (Aurora Lab n.d.).



### **3.1.3 KNOWLEDGE CO-PRODUCTION**

**// DISTRICT LEVEL**



## IDENTIFIED EXAMPLES OF KNOWLEDGE CO-PRODUCTION AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

### AuroraLAB

At the district level, in Circoscrizione 7, the Aurora Urban Living Lab (AuroraLAB) stands out as a long-term initiative that exemplifies knowledge co-production through the integration of academic research, teaching, and civic engagement. Established in 2018 by the DIST department (Interuniversity Department of Urban and Regional Studies and Planning) of the Politecnico di Torino and the University of Turin, the lab operates within the framework of Politecnico's third mission and the PoliTO4Impact initiative, aiming to bring the university into closer contact with the city's peripheral neighbourhoods (Aurora Lab n.d.).

The laboratory's methodological approach is based on action research, combining empirical fieldwork, co-design and student engagement. Through a succession of workshops, focus groups, walking interviews and participatory mapping, AuroraLAB has produced two major research publications – “Sguardi su Aurora: tra centro e periferia” (2020) and “Aurora: a sud di Torino nord” (2022) – that provide deep insights into the socio-spatial dynamics of the neighbourhood. Based on qualitative data and community narratives, these reports highlight the neighbourhood's complex identity, perceived boundaries, socio-economic fragility and internal diversity (Aurora Lab 2020a,b ). Through this work, AuroraLAB has created a shared knowledge base that can serve both public reflection and policy formation.

A key component of AuroraLAB's activities is the integration of students into the research and design processes. Adopting a learning-by-doing pedagogy, students from different disciplines work directly in the area, gaining first-hand experience in solving urban transformation problems while contributing to data collection and project implementation. This educational approach not only enhances students' learning, but also reinforces the laboratory's mission to co-produce situated knowledge in collaboration with local stakeholders. As stated on the official Politecnico Poliflash news platform: “AuroraLAB is where education and research meet the city”(Politecnico di Torino 2025).

AuroraLAB has also formally strengthened its public role through the signing of the Patto di Collaborazione (Comune Torino 2025), an agreement signed in December 2023 between AuroraLAB, Scuola Primaria “Giuseppe Parini”, Comitato Cittadini Quadrilatero Aurora and the Comune

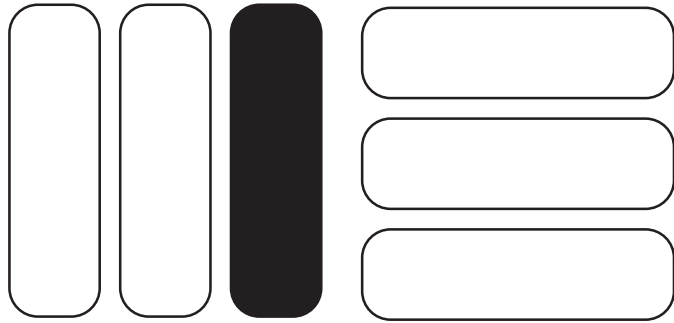
di Torino, as part of the Beni Comuni (common goods) initiative. The aim of the agreement is to share the school courtyard and façades as “living classrooms”, a space for workshops, urban observations and civic action activities, including the design of the area by students and the organization of public exhibitions. This brings together the educational environment, the university and the neighborhood in regular collective activities that strengthen relationships and a sense of local belonging.

The initiative began in 2021, when AuroraLAB won a grant within the European ToNITE / Urban Innovative Actions program for the project “Grandangolo – Dream Spaces for Safe Living” (2021–2023). The project involved tactical urbanism in the Aurora area, in particular in front of the Scuola Parini: students collaborated with students from the Polytechnic and local activists to create pedestrian areas, art installations and street workshops (Aurora Lab Grandangolo). This successful experience was a turning point. It confirmed the importance of the interaction between the school and the university through concrete practice. At the Grandangolo base, AuroraLAB established itself as a “mediator” between students, residents and the academic community of Parini, which created a solid basis for further institutionalization. The success of Grandangolo laid the foundation for a more structured partnership. In December 2023, the City of Turin published a formal proposta di collaborazione, and in January 2024 a Patto di Collaborazione was signed.

As Bragaglia (2024) points out, AuroraLAB does not simply study the Aurora neighbourhood – it becomes part of its everyday life, acting as a visible and credible presence in the community. This embedded presence strengthens mutual trust and turns the university into a component of the local infrastructure. AuroraLAB functions as an institutional mediator between the school, municipal actors, the university and local residents, filling gaps in coordination and enabling flexible forms of collaboration. In this sense, the experience of AuroraLAB can be interpreted as an extension of the third mission of the university – not just the transfer of knowledge, but also its co-production in socially vulnerable urban contexts. However, despite its transformative potential, AuroraLAB also faces structural limitations. As Bragaglia notes, initiatives of this kind often rely on short-term project funding, temporary research grants or the individual commitment of the faculty involved. Without long-term institutional support, there is no guarantee that such projects will survive beyond the end of external funding, significantly limiting their impact over time and calling into question the sustainability of university engagement in marginalized areas.

# INSTITUTIONALISED CO-PRODUCTION

*Analysis of co-production practices in context of Turin*



## 3.1.4 INSTITUTIONALISED CO-PRODUCTION

// MULTI LEVEL

## IDENTIFIED EXAMPLES OF INSTITUTIONALISED CO-PRODUCTION IN A MULTI-LEVEL SYSTEM

### 1. Beni Comuni Urbani and Patti di Collaborazione (Collaboration Pacts)

One of the most concrete and institutionalised manifestations of co-production in Italy is the model of Patti di Collaborazione, which allows citizens and local organisations to participate in the care, regeneration, and shared governance of urban spaces, recognised as Beni Comuni Urbani (Urban Commons). The idea was born in Bologna in 2014 with the first “Regulation on the co-management of urban communities”, which redefined the role of citizens as active co-managers of public interest assets. Inspired by Bologna, cities such as Turin have adopted similar frameworks adapted to their urban contexts (Comune Torino 2022).

In this model, co-production starts from below: residents or associations propose ideas for improving public goods—like parks, courtyards, or buildings—which are then discussed and formalised with the municipality. The resulting pact sets out mutual responsibilities, resources, timelines, and monitoring mechanisms. As of May 2024, over 8,000 pacts have been signed across Italy, confirming its national relevance (Settimane Sociali 2024).

The concept of beni comuni has its roots in Italian constitutional principles (notably Article 118), which emphasise subsidiarity and the active role of citizens. It was further formalised through local Regolamenti dei beni comuni urbani (Urban Commons Regulations), which provided a legal basis for introducing Patti di Collaborazione—formal agreements between citizens and municipalities for the co-management of these assets (Comune Torino 2020).

In Turin, Beni Comuni Urbani became a key policy axis through the Co-City programme (2017–2020), supported by the EU’s Urban Innovative Actions. It aimed to regenerate neglected spaces through collaborative governance, and embedded the logic of pacts within the municipal administrative system. Dozens of pacts piloted during Co-City tested models of joint management between the public sector, communities, and the third sector, enabling citizens to become institutional partners rather than external consultants. The application of this program is clearly visible in Circoscrizione 7, where as of May 28, 2025, there are 14 active pacts – many of them in the Aurora district. These include: the shared use of the courtyard of the Parini School by AuroraLAB and the school community; the restoration of the Giardino Cardinal Pellegrino park, led by the Fondazione Porta Palazzo; and

the shared maintenance of the Giardino Piazza Alimonda park. Other pacts range from the care of monuments (e.g. Grande Torino Memorial, Sassi Cemetery) to the revitalization of abandoned buildings and long-term public work in Via Parma, Piazza Don Albera and elsewhere (Comune Torino 2025).

While Co-City and ToNITE have served as catalysts, the continued use of the pacts shows their institutional anchorage. The Turin experience reflects how the Beni Comuni Urbani have evolved from a legal innovation into a practice of embedded civic co-production, offering robust structures for citizen participation in urban governance.

### 2. Participatory budgeting (Bilancio Partecipativo)

Another example of an institutional tool identified in Turin—although it has not seen significant development—is participatory budgeting. This process allows citizens to actively participate in the distribution of part of the municipal budget. The mechanism aims to democratize decision-making by allowing residents to propose and vote on projects that they consider a priority for improving the urban environment, infrastructure or social services. Participation in Bilancio Partecipativo contributes to the strengthening of trust between the local administration and society, as well as a more transparent and efficient use of resources. The mechanism has been successfully applied in several cities, for example Milan has carried out two successful campaigns for citizen participation in budgeting, allowing residents to propose and choose projects for funding (Comune Milano 2025). Bologna also actively uses “Bilancio Partecipativo” to improve public spaces in various districts, involving citizens in the decision-making process (Comune Bologna 2023).

In Turin it was implemented as an experimental project, but was not widely used in the city administration. One of the first pilot projects was implemented back in 2011, just in Circoscrizione 7. Local residents were given the opportunity to actively participate in choosing priority initiatives for funding from the municipal budget (Consiglio di Circoscrizione 2012).

It is difficult to say why the project did not receive active development in Turin, but I think it is important to mention this tool. Because, as world experience shows, it is one of the effective manifestations of co-production, and the fact that there are examples of its implementation in Italy, speaks in general about the possibility of its integration into this context.

## 3.1.5 SUMMARISE

### CO-PRODUCTION IN CONTEXT OF TURIN

The analysis of the multi-level governance system of Turin provided the necessary framework for identifying the main planning documents and institutional actors involved in the shaping of urban space at metropolitan, municipal and district levels. This framework made it possible to trace how urban development processes are initiated and implemented, as well as to assess the presence and characteristics of co-production practices at each level of governance. The study showed that co-production is a phenomenon that manifests itself at all levels, although with different intensities and institutional forms.

At the level of the metropolitan district, participatory design was integrated into the development of key strategic documents such as the Piano Strategico Metropolitano (PSMTo) and the Piano Urbano della Mobilità Sostenibile (PUMS). These processes included both thematic consultations and structured stakeholder engagement, often coordinated by external intermediaries or academic institutions such as the University of Turin and the Polytechnic University of Turin.

At the municipal level, the ongoing revision of the Piano Regolatore Generale (PRG) represents a significant moment in the institutionalization of public participation. Thanks to the Torino Cambia program and with the help of the Torino Urban Lab, the city administration has organized multi-level participation formats – from thematic stakeholder workshops to district-level meetings and creative outreach campaigns – creating one of the most comprehensive participatory processes in the history of Turin's urban planning.

At the district level, especially in Circonscrizione 7 and the Aurora district, initiatives such as Co-City, ToNite and Aurora Urban Living Lab have demonstrated a high level of citizen engagement. In particular, AuroraLAB has become a platform for continuous interaction between academia, local residents and municipal actors, producing embedded research and facilitating tactical interventions in urbanism. A number of public spaces have been considered, which have been transformed for the better through collaborative work.

The analysis of knowledge co-production in Turin highlights the active role of academic institutions such as DIST at the Polytechnic University

of Turin (through FULL and AuroraLAB, among others), the University of Turin. Their contribution went beyond expert advice to include the design and facilitation of participatory processes. At metropolitan level, FULL, together with the UniTo expert, coordinated co-design workshops and stakeholder engagement for the PSMTo. At city level, the Torino Urban Lab supported public participation in the revision of the PRG. At the district level, AuroraLAB demonstrated active long-term co-production. These cases show that universities in Turin act as institutional intermediaries, shaping co-planning through both knowledge production and civic facilitation.

The chapter also shows that the institutionalization of co-production in Turin remains limited and relies heavily on project-based mechanisms. Most of the co-production initiatives identified in this study were implemented through temporary programmes and externally funded structures, including the PNRR (through instruments such as Torino Cambia and PIU), Urban Innovative Actions (Co-City, ToNite). Although these programmes have provided a decisive impetus and allowed experimentation with collaborative practices, their temporary nature raises concerns about long-term sustainability. In contrast, formally implemented regulatory instruments that allow for the continuity of co-production beyond individual projects remain rare. The Patto di Collaborazione model stands out as the only widely institutionalised mechanism that enables structured collaboration between city administration and civic actors. These agreements provide a legal basis for the shared care and management of public spaces and represent a significant step towards the formal recognition of co-production.

As noted in the "Guidelines for building an Agenda for Sustainable Development for the Metropolitan City of Turin and its Territory" (ASvSCmTo), among the guidelines that emerged from the first research phase, there is a need to:—Citizens' participation in change: 1) Give citizens a central role in formulating policies and governance tools to support changes for sustainable development, to strengthen the role of individual responsibility in social transformation processes. 2) Build contexts of cooperation between the political world, public administration and the third sector, to create experiences of change, with educational intentionality (CMTorino 2021d). This may signal that the trend towards greater citizen inclusion and co-production exists at higher levels, but sustainable tools have not yet been developed.

Finally, the analysis also reveals the relatively recent origins of these practices—most of them emerged after 2019—indicating that co-production in Turin is an evolving process rather than a fully consolidated practice.



# 3 PUBLIC SPACE

## 3.2 THREE CO-PRODUCTION PROJECTS OF PUBLIC SPACES

### 3.2.1 CONTEXT OF AURORA

The Aurora district (Quartiere) is located in the north of Turin, in the administrative Circoscrizione 7, and occupies a strategic position due to its proximity to the city centre and being crossed by the Dora Riparia river. The Circoscrizione comprises 5 quarters, including Aurora. Aurora in turn is divided into such parts as Borgo Dora, Borgo Rossini and Borgata Aurora. However, the divisions within the Circoscrizione are theoretical, and do not have their own administration. The division into quarters allows the district administration to better understand local problems and priorities, which simplifies data collection, planning and the implementation of local initiatives.

Today it is a colourful, vibrant and contrast area, but with a number of problems. The city's largest market Porto Polazzo is located here. Turin's main flea market, the Grand Balon, is a cultural highlight of Aurora and attracts large crowds every week. The south part of the area on the right bank of the Dora is usually perceived as the central part of the city – active, eventful, always crowded. The main part of the area on the other bank has a completely different character and is more like the outskirts.

The entire Aurora area is undergoing active development today. For example, in recent years, within the framework of the already mentioned Torino Cambia program, a number of projects have been implemented. Reorganization of the Dora river bank with the creation of separated pedestrian and bicycle paths. This has improved the connectivity of the area and has become a popular route for cyclists. A number of streets have been landscaped. The main interventions concerned via Cecchi, largo Cigna, the area which is located above the Trincerino, corso Emilia, and the nursery school in via Giaveno ang. via Beinasco. Pedestrian connections have been improved, as well as landscaping and recreation areas, and green areas have been created that should participate in water management and make the city more sustainable. The Madre Teresa di Calcutta garden was redesigned. The project included updating the park to counter climate change and create new recreational opportunities. Another part of the program, within the framework of the PIÙ implementation, the Italo Calvino Library will soon be modernized to become an attractive cultural center and space for residents of the area (Consiglio di Circoscrizione 2024b).

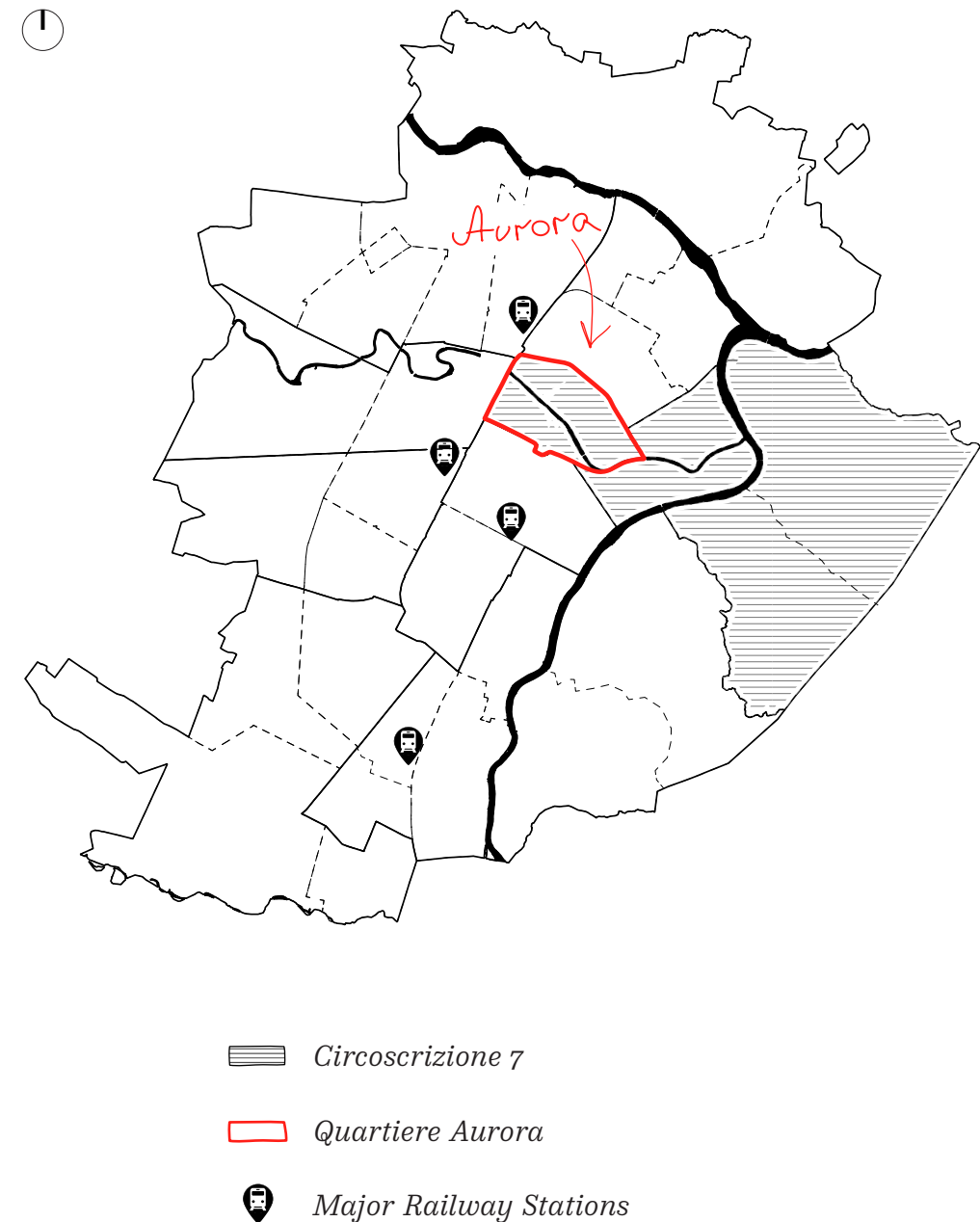


Figure 1. Map of the Città di Torino with the division into Circoscrizioni / districts  
(Source: Author's elaboration)

Aurora is also known for its underground culture. Street art has found support here through such an urban project as MurArte, which provides legal spaces for graffiti. Aurora launched the AurorArt program. In order to reconstruct and revive the area, a route and an interactive map with markers of significant art objects were developed, thus inviting a greater flow of visitors to the area. In this way, the murals also became part of the cultural landscape of the area (Consiglio di Circoscrizione 2022).

### *Post-industrial character*

Aurora is a classic example of a post-industrial neighbourhood. Historically a working-class area, it is a dense mix of housing and industrial heritage. This spatial stratification is explored in Delogu Michele's (2018) thesis *Il Quartiere Aurora ieri e Oggi (Aurora in Yesterday and Today)*, which systematically catalogues the area's former industrial sites and their current state. Building on this, the AuroraLAB Map (2020a) offers a spatial overview of the transformation process. It highlights that most former industrial sites have already undergone or are undergoing redevelopment, marked in light blue.

Among them, Site 1, located next to Giardino Pellegrino, is the former Arsenale Militare di Borgo Dora. It is now home to the Arsenale della Pace, a centre for solidarity and international cooperation. The complex also includes educational and training spaces, volunteer programmes and community initiatives, and partially houses the Scuola Holden (MuseoTorino n.d.). To the south, next to the Giardino San Bon, is Site 18, the former site of Officine Grandi Motori (OGM). Once one of Aurora's largest industrial complexes, the site has now been cleared for redevelopment. In 2023, the city council approved a comprehensive development plan for the 70,000 m<sup>2</sup> site, which includes mixed-use buildings, student housing, a logistics centre and a new public park. It is expected that construction work could begin in the spring of 2025, but the exact dates have not yet been determined (Comune Torino 2023a, TorinoCronaca 2024a). Between the two sites lies Site 20— the Trincerino, an abandoned railway trench that cuts through the area. The proposals for its redevelopment are discussed in detail in the next part of the chapter. Nearby is Cecchi Point—Casa del Quartiere, a neighbourhood cultural centre housed in the former municipal workshop (former Officine Comunali), not included in the provided map, it is an important example of citizen initiative. Today it hosts educational, artistic and social initiatives and has recently been selected as a Torino U<sup>2</sup> project with the support of the PNRR and PIU funds (Comune Torino 2023b; Cecchi Point n.d.). Aurora's industrial heritage offers great opportunities for the development of public space, where the quality of reconstruction creates fruitful urban life.

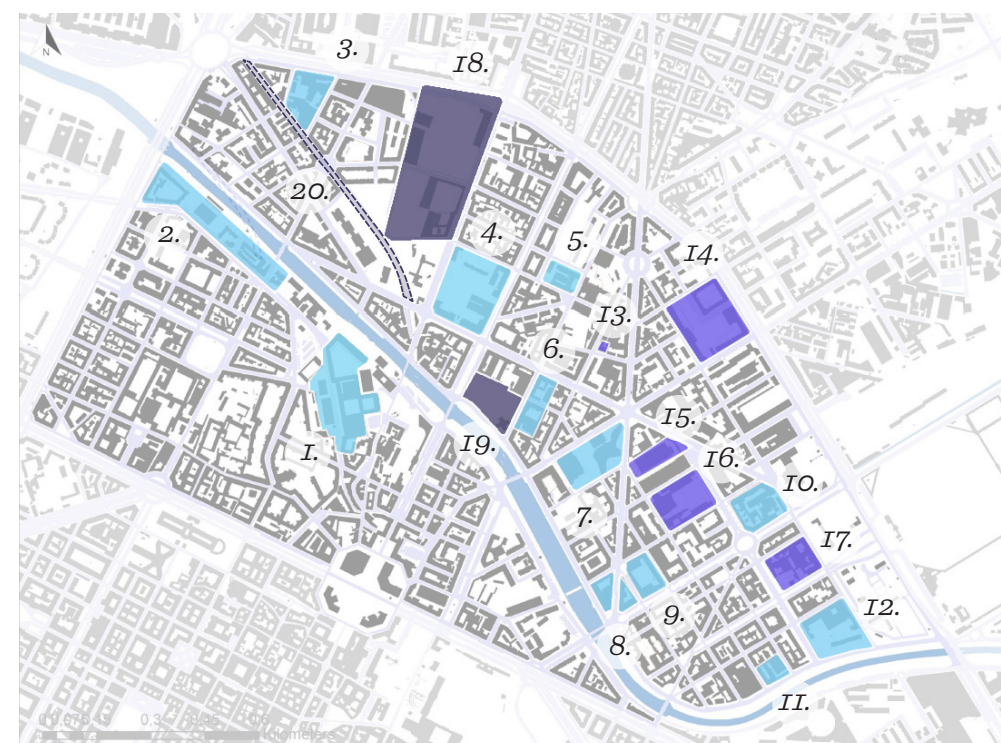


Figure 2.  
Abandoned industrial areas, entirely or partially redeveloped  
(Source: AuroraLAB 2020a)\*

\* addition of Trincerino and graphics changes by the author

1. Arsenale (1582–1982)
2. DURIO Tanneries (1870–1905)
3. OSRAM (Società Riunite Edison) formerly Radio Lamp Factory (1853–1989)
4. GFT (Gruppo Finanziario Tessile) formerly Bass Abrate Mill (1869–1987)
5. Sclopis Chemical Factory (1812–1931)
6. Tobler formerly Gilardini Tannery (1900–1972)
7. Enel Power Plant formerly SAEI (1891–1980)
8. CEAT Cavi sud (1925–1981)
9. CEAT Cavi nord (1925–1981)
10. Maglificio Calzificio Torinese (1916–1994)
11. Ambrosio Film (1912–1929)
12. Lanificio Colombo (1908–1966)
13. AEM "Aurora" Electricity Subscription
14. Nebiolo Cast Iron Foundry (1922–1979)
15. Military Galletificio (1908–1988)
16. "Ballada" Enamelling and Similar Foundry Company (1906–1958)
17. Industrial buildings (1915–2000)
18. Officine Grandi Motori (1923–1990)
19. Conceria Gilardini (1831–1955) then Leonardo da Vinci High School
- \*20. "Trincerino" former Turin–Ceres railway (1868–1916)



## Socio-economic situation

A comprehensive study published by Aurora Lab (2020a,b) has demonstrated the socio-economic specificity of the area. The area is characterized by a high level of social vulnerability, which is reflected in significant economic and educational differences among its residents. And that Aurora is one of the most multicultural areas of Turin:

### 1. Social vulnerability

- **Unemployment:** The district has one of the highest unemployment rates in the city, at 14%, significantly higher than the Turin average of 9.8%. The closure of large factories and industrial plants has exacerbated economic instability.
- **Low education:** The district has a high proportion of people with low levels of education, which limits their access to skilled trades. This is especially true for young people and migrants, who face additional barriers such as language difficulties and discrimination. 16.7% of young people (aged 15-29) are classified as NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training), one of the highest rates in the city. Also, only 46.9% of the population has a diploma or higher education, which is lower than the city average of 61.6%
- **Economic instability:** The proportion of families receiving social assistance in Aurora is higher than the city average, indicating the need for economic support from government agencies. The average income in Aurora is only 11,393 euros per capita, which is significantly lower than the city average of 17,000 euros.
- **The Aurora real estate market** has particularly modest values, among the lowest in the city (1,517 euros/m<sup>2</sup>), second only to the more peripheral areas of Barca, Bertolla and the Porta Palazzo area (1,313 euros/m<sup>2</sup>).

### 2. Ethnic diversity

- **Migration component:** The area is home to around 36.4% foreign nationals, more than double the Turin average of 15%. The main groups are migrants from North Africa, South Asia and Eastern Europe.
- **Integration issues:** Despite the cultural richness, the high level of ethnic diversity leads to integration difficulties. This is reflected in the segregation of certain groups of the population and the lack of access to social services adapted to the needs of migrants.

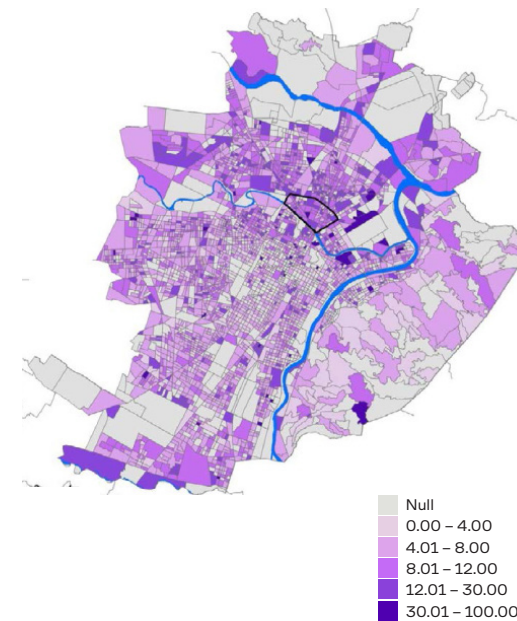


Figure 3.  
Unemployment rates in Turin, by census sections  
(Source: AuroraLAB 2020b)

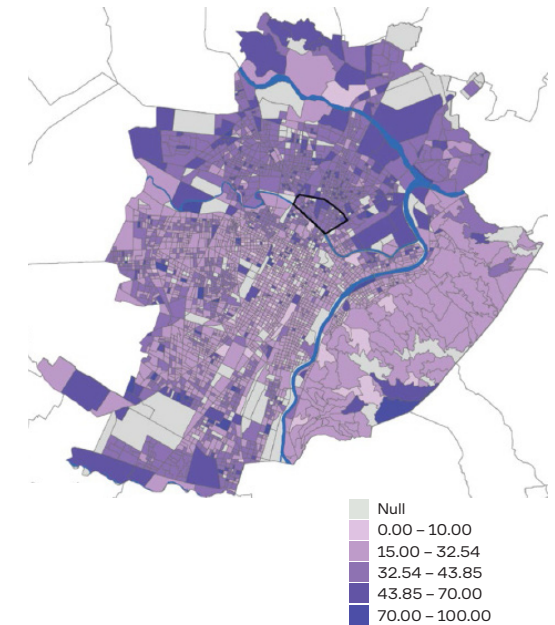


Figure 4.  
Population over 15 years old without a lower  
secondary school diploma (%) in Turin  
(Source: AuroraLAB 2020a)

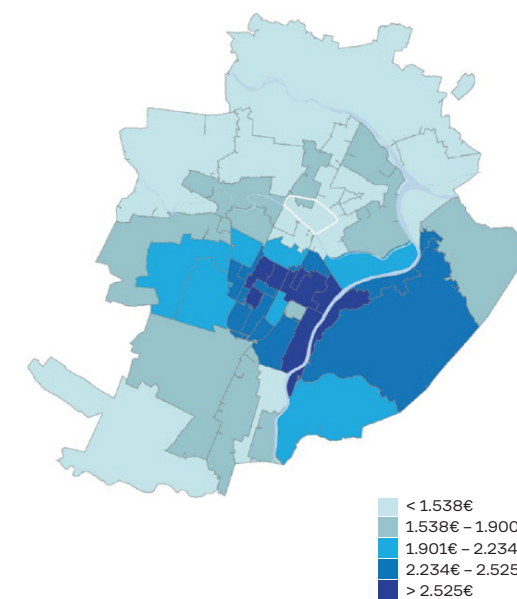


Figure 5.  
Average house prices (euro/m<sup>2</sup>) by real estate area  
(Source: AuroraLAB 2020a)

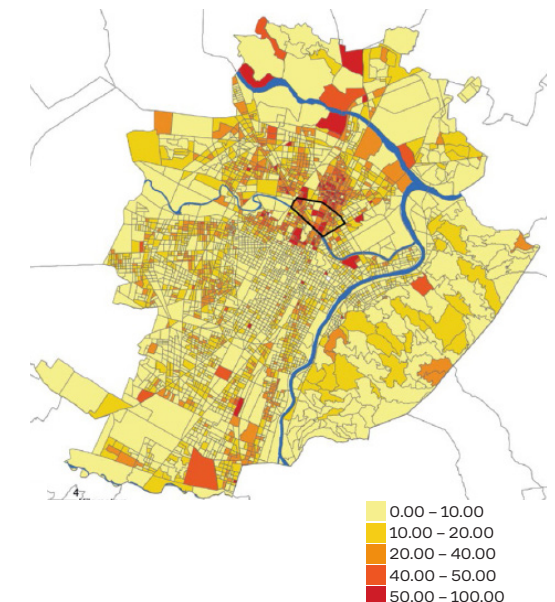


Figure 6.  
Foreign population (%) in Turin  
(Source: AuroraLAB 2020a)



Weekend festival at Cecchi Point – Casa del Quartiere Aurora.

U



View of the pavement painted during the AuroraLab workshop "Grandangolo" in front of the Parini school.

A

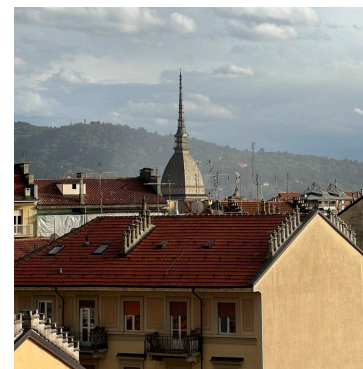


Evening view of the Dora River embankment with mountains visible on the horizon.

R

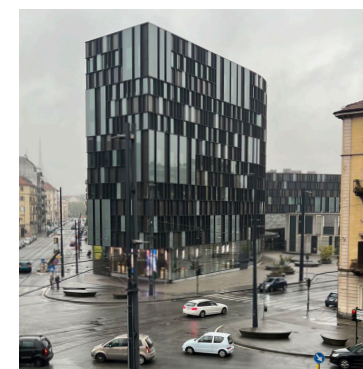


People relaxing in the recently renovated Pellegrino Garden



The Aurora district is quite close to the city center. View from the apartment window on Mole Antonelliana.

O



View of the multifunctional business center Lavazza after reconstruction.

A



View of the lively Via Borgo Dora during Turin's Balon flea market.



### 3.2.2 OVERVIEW OF THE THREE CASE STUDY AREAS

In this chapter, the analysis narrows the focus to the scale of individual public spaces in the Aurora district of Turin. While the previous chapters looked at co-production through broader planning frameworks and multi-level governance dynamics, this section looks at the specific transformation of specific urban environments. Here, we examine how the redevelopment of public space unfolds in practice: who initiates action, how decisions are made, how design processes are conducted, which actors are involved, and how these processes are framed or constrained by legal and institutional structures.

Co-production in practice in a site-specific context:

- Giardino Cardinale Michele Pellegrino (Pellegrino Garden)
- Giardino Di Via Saint Bon (Saint-Bon Garden)
- Trincerino (Old railway trench)

The first two are public gardens whose transformations were driven by citizen initiatives and community collaboration. The third, Trincerino, is a more complex case due to its former status as transport infrastructure, its current governance within the GTT, and its inclusion in broader metropolitan mobility strategies.

The analysis follows a timeline-based methodology, reconstructing year-by-year the key developments, participatory processes and design decisions that shaped each project. By tracing the evolution of each site, this chapter aims to provide a detailed understanding of the co-production process, highlighting both the opportunities it offers and the structural constraints it faces. By comparing the three cases, we aim to identify recurring patterns, challenges and contextual differences.



1. Saint Bon Garden

2. Old railway trench Trincerino

3. Pellegrino Garden

Figure 7. Sketch of the Aurora District with Three Case Study Areas  
(Source: Author's elaboration)





# GARDEN PELLEGRINO

(Source: Photo by the author)



### 3.2.3 CARDINAL MICHELE PELLEGRINO GARDEN

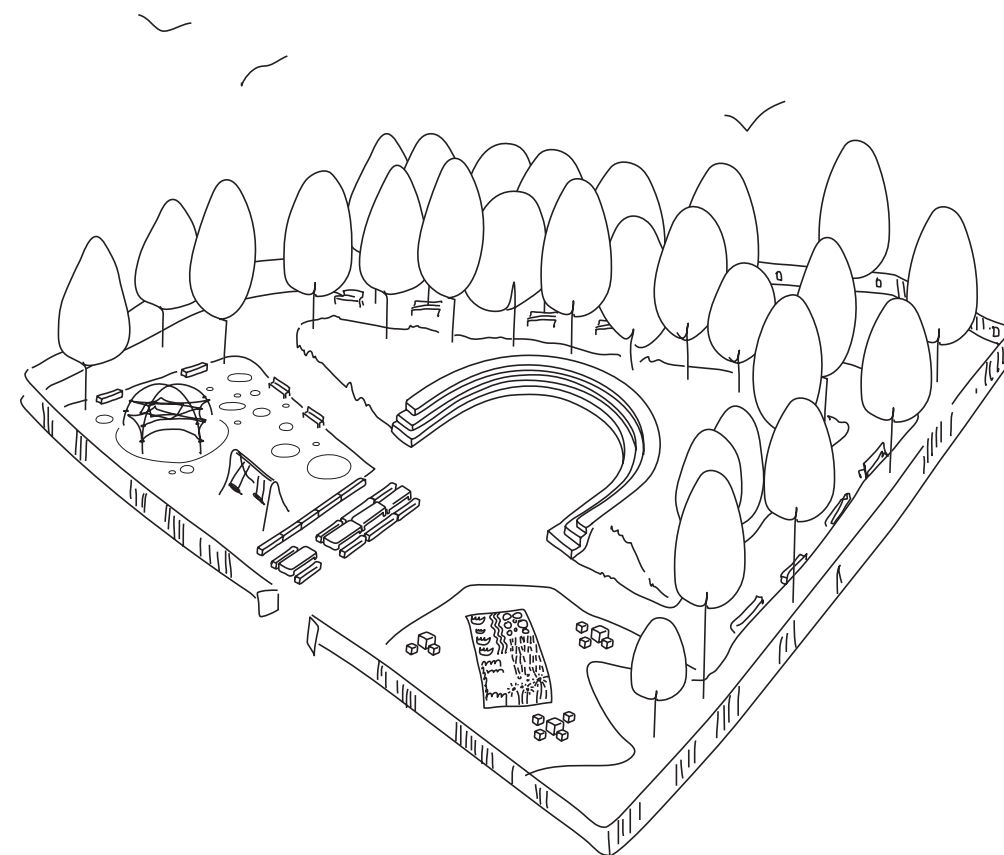
#### *Overview*

Giardino Cardinale Michele Pellegrino is a public garden in Piazza Borgo Dora, on the south side of the Dora River. Created in 2001 as part of the “The Gate” regeneration project, it originally featured a playground and an amphitheatre on the site of a demolished church. For years, it remained unnamed until its dedication to Cardinal Michele Pellegrino in 2012 (Torinoclick 2022).

For a time, much of the space was occupied by the Turin Eye, a tethered hot air balloon offering panoramic views of the city. The balloon operated from 2011 until the bankruptcy of its operating company in late 2018. Consequently, by 2019, the entire garden was closed to the public and essentially became a warehouse for the disused balloon equipment. Its closure highlighted the loss of much-needed community space in a densely populated area of the city. Giardino Pellegrino remains the only public green space with a playground in the Borgo Dora–Porta Palazzo area (Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo 2023).

The Fondazione della Comunità di Porta Palazzo, composed of local associations, social cooperatives, active citizens, and local businesses, expressed concern about the neglect of the garden (Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo 2020a). Since 2016, Turin has adopted collaborative management (‘Patti di collaborazione’), making the garden a key example of co-production in urban planning. Its restoration has brought together city institutions, local groups, and residents, reflecting the city’s wider strategy for the co-management of public spaces (Torinoclick 2022).

The garden’s story reflects Aurora’s transformation from a neglected site into a shared public asset, supported by major investments in northern Turin, including React-EU, PINQuA, and UIA funding. By 2023, over €7 million of work had been completed, with an additional €20 million planned (Torinoclick 2023). Supported by the European UIA ToNite project, the renovation of Giardino Pellegrino contributes to a safer and more inclusive public space.



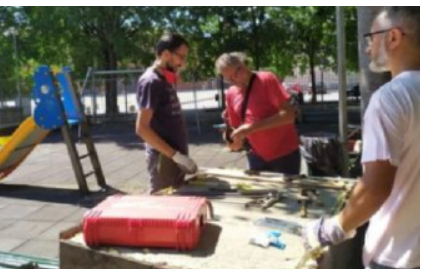
*Project status: Implemented*

## 2020

### First initiatives and Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo



Since 2019, the Garden has become one of the places that local activists care about, taking various steps, from planning with citizens, as well as local institutions and authorities, to transform the green area from a closed and abandoned space into an attractive and convenient place for everyone.



First reopening (Source: Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo n.d)

In the summer of 2020, in response to the need for open public spaces during the pandemic, the Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo, which was still in the process of being created, together with Circoscrizione 7 and the Fuori di Palazzo association, initiated the signing of a "protocollo d'intesa" memorandum of understanding, ensuring the reopening and daily management of the children's area of the Pellegrino Garden with the participation of volunteers. (Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo n.d.)

On November 2, 2020, the Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo—a community foundation for the Aurora/Porta Palazzo area—was formally constituted (Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo 2020a). This foundation, formed by a coalition of local organizations and activists, became the main driver of the garden's revival efforts. Its mission was to mobilize resources and residents for neighborhood improvements, with Giardino Pellegrino as a priority project. In its manifesto, the committee stated "To shape a new form of local protagonism that starts from the people and the realities who live and inhabit the territory" (Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo 2020b).



Official establishment of the Porta Palazzo Community Foundation (Source: Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo 2020a)

In December 2020, the foundation and local groups initiated a crowdfunding campaign titled "Aiutaci a riaprire il giardino del Balon" ("Help us reopen the Balon garden"). The appeal highlighted the unique value of the garden to the community and asked for funds to clean up debris and meet safety requirements for reopening. This grassroots fundraising touched on the neighborhood's sense of ownership: despite the ongoing pandemic, many residents and supporters contributed online to "reclaim" the space (Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo 2020c). The crowdfunding campaign reached its goal in just two months. In May 2021, the foundation, local volunteers and contractor Costruzioni Bonarrigo organised a major public clean-up under the slogan "Riapriamo il giardino del Balon" ("Let's reopen the Balon Garden") to remove debris and prepare the park for reconstruction (Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo 2021a,b).



A fundraiser to reopen the Balon garden (Source: Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo 2020c)

## 2021

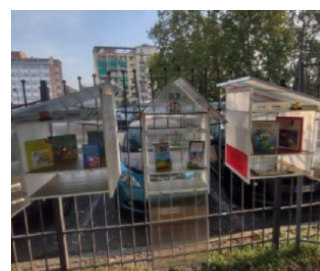
### Partnerships and Co-Planning

In June, the Italian Pavilion of the Venice Architecture Biennale screened two short films documenting the garden's restoration process. As part of the "Communities Resilienti" project, the videos, presented by Fondazione Porta Palazzo and produced by local videographers, highlighted the role of the community in transforming Giardino Pellegrino from a neglected space into a shared civic space. The inclusion of this story in an international exhibition underscored its importance as a model for grassroots urban regeneration (Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo 2021c).

In parallel, in June 2021, the project "Usanze Pellegrine" ("Pilgrim Customs"), directed by the committee, was approved for funding within the ToNite framework. This provided a substantial EU grant to support programming and improvements to the site. The ToNite program aimed to "improve the quality of public spaces and the perception of safety in the evening hours" in Aurora. For the garden, this meant resources for the organization of events (especially evening cultural and social events) and modest physical improvements (lighting, etc.) that complemented the grassroots efforts (Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo 2021d).



Even before the opening in 2021-2022, the garden organized weekly meetings open to everyone, where participants tried to determine the best methods of involving citizens in the process of reviving Giardino Pellegrino. Meanwhile, in order to make the play area more welcoming to the children of the area, a bookcrossing was installed: three beautiful little houses that house a variety of books for the youngest children. Participants were also asked to answer two basic questions that will help shape the future of the garden: “what would you like to find in the garden?” and “what do you want to do for the garden?” Once the proposals were collected and left for future use on the garden gate, a calendar of events could be drawn up, which took place every Wednesday (Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo n.d).



Joint design of the future garden  
(Source: Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo n.d)

## 2022

### Reopening and Collaborative Management

At the begging of 2022, the groundwork for long-term co-management was set. In December, the City Council of Turin approved a formal “Patto di collaborazione” (collaboration pact) to govern Giardino Pellegrino (Torinoclick 2022, Comune Torino 2025). The pact, officially signed at the beginning of January 2022, recognized the garden as an urban asset and entrusted its care to a coalition of civic actors in partnership with the city. The signatories to the management included the Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo and several local NGOs: Fondazione UCI—Uniti

per Crescere Insieme (Social Circus Foundation), Associazione Fuori di Palazzo, Invasioni Creative UAPS and Piattaforma Artistica Co.H (Torino EU Projects 2023). The pact defined the roles: the city would remain the owner and would handle major maintenance and social support, while the civic partners would open/close the park daily, animate it with events and jointly manage its maintenance.



Official establishment of the Porta Palazzo Community Foundation  
(Torinoclick 2022)

On March 20, 2022, Giardino Pellegrino finally reopened its gates to the public, with an official opening ceremony on May 13, 2022, to celebrate the “return” of the garden to the city. The garden, now legally under the joint management of the foundation and its partners, has been tidied up, partially renovated (old benches repainted, lawn mown) and is ready to welcome its neighbours again. The opening brought together all stakeholders, from ordinary citizens to city leaders. Participants included representatives of the mayor and two deputy mayors (social policy assessor Jacopo Rosatelli and innovation assessor Chiara Foglietta), as well as the president of Circoscrizione 7, Luca Deri. Institutional neighbours such as the Scuola Holden (across the street) and public figures such as Ernesto Olivero from SERMIG were also present. In their speeches, officials praised the joint efforts, calling the garden “a gift from the people of Turin to themselves” and a model for inclusive, accessible cities (Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo n.d.).



Re-opening march 2022  
(Source: Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo)



Official Re-opening May 2022  
(Source: Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo n.d)

After its reopening, the garden immediately became a hub of community activity. Co-management groups, coordinated by Fondazione Porta Palazzo, developed a rich calendar of events, using ToNite funding and the energy of local associations. For example, Fondazione UCI began hosting free circus workshops for children every week in the park, and an open-air film festival, Cinema Pellegrino, was launched for summer evenings. Other events included small concerts, multicultural food nights, yoga classes, art installations, and children’s play nights. Social service organizations used the space for inclusive play sessions and to engage vulnerable residents. Monthly calendars were published online and on the park’s noticeboard, inviting all neighbours to participate.

According to the project reports, by the end of 2022, a total of 179 public events had taken place in the garden, with the steering committee meeting regularly and a total of 39 citizen co-design meetings held, and 6,500 people participated in the beautification activities of the Pellegrino Garden (Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo n.d.).



In spring 2023, the foundation presented “I giovedì del Perché no?!” , an innovative format for weekly meetings in the garden. Every Thursday, anyone interested in Giardino Pellegrino is welcome to stop by to meet, chat, and socialize over snacks and drinks in the park. On the first Thursday of each month, the meeting becomes a more structured forum for pitching ideas, discussing any concerns, and coordinating volunteer efforts. These “Why Not?!” Thursdays serve as an open door for new volunteers and ideas—like recruiting neighbors to join the list of people who unlock the gates each morning and lock them at night (Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo n.d.).

## 2023 New Renovation



New reconstruction  
(Source: Torino Oggi 2023)

work, carried out by the city’s Urban Renewal Department in coordination with the community, gave the park a “new look”, keeping it closed for several weeks during the summer. The children’s playground was completely renovated with inclusive play equipment and a safer surface. In addition to the playground, the project added numerous amenities: new seats and tables, ping pong tables. Turin’s iconic green “Toret” fountain was also installed so that visitors could drink water for free. Importantly, the amphitheater area, where the hot air balloon once stood, was refurbished with sturdy benches and made fully accessible with the addition of safety railings on the steps. The design of these upgrades was influenced by public feedback collected in 2022, ensuring that the new features would meet local needs, more shaded areas for the elderly, play equipment for children (Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo 2023). The intervention concluded was carried out in agreement and synergy with local associations and rep-

resents a further piece of a broader redevelopment program for the northern area of Turin, which will be covered by 3 different investment programs: React EU, PinQua—National Innovative Program for the Quality of Living, PIU—Integrated Urban Plan (Torino EU Projects 2023). On November 10, 2023, the city held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the completion of the garden’s renovation. Mayor Stefano Lo Russo attended the event (TorinoClick 2023). This event effectively marked the second time the “new” Giardino Pellegrino was inaugurated. Circoscrizione 7 President Luca Deri noted that this was only the “first tranche” of improvements in the Balon area: additional projects will begin in the surrounding neighborhood in the coming months, including the conversion of a nearby building into social housing and the modernization of streets and urban decor (Quotidiano Piemontese 2023). The city stressed that the collaborative management model of the garden will continue, with the same foundation and network of volunteers taking care of the new facilities. The successful partnership under ToNite was also showcased at the EU Cities Forum 2023 in Turin, where delegates visited the garden to see how the project has improved nighttime safety and community cohesion (Tonite.eu 2023).



Official opening and ribbon cutting2023  
(Source: TorinoClick 2023)



### *Summary: Co-production in the Giardino Pellegrino*

The renovation of the Giardino Pellegrino is an example of co-production that combines citizen participation, shared knowledge and institutional recognition. The regeneration process, initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic in response to the urgent need for accessible public space, was initiated by the Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo, a hybrid civic body made up of local residents, professionals and urban scientists, some of whom are affiliated with the Polytechnic University of Turin. Their dual role as citizens and experts in the field allowed for an insider's expertise, strengthening the epistemic legitimacy of grassroots knowledge. Through participatory design workshops, open meetings and participatory design activities, the community collectively rethought the function and identity of the park. This co-creation of situated knowledge reflected a deep contextual understanding of the spatial needs of the area.

The project was built on regular meetings, workshops and open discussions where ideas for the development of the garden were formed. This allowed the participants not only to rethink its functions, but also to form a collective vision. In 2022, the Patto di Collaborazione was signed between the city and local organizations, legally establishing joint management. Importantly, it was the community, through the foundation, that independently prepared the application and received funding under the UIA ToNite. ToNite funding supported not only the physical improvement of the garden, but also a rich program of social and cultural events, many of which were held in the evening to improve the perception of safety and encourage community life. Such transformations were made possible thanks to an active urban community, whose members voluntarily donated their time and energy to improve their neighborhood. In 2023, a further renovation of the garden followed thanks to the support of PNRR and the Torino Cambia program, and today, it is not an abandoned area like in 2019, but a lively and popular public space.

In the wake of these transformations, some activists have expressed concerns that the foundation's activities could contribute to gentrification. In response, the foundation's vice president, Karl Kramer, explained that the organization's goal is to improve the quality of life in the area through a combination of social initiatives and work with space, while consciously recognizing the risks and contradictions of such an approach (Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo 2022).







# GARDEN SAINT BON

(Source: Photo by the author)



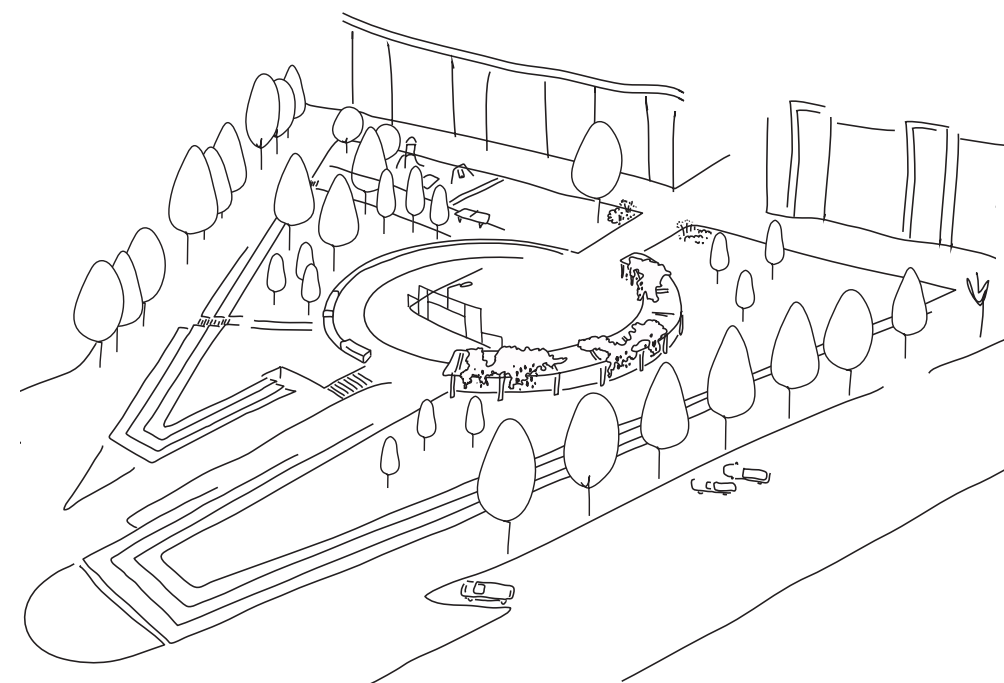
### 3.2.4 GIARDINO DI VIA SAINT BON

#### *Overview*

Giardino di Via Saint Bon is a small public garden in the central part of Aurora, bordered by Via Saint Bon and Via Generale Luigi Damiano. It is located next to the former Officine Grandi Motori and the abandoned Trincerino, not far from the Italo Calvino public library. The garden is opposite the Scuola Media Statale Ettore Morelli high school, but there is no direct pedestrian connection between the school and the garden, as the Trincerino is fenced off and separates these areas.

The initial design of the garden project was realized in 2007. The triangular garden included a sunken terraced central plaza (an amphitheatre-like depression) and a brick arcade enclosing a play area. These features, while artistically expressive, created hidden corners and visual barriers. Aurora Urban Lab found that despite its “attractive design”, the Saint Bon garden was “very little visited or used”, felt “uncomfortable and unpleasant” and was perceived as unsafe due to its layout "(Aurora Lab 2020). The garden also suffers from a severe lack of shade: only one small pergola provides minimal shelter from the sun, while most of the benches are located in the open and become hot in the summer, making the garden uncomfortable to use in hot weather, "almost all the benches in the area are in the sun, only two benches are sheltered by trees with large foliage... The space does not appear particularly unsafe during the day, but certainly a place to avoid in the evening hours" (Aurora Lab 2020).

Until 2022, the garden was in disrepair, with local media and officials repeatedly documenting the decline: by June 2020, a local magazine reported that the gardens were in “the worst state ever” and that drug dealers were operating among the bushes (La Gazzetta Torinese 2020). In 2021, another consul wrote to the city council about the “Deterioration of the City of Aurora.” Her written request noted that “residents report to us daily about various phenomena: micro-crimes, thefts, drug dealing, and deterioration” in the area (Comune Torino 2021b). But thanks to the efforts of active citizens who were not prepared to accept this state of affairs, a process of rethinking the public space began in 2022.



*Project status: Implemented*

## Timeline of Key Events

### 2022

#### Beginning of Active Actions by Neighbours

Frustrated by the garden's neglect and lack of security, local residents mobilized to demand action. Active community members formed a neighbourhood committee, without legal recognition, called “Nuovo giardino Saint-Bon.” Their goal was to revive the fortunes of this now-abandoned public garden (information based on interviews).



Devastated and marginalized garden in 2022  
(Source: Torinoggi 2022a).

The submitted petition with around 90 signatures from residents was to Circonscrizione 7 President Luca Deri, calling for the restoration of the San Bon Garden Organizer Silvia Idrofano described serious problems: "the presence of drug dealers... syringes scattered everywhere, senseless littering and vandalism" and "real attacks" that have driven neighbourhood children and elderly people away from the park (Torinoggi 2022a). The petitioners called for more security

(better lighting, video surveillance, and police patrols) and public events. They proposed installing a small stage in the amphitheater for cultural events, expanding the playground with additional equipment and fencing (to keep large dogs off-leash), repainting the surrounding walls, and adding new trash cans. The same newspaper TorinoOggi noted that the problem has not been resolved since 2015, and residents have again called for real renewal—cleanup and safety measures, as well as cultural/aggregation programs—as the only way to reclaim the abandoned green space (Torinoggi 2022b).

In October 2022, on the initiative of the Committee and with the support of Associazione Arteria and other local organisations and ToNite, a theatrical reading of Andrea Quarello's text *Inter(s)viste* took place in the garden. This event served as a catalyst for a neighbourhood meeting dedicated to the future of the Saint-Bon garden. During the event, the AuroraLab team presented a study of the green spaces in the Aurora neighbourhood, highlighting the potential of the Saint-Bon garden as a key site. The meeting



First meeting of the neighborhood residents, the *Inter(s)viste* readings and presentation of the Auroralab study (Source: Aurora in Movimento 2022).

was a first step towards establishing links between residents, experts, institutions and associations (Aurora in Movimento 2022). Also after this event, a WhatsApp group “Nuovo Giardino Saint-Bon” was created for those who attended the reading and expressed a desire to participate in caring for the garden (from the personal notes of Silvia Idrofano). Later, in March, a Facebook page for the group was also created: Nuovo Giardino Saint-Bon (Facebook 2023).

In December, the issue of garden improvement is discussed at a meeting of the 1st District Commission. The administration is open, but warns of a lack of funds for capital repairs. The technical department of the district begins to look for ways to include the project in programs with allocated funding. (from the personal notes of Silvia Idrofano).

### 2023

#### Co-Design of the new Garden

In April, the first collective action took place: garbage collection, planting of flower beds, common tea drinking. About 10 participants, joint organization of the Committee and Torino Spazio Pubblico (Instagram 2023).

In the summer of 2023, the big joint event marked the beginning of the transformation of the Giardino di Via Saint Bon: the “Festa delle Famiglie” Family Festival (Consiglio di Circonscrizione 2023). Organized jointly by local residents and the Torino Spazio Pubblico, the event was the first milestone in a collective effort to revive the neglected garden. During the festival, participants — families, volunteers and municipal councilors—planted new flowers, restored the existing flowerbeds and enclosed them with

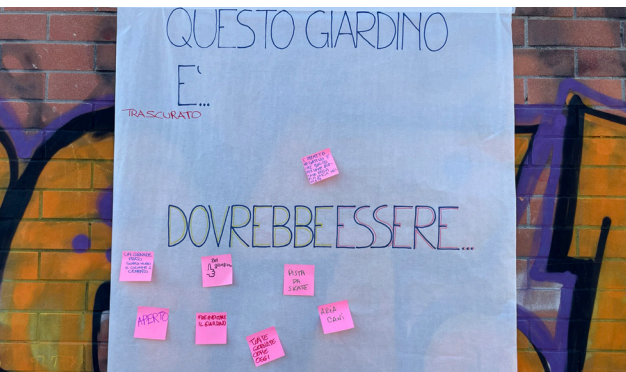


A view of the amphitheater after the “cobweb” under which homeless people slept was removed 2023 (Source: photo by the author)

Poster of the event “Festa delle Famiglie”  
(Source: photo by the author)







Collaborative activities during the "Festa delle Famiglie" 2023, an idea board and a shared picnic (Source: photos by the author)

artistically designed frames, making the park more "child-friendly" and combating visible decay. According to Torino Cronaca, this grassroots initiative was clearly aimed at offering children "an alternative to degradation" and promoting a sense of community ownership (Torino Cronaca 2024b).

From my own field observations, I would like to note that quite a large number of people participated in the event, around 30-40 people, including local residents, families with children, elderly people and volunteers. All participants first tidied up the flower beds together, planted new plants and discussed plans for the future development of the garden. A poster was installed in the park, on which everyone could leave their suggestions and ideas by sticking stickers. Without knowing the language, it was difficult for me to determine exactly who played the leading or organizing role, however, in my opinion, Silvia Idrofano certainly played an important role as a link between the participants and the organization of the event. The event was attended by the president of Circoscrizione 7 Luca Deri and a representative of the second commission Giuseppe Piras, as well as representatives of AuroraLab. After the joint work, all participants gathered for an impromptu feast, which looked very friendly and warm.

Soon after, decorative fences with animal designs by artist Alessandro Rivoira were installed near the playgrounds, and discussions began to choose a new name for the garden as part of the renaming process (Torino Cronaca 2023).



Installation of a decorative fence (Source: Torino Cronaca 2023)

At the beginning of summer 2023, the opportunity arose to include the garden in the PNRR-funded Programme for the Improvement of Urban Areas around Libraries (PIU—Programma per la Rigenerazione Intorno alle Biblioteche) (Comune Torino 2023b). The project was developed in connection with the biblioteca Italo Calvino. The joint design phase begins. Meetings are held with President Deri, Councillor Piras and technical representatives of the project (including on 13 July and in September) (from the personal notes of Silvia Idrofano).

Based on personal field observations, when I attended the first meeting in the summer of 2023, a meeting was held in the district administration building with about 15 people present. Among them were representatives of the administration, including Luca Deri, De Magistris, Giovanni Besusso and Giuseppe Piras, as well as members of the garden committee. AuroraLab representatives were also present, mainly as observers. At the meeting, a project for reorganizing the central playground with the installation of a basketball hoop and replacing the dismantled children's spider web (since in the past homeless people found shelter under it) was presented for discussion. The need to demolish the brick arcade, which interferes with visual visibility, was also discussed.

According to a committee representative, at the autumn meeting, among other things, they discussed how best to green the area and what trees to plant. There have been repeated discussions about setting up a dog walking area; this was noted both on the table with wishes and in discussions. However, due to regulatory restrictions on the territory, it was not possible to implement this in the future.



2024

### Reconstruction of the Garden

July 26- start of construction works with PNRR funding (Vivoin 2025). Speaking about the participation of citizens in this process, it can be noted that Silvia Idrofano mentioned that after the start of construction, the committee was constantly consulted and informed about all the stages and activities planned on the construction site. "The agronomist Giovanni Besusso, who was invaluable to us and was always available and kind. For example, he told us how they would place the street lamps, how they would place the benches and tables, what types of plants they would plant." She also notes that she acted as an intermediary between Besusso and the rest of the committee members, and also consulted with representatives of AuroraLab regarding design decisions.



Construction site, June 2024 (Source: photos by the author)

A separate line of development of the garden was the election for its name, so that it would not be named only after the street. The toponymy commission of the Municipality of Turin unanimously approves the proposal of the District Council to name the garden after Astrid Lindgren (the naming ceremony with the positioning of the plaque will take place after the end of the redevelopment works). This reflected the idea of giving the place a character, the idea of the power of a woman's name, openness to children, and was also connected with a literary image, since this whole project is being implemented within the framework of the library improvement program (Biblioteche Civiche Torinesi 2024).

In the summer of 2024, the garden also hosted two public events: the first was a reading organized by TorinoCambia–Le Biblioteche, and the second,

entitled “Pippi’s New Garden. Discovering the Plants and Trees of the Astrid Lindgren Garden (formerly Saint-Bon)”, explored nature through the playful prism of Pippi Longstocking (from the personal notes of Silvia Idrofano).

2025

### Opening of the New Via Saint-Bon Garden

On May 30, 2025, the Giardino di via Saint-Bon was officially opened with a public ceremony. The garden now includes a multi-purpose sports court for basketball and mini-football, which is located on the site of the former amphitheater. By leveling the depression in the relief, the garden has become more visually visible. The arcade was also demolished, and only the concrete benches in the radius around the sports court recall it. Other areas have also been improved: a concrete ping-pong table appeared and the children's playground has been expanded, equipped with four inclusive play structures, safe flooring and protective metal fencing. A new system of accessible pedestrian paths was laid using permeable concrete, and twenty-five new trees and shrubs were planted to provide shade. The site was also equipped with improved lighting for evening use, wooden benches, picnic tables, trash cans and prepared for the installation of a public toret fountain (Verde Pubblico 2025, Consiglio di Circoscrizione 2025a).



Opening of the New Saint-Bon Garden 2025 (Source: photos by the author)





Library bus and TorinoCanbia booklet at the opening of the garden (Source: photos by the author)



The opening was attended by Mayor Stefano Lo Russo, the city councillor for green and urban care Francesco Tresso, the president of Circoscrizione 7 Luca Deri, the technical staff of the project, representatives of the Primo Levi library and members of the local gardening committee. In his speech, Mayor Lo Russo stressed the importance of the recovery of public

spaces, stating that such projects are a direct response to the need for social security. According to personal field observations, the event attracted a large number of participants, including, apparently, an entire class of children. All the speakers emphasized the importance of the relationship between the garden and the nearby library, confirming its role as an educational and recreational space for the younger generation. Representing the local committee, Silvia expressed her sincere gratitude to the many participants who made the project possible, stressing that without their active participation the entire process of co-production would not have taken place.

Speaking on behalf of the "Nuovo giardino Saint-Bon" committee, Silvia Idrofano gave a speech in which she expressed her sincere gratitude to the many participants and co-producers of the project, without whom its im-

plementation would not have been possible. Among those she thanked were Mayor Stefano Lo Russo and Councillor Francesco Tresso; Giuliano Taurisano, coordinator of the civic volunteer project Torino Spazio Pubblico; the Department of Green Spaces and Parks of the City of Turin; the project site managers Giovanni Besusso and Ezio De Magistris; the Technical Office of District 7; the councillors of District 7 Ilaria Genovese, Giuseppe Piras and the coordinator Marta Sara Ini; as well as Professor Cristiana Rossignolo from AuroraLab.



Info stand highlighting the garden's connection to the library and new equipment (Source: photos by the author)



Official ribbon cutting and opening of the New Via Saint-Bon Garden (Source: SpazioTorino 2025)



*Summary: Co-production in Giardino Di Via Saint Bon*

The regeneration of Via Saint Bon Garden is a other clear case of bottom-up co-production, rooted in strong civic initiative and long-term neighbourhood engagement. Unlike top-down interventions, this transformation began with the commitment of a single resident, Silvia Idrofano, whose role as initiator, mediator, and organizer was central throughout the entire process. She built bridges between citizens, institutions, and experts, keeping the project active across multiple years despite limited formal structures.

One of the most revealing aspects of this case is the formation of the Nuovo Giardino Saint-Bon Committee, an informal, unrecognised body that nonetheless served as a platform for negotiation, coordination and mobilisation. Although not institutional in the legal sense, it functioned as an intermediary structure, giving form and continuity to the co-production process. This shows how institutionalisation in co-production can take informal or temporary forms, particularly in contexts where the legal framework for participation is limited or non-existent. The process of knowledge co-production was formed through exchanges between citizens, professionals from the city's green department and researchers from AuroraLab, who offered guidance without taking the lead. During 2023, the dialogue with Circoscrizione 7 remained active, with municipal councilors and technical specialists regularly attending meetings and supporting the preparation of project proposals. At the heart of this civic mobilization was one resident whose individual commitment, coordination efforts, and ability to maintain dialogue with institutions were crucial to the continuity of the project. Her role ranged from organizing petitions and informal events to mediating between citizens, neighbourhood authorities, and professionals.

In just a few years, the area has undergone a remarkable transformation. Once considered unsafe and occupied by marginalized groups, the garden now features more greenery and play and rest areas, improved lighting, and redesigned spaces that increase visibility and safety. Thanks to the initiative of local residents and the responsiveness of the District 7 administration, it was possible to obtain funding through the PIU (Programma per la Rigenerazione Intorno alle Biblioteche) program, linked to the Italo Calvino Library, and to carry out the renovation project. Although the garden will only officially open in May 2025 and it is too early to assess its long-term impact, the project demonstrates how sustained citizen action can lead to both social and spatial change.







# TRINCERINO

(Source: Photo by the author)



### 3.2.5 TRINCERINO

#### *Overview*

The trench along Via Saint Bon, known as the Trincerino, is a disused segment of the historic Torino-Ceres railway. It begins near the Dora river, close to the former Dora station—located next to Giardino Pellegrino, then crosses the river and follows Corso Vercelli, gradually descending below ground from the level of Giardino Saint Bon. The trench remains largely open and fenced off, creating a physical barrier that disrupts pedestrian connections in the area.

Nowadays turning from Piazza Generale Antonio Baldissera onto Via Saint Bon, you are immediately struck by its silence. While the surrounding streets are full of life—people rushing to work, going to shops, spending time in public places—Via Saint Bon seems forgotten. There are almost no pedestrians on this street. There are no shops or places that could become points of attraction for locals. It is not a choice for walking or relaxing, since there are no activities that would attract people.

Over the years, residents and local leaders have consistently raised concerns about its degraded state, marked by pollution, insecurity, and marginalization (Consiglio di Circoscrizione 2005; Consiglio Comunale di Torino 2009). As early as 2006, proposals emerged to rehabilitate the site, including the idea of covering the trench to improve livability (Consiglio Comunale di Torino 2006), while council documents from 2007 and 2008 show the issue remained unresolved (Consiglio di Circoscrizione 2007, 2008). In 2012, local media highlighted the presence of homeless people and the general abandonment of the area (TorinoToday 2012a, 2012b), leading to partial clean-up initiatives in subsequent years (Consiglio di Circoscrizione 2014a; TorinoToday 2014, 2015).

Since 2012, a national agreement has initiated the restructuring of the Turin-Ceres railway, marking the beginning of a wider transport reorganization in Turin (Gazzetta Ufficiale 2012). By 2024, most of the planned works, including the underground connection and the relocation of the Dora station, have been completed (Lombardi Group 2024). Although the Trincerino itself was not directly included in the Turin-Ceres redevelopment plan, it is worth mentioning these events, as it is part of this railway. The development of transport infrastructure is also taking place in the immediate vicinity of the project area. At the southern end of the Trincerino, Piazza Baldissera is currently undergoing redesign, with con-



*Project status:*

*A design has been completed;  
implementation is pending*



The land is publicly owned and managed under a GTT concession, adding an additional institutional complexity to the site's redevelopment in terms of co-production. However, local residents have been proactive not only by addressing their grievances to the authorities, but also by participating in collaborative workshops to develop their ideas for the redevelopment of "Trincerino".

2018-2021

The Scandagli project was launched by IN/Arch Piemonte in mid-2018 as a collaborative production initiative for urban regeneration in the Aurora area of Turin (InArch 2018–2022). It aims to “investigate the ‘urban depths’, explore existing potentials and vocations and propose collaborative approaches to discover new transformation scenarios and create long-term models of change”. In practice, Scandagli involves architects, planners, local institutions and community groups to co-design and implement interventions in under-used public spaces. The first phase took place in June 2018 and focused on the strategic area of Aurora. Subsequent phases continued throughout 2018–2019 (including design workshops and a public forum in January 2019) and will resume in 2022 with EU-funded activities under the Turin ToNite (UIA) programme.





Joint work within the workshop 2019  
(Source: InArch 2018–2022)

Discussions included how to integrate the abandoned railway trench into the wider area by improving pedestrian connectivity, public safety and accessibility. The discussions explored the transformation of the site into an inclusive urban space, with proposals ranging from green corridors to community gathering areas, which can be seen in the sketch projects presented at the workshop "A green project - explains the president of the 7th District, Luca Deri - to make a space that has never been used available to citizens. A new way of thinking about the neighborhood with a large pedestrian area available to residents" (TorinoCronaca 2019). There were also creative activities in 2022 where participants and children painted part of the fence along Via S. Bon—an area of Trincerino that remains at street level and is not completely fenced off—contributing to the symbolic regeneration of the space.

Throughout the project, local residents, community associations (such as Associazione Solco aps, Genitori Insieme, and EducaDora Onlus), and schoolchildren were consistently engaged as key partners and participants. Official project materials prominently display logos of partner and supporting or-

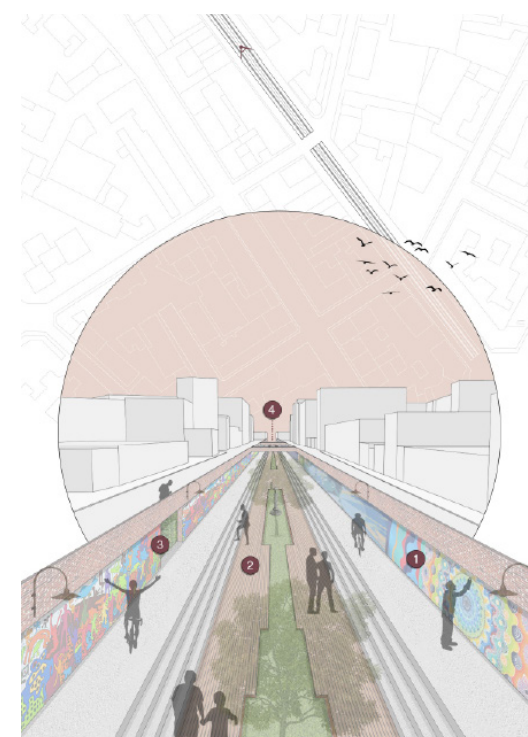
ganizations, including IN/Arch Piemonte, Associazione Solco aps, Genitori Insieme, EducaDora Onlus, ANCE Torino, Confindustria Piemonte, Torino Urban Lab, isole, CPS (Culture Politica Società), the European Union's Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) program, and the City of Turin, underscoring the project's multi-actor approach (InArch Piemonte 2018–2022).

During the Scandagli workshop, student Pelosi (2020) from Politecnico di Torino published a Master thesis project entitled "Utopia realizzata: potere sussidiario e spazi condivisi" ("Utopia Realized: Subsidiary Power and Shared Spaces"). The railway trench of the Torino-Ceres line is considered as a strategic space for urban acupuncture. The author proposes to develop it through small-scale, grassroots initiatives such as temporary greening, events involving residents and the establishment of "patti di collaborazione" pacts between the administration and local actors. Such a strategy aims to restore social coherence, eliminate territorial fragmentation and return the space to collective use.

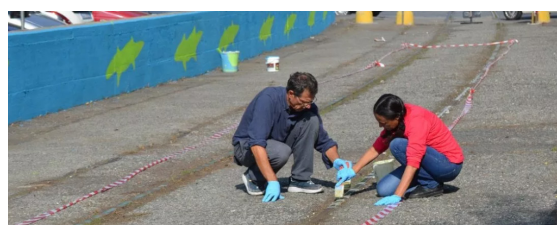
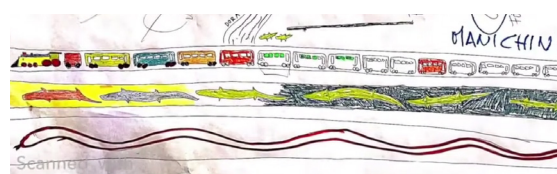
Also in 2018, as reported by the newspaper CittAgorà, local residents continued to appeal to the authorities, calling for concrete solutions and collaborating with neighborhood commissions to restore order, highlighting the problems of Via Saind Bon, drug trafficking, waste accumulation and a general feeling of insecurity (CittAgorà 2018a,b). In 2019 discussion is still continiuews "A dialogue is underway with GTT and the Region to fill the trench using backfill soil, while still leaving the possibility to reuse the tracks in the future. In the meantime, to prevent access to the area, it is possible to install a gate at the level of Corso Emilia."-explains Mobility Councillor, Maria Lapietra (La Stampa 2019).

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Conceptual proposal for redevelopment and shared use of spaces (Source: Pelosi 2020)



Conceptual proposal for redevelopment and shared use of spaces  
(Source: Pelosi 2020)



Workshop Scandagli 2022 and joint drawing of an art object on the open part of Trincerino (Source: InArch 2018–2022, Geoportale n.d., Torino Repubblica 2022)





1. The spaces present in the areas surrounding the 3 identified sections of Trincerino (Source: Bogetto and Martinengo, 2022)



2. Critical points and enhancement points near the trench (Source: Bogetto and Martinengo, 2022)

3. Actions to be performed along the trench sections (Source: Bogetto and Martinengo, 2022)



Academic interest has also been directed towards this area. In the 2021-2022 academic year, a thesis was completed at the Polytechnic University of Turin, supervised by Professor Cristiana Rossignolo, representative of AuroraLAB (Boghetto and Martinengo, 2022). The thesis analyses the current state of Trincerino, a former railway trench that runs through the Aurora district, and proposes its transformation into a linear public park for slow mobility and public events.

The authors describe Trincerino as a “dividing infrastructure” that aims to become an “infrastructure that unites”, connecting the more developed area along Via Cecchi and Via Emilia with underutilized spaces around the Saint-Bon Gardens, the former OGM site, and other public hubs. A detailed map of public spaces in the area identifies Trincerino as the space with the highest potential for regeneration. The first map visually depicts this strategy, dividing Trincerino into three functional segments and highlighting the network of surrounding public spaces—such as parks, schools, and community centers—that could be re-connected through the proposed linear park. The second diagram illustrates the current spatial fragmentation and critical moments of the area. It identifies Trincerino as a linear source of disconnection within a wider zone of urban vulner-

ability, while also showing nearby areas of attraction. The map highlights the opportunity to reverse this pattern and transform the corridor into a unifying axis linking isolated urban fragments. The project describes a vision for a continuous green corridor that improves pedestrian accessibility, provides social and recreational spaces and strengthens links with the wider ecological network, especially with Parco Dora. The proposed interventions are structured using a benefit-effort matrix, with third map showing both site-specific actions and a set of transverse measures that could be implemented progressively depending on the readiness of each segment. These transverse actions include the activation of participatory processes involving local residents and associations, the creation of a pedestrian and bicycle corridor linking Aurora with Spina 3 and Parco Dora, and the development of green infrastructure that connects the existing public gardens and open spaces along the trench. More complex site-specific proposals include the cleaning and reopening of the trench, the removal of physical barriers and the redevelopment of the former railway track to street level, which would significantly improve transverse accessibility but would require significant technical and structural efforts. Additional measures include the redesign of the Giardino Saint-Bon, the reuse of abandoned or demolished buildings, and the installation of lighting and urban furniture to ensure safety and comfort. The project also includes new recreational areas, including urban gardens, inclusive playgrounds, sports areas and flexible open spaces for events and informal gatherings. With their proposal, the authors respond to existing problems such as environmental neglect, fragmented connections, lack of vegetation and persistent perceptions of the area as unsafe and disconnected from the wider urban fabric.



In parallel to the collaboration between IN/Arch Piemonte and local residents in the Scandagli project, participatory planning activities were also carried out at metropolitan level for the development of PUMS (Piano Urbano della Mobilità Sostenibile). As already noted in the chapter on co-production at metropolitan level, these processes included a series of public events held between December 2019 and April 2021. Although the broader participatory process underlying the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan included a fairly broad agenda, it remains difficult to assess the extent to which the representatives of Circoscrizione 7 were involved in discussions that directly affected their territory. As discussed in the previous chapter, the initial Ascolto del Territorio forum, held on 18 December 2019, brought together over 170 participants from 11 homogeneous metropolitan areas, but they were related to the wider scale of the Città Metropolitana rather than the inner city of Turin (CMTorino 2021b).



PUMS Forum with stakeholders to identify the objectives and priorities of the Plan 18 December 2019 (Source: CMTorino 2021a)

A detailed review of all official reports on the co-production route does not reveal any direct mention of Circoscrizione 7 or Aurora. The only explicit reference found concerns tram line 12 (which repurposes the historic “Trincerino” railway trench), which appears in the second thematic workshop held on 20 April 2021 as part of the “Scenario Cooperativo” aimed at boosting collective motorized mobility. Here, line T12 is listed among the strategic interventions, together with the extension of the M1 and M2, as part of a vision to densify the tram network and support multimodal hubs (CMTorino 2021c).

Also, as already mentioned, AuroraLAB representative Silvia Saccomani writes an article criticizing the proposed project for tram line 12, presented by GTT at the Circoscrizione 7 council meeting on March 2nd, as part of

the discussion of the PUMS sustainable mobility plan. She raises several issues and highlights the ineffectiveness of recent discussions. Saccomani expresses doubts about the stated obstacles to filling the trench and emphasizes that the decision was taken solely on the basis of transport infrastructure issues, without taking into account other aspects and the real needs of the Aurora area (AuroraLab 2021).

In 2020 the mayor Appendino and transport councillor Lapietra launched a petition on Change.org, proposing a new tram line (Line 12), which gathered 449 votes. Tram could go to the Juventus Stadium, including a part of the line will run along a trench on Via San Bon. It should improve access to public services in the districts (Change.org 2020).

## 2022–2023

### Decision making on the reconstruction of the Trincerino

The visibility of Line 12 was further enhanced by the official release of PUMS 2022, which includes cartographic representations of the extended both SFM line project and tram network, confirming its planned route along the former Trincerino trench. According to the approved plan, line 12 runs through the former trench of the Trincerino railway, linking important transport hubs of the city. It connects the Allianz Stadium area and key transport arteries, providing access to other parts of Turin, including the Mauriziano hospital and residential areas in the south of the city. The trench acts as a transport corridor, turning a previously abandoned site into an important part of the city's transport system (CMTorino 2022b).

Later, during the European Mobility Week 2022 held in the Urban Lab, the Detailed Planning Project of the Linea 12 Tram was presented (Urban Lab Torino 2022a). The

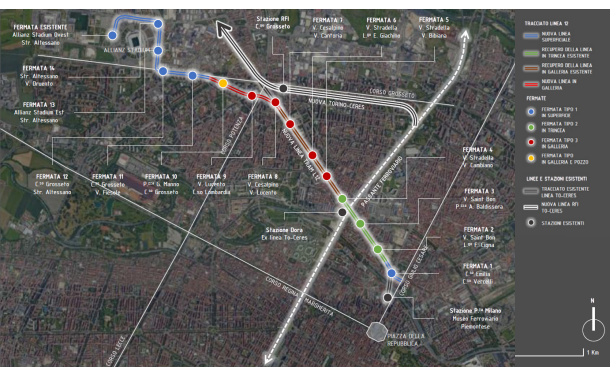


Urban plan for sustainable mobility PUMS (Source: CMTorino 2022a)





Presentation of the Line 12 project during the Turin Mobility Week (Source: Urban Lab Torino 2022a)



The scheme of the different parts of line 12 where Trincerino is marked in green (Source: Urban Lab Torino 2022b)



View of the tram stop number 3, Saint-Bon street from the Baldissera square (Source: Urban Lab Torino 2022b)



View of the number 3 tram stop, from the lower level of Saint-Bon street (Source: Urban Lab Torino 2022b)

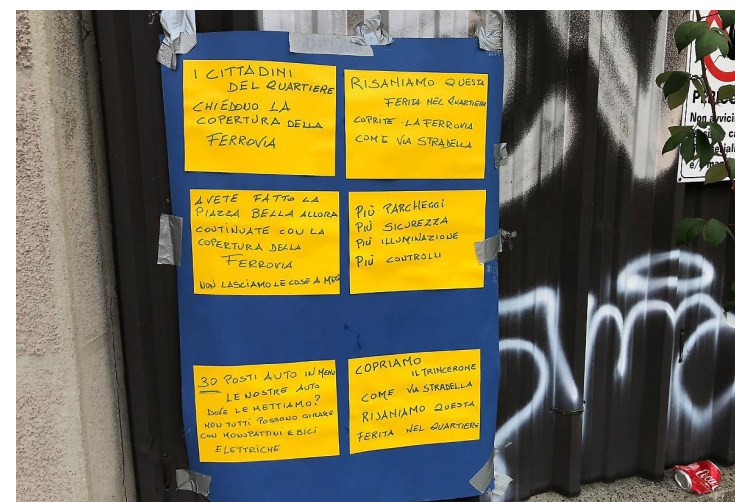
title of the presentation no longer mentioned the metropolis, but Citta di Torino, and the lecture itself outlines the step-by-step project of the new tram line. This document confirms that the Tricerino trench is part of the tram route and will be completely repurposed into a dedicated tram corridor, which will improve north-south mobility and reconnect peripheral areas such as Barriera di Milano and Aurora through sustainable infrastructure. The project included maps indicating the significance of the project for the city's transport infrastructure, detailed sections of different sections of the route. According to the schemes, Trincerino has 4 tram stops, one at the very beginning at ground level, and three directly in the trench, at a lower level near the rails relative to the street level. Also, according to the renderings, you can see an increase in the level of the trench fences (Urban Lab Torino 2022b). Participants included representatives of the Turin Mobility Authority, Urban Lab staff and interested local residents. The session ended with a Q&A session, during which participants asked questions about the potential impact on traffic, construction timelines and community involvement during the design phase of the project.

In January 2022, Turin Mayor Lo Russo met with Transport Minister Giovannini. He announced the allocation of a budget for projects including the construction of tram line 12 and the rehabilitation of the Turin-Ceres railway trench. The Mayor stressed

that these investments represent an important step towards integrating the different parts of the city and addressing long-standing issues of mobility and urban regeneration (TorinoTopNews 2022a; 2022b). And on 27 September 2023, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport officially approved the allocation of €221.7 million to the City of Turin for the extension of tram line 12 to the Allianz Stadium and the rehabilitation of the Trincerino trench (MIT 2023).



Meeting between Mayor Lo Russo and Minister Giovannini in Rome, after which significant funds were allocated for Turin's mobility (Source: TorinoTopNews 2022a)



An anonymous protest calling for the trench to be filled (Source: Torino Cronaca 2023)

Meanwhile, at the district level, anonymous protest posters appear on Via Saint Bon reading “Coprire il trincerone abbandonato” (“Close the abandoned trench”). Residents complain that half of the parking spaces have been removed in favor of new flower beds and bike racks during the renovation of Largo Cigna. They are calling for the railway trench to be filled in to restore parking spaces, increase lighting, and improve safety (Torino Cronaca 2023a).

In recent years, in 2024–2025, public information about the implementation of tram line 12 remains limited, and the project does not show significant progress. In March 2024, a meeting was held at Circoscrizione 5, through which part of the future route of the line passes. During the meeting, project materials were presented, but the discussion also revealed concerns among residents about the impact of the works on local mobility and infrastructure (Infrato 2024). At the same time, local media highlight the continuing uncertainty about the future of the project, despite its strategic importance. Both delays in implementation and the lack of a clear deadline for the start of the works are noted (Mole24 2024).



### *Summary: Co-production in the Trincerino*

The Trincerino project is a case study in the analysis of the tensions and constraints of co-production at different levels of governance. On the one hand, the site was the object of intensive bottom-up initiatives that mobilized local knowledge, creative practices and academic research. The Scandagli project stands out as a clear example of participatory planning: it involved residents, associations, schools and professionals in a collaborative design activity, temporary artistic interventions and the development of a scenario for the reuse of an abandoned railway trench. These efforts contributed to the accumulation of a rich body of situated knowledge, also reflected in several university theses and public statements that conceptualized the trench as a shared urban space—a potential solution to social fragmentation, lack of greenery and disunity in the Aurora district.

On the other hand, the official decision to transform the trench into part of tram line 12 was taken at the metropolitan level, within the framework of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (PUMS). This broader process also included participatory components, including thematic forums and scenario workshops. However, due to the metropolitan scale of these events, it remains unclear to what extent local actors from Circoscrizione 7 or the Aurora district were able to influence decisions that directly affected their environment. There are no clear traces of their involvement in the official documents and no evidence that ideas from the Scandagli initiative or similar local proposals were incorporated into the final plans.

Ultimately, the Trincerino case demonstrates that co-production is not only about facilitating participation, but also about managing institutional translation between scales. Although the project has received funding, the implementation framework has not yet been finalized and only the future will tell how exactly it is implemented.



## 3.2.6 SUMMARISE. CO-PRODUCTION IN PRACTICE IN A SITE-SPECIFIC CONTEXT

The analysis of the three public space projects in the Aurora district—Giardino Pellegrino, Giardino Saint-Bon, and the Trincerino—offers valuable insight into how co-production unfolds at the neighbourhood scale in Turin. While all three cases are united by a common goal of urban regeneration and civic engagement, they also reveal distinct trajectories, institutional complexities, and degrees of influence over decision-making processes.

The first two projects, both public gardens, share similar spatial and regulatory statuses. According to the current PRG zoning, Giardino Pellegrino is designated for public green space, while Giardino Saint-Bon is classified as mixed-use with a strong public function. In both cases, the initial transformations were made possible through bottom-up activation led by residents. Giardino Pellegrino's redevelopment was spearheaded by Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo, a civic foundation formed by active citizens and local experts. Giardino Saint-Bon, on the other hand, emerged from the individual initiative of a resident who gradually mobilized neighbors to form an informal committee. In both examples, collaboration with external associations—such as Turin Public Space and associations connected to the local library “Italo Calvino”—helped expand the scope and capacity of action.

Although the pathways were different, both gardens eventually benefited from significant institutional support. They received funding through the PNRR and PIU programs: Pellegrino via the Torino Cambia initiative, and Saint-Bon as part of a larger grant tied to the improvement of the local library. In both cases, the transformation of the gardens prioritized children and families, combining ecological, recreational, and social goals. While Pellegrino's trajectory was reinforced by winning the ToNite grant and organizing numerous events to activate local participation, Saint-Bon's redevelopment relied on weekly voluntary work and partnerships with school-related actors. Ultimately, both gardens have undergone significant physical renewal in the past two years and have emerged as successful examples of community-led regeneration in Aurora.

By contrast, the case of the Trincerino illustrates the limits of local co-production when confronted with metropolitan-scale agendas. Despite the land being formally designated as green public space in the PRG, it remains underutilized and managed by the public transport company GTT, making

it inaccessible and fragmented. While extensive co-production efforts were made at the local level—including the Scandagli project, which involved workshops, public events, and even academic theses—the broader vision adopted in the PUMS prioritized strategic metropolitan mobility goals. The trench was repurposed into the proposed route for Tram Line 12, with limited evidence that local visions shaped this outcome. This reveals a structural tension between community-based spatial imaginaries and higher-level infrastructural planning. Whereas local actors envisioned the site as a connective green corridor for the neighbourhood, metropolitan authorities framed it as a missing link in the urban mobility network.

Across all three cases, co-production was shaped by local knowledge co-creation and civic engagement, often driven by citizen-experts connected to research institutions like Politecnico di Torino or groups like AuroraLAB. However, these bottom-up processes often lacked institutional anchoring beyond temporary funding or volunteer-based commitments. The absence of formalized structures of representation—except for the Patto di Collaborazione in Pellegrino—made long-term governance and influence more challenging.

Circoscrizione 7 repeatedly appeared as a facilitating and supportive actor. While it rarely acted as a project initiator, it played a crucial role in connecting grassroots initiatives with city-level resources and grant opportunities. The district administration also recognized and supported forms of situated knowledge production, particularly in the Trincerino case, where it cited Scandagli proposals in official communication.

In sum, this chapter revealed the multiplicity of co-production forms and their varying degrees of institutional impact. It highlighted how grassroots initiatives can successfully lead to the redevelopment of specific urban sites, but also how local visions may be subordinated to broader strategies when infrastructure, legal ownership, and citywide priorities are at stake. These cases reaffirm the importance of co-production as a spatial and political process—capable of reshaping urban space, but often contingent on its ability to navigate institutional structures and secure long-term support. Whether local knowledge can effectively inform strategic planning remains an open question, but one that is central to achieving more equitable and context-sensitive urban futures.



# INTERVIEWS

## 3.3 INTERVIEWS

This chapter presents an analysis of 15 semi-structured interviews conducted in November–December 2024 with local authorities, experts (from academia and urban labs), and citizens. The written interviews were collected via Google Forms using tailored questionnaires. The aim is to explore co-production dynamics in Turin and the Aurora district, focusing on relationships and barriers across governance levels.

The chapter is organized into five main sections:

- *Intersections Between Different levels of Local authorities*
- *Intersections Between Citizens and Local Authorities*
  - Experiences of Citizens Regarding Interaction with Local Authorities
  - Experiences of Local Authorities Regarding Interaction with Citizens
- *Intersections Between Citizens and Experts*
  - Experiences of Citizens Regarding Interaction with Researchers
  - Experiences of Researchers Regarding Interaction with Citizens
- *Intersections Between Authorities and Experts/Researchers*
- *Coordination*
- *Considerations on the Trincerino Redevelopment*
- *Other findings*

*Could you say that your opinion (or the opinion of the organization you represent) is taken into account to a sufficient extent in the decision-making process regarding the development of urban public spaces?*

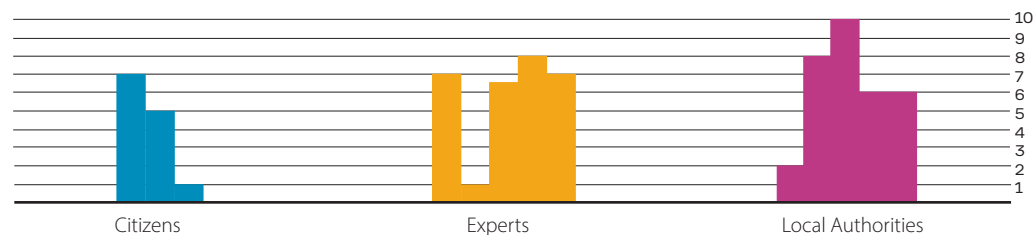
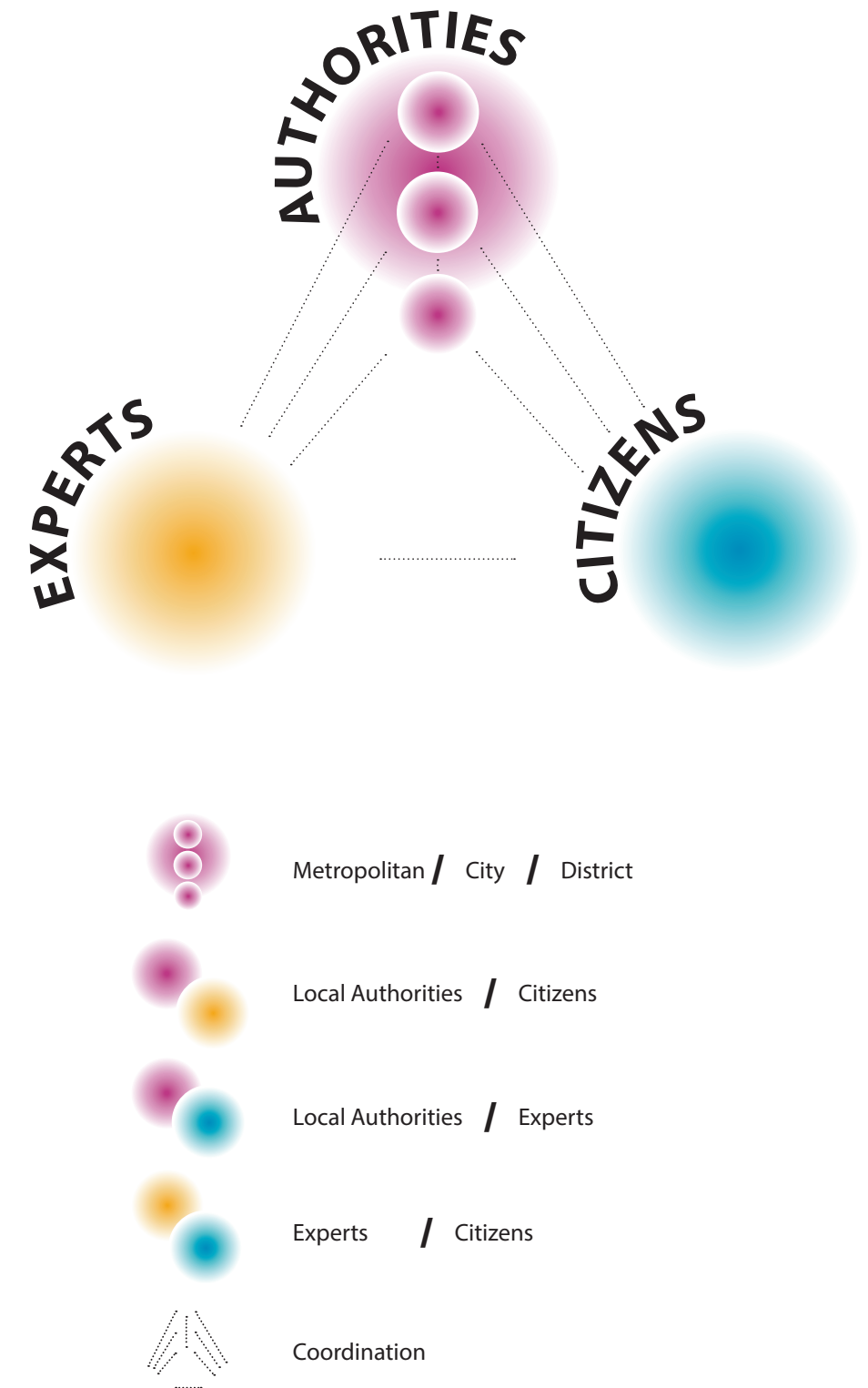
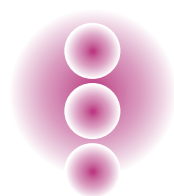


Figure 8. Stakeholders' Perception of Influence on Public Space Decisions (Source: Author's elaboration)





## Metropolitan / City / District

*How would you rate the quality of interaction between representatives of the district administration and the city and the metropolis levels?*

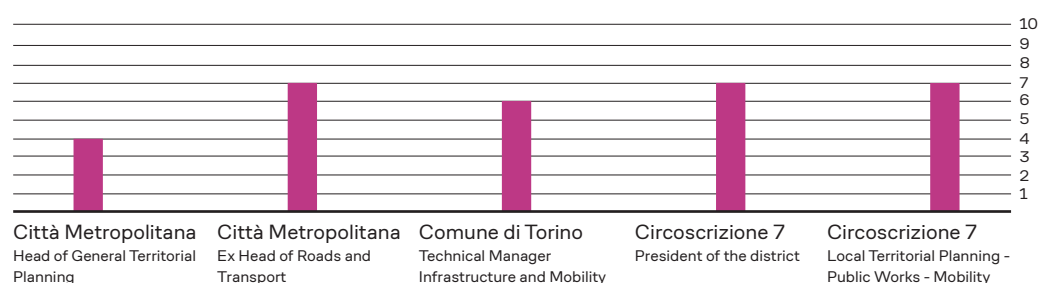


Figure 9. Perceived Quality of Interaction Between District, City, and Metropolitan Levels  
(Source: Author's elaboration)

*Can you say to what extent, when creating strategic plans at the city level, data from the district administration are taken into account? ?*



Figure 10. Stakeholders' Perception of the Extent to Which District-Level Data Are Considered in City Strategic Planning  
(Source: Author's elaboration)

### 3.3.1 RELATIONS BETWEEN DIFFERENT GROUPS

#### *Intersections Between Different levels of Local authorities*

The quality of interaction between representatives of the district administration and the city and metropolitan levels was rated at 6.2 out of 10, with slight variation in responses.

In discussing vertical interactions between different levels of government and horizontal interactions with other departments, opinions were somewhat divided. The interview question addressed both vertical and horizontal interactions between levels of government, but the responses primarily focused on vertical relationships, offering less detail on horizontal collaboration. A representative of the city level noted that the decision-making phase is, of course, led by the political part (councilors, mayor, council, etc.) in cooperation with the management and technical management. At a lower level, organizational positions and technical specialists implement projects. At a higher level, the highest authorities provide funding and place themselves in a relationship of dominance over subordinate entities. A unanimous opinion was expressed by representatives of the district - that the city council plays a key role in the strategic development of the city in terms of decision-making and planning, and the higher levels (region, ministries, Europe) are responsible for funding.

Regarding tools for collaboration, the Ex Head of Roads and Transport at the Metropolitan City mentioned forums, working groups, memoranda of understanding, and public consultations and future monitoring of processes. The Manager from the City of Turin noted that meetings occur between administrative structures, politicians, and citizens, even if he is not directly involved. The district respondent pointed out that there are no systematic meetings and that even when the district votes on projects, its opinion is not binding.

When discussing whether district-level data is considered in city strategic plans—specifically the Piano di Sviluppo Locale Condiviso and the Circoscrizione Documento Programmatico—three of the five respondents agreed that it was difficult to answer. The remaining two responses were in direct contradiction: the Ex Head of Roads and Transport at the Metropolitan City stated that city plans are based on an analysis of all district plans, while the district representative argued that city plans are developed entirely independently of district documents.





## Citizens / Local Authorities

### *With whom did you collaborate?*

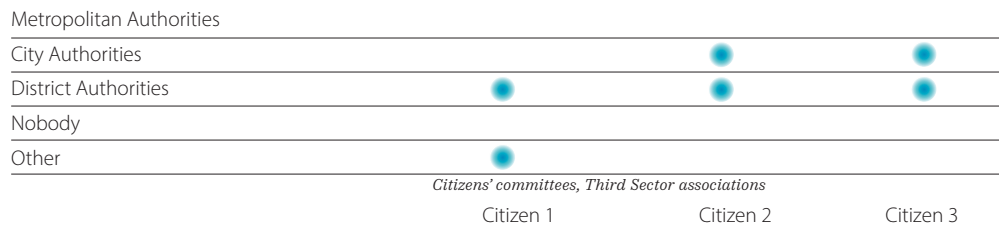


Figure 11. Responses of Citizens Regarding Their Collaboration with Local Authorities  
(Source: Author's elaboration)

### *Who typically initiates collaborative work between local authorities and NGOs, public organizations or citizens?*

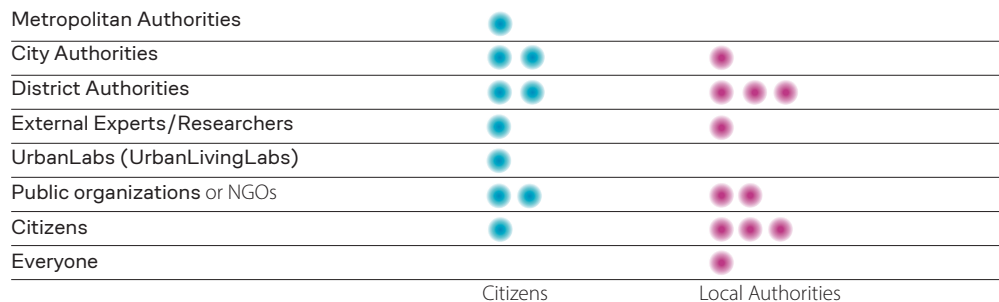


Figure 12. Perceptions of Collaboration Initiators: Citizens and Local Authorities  
(Source: Author's elaboration)

### *Strong institutional capacity for co-production or personal initiatives of individual actors?*

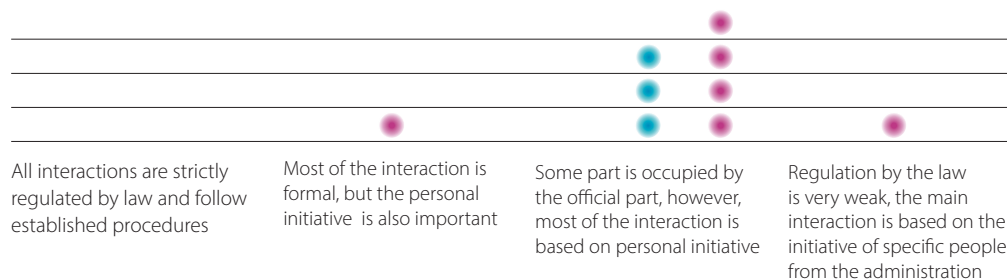


Figure 13. Citizens' and Local Authorities' Views on Institutional vs. Personal Drivers of Co-production  
(Source: Author's elaboration)

## *Intersections Between Citizens and Local Authorities*

All respondents, both from civil society organisations and from government agencies, confirmed that they had collaborated with each other in the context of urban development. This is in line with the selection criteria for the interviews, which focused on individuals and departments actively involved in co-production processes. However, one representative of the Metropolitan City stated that the co-production of public space was not within the remit of this level of government. This highlights an important nuance: the term 'public space' could be interpreted differently by respondents. While citizens often referred to specific local areas – such as parks, gardens or streets – the Metropolitan Authority is more involved in strategic planning and may not associate its role with tangible interventions in public space. However, despite this imprecision, the remaining responses from the Metropolitan City representative were important for the study and demonstrated the level's involvement in co-production.

From the perspective of citizens, collaboration primarily occurs with district and city authorities. All three respondents reported working with district administrations, and two also mentioned the city level. No one mentioned direct collaboration with metropolitan authorities. In addition, citizens emphasized collaboration with other actors at the district level, such as committees, third sector associations, and professionals living in the area.

The question of who usually initiates collaboration revealed a more complex and varied picture. Citizens identified a wide range of initiators, including district and city authorities, community organizations, Urban Living Labs, and themselves. Authorities also frequently pointed to citizens as the main initiators, although they also acknowledged district-level administrations at the same level.

Citizens and civil servants agreed that co-production is primarily not driven by formal regulation. Although some institutional structures exist, most collaboration relies heavily on the initiative of specific individuals, either in the administration or from civil society. One of the respondents from the capital described the process as strictly regulated, but most emphasized hybrid or informal models in which personal relationships, motivation and contextual knowledge play a decisive role. A vote for weak institutional co-production was given by a representative of Circoscrizione 7.

### *Experiences of Citizens Regarding Interaction with Local Authorities*

Citizens interviewed for this study, including members of civic associations and committees in the Aurora area, described a variety of experiences with local government on issues related to urban public space. Their responses illustrated a range of interactions, from ongoing grassroots initiative to frustration with a lack of institutional responsiveness.

When asked to provide specific examples of working collaboratively with local governments, one of the most detailed responses came from a member of the Saint-Bon Garden committee. Silvia, in her answer, talks about the creation of the “Nuovo giardino Saint-Bon” committee as an initiative group of residents of the area, which does not have legal status. She notes that the committee was born in late 2022, when a group of residents decided to try to revive the neglected Saint-Bon public garden. Silvia emphasizes that she herself became a kind of coordinator of the committee after she prepared and submitted a petition to the district administration, collecting about ninety signatures. This is how, little by little, the group took shape and began to work on projects for this space—what Silvia calls a process of co-creation. Before any formal renovation or funding for the PNRR, the committee took action to improve the neglected garden. The respondent personally contacted civic libraries to propose bringing Bibliobus to the area, hoping to connect families with library services and create a more welcoming space. Small steps, such as planting flower beds, helped strengthen the group and draw attention to the space. A key moment was the collaboration with AuroraLab, which helped them contact Torino Spazio Pubblico and navigate institutional channels. For example Silvia shared: “We met Professor Cristiana Rossignolo, coordinator of the AuroraLab project, who subsequently advised us to join the volunteer project of the Comune of Torino “Torino Spazio Pubblico” in order to be able to work legally in the garden”. The project was later included in the PNRR program, with the respondent now acting as a go-between. Another respondent cited the Pellegrino Garden Collaboration Agreement as an example of working together with local authorities.

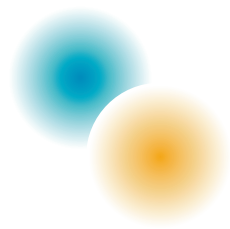
All respondents stated that they felt free to approach the administration with ideas or complaints. One respondent confirmed the importance of respectful and constructive communication given the complexity of the role of the administration. Another noted that while communication is possible, it often does not produce results. Residents highlighted the lack of a dedicated platform for interaction with the authorities. Communication is mainly via email, phone, WhatsApp, and social media—Facebook and Instagram. After their project was included in the PNRR program, a committee representative began to meet regularly with the chief engineer, acting as an in-

termediary between residents and the technical team. Other forms of interaction mentioned by respondents include meetings, on-site inspections, phone calls, correspondence, and joint work on European project applications. When reflecting on how communication with local authorities could be improved, respondents advocated for more consistent, open, and transparent methods. They emphasized that planning should be an ongoing and inclusive process, rather than one driven by ad hoc funding opportunities. One respondent noted that meaningful dialogue becomes more difficult during large-scale urban transformations such as the PRG and larger ones, despite formal openness to public input.

### *Experiences of Local Authorities Regarding Interaction with Citizens*

Representatives from different levels of local government—including the Metropolitan City of Turin, the Comune di Torino, District 7, and Torino Spazio Pubblico—provided a fragmented but informative picture of how interactions with citizens and civic organizations are organized. Responses showed that engagement varies in formality, frequency, and structure depending on the administrative level and type of project. Authorities reported involving citizens at multiple stages of project development, most frequently during design, development, and implementation. However, these interactions are not supported by a unified legal framework. The Metropolitan City, for example, noted that while certain participatory methods are prescribed by law in strategic planning (e.g., the Metropolitan Strategic Plan under Law 56/14), in other cases participation is left to administrative discretion. Forums, working tables, and certified email consultations were mentioned as tools used during these processes. At the municipal and district levels, communication with citizens is described as largely informal. District 7 representatives noted that feedback is collected during meetings and site visits and then passed on to technical offices for planning. Torino Spazio Pubblico emphasized that there is no system imposed by law; instead, communication takes place through email, WhatsApp, and social media such as Facebook and Instagram, especially in the comments section.

Examples of co-production varied in scope. The Metropolitan City referred to its involvement in drafting the strategic plan. Other cited cases included Agency XXI initiatives focused on school mobility and co-design, the Civic Project Zero, the pedestrianization of Borgo Dora, and regular consultation with the cycling council (e.g., on Piazza Baldissera). One respondent described ecological clean-up activities in collaboration with local volunteers.



## Citizens / Experts

*Who typically initiates collaborative work between experts and NGOs, public organizations or citizens?*

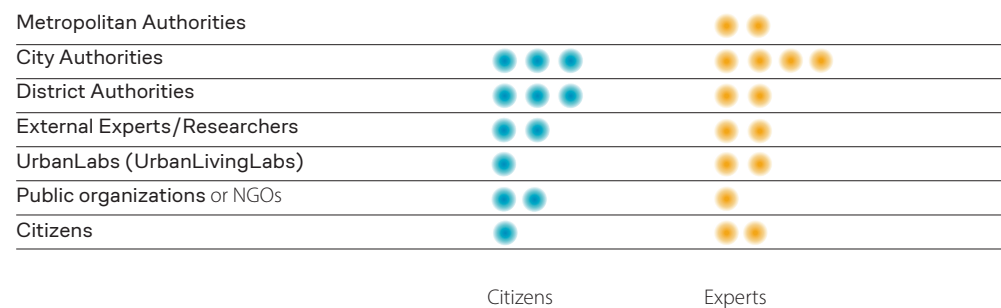


Figure 14. Citizens' and Experts' Views on Who Initiates Collaborative Work  
(Source: Author's elaboration)

*At what stage of the project experts/researchers typically engage in collaborative work with external NGOs, public organizations or citizens?*

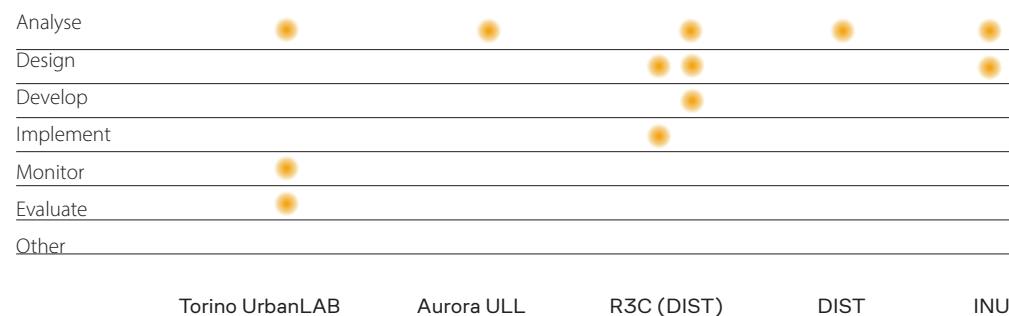


Figure 15. Experts' Perception of the Stages of Their Involvement in Collaborative Projects  
(Source: Author's elaboration)

## Intersections Between Citizens and Experts

The interviews revealed a broad spectrum of collaborations between citizens and experts in urban planning and public space development. Among citizens, the three respondents represented the committee Nuovo Giardino Saint-Bon (New Saint-Bon Garden) the Fondazione Comunità Porta Palazzo (Porta Palazzo Community Foundation), and the civic organization Torino Spazio Pubblico (Turin Public Space). They confirmed active engagement with various experts and UrbanLabs, naming institutions like AuroraLab, Andrea Quarello, Associazione Arteria, Fondazione delle Associazioni di Porta Palazzo, and Cantiere ABC Barriera Aurora. One of them also mentioned collaborating with universities outside Turin.

Citizens agreed that city authorities and district authorities were typically the main initiators of collaborative work with external experts and researchers. Experts unanimously emphasized the dominant role of city authorities as initiators of collaborative work, while other responses were fairly evenly distributed, indicating that various actors can play this role. Unlike citizens, experts also pointed to the metropolitan level as a potential initiator.

Regarding project phases, experts mainly described engaging citizens during the early stages, particularly in data collection and problem definition. Some noted involvement in the design and development phases, but implementation and monitoring were rarely highlighted as key moments for citizen participation.

Experts explained that there is no dedicated platform for regular meetings or workshops with citizens and NGOs. Communication with citizens typically happens through direct contacts (emails, calls, and face-to-face meetings) or informal channels, often initiated by citizens themselves. Some experts mentioned that interactions usually occur during specific projects—particularly European projects—or are coordinated by intermediary organizations, such as Avventura Urbana, which organize activities and facilitate communication between experts and residents.



### *Experiences of Citizens Regarding Interaction with Researchers*

Citizens shared diverse experiences of collaborating with experts in urban public space projects. The representative from the New Garden Saint-Bon committee highlighted that AuroraLab played a fundamental role in introducing them to the civic activities of Torino Spazio Pubblico. They also reached out to Dr. Cecilia Cognini, director of the civic libraries, to discuss the degraded state of the area and the potential for enhancing library services by introducing a Bibliobus stop at the garden, given its proximity to council houses with many children and schools. In an initial context of scarce resources, the Bibliobus could serve as an “ambassador” to bring families and children closer to library services, while also fostering a new, more vibrant atmosphere in the garden. A key early action was the creation of flower beds, which consolidated the group, highlighted the neglected space, and drew the administration’s attention, particularly the Tresso Department through Dr. Giuliano Taurisano, head of Torino Spazio Pubblico. This led to an inspection by the department “Demographic and statistical services, Toponymy and decentralization, Civil Protection, Maintenance of roads and public greenery, Fountains and monuments, Animal Protection.” The same respondent also described how they maintain ongoing relationships with AuroraLab and consult with architect Andrea Quarello, highlighting the importance of expert support in improving the design and livability of urban spaces.

### *Experiences of Researchers Regarding Interaction with Citizens*

Several experts shared concrete examples of co-production projects they were involved in. Representatives from Urban Lab and Aurora Lab shared examples of knowledge co-production illustrating how they collected context-sensitive insights from citizens to inform subsequent project planning and development. A representative of the Torino Urban Lab discussed the Voci di Quartiere, a participatory process commissioned by the urban planning department to inform the revision of the Piano Regolatore Generale (PRG). This citywide initiative involved a wide network of public actors such as NGOs, cooperatives and housing estates to facilitate citizen consultation and collaboration across the different neighbourhoods. A more localized example came from Aurora Lab, who supported the redevelopment of the Saint-Bon garden by collecting requests and proposals from residents.

Meanwhile, researchers from R3C (DIST) highlighted their involvement in the MainCode project, which focuses on developing climate shelters in collaboration with a local school. The initiative uses co-design methods to actively involve children, professionals and local communities in the transformation process. Experts from INU referred to pedestrianisation projects, such as those implemented on school streets, as examples of co-production with citizens. These two projects are closer to co-design as they directly involve citizens in the process of shaping and creating the intervention.

Other experts, including one from DIST, noted that their experience was mainly professional and that co-production often took place through intermediaries, such as Avventura Urbana, rather than directly with individual citizens. Some experts also highlighted that these collaborative efforts often happened within specific initiatives, rather than as a systematic process.



## Authorities / Experts

*Who typically initiates collaborative work between authorities and external experts/researches/universities/UrbanLivingLabs?*



Figure 16. Perceptions of Local Authorities and Experts on Who Typically Initiates Collaboration  
(Source: Author's elaboration)

*At what stage of the project experts/researchers typically engage in collaborative work with local authorities?*

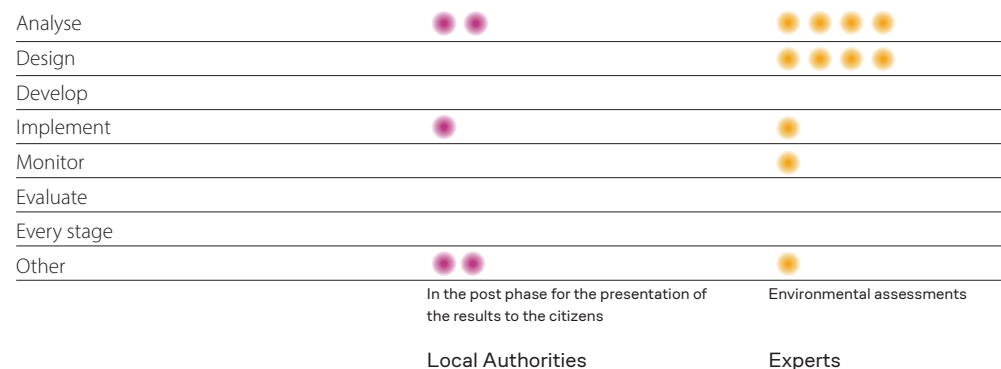


Figure 17. Perceptions of Local Authorities and Experts on the Stages of Expert Involvement in Collaboration with Authorities  
(Source: Author's elaboration)

### *Intersections Between Local Authorities and Experts/Researchers*

Interviews with both local authorities and experts reveal important insights into how collaboration is perceived and structured in the context of urban public space projects.

Both groups emphasized the key role of city authorities in initiating collaboration. Interestingly, experts also highlighted the Metropolitan level as an important initiator. In their responses, experts often referenced working with various departments of the Metropolitan City of Turin, particularly the Dipartimento Territorio, Pianificazione e Urbanistica within the CmTO. They also noted that participation forms are increasingly foreseen within the procedures for drafting plans and programmes, and that European projects (such as Alcotra and Life) typically include provisions for collaboration between different actors. One local authority representative noted that the involvement of experts “varies from project to project based on who and what is involved,” emphasizing the flexible nature of these collaborations.

Experts emphasized that collaboration with local authorities often occurs in the initial stages of project development, particularly during analysis and design phases, where data collection and problem definition take place. Experts also noted that collaboration often occurs in the context of European projects or other initiatives where authorities consult experts to conduct feasibility studies and context analyses. In some cases, experts or universities themselves propose studies or design activities, which are then evaluated and, if relevant, commissioned by local authorities. Local authorities also identified the analysis stage as a key point of engagement with external experts, noting that this phase is essential for defining problems and priorities. Additionally, the representative from the City of Turin emphasized that experts are also engaged in the post-phase for the presentation of results to the citizens.

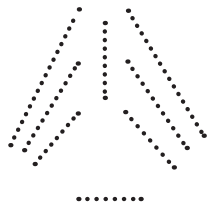
Experts noted that while collaboration is possible, it often occurs through project-based consultations, and the process can be somewhat fragmented and ad hoc. They frequently underlined the importance of peer-to-peer collaboration, especially with universities and research centers, but highlighted the lack of a continuous dialogue or integrated platforms for sustained cooperation. One expert from INU described the relationship as more of an external consultancy, where experts deliver reports or studies aligned with the policy framework of the authority rather than being involved in decision-making.

Some local authorities indicated that collaboration with experts occurs through inter-institutional tables, scientific commissions, and consultation tables involving associations and citizens. Others noted that experts, whether as individuals or institutions (such as the Polytechnic), are engaged as consultants with fees to carry out specific studies or design services.

When discussing examples of co-production, local authorities provided the following: one representative from the Città Metropolitana (Head of General Territorial Planning) mentioned preparatory studies for the metropolitan territorial plan and European projects; another (Ex Head of Roads and Transport) cited work on the Metropolitan Strategic Plan, PUMS (Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan), PULS (Sustainable Urban Logistics Plan CMT0), the Metropolitan Bicycle Plan, and the Accessibility and Intermodality Plan of CMT0. Representatives of Circoscrizione 7 mentioned collaboration with Urban Lab in the PRG context.

When describing their collaboration with local authorities, experts provided the following insights based on their experiences. Torino UrbanLAB mentioned their involvement in the Conexus/Valdocco Vivibile project, focusing on the co-design of an NBS garden and the area in front of De Amicis primary school via Masserano, developed with the consultation of public, private, and third-sector actors to transform the urban layout. Aurora Urban Lab described their contribution to the TONITE project on the outdoor spaces of the Parini school, also highlighting that experts sometimes play a bottom-up role, proposing projects that are then taken up by local authorities. R3C (DIST) shared their involvement in the MAINCODE project coordinated by POLITO, focusing on transforming schoolyards in Turin into Urban Climate Shelters through a co-design process involving citizens, administrators, NGOs, and students. They also mentioned collaborating with the City of Turin on training courses aimed at improving citizens' knowledge in sustainable urban practices. DIST noted that the metropolitan level typically does not deal directly with municipal public spaces but mentioned their experience with the PUI (Integrated Urban Plans) and the PINQuA program as relevant frameworks. INU emphasized that metropolitan-level frameworks such as PUMS, the Metropolitan Strategic Agenda, and other plans often incorporate collaboration with external experts and universities.





## Coordination

*Would you say that the institutional tools currently in existence allow for the effective regulation of interactions between local authorities, experts and citizens?*



Figure 18. Perceptions of Citizens, Experts, and Local Authorities on the Effectiveness of Institutional Tools for Regulating Co-production  
(Source: Author's elaboration)

*Who initiate this collaboration and takes on the role of coordinator to ensure effective communication?*

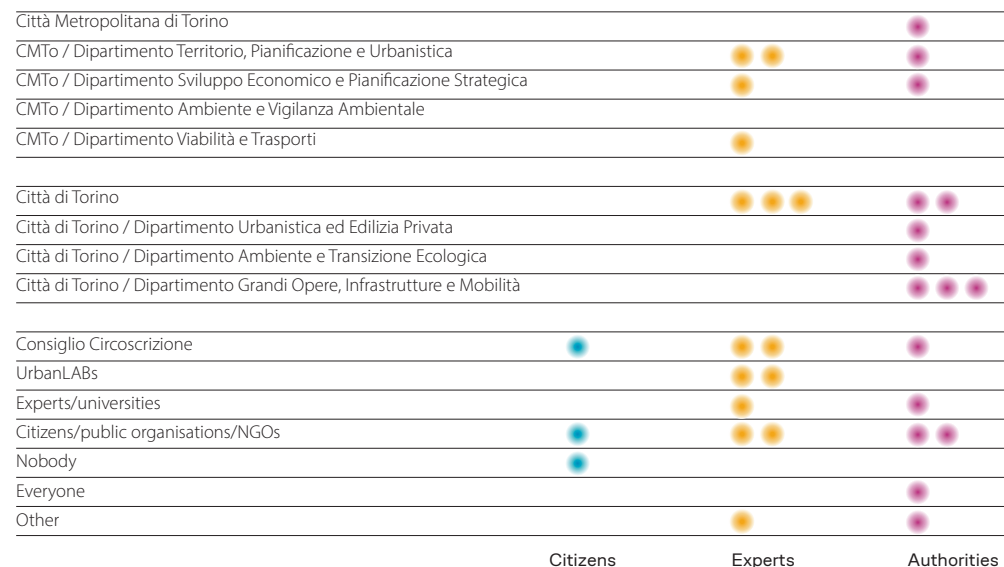


Figure 19. Perceptions of Citizens, Experts, and Authorities on Who Initiates and Coordinates Collaboration  
(Source: Author's elaboration)

### 3.3.2 COORDINATION

In analyzing the responses regarding institutional capacity, a notable difference emerged among the groups. Local authorities predominantly leaned towards “probably yes” and “definitely yes,” reflecting a higher level of confidence that the current institutional tools are sufficient to regulate interactions between authorities, experts, and citizens. By contrast, experts tended to indicate “probably no,” showing more skepticism regarding the adequacy of existing frameworks. Citizens’ responses also clustered around “probably no,” highlighting similar doubts about the effectiveness of current structures.

When discussing who typically initiates collaboration and assumes the role of coordinator, the answers revealed further variation. Citizens most pointed to Consiglio Circoscrizione (Seconda commissione di Circoscrizione), and public organizations as initiators. Additionally, one citizen explicitly stated that no specific body is responsible for coordination. Among experts, Città di Torino is the most frequently mentioned initiators. Experts also cited CMTo, especially Dipartimento Territorio, Pianificazione e Urbanistica and CMTo. Some votes receive Consiglio Circoscrizione, UrbanLABs, and NGOs. Local authorities’ responses revealed that Città di Torino and its departments, especially Dipartimento Grandi Opere, Infrastrutture e Mobilità, were most frequently cited as coordinators. Some local authorities mentioned citizens and NGOs as occasional contributors.

Regarding whether there is a specific department or person responsible for coordination, the experts’ answers revealed that the majority responded with “I don’t know.” One expert noted that this coordinating role could sometimes be handled externally by organizations like Urban Adventure or similar. Torino UrbanLAB noted that it is often difficult to provide a single answer about how coordination of joint work is organized, as each project can follow a different procedure. They mentioned that consultations may start with the City directly but often involve other bodies such as UrbanLAB or other associations that manage projects. They emphasized that knowing individual contacts within these offices is crucial for effective collaboration. The answers also highlighted the lack of a specific platform, except for the participatory process for TPL (Local Public Transport) tenders under the Piedmont Mobility Agency.

From the perspective of local authorities, several respondents emphasized that coordination often depends on the project, rather than being assigned to a single department or person. Two respondents explicitly stated that they did not know any department or person responsible for coordination. Others cited multiple departments within CMTo as potentially taking on this role. It's important to note that Torino Spazio Pubblico was mentioned as a responsible coordinating body, but this came specifically from the representative of that organization itself.

### 3.3.3 CONSIDERATIONS ON THE TRINCERINO REDEVELOPMENT

Most respondents demonstrated only limited awareness of the Trincerino project. While some had a general understanding of its goals, few were actively involved in its development. Among those who were aware, opinions varied.

#### Citizens:

Among the citizens, one respondent had limited knowledge of the Trincerino project but mentioned that a political component had submitted a petition to cover the trench, aiming to reconnect the area; this petition was reportedly not accepted by the administration. Another citizen, despite being relatively well-informed and involved in local matters, indicated that they had heard nothing about the project or any related open decision-making process. However, they emphasized that transforming the trench into part of the city's transport system would be the best solution, given the importance of efficient public transport. At the same time, they stressed that public spaces remain crucial for urban well-being. In this context, they highlighted that the neighboring OGM area, adjacent to the Trincerino and Saint Bon Garden, could be converted into a park rather than developed as a multi-functional project or supermarket, as currently proposed. They also suggested that improving pedestrian and bicycle connections between Corso Emilia and the Saint Bon Garden would be beneficial, as these areas are currently difficult to access.

#### Experts:

All the experts interviewed reported limited knowledge of the Trincerino project. Although some had a general idea of its existence, none of them provided detailed insights or indicated any direct involvement in its development.

#### Local Authorities:

Most representatives of local authorities reported low levels of knowledge about the Trincerino project. Only a few indicated a general understanding of its objectives but were not involved in its development. Notably, representatives from Circoscrizione 7 provided more detailed insights, highlighting that the project had been presented to the constituency in a semi-final form, leaving very little room for negotiation or meaningful participation. One representative expressed support for the partial coverage of the trench, acknowledging that, although full coverage would have been the best solution, the partial version was more feasible.

## 3.3.4 EMERGING CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Individual statements and opinions from respondents gradually formed a coherent picture, sometimes overlapping and highlighting common points. These comments deepened the understanding of how co-production is implemented in practice, and the suggestions for improving processes helped to identify key limitations in the Turin context.

### • Need for new bureaucratic forms of cooperation with the administration

A representative from the Saint Bon Garden Committee noted that their group would not have the strength to engage in a burdensome collaboration agreement with the administration for managing the garden. They emphasized that the more flexible approach offered by Torino Spazio Pubblico allows them to operate safely and with administrative recognition. Another citizen also mentioned that bureaucratic barriers often hinder the implementation of projects, citing Michelotti Park as an example where even basic actions like demolishing abandoned animal houses are blocked by red tape.

A representative from the Comune di Torino emphasized that it should be made mandatory to produce a design phase (PFTE, definitive project, etc.) that is truly the result of collaborative work, highlighting that such a requirement is not yet systematically regulated.

### • Balancing Economic Interests and Long-Term Planning

One citizen expressed concern that economic factors too often overshadow social and environmental well-being in decision-making. They suggested that a macro-project that includes various micro-projects could help balance immediate and long-term goals. However, they also noted that the short-term political interests of politicians often conflict with the need for sustainable, long-term solutions.

### • Need for transparent and Inclusive Decision-Making Processes and Moderator

An expert from R3C (DIST) emphasized the importance of "building a dialogue process to manage conflict," highlighting that in this role, the expert is fundamental because he becomes a mediator of the process.

One citizen described the challenge of balancing different interests and scales in complex projects. They stressed the importance of a transparent, widely publicized, and well-facilitated process that includes people typi-

cally excluded from such discussions. If consensus cannot be reached, they believed decisions should ultimately rest with democratically legitimized bodies, such as the City Council. They also suggested that, in some cases—though perhaps not in the case of Trincerino—a referendum might be appropriate, despite the complexities of defining voting scales and ensuring real alternatives, including a Zero option.

### • Empowering of the Circoscrizione

An expert from INU noted that the constituency (Circoscrizione) is "elected by the citizens," and emphasized that "it is right that it coordinates and makes decisions." They stressed that "the issue remains that of understanding how to promote real joint decision-making processes," and concluded that "presence on the territory and listening are fundamental."

A representative from Circoscrizione 7 advocated for "greater decision-making and economic autonomy to the districts as a local authority."

### • Co-production process organisation

The expert from Città Metropolitana recommended drawing up "timetables for meetings; development of strategies, development of actions distinguishing between short, medium and long term." They suggested "monitoring results with the help of citizens" and involving citizens through "different communication tools, including experimental ones (e.g. social experiments, story-telling, interviews...)."

Another representative from Città Metropolitana suggested presenting "max 2/3 concrete proposals," accompanied by an "objective summary/matrix of the advantages/disadvantages of each project." They emphasized the importance of taking responsibility at political level, by the 'elected' subjects for the final choice. It was mentioned also it would certainly be useful to give more prominence to projects (internet, newspapers,...), stimulate the interest of citizens and highlight the importance of their contribution.

An expert from DIST highlighted the need for work tables that would allow of sharing between local administrators, interested organizations, districts and citizens. An expert from DIST also commented on participation processes, suggesting that "participation in strategies/programs should be better differentiated from participation in projects/interventions." They felt that "progress has been made in experiences on wide-ranging choices, but as we go down the scale and into the project details, we lose."



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**CHAPTER IV**

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

# FINDINGS

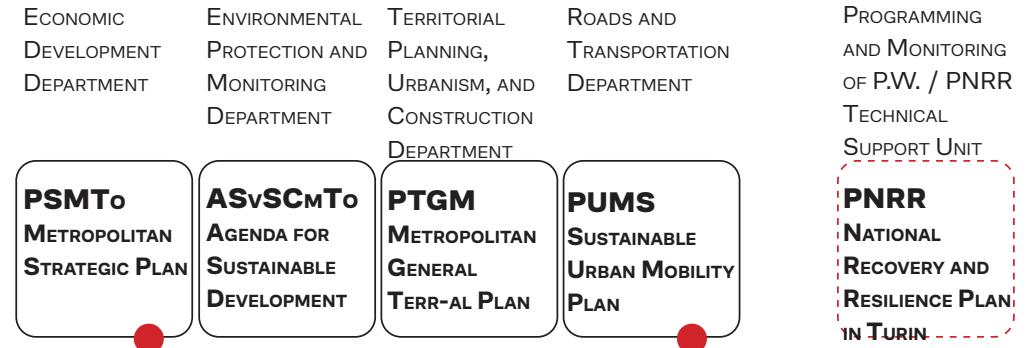
## 4.1 RESPONSE TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION

### 4.1.1 HOW DOES CO-PRODUCTION HAPPEN IN PRACTICE?

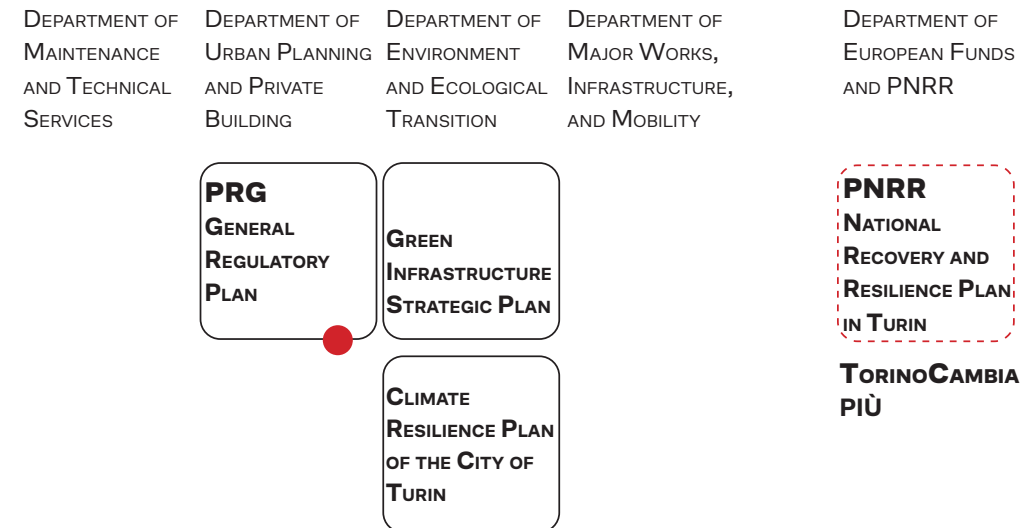
#### *Institutional context*

The study of co-production practices began with an analysis of the multi-level governance system of Turin and the key strategic documents that shape urban planning and social policy at the metropolitan, city and district levels. This analysis allowed us not only to record how powers are distributed between levels, but also to identify that elements of co-production, to varying degrees of expression, are present at each of them. At the metropolitan level, examples of citizen participation were found in the process of forming the PSMT<sub>o</sub> strategic plan and the PUMS transport plan, in which certain forms of public and expert participation were used at the diagnostic and discussion stages. The Agenda for Sustainable Development also advocates the inclusion of citizens in the management process, which only once again shows the general tendency towards co-production, but since no specific details were found during the work, this document is deprived of a mark. At the city level, a striking example of co-production is the ongoing revision of the PRG, the city's main master plan, where a program for interaction with citizens has been prepared with the help of Torino UrbanLab. At the level of the Aurora district, PSLCondiviso documents and local initiatives with formal or informal contours reflecting the interests and knowledge of local actors were analyzed, and since the development of these documents was based on the work of AuroraLab, which in turn actively works with citizens and created knowledge about the territory together with them, these documents are also marked as examples of co-production. Thus, it can be concluded that examples of co-design practices were found at all levels, which is visualized in the diagram (A). However, the analysis was not limited to the content of the documents. One of the tasks was to understand how the institutional logic of their development is structured and how the responsible departments interact with each other. In the process of analysing the organizational structure, it became obvious that it is extremely difficult to establish clear and transparent connections between the departments participating in the development of these documents. At no level — neither the metro, nor the city, nor the district — was a specific body or division responsible for inter-level coordination or structuring co-production as an institutional approach identified.

### METROPOLITAN CITY



### CITY OF TURIN



### CIRCOSCRIZIONE 7

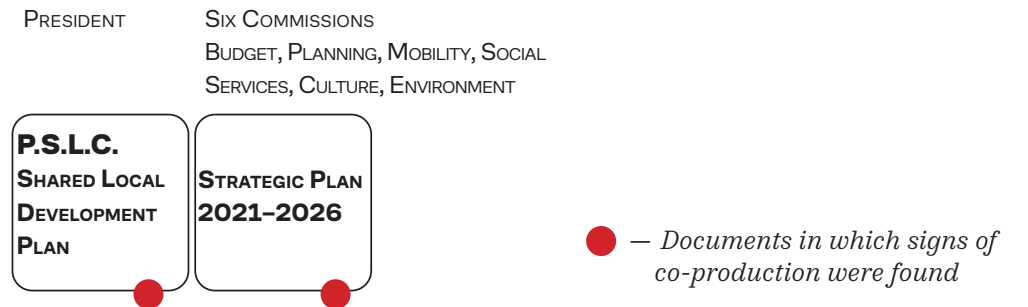


Figure 20. Key Departments and Evidence of Co-production Across Governance Levels Identified in the Planning Documents Reviewed in the Study (Source: Author's elaboration)

At the same time, the scale of such documents, in itself, implies the participation of many departments and the presence of internal coordination mechanisms. This allows us to make a cautious assumption that horizontal forms of coordination between departments do exist, albeit they remain implicit or project-oriented.

This conclusion was partially confirmed in the interviews: respondents with different institutional positions noted that the nature of participation, the composition of the structures involved, and the logic of interaction between them almost always depend on a specific project. It is the project, and not the established procedure, that determines who initiates the interaction, who coordinates the processes and how the dialogue between the levels is built. This approach allows for flexibility, but at the same time creates the risks of non-systematicity and repeated isolation of the experience.

A special case in this context is the implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), coordinated at the national level within the Italia Domani program, which is part of the Next Generation EU initiative. For PNRR, special technical units were created at both the city and metropolitan levels, responsible for the implementation of projects in accordance with European procedures. Unlike other strategic documents, the implementation of PNRR demonstrates a clear vertical management architecture and allocated institutional responsibility.

To summarize, it should be noted that the study did not identify sustainable mechanisms or responsible structures that would ensure the implementation of co-production practices on a permanent basis. Examples of co-design and participation, recorded during the analysis of strategic documents and master plans, are predominantly project-based and ad hoc, rather than representing elements of a sustainable institutional architecture. The most pronounced forms of coordination and hierarchical coherence were found in the implementation of PNRR programmes and other initiatives funded by the European Union, where the presence of clear procedures and reporting requires a more formalised approach. At the city level, public hearings remain the main institutional instrument of participation, but they do not provide the conditions for genuine co-production of decisions, which presupposes a deeper integration of the knowledge and interests of various actors. Thus, even in cases where elements of participation are present, they rather reflect the specific features of a specific project than are an expression of a systemic management approach.

### *Visualising Co-production Trajectories in Turin and Aurora*

Figure (B) synthesizes the main empirical findings of this thesis, tracing how co-production initiatives in Turin unfolded at several levels of governance and which programs were involved. It focuses on the main projects analyzed in this paper.

As discussed in the thesis, co-production involved the interaction of three main categories of actors: citizens and local associations, experts and academic actors, and administrative institutions. These are visually differentiated in the diagram by color: blue for citizen actors (such as committees and associations), yellow for experts and researchers, and purple for administrative structures at different levels.

The top part of the diagram highlights processes at the metropolitan level, where co-production mainly took the form of expert coordination of co-design for strategic planning. Academic actors such as FULL and UniTo played a central role in organizing workshops, interviews and participatory diagnostics for the Piano Strategico Metropolitano (PSMTo), and Avventura Urbana was responsible for organizing participation in the development of the Piano Urbano della Mobilità Sostenibile (PUMS).

At the municipal level, co-production was organized through the Torino Urban Lab, which curated formats for citizen engagement during the revision of the Piano Regolatore Generale (PRG). These activities were supported by wider national and European programs such as the Torino Cambia, funded through the PNRR, which helped implement co-design processes in urban areas.

The lower part of the diagram focuses on the Circoscrizione 7 district level, where co-production has more often appeared in territorial and tactical forms linked to specific urban spaces and local mobilization. The diagram illustrates how projects such as Giardino Pellegrino, whose main initiator was the citizens' organization Fondazione Comunità Porta Palazzo, have undergone several iterations of redesign through programs such as ToNite and then Torino Cambia. In the case of Giardino di via Saint Bon, the project was also initiated by citizens, and later secured the support of Aurora Lab, TorinoSpazioPubblico and was able to obtain funding through the PIU program (also part of the PNRR funding). The diagram also shows the multifaceted role of AuroraLAB at the district level, the implementation of the Grandangolo project within ToNit and the subsequent collaboration with the Scuola Parini. And also the role of the laboratory in helping to create the local strategic document P.S.L.C. Strategic Plan.

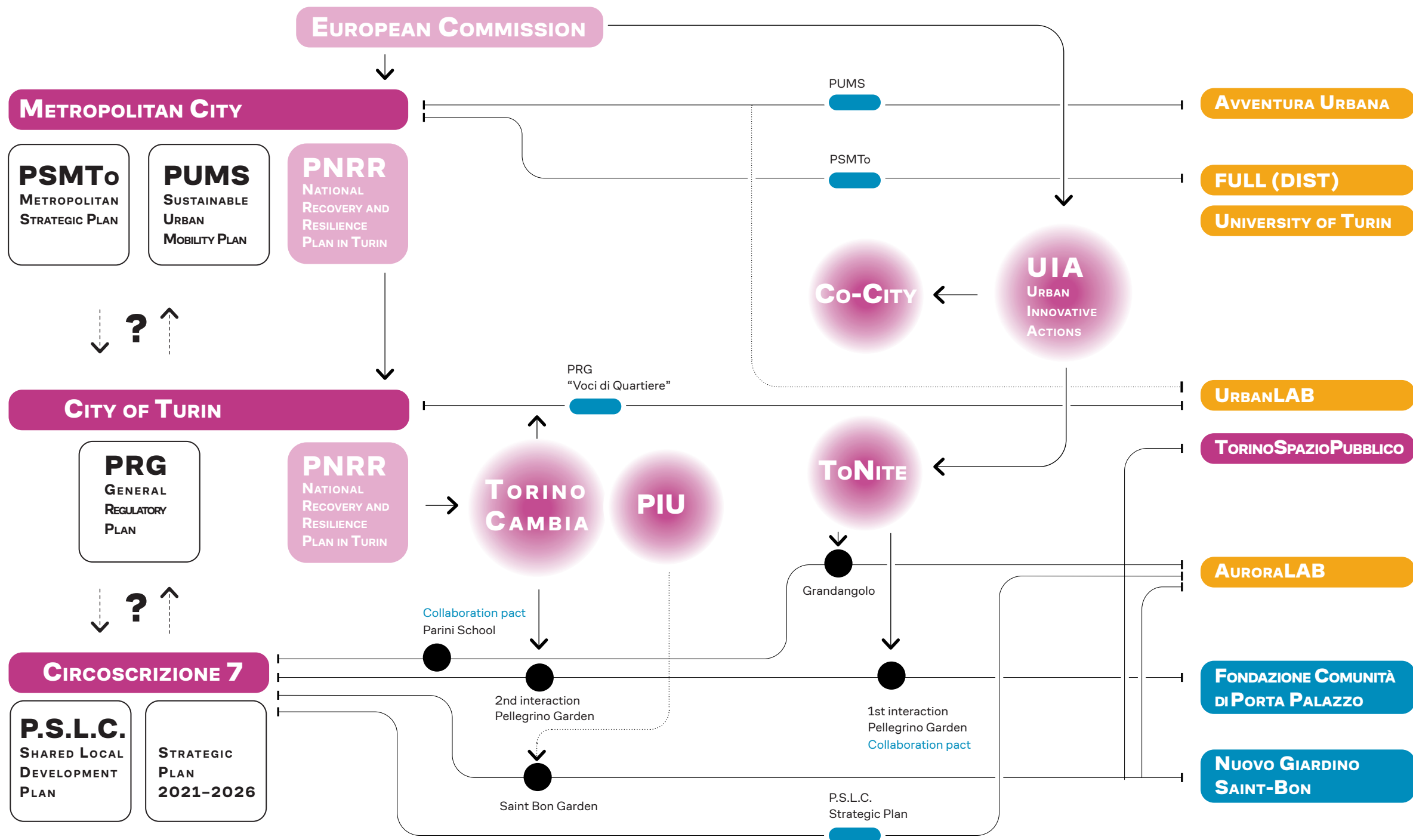


The framework reveals several overarching patterns:

The diagram makes visible the episodic and project-based nature of most co-production initiatives in Turin. The diagram also reflects institutional uncertainty. For example, question marks indicate institutional gaps between levels of governance.

At the city and metropolitan level, expert organizations are deployed in local production to develop a specific strategic document. At the district level, bottom-up initiators (citizens) implement joint production over a specific territory in which they are interested. Most initiatives depend on temporary programs and external funding, and their sustainability is limited to the framework of specific projects. The lack of mechanisms for the systematic integration of local knowledge into the hierarchy of urban governance is particularly acute. Although the transfer of strategic documents and policies from top to bottom (from the metropolis to the city and district) is organized institutionally and occurs through classic vertical channels, the reverse flow—that is, the transfer of knowledge, needs and developments from bottom to top—remains poorly structured. The work did not reveal the presence of special tools, methods or procedures by which the results of district initiatives, such as local strategic plans or tactical urbanism, could be systematically taken into account in urban or metropolitan policies. Thus, knowledge co-production mechanisms exist locally but are not institutionalized at the scale of cross-level governance, which limits their impact on broader decision-making processes and reduces the potential of co-production as a sustainable form of governance.

To date, the only institutionalized tool for sustainable co-production in Turin remains the Patti di Collaborazione—collaboration agreements concluded between residents and city structures. These agreements certainly represent a significant step towards recognizing citizens as active participants in urban transformation, allowing them to take responsibility for the development and care of specific spaces. However, their scope remains strictly local: participation is limited to a specific territory, and they do not provide mechanisms for influencing larger-scale strategic decisions. As a result, Patti do not scale up to the level of participation in the formation of territorial development directions or in broader decision-making. Thus, despite their value, they do not solve the problem of the lack of channels for transmitting civic knowledge and initiatives to the level of urban and metropolitan planning, limiting the institutionalization of co-production to the micro level.



Visualisation of Co-production Initiatives Examined in context of Aurora

Figure 21. Visualisation of Co-production Initiatives Examined in the thesis in context of Turin and Aurora (Source: Author's elaboration)

Legend:

- Local Authorities
- Public Associations
- Planning Documents
- Public participation in the process
- Experts
- Projects
- EU Programmes

#### 4.1.2 BARRIERS TO CO-PRODUCTION PRACTICE

##### *I—Weak institutional position of co-production*

Co-production in Turin emerges as a fragmented but evolving set of practices that reflect both the potential and limitations described in the theoretical framework part. In theory, co-production is understood not only as collaboration between citizens and institutions in the provision of services or the management of spaces, but also as a broader reconfiguration of governance – where knowledge, decision-making and responsibility are shared between traditionally separated actors (Voorberg et al., 2015; Brandsen & Honingh, 2016). In practice, this aspect can be analyzed from two different perspectives. At the level of strategic planning (metropolitan and municipal), even if participatory and co-design processes are used, citizens are not given decision-making power over the final results. As one interviewee at the metropolitan level noted, the final responsibility must lie with the “elected subjects”, which means that co-production at this level remains limited to the co-creation of knowledge. Experts and institutions may genuinely listen to citizens and citizen committees, integrating their views into planning documents, but co-governance– in the sense of co-management of urban decisions – is not realized. On the contrary, at the local level, the Patti di Collaborazione format offers a more concrete form of co-responsibility. Through these agreements, citizens and local associations participate in the maintenance, management and even redesign of certain public spaces. This mechanism is an example of a deliberative and decentralized governance regime that allows for more tangible forms of co-management. Despite its limited scale and lack of connection to broader strategic decisions, it nevertheless represents a significant form of co-production based on local cooperation and sustainable civic engagement.

The interviews also revealed a perceived need for new bureaucratic forms of cooperation with the administration. From the perspective of a citizen and founder of the Saint Bon Committee, the current collaboration agreements are too burdensome for grassroots groups, whereas more flexible frameworks like those offered by Torino Spazio Pubblico enable safer and more feasible civic engagement. From the perspective of a representative of the City of Turin, the comment pointed to the broader need for institutional and legal recognition of co-production, emphasizing that co-designed project phases (such as PFTE or definitive designs) should be mandated by regulation, as there is currently no legal requirement ensuring that collaborative design is systematically integrated into planning procedures.

As discussed earlier, this study did not identify any other mandatory or institutionalised co-production mechanisms. Apart from the Patti di Collaborazione, which remain voluntary and limited in scope, there are no instruments that systematically integrate co-production into mandatory planning or governance procedures. It can therefore be concluded that co-production as a tool for new governance remains only weakly institutionalised in Turin. Although various pilot projects and experimental formats exist—often supported by temporary European funding—they have not yet led to a structural, citywide integration of co-production as a standard practice in urban decision-making.

An additional structural constraint for the institutionalization of co-production in Turin is the land ownership regime and the rigidity of land use designations. The case of Trincerino can be seen as a case in point: despite the mobilization of grassroots bodies and a clear local interest in transforming the area into a shared public space, the project remained subordinated to infrastructural goals. This may also be due to the fact that the land is managed by GTT, the public transport company. This situation limits any real decision-making power at the local level, regardless of the efforts made by citizens and local actors.

This case study confirms the broader observation made by Bragaglia et al. (2023), who contrast the Italian planning system with the English one. While the English system allows for more flexible, negotiated forms of spatial governance, including community-led planning instruments, the authors argue that land use regulation in Italy is heavily state-centric and legalistic, which severely limits the ability of communities to co-produce spatial transformations unless they operate within formal, predetermined procedures.



## *2—Limits of vertical coordination in participatory urban governance*

One of the most pressing issues identified in both the theoretical and empirical parts of this study is the lack of close coordination between different levels of government in the governance of co-production processes. Although co-production is often encouraged at all levels—from metropolitan planning documents to local urban regeneration—it remains unclear how ideas, needs and proposals developed at the neighbourhood level are systematically transferred and integrated by higher institutional levels.

From a theoretical perspective, the literature highlights that multi-level governance can increase responsiveness and inclusiveness, but only if mechanisms are in place to ensure horizontal and vertical coordination (Torfing et al., 2012; Durose & Richardson, 2016). However, it also warns that in the absence of such mechanisms, participatory processes risk becoming fragmented or symbolic, as local knowledge cannot be diffused upwards. In particular, when participation is limited to isolated moments or dispersed participants, co-production cannot be truly institutionalised.

These concerns are confirmed by field research in Turin. Although strategic planning programs such as PUMS and Piano Strategico Metropolitano have involved several participatory processes, they have involved a limited number of citizens and stakeholders. In the absence of interactive digital platforms or citywide engagement tools, there is currently no system that allows for broad civic participation in strategic issues, as well as transparent aggregation and visualization of feedback at different levels of government. As a result, even though co-design activities are taking place, it remains difficult to assess whether they adequately reflect the diverse needs of all neighbourhoods.

This problem becomes particularly evident in the case of the Trincerino project, where two parallel visions emerged. On the one hand, local residents—together with university researchers and district representatives—saw the abandoned railway trench as a potential public space for the Aurora community. On the other hand, the municipal administration viewed the same site primarily through the lens of transport infrastructure, ultimately singling it out for a future tram line. While some interviewees acknowledged that the solution may be functionally justified, the focus of this dissertation is not to evaluate the merits of the solution, but to question the process by which it was arrived at. As the study shows, feedback at the district level, including official letters and proposals from Circoscrizione and Aurora Urban Lab, was met with silence. According to comments from

interviews, there was no open dialogue or co-design process with the community on this particular transformation. This illustrates a broader issue: local knowledge and place-based proposals are not always acknowledged or incorporated into subsequent planning stages, especially when they clash with overall technical or infrastructural priorities. This gap was symbolically demonstrated in the interviews, where respondents gave contradictory answers to the question of whether local strategic documents, such as the Piano di Sviluppo Locale Condiviso (PSLC), are taken into account when developing higher-level strategic plans. While the representative of Città Metropolitana answered “absolutely yes”, the representative of Circoscrizione 7 stated “definitely not”.

In the absence of integrated platforms or formalised tools for knowledge sharing across scales, the upward flow of information from citizens to policy makers remains weak. This limits the ability of metropolitan and municipal planning to incorporate real, grounded knowledge, despite rhetorical commitments to participation at all scales. As a result, although participation may occur at different scales, the systemic integration of co-created knowledge remains weak, challenging the real capacity of governments to treat citizens as co-creators of urban space.

## *3—Lack of facilitation*

The literature on co-production highlights that successful co-planning is not spontaneous. It requires intentional facilitation to overcome institutional inertia, conflicting interests, and knowledge and power asymmetries among participants (Brandsen & Honingh, 2018; Voorberg et al., 2015). Facilitators can be institutional actors, independent facilitators, or academic facilitators. Their role includes bridging gaps between citizens and administrations, translating between technical and non-technical knowledge, building trust, and maintaining continuity. Facilitation is also key to transforming participation from a one-off consultation to structured co-management. Theories emphasize the importance of continuity, supporting weaker actors, ensuring that citizens’ input is visibly included in the decision-making process. Durose & Richardson (2016) emphasize the importance of trust in facilitators and that they are perceived as legitimate by the participants in the process.

The study identified several key examples of facilitation. At the city level, Torino Urban Lab has emerged as a prominent player specializing in organizing public participation. The Lab plays a formalized role in supporting events, workshops, and communication efforts for citywide projects of

varying scales. It can be considered a partially institutionalized organizer—operating with official recognition, professional capacity, and strong visual and narrative strategies—but structurally independent from city departments.

At the district level, AuroraLab acts as an academic facilitator embedded in the community. In particular, its work with Scuola Parini and local associations exemplifies a model of sustainable, relational facilitation. AuroraLab not only helps coordinate co-design efforts with students and residents, but also plays a bridging role between the school, civil society, and the municipal administration. Its legitimacy stems from its long-term presence and trust-building, in line with the literature on urban labs as embedded and trusted facilitators.

In some cases, facilitation responsibilities are taken over entirely by civil society actors. This is particularly evident in the cases of the Comunità di Porta Palazzo, which led the reactivation and management of the Giardino Pellegrino, and the founding Committee of the Nuovo Giardino Saint-Bon, which independently initiated and coordinated the collaborative effort. These citizen-led mediators often fill institutional voids by taking on the functions of process design, advocacy and negotiation. While these efforts demonstrate strong civic capacity and agency, they also highlight the lack of systematic institutional support. It is important to note that institutional facilitation embedded in municipal departments was not identified. Interviews with local administrators and stakeholders confirmed this gap: no specific departments or dedicated staff were reported to be responsible for the structured facilitation of co-production. The only example of a professional external mediator was Avventura Urbana, which was hired for certain stages of the PUMS process.

In the context of large-scale or cross-level projects, the absence of a clearly designated facilitator becomes particularly problematic. In such contexts, a facilitator is needed not only to organise moments of participation, but also to actively coordinate between levels of governance, ensure the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders and maintain a deep understanding of institutional, social and spatial complexities. This role requires awareness of ongoing processes and issues at the metropolitan, municipal and district levels, as well as the ability to integrate local knowledge and citizens' priorities into a coherent planning strategy. Without such a figure or department, co-production risks being limited to disjointed consultations rather than facilitating real collaboration.

Thus, despite the growing use of participatory practices in Turin, facilitation remains project-oriented, context-specific, and unevenly institutionalized. When it occurs, it often relies on the initiative of laboratories or individuals rather than being structurally embedded in governance structures. This limits the ability to scale up or replicate successful co-production experiences across contexts. The lack of a dedicated facilitation infrastructure may also hinder the long-term continuity and inclusiveness of participatory processes – especially for communities with fewer internal resources or organizational expertise.

#### *4—Resource intensity*

Co-production is a resource-intensive process that requires significant investments of time, coordination, and human capital. As Duroz and Richardson (2016) point out, co-production involves not only the engagement of multiple actors with different interests, but also the creation of platforms, opportunities, and relational infrastructures that enable these actors to interact meaningfully and sustainably over time. Co-production is not a one-time event but a long-term commitment, and thus its implementation relies heavily on the availability of institutional and civic resources.

This aspect became particularly evident in the analysis of two community-driven projects in Aurora: Giardino Pellegrino and Giardino di Via Saint Bon. In both cases, the projects were made possible in large part by the exceptional civic commitment of the initiators. The representatives of the Fondazione Comunità Porta Palazzo and the founder of Nuovo Giardino Saint-Bon played a decisive role in supporting the design process, maintaining dialogue with the administration and mobilizing other stakeholders. Their efforts required a significant investment of time and personal involvement over several years. In the case of Giardino Pellegrino, the initial transformation was made possible solely by bottom-up action and a crowdfunding campaign, before any institutional support was in place. At the same time, the success of these projects also benefited from external funding, especially from programs linked to PNRR (Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza). Such programs provided the financial and procedural framework that allowed co-production to scale up and implement the projects in material terms.

The resource needs for co-production are not limited to civil society. From an institutional perspective, effective co-production requires the creation of specialized departments, trained facilitators and structured procedures. This resource gap is particularly acute at the district level. The

Circoscrizione 7 Development Plan 2021–2026 explicitly states that the administration lacks the personnel to extend the opening hours of public offices or increase face-to-face interaction with citizens. As a result, even when local administrations express a willingness to deepen participatory approaches, they lack the human and organizational resources to do so on a sustainable basis.

Also in the interview, the INU representative noted the importance of giving the circoscrizione real powers as an elected body, emphasizing the need to develop genuine joint decision-making processes, while the representative of Circoscrizione 7 advocated for increasing its autonomy in governance and finances.

#### *Additional Considerations:*

As highlighted in the theoretical literature, co-production processes often carry the risk of reproducing inequalities when participation is limited to the most active, resourceful or institutionally connected citizens (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012; Brandsen et al., 2018). Vulnerable or marginalised groups, such as migrants, low-income residents or people with limited time and access, are at particular risk of being left behind, especially when co-production is undertaken without targeted support or support mechanisms.

This risk becomes especially critical at the level of citywide strategic planning, where participation is typically more abstract and less accessible. However, exclusion can also occur at the neighbourhood level, particularly in informal or volunteer processes where only those with sufficient time, cultural capital, or confidence can participate.

In the case of Giardino Pellegrino, local residents took the initiative to redevelop a neglected and marginalised space. Although the project aimed to promote inclusion, it also highlighted the difficulty of meeting the needs of vulnerable groups. The Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo made efforts to engage with young foreigners visiting the area, seeking to involve them in the process. However, some tensions remained, highlighting the challenges of ensuring inclusive co-production in socially sensitive contexts.

Similar features can be seen in the Via Saint Bon garden project, where the active involvement of an active, local committee was essential to the success of the transformation. However, this also raises questions about who has the time, energy and capacity to contribute. Without institutional support to promote greater inclusion, such models may inadvertently re-

produce inequalities of participation. One of the redevelopment iterations involved the removal of equipment used for homeless people, and on the one hand there is no question why this is a nuisance to local residents, on the other hand, the lack of an institutional solution to this problem leaves open the question of where those people who used to spend time in this area will move.

These examples highlight that co-production must be developed with constant attention to inclusion, especially in socio-economically unstable contexts. Providing access for vulnerable groups requires not only openness, but also active facilitation.





**CO-PRODUCTION**

**GUIDELINES**

## 4.2 CO-PRODUCTION GUIDELINES

This set of five recommendations was developed based on the theoretical framework of the study, an analysis of governance structures, and a close reading of how co-production functions in practice in Turin – including specific experiences and reflections expressed during interviews. Together, these insights helped to identify key institutional gaps and recurring challenges, as well as opportunities for improving collaboration between citizens, local organisations and local authorities.

### 1. ENSURE COMPREHENSIVE AND STRUCTURED PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS AT ALL STAGES OF URBAN PUBLIC SPACE PROJECTS

#### *Justification:*

For co-production to be effective, citizen participation must not only be encouraged but also structurally embedded throughout the life cycle of urban space projects – from the early design stage to implementation and monitoring. A fragmented or purely consultative approach often results in limited influence on final decisions.

#### *Action:*

Clearer and more structured regulations are needed to ensure citizen inclusion in co-production throughout all phases of urban space projects — a framework still largely missing. A concrete recommendation, proposed by a city-level architect during interviews and supported by this research, is to legally mandate citizen involvement during the Progetto di Fattibilità Tecnica ed Economica (PFTE) phase. According to D.Lgs. 36/2023, this is now the first of two official design stages (following the suppression of the “Definitivo” in 2023). The PFTE is a key part of project definition: it establishes the basic concept, spatial and functional layout, material use and zoning; defines the objectives, technical characteristics, sustainability goals and expected social value; and serves as the basis for cost assessment and public interest verification. Involving citizens in a structured manner at this early stage will enable a more realistic identification of local needs and ensure that co-produced knowledge and ideas is incorporated into later stages of design rather than being sidelined or become symbolic.

### 2. STRENGTHEN VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL COORDINATION FOR EFFECTIVE CO-PRODUCTION

#### *Justification:*

Effective co-production requires not only the direct participation of citizens, but also institutional capacity to integrate local knowledge and initiatives into higher-level decision-making processes. Despite the formal recognition of horizontal subsidiarity in the Italian Constitution (Article 118), current institutional arrangements provide limited tools to ensure continuity, reciprocity and coherence between processes at the county level and planning at the city or metropolitan level. Circoscrizioni, which are the administrative bodies closest to local communities and possess valuable contextual knowledge, often lack formal mechanisms to influence strategic policy-making. This structural fragmentation weakens the systemic integration of bottom-up contributions and risks fragmenting co-production into isolated or symbolic episodes rather than embedding it as a continuous practice and a being a new governance tool.

#### *Action:*

In order to strengthen the constitutional principle of horizontal subsidiarity, as set out in Article 118, more attention should be paid to strengthening the procedural role of the Circoscrizioni within the framework of multilevel governance. Although institutional channels between the districts, the municipality and the capital city formally exist, they often function primarily from the top down. It is therefore necessary to develop clearer coordination frameworks that not only transmit information upwards, but also actively integrate local knowledge into the processes of joint decision-making in the multilevel governance system.

### 3. ENSURE FLEXIBLE AND LEGALLY RECOGNIZED OPPORTUNITIES FOR CITIZEN CO-PRODUCTION

#### *Justification:*

Co-production is a multifaceted practice that takes different forms depending on scale and context. At the local level, it enables citizen initiatives and direct citizen participation in urban projects. The Patto di Collaborazione represents the main formalized legal instrument for structuring citizen participation in the management of urban commons. Since its introduction, it has opened up unprecedented institutional opportunities for citizen participation, allowing citizens and associations to take charge of common urban spaces in collaboration with public authorities. However, a single legal format cannot adequately respond to the diversity of actors, opportunities and types of civil initiatives present in urban contexts. As some respondents noted in interviews, such an agreement seems too complex and burdensome for small organizations that do not have the necessary administrative resources.

#### *Action:*

To make co-production practices more accessible and inclusive, it could be effective to introduce a broader set of agreement formats that vary in terms of formality, duration, responsibilities, and expected outcomes. This would allow for more flexible and less bureaucratically demanding forms of participation. These alternative agreements could complement the existing Patto di Collaborazione by being incorporated into the Regolamento dei Beni Comuni Urbani, enabling different levels of civic involvement according to the nature and scale of the initiative. This diversification could strengthen the ecosystem of co-production and help expand co-production to a wider range of urban contexts.

### 4. DEVELOP A DIGITAL PLATFORM TO SCALE UP CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

#### *Justification:*

Traditional face-to-face participation methods require significant time, effort and organisational resources that not all citizens can afford. As a result, participatory processes often remain limited in scale and social diversity. Digital platforms can lower the threshold for citizen engagement in collaborative, productive urban planning. They enable broader and more flexible participation, allowing for different forms of participation – such as voting, submitting project proposals or identifying local issues – without the need for direct physical presence. This not only increases the overall volume and diversity of contributions, but also helps to create a more complete and data-rich understanding of urban needs. The experience of platforms such as Decidim in Spain demonstrates the potential of digital tools to enhance citizen co-production and improve the quality of collective decision-making.

#### *Action:*

The creation of the digital platform must be carried out at the level of the city or the metropolitan area of Turin, since only this level of government has the necessary powers and institutional coherence to integrate the platform into the official decision-making processes. The platform must not only provide technical opportunities for participation, but also reflect the complexity of the urban system - including the links between the different departments, programs and levels of interaction with citizens. Given that this is a complex IT solution, its development requires significant investment, ongoing maintenance and a transparent mechanism for coordination with the city structures. It is important that such a system is multifunctional, sustainable, open and in line with the principles of horizontal subsidiarity, giving citizens real leverage within the framework of formalized procedures.



## 5. PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL FACILITATION AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

### *Justification:*

Effective facilitation is a key element of sustainable co-production, especially when multiple, heterogeneous participants with different interests, resources, and levels of competence are involved. Professional facilitators play a crucial role in ensuring that the dialogue between the parties remains productive, does not degenerate into endless discussions without results, and does not lose the trust of the participants. They help to clearly distribute roles and responsibilities, maintain an inclusive process, and help to formulate structured and implementable solutions. Facilitation is not just moderating meetings, but using a wide range of methods to organize teamwork, agree on priorities, and support horizontal interaction. Moreover, professional facilitators can help ensure that the concerns of socially marginalized groups are not left behind by using tailored approaches that support their inclusion and promote equitable participation.

### *Action:*

At each level of urban governance and participation, facilitator roles must be established, adapted to the scale and tasks of the respective level. At the local level, this function can be performed by urban laboratories or associations with credibility and knowledge of the context. Project activities should include professionals who specialize in facilitating multi-component processes. At the city and metropolitan level, facilitators with experience in interdepartmental coordination and an understanding of administrative procedures are needed. A key condition for the effectiveness of facilitation is the recognition of this role by all participants in the process. Facilitators must have sufficient authority and institutional support so that their intervention is perceived as neutral and constructive. Such structures must be publicly recognizable, accessible for appeal, and associated with transparent support of the process.

Together, these five recommendations aim to implement co-production as a systemic and continuous method for co-creating urban environments. At the local level, they support diverse citizen initiatives and the co-creation of inclusive public spaces that reflect real territorial needs, especially in marginalized contexts. More broadly, they strengthen co-production as a tool of new governance, institutionalizing local knowledge and ensuring that it informs strategic planning. In this way, co-production becomes not only a means of improving individual spaces, but also a structural approach to creating more sustainable, contextual and inclusive urban spaces.



# CONCLUSION

## 4.3 CONCLUSION

This thesis investigated how co-production unfolds in practice within the multi-level governance system of Turin, using the Aurora district as a case study. Framed by growing academic and institutional interest in participatory governance, co-production was explored not simply as a set of practices, but as a potential paradigm shift in how cities are governed—where responsibilities, knowledge, and power are distributed among diverse actors, and where local knowledge is recognized as integral to policy-making. From this perspective, the study aimed to examine whether co-production in Turin functions as a systemic governance tool or remains limited to isolated projects.

Co-production in Turin is evolving along several pathways. On the one hand, strategic planning processes increasingly incorporate participatory approaches. In the early stages of developing planning documents, there is evidence of face-to-face engagement and initial attempts at knowledge co-production. These trends point to a growing institutional awareness of co-production principles, even if their application remains limited in scale and consistency. Supporting this shift are institutional actors such as urban labs, which act as intermediaries between citizens and administrations. In particular, AuroraLAB stands out as a platform that fosters knowledge co-production by combining scientific expertise with local insights to support more sustainable district development. On the other hand, grassroots associations and informal citizen committees continue to play a crucial role in initiating bottom-up traditional co-production processes.

Despite these promising developments, several structural limitations persist. Many co-production efforts remain fragmented and rely on specific funding calls, which makes them difficult to sustain over time. In this context, European funding frameworks have had a particularly significant impact. Programmes such as Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) have not only fostered collaborative practices in Turin, but also provided essential resources and visibility, allowing local initiatives—especially in the Aurora district—to expand and gain institutional support.

From a legal and institutional perspective, the concept of Beni Comuni Urbani (Urban Commons) has become central to promoting shared responsibility for urban resources. A key legal instrument within this framework is the Patti di Collaborazione, which has emerged over the past decade as a valuable tool allowing residents to take part in the management and transformation of public spaces in cooperation with local administrations. However, institutionalised co-production implies a broader perspective. It

requires not only mechanisms for direct citizen participation at the scale of the neighbourhood, but also the ability to integrate local knowledge into the development of strategic plans and to ensure the circulation of such knowledge at all levels of governance. From this perspective, the available tools in Turin remain limited. While Patti di Collaborazione supports collaboration at the micro level, there is still a lack of tools and procedures that would integrate local ideas into the wider system of multi-level urban governance and influence long-term strategic decision-making.

Another significant barrier to the institutionalisation of co-production in Turin is the lack of structured facilitation. Co-production processes often involve a wide range of actors — from public institutions and experts to informal citizen groups — and require careful coordination to ensure clarity, inclusiveness, and continuity. Without dedicated facilitators, these complex interactions risk becoming fragmented, inefficient, or dominated by more resourceful participants. Professional facilitation plays a critical role in bridging knowledge and power asymmetries, translating between technical and non-technical languages, and supporting the consistent engagement of all stakeholders throughout the process. This is particularly important in sensitive urban contexts, where marginalised or vulnerable groups are at risk of exclusion. In such settings, facilitation is not just a matter of process design but of social equity — ensuring that co-production does not reproduce existing inequalities but actively works to overcome them.

On a personal note, while writing this dissertation, I had the opportunity to observe the transformation of two of the projects discussed, Via Saint Bon Garden and the recent refurbishment of Giardino Pellegrino. Seeing these spaces before and after their refurbishment, I witnessed how they became more welcoming and used more frequently, encouraging outdoor living and everyday interactions between residents. These changes reinforced my belief in the power of bottom-up initiatives and co-created public spaces to promote well-being and social cohesion.

There is clear evidence that the urban fabric of Aurora is in the process of active transformation. As the area moves into a phase of sustainable renewal, it is especially important that the approaches applied are inclusive and strategically oriented. The use of co-production practices - systemic, sensitive to local knowledge and based on real participation - can not only strengthen the alignment of transformations with the goals of sustainable development (SDG 11), but also help to overcome the existing deficit of trust between residents and institutions. Only if citizens see that their voices really influence what happens can we expect sustainable engagement and shaping of the urban environment not for, but with its citizens.

## FUTURE RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

Future research could further develop the concept of facilitation, examining it as a distinct governance role that enables more effective organisation of co-production in the Turin urban system. The city's multi-level planning structure, divided into metropolitan, municipal and district levels, highlights the urgent need for actors that can operate across institutional boundaries, align strategic objectives and ensure the integration of local knowledge into decision-making. However, facilitation in this context remains informal, unrecognised and often invisible. A valuable avenue for future research would be to examine how facilitation can be institutionalised: this includes identifying the potential locations of such roles (in the municipality, in metropolitan offices or through civic intermediaries), the competencies they require and the administrative barriers they may face. Given the lack of formal facilitation structures, further empirical work, such as embedded studies or partnerships with local administrations, would help to clarify how facilitation currently occurs 'by default' and where it fails.

## LIMITATIONS

The thesis examines a single case study, the Aurora district in Turin. Although this provides in-depth knowledge, it limits the external validity of the results. The study is based on a qualitative methodology, particular desk research, field observations and semi-structured interviews with selected stakeholders, including local authorities, experts and community representatives. Although these interviews provided valuable perspectives, the sample size was limited and not fully balanced across all levels of governance. Some institutional actors were less accessible, which may have led to a partial understanding of inter-institutional coordination. In addition, the interviews reflect individual perceptions, which may be subjective and context-dependent.

This thesis highlights the lack of systemic facilitation and coordination roles between different governance levels as a key barrier to effective co-production. However, this absence is also a research limitation in itself: it is difficult to observe and analyse something that is not formally institutionalized. Since no official positions or departments are explicitly responsible for facilitation in Turin's governance system, the study had to rely on indirect evidence—such as interviews, informal networks, and observed gaps in coordination—to infer where facilitation should have taken place but did not.

Studying facilitation from the outside, without being embedded in the decision-making structures, presents methodological challenges. Many facilitation dynamics—such as informal negotiations, internal communication failures, or cross-departmental coordination—are not publicly documented or easily accessible to researchers. As a result, this work can only provide a partial and interpretive understanding of how the absence of facilitation affects co-production outcomes.

Furthermore, although the thesis emphasizes facilitation as a crucial function in urban co-production, it does not construct a dedicated theoretical framework around the term. Facilitation is introduced as an essential yet understudied component of governance, positioned at the intersection of management, communication, and institutional design.



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# APPENDIX

# SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW MATERIALS

This section presents the structure of the three sets of interview questions used in the study. Interviews were collected in written format using Google Forms in November and December 2024. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format and consisted of three parts: a similar introduction and conclusion for all groups, and a main section with questions tailored to each category of respondent. Each set included both open-ended and multiple-choice questions. Although this section presents the full set of questions, only selected closed-ended results are shown here; the qualitative analysis of the open-ended responses is integrated into the main findings of the dissertation.

A total of 15 interviews were conducted, involving three stakeholder groups. These included 6 representatives of local authorities across metropolitan, municipal, and district levels; 6 experts from academia and urban labs; and 3 active citizens engaged in local volunteer groups and neighborhood committees.

## INTRODUCTION

This survey is conducted as part of the master thesis “Urban Co-Production. An investigation of the barriers to the co-production of public spaces — a case study of Aurora, Turin”. The aim of the interview is to gain a deeper understanding of co-production in Turin today, exploring the methods and tools with which different levels of urban planning authorities, Public Sector, Third sector, experts, Urban LivingLabs and local residents interact with each other today.

The research focuses on public urban spaces. We discuss the possibility of collaborative working at different stages of development, from collecting information and making decision on the need for action, to implementation and the future life of the public space.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the survey!  
It will take approximately 15-20 minutes

Could you introduce yourself  
.....

Your position and the organization you represent  
.....

## THREE LISTS OF CORE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### LOCAL AUTHORITIES’ REPRESENTATIVES

### EXPERTS’ REPRESENTATIVES

### CITIZENS’ REPRESENTATIVES

## CONCLUSION

Do you personally know anyone who was involved in the Trincerino redesign project / is interested in the topic of co-production / whose experience might be relevant?  
If possible, share with him/her a link to the questionnaire or provide his/her contact information  
.....

Are you willing to answer additional clarifying questions if needed?  
They can be submitted in written form via email or conducted as a personal interview in English  
☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Other .....

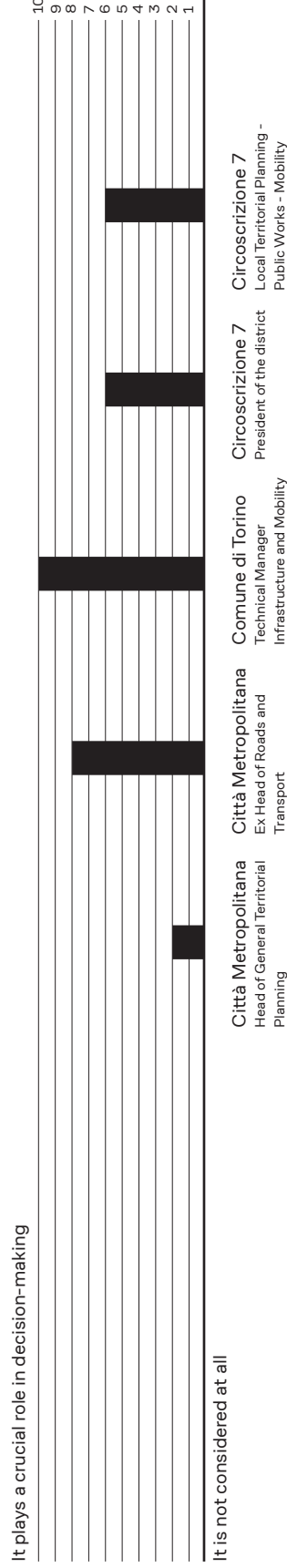
Would you like to receive the final thesis emailed to you after graduation?  
If yes, in the “other” window write your email  
☐ No  
☐ Other .....



# SURVEY FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES' REPRESENTATIVES

When speaking about co-production, it is understood as a collaborative framework for the development of urban spaces that involves three key actors: the administration, experts, and citizens. In this context, it becomes essential to assess the extent to which these actors currently have access to participation and decision-making processes.

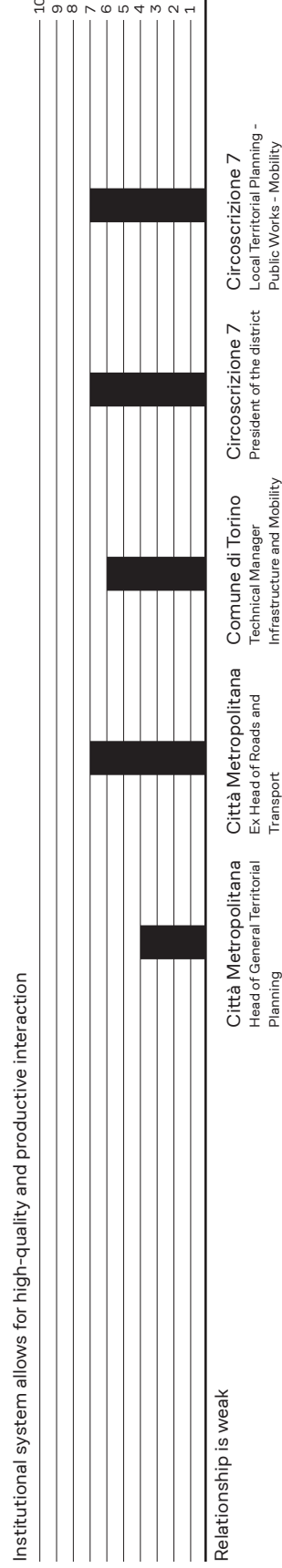
**1. Could you say that the opinion of the organization you represent is taken into account to a sufficient extent in the decision-making process regarding the development of urban public space?**



## DISTRICT VS CITY VS METROPOLIS

The aim of this section is to study in more detail the vertical relationships in Turin. How exactly does the interaction between the representatives of the district administration, Citta di Torino and Città Metropolitana take place? Could we talk about a process of co-production, or today the hierarchical relationships remain stronger.

**2.1** How would you rate the quality of interaction between representatives of the district administration and the city and the metropolis levels?



### 2.2 Speaking about vertical interactions between different levels of government, as well as horizontal interactions with other departments, could you list who is usually involved in developing strategic decisions on the development of urban spaces?

### 2.3 What tools exist to organize joint work between city and district departments on urban planning?

Is it possible to speak of systematic meetings between representatives of districts, the city administration, and the metropolitan authority, as well as meetings between different departments at the same level? How often do they occur? Does joint decision-making exist, or are documents and plans formally transferred through a vertical system of interactions without being subject to joint discourse?

2.4 Can you say to what extent, when creating strategic plans at the city/metropolitan level, data from the district administration are taken into account? (in particular, documents such as P.S.L.C Piano di Sviluppo Locale Condiviso and Circoscrizione Documento programmatico)?

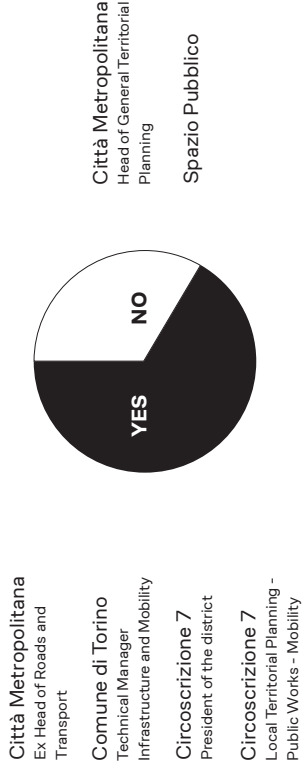
<div><div></div><div>Città Metropolitana Head of General Territorial Planning</div></div>	<div><div></div><div>Città Metropolitana Ex Head of Roads and Transport</div><div></div><div>Comune di Torino Technical Manager Infrastructure and Mobility</div><div></div><div>Circoscrizione 7 President of the district</div></div>	<div></div> <div>Circoscrizione 7 Local Territorial Planning - Public Works - Mobility</div>		
City strategic plans are based on an analysis of all district plans	More likely taken into account	Hard to say	Rather not taken into account	City strategic plans are developed entirely independently from district plans

2.5 Could you provide an example of how the district and the city have worked together on public space in the Aurora district (or other district)? Could this experience considered as successful and why?

AUTHORITIES VS EXPERTS

The aim of this section is to study in more detail the horizontal interactions between different levels of power and Experts, i.e. representatives of knowledge. We are talking about universities, independent experts and UrbanLabs, as well as Urban Planning and Architectural firms. How often does the administration ask for their participation when making decisions on the development of public spaces, is this a legislatively mandatory stage or just an initiative, how useful and successful are such interactions.

3.1 In your experience, does your department organize collaborative activities with experts/researchers/universities/UrbanLabs on the development of urban public spaces?



3.2 At what stage of the project do you typically engage with external experts/researches/universities/UrbanLivingLabs ?

Analyse (gather data, problem definition )				
Design (drafting potential plans and solutions )				
Develop (detailed planning, budgeting, setting timeline)				
Implement (actual urban development, construction)				
Monitor				
Evaluate				
Every stage				
Other				

Città Metropolitana Head of General Territorial Planning Metropolitan city does not deal with the development of urban public spaces	Città Metropolitana Ex Head of Roads and Transport	Comune di Torino Technical Manager Infrastructure and Mobility In the post phase for the presentation of the results to the citizens	Circoscrizione 7 President of the district	Circoscrizione 7 Local Territorial Planning - Public Works - Mobility
---	--	---	---	---

3.3 Could you explain how the work between authorities and experts is organized?

Do you involve experts for advice or request specific research for your projects? Is there a system of mandatory meetings where the strategic development of the urban environment is discussed? Are experts considered contractors, or is there a genuine collaboration and ongoing dialogue? Do you also organize joint training workshops?

3.3 Who typically initiates collaborative work with external experts/researches/universities/UrbanLabs in urban public spaces projects?

Metropolitan Authorities					
City Authorities	●			●	
District Authorities	●				
External Experts/Researchers/ Urban Labs					●
Public organizations or NGOs		●			
Everyone					
Other	●			●	

Città Metropolitana Head of General Territorial Planning Metropolitan city does not deal with the development of urban public spaces	Città Metropolitana Ex Head of Roads and Transport	Comune di Torino Technical Manager Infrastructure and Mobility It varies from project to project based on who and what is involved	Circoscrizione 7 President of the district	Circoscrizione 7 Local Territorial Planning - Public Works - Mobility
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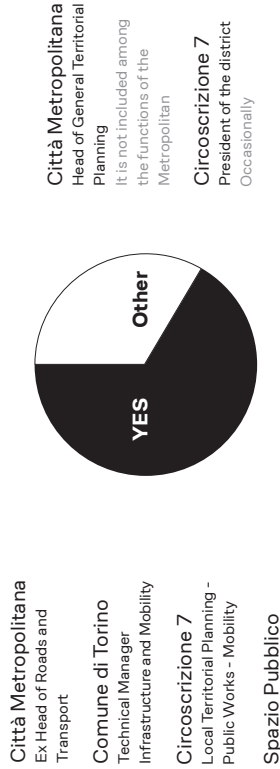
3.5 Based on Your experience could you provide an example of co-production / collaborative work with external experts/researches/universities/UrbanLivingLabs?

If possible, about a project connected with urban public spaces

AUTHORITIES VS CITIZENS

Co-production is largely associated with involving citizens in the urban planning process. Here, we focus more on active citizens and Public organizations . Our goal is to determine how actively they are currently involved and with which levels of government they typically collaborate.

4.1 In your experience, does your department organize collaborative activities with NGOs, public organizations or citizens on the development of urban public spaces?



4.2 At what stage of the project do you typically engage with external NGOs, public organizations or citizens?

Analyse (gather data, problem definition )		●		●
Design (drafting potential plans and solutions )		●		●
Develop (detailed planning, budgeting, setting timeline)				
Implement (actual urban development, construction)				
Monitor				●
Evaluate				●
Every stage		●		
Other	●			

Città Metropolitana Head of General Territorial Planning Metropolitan city does not deal with the development of urban public spaces	Città Metropolitana Ex Head of Roads and Transport	Comune di Torino Technical Manager Infrastructure and Mobility	Circoscrizione 7 President of the district	Circoscrizione 7 Local Territorial Planning - Public Works - Mobility
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4.3 Could you explain how the work between authorities and citizens/ public organizations/ NGOs is organized?

Is there a legally mandated system of meetings, events, or public hearings? How is feedback and criticism from residents collected? Is there a platform or hotline for this purpose, and how popular are they? Does your department hold meetings/workshops with residents, and how are they organized?

4.4 Who typically initiates collaborative work with NGOs, public organizations or citizens in urban public spaces projects?

Metropolitan Authorities						
City Authorities						
District Authorities						
External Experts/Researchers/ Urban Labs						
Public organizations or NGOs						
Citizens						
Everyone						
Other						

Città Metropolitana Head of General Territorial Planning Metropolitan city does not deal with the development of urban public spaces	Città Metropolitana Ex Head of Roads and Transport	Comune di Torino Technical Manager Infrastructure and Mobility It varies from project to project based on who and what is involved	Circoscrizione 7 President of the district	Circoscrizione 7 Local Territorial Planning - Public Works - Mobility	Spazio Pubblico
--	---	--	---	--	-----------------

4.5 Strong institutional capacity for co-production or personal initiatives of individual actors?

Do you think the interaction between the administration and local residents occurs primarily due to existing laws and required procedures, or is it driven by the initiative of individuals who, understanding the importance of participation, organize this process? However, if these individuals are replaced by others who are less interested, do you think co-production would cease to exist?

	Città Metropolitana Head of General Territorial Planning	Città Metropolitana Ex Head of Roads and Transport	Comune di Torino Technical Manager Infrastructure and Mobility	Circoscrizione 7 Local Territorial Planning - Public Works - Mobility	
All interactions are strictly regulated by law and follow established procedures	Most of the interaction is formal, but the personal initiative is also important	Some part is occupied by the official part, however, most of the interaction is based on personal initiative	Regulation by the law is very weak, the main interaction is based on the initiative of specific people from the administration	Other	

4.6 Could you provide an example of co-production / collaborative work with NGOs, public organizations or citizens involving ?

If possible, about a project connected with urban public spaces )

## COORDINATION

The key question of successful co-production is how the process is organized. In this section, we aim to understand, in today's context, who acts as the initiator, organizer, and facilitator of interactions between various stakeholders. How is the organization of joint work between local authorities, experts and citizens, taking place today.

### 5.1 Who initiate this collaboration and takes on the role of coordinator to ensure effective communication?

Città Metropolitana di Torino	●					
Dipartimento Territorio, Pianificazione e Urbanistica	●					
Dipartimento Sviluppo Economico e Pianificazione Strategica	●					
Dipartimento Ambiente e Vigilanza Ambientale						
Dipartimento Viabilità e Trasporti						
Città di Torino		●				
Dipartimento Urbanistica ed Edilizia Privata		●				
Dipartimento Ambiente e Transizione Ecologica		●				
Dipartimento Grandi Opere, Infrastrutture e Mobilità		●				●
Consiglio Circoscrizione UrbanLABs			●			
Experts/universities					●	
Citizens/public organisations/NGOs					●	●
Everyone			●			
Nobody						
Other	●		●			

Città Metropolitana  
Head of General Territorial Planning  
It depends on the topic

Città Metropolitana  
Ex Head of Roads and Transport

Comune di Torino  
Technical Manager Infrastructure and Mobility  
It changes based on the projects/interests and that based on this, some actors involve others and vice versa

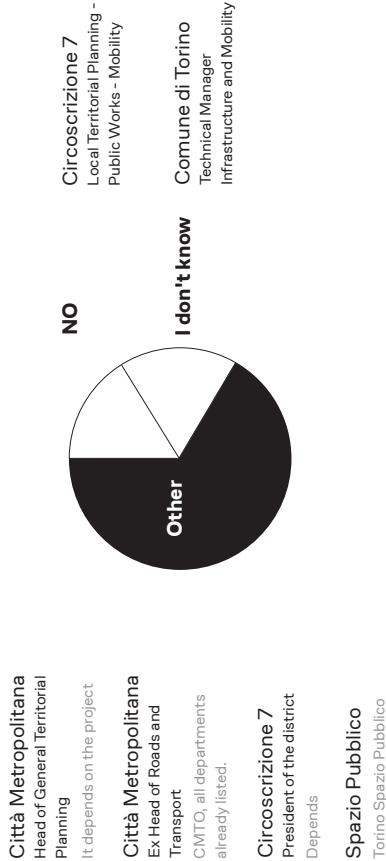
Circoscrizione 7  
President of the district

Circoscrizione 7  
Local Territorial Planning - Public Works - Mobility

Spazio Pubblico

### 5.2 Is there a department/person responsible for coordination?

Based on your experience of participating in various joint activities with representatives of the administration or experts, perhaps some department/organization or person was the main link, coordinator, organizer? Perhaps someone systematically manifests themselves in this role? If your answer is yes, please select the “Other” option and specify the name or the person's role/position, or the name of the department.



### 5.3 Could you give an example of how joint work was organized?

Perhaps there is a system for collecting data from citizens, and then discussing it with representatives of the city district and experts? perhaps some joint workshops were held for everyone? perhaps there is a platform that unites all participants?

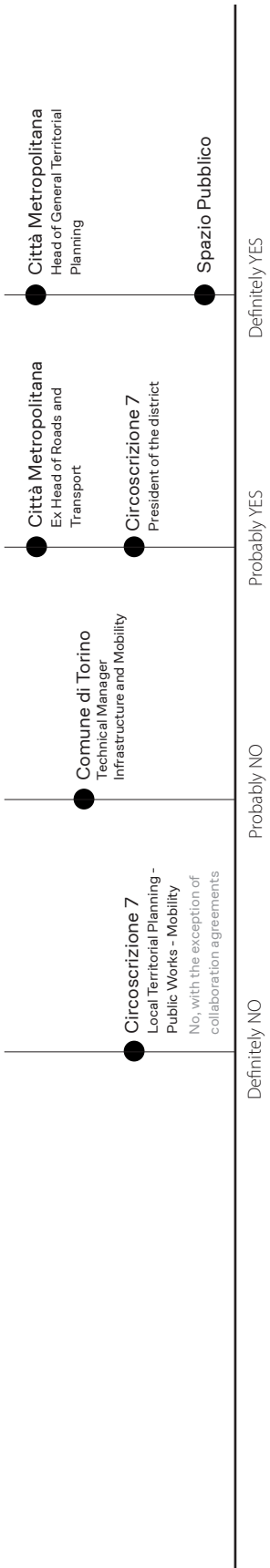
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5.4 Would you say that the institutional tools currently in existence allow for the effective regulation of interactions between local authorities, experts and citizens?

By tools we mean those methods of organization as well as laws that exist today



5.5 Do you have any suggestions or ideas on how to improve the quality of interaction and collaboration to make work on design urban spaces more effective?

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“TRINCERINO” CONTEXT

In the context of the Aurora district, there has been a problematic area for many years - the unused railway trench “Trincerino”. At the district level, studies were carried out with the help of experts from the Politecnico di Turin and AuroraLivingLab, as well as a series of workshops with city residents. The general decision, supported by local authorities and summarized in the documents P.S.L.C Piano di Sviluppo Locale Condiviso e il Documento Programmatico di Circostrizione, as well as in the Rapporto di Ricerca by AuroraLAB, was the need to use this territory to organize a public space that would increase the connectivity of the territory, improve the quality of life in the quarter and contribute to reducing the level of marginalization. At the city level, this trench was important for the organization of tram service between remote areas and the city center. Despite a number of meetings, it is difficult to talk about a productive dialogue and joint decision-making. The project has already received funding, and in the coming years the former railway tracks will be used for tram 12.

Are you familiar with this project?

Could you please share your opinion on how the process was organized, how you feel about the decision that was made, and what role you played in it?

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In your subjective opinion, what is the most effective way to work with a complex area, whose development the district and the city have different visions?

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Anything else?

Your opinion and experience are very valuable for this work! Perhaps the questions did not allow us to fully discuss some aspects. In this section, you can write any additional comments and suggestions.

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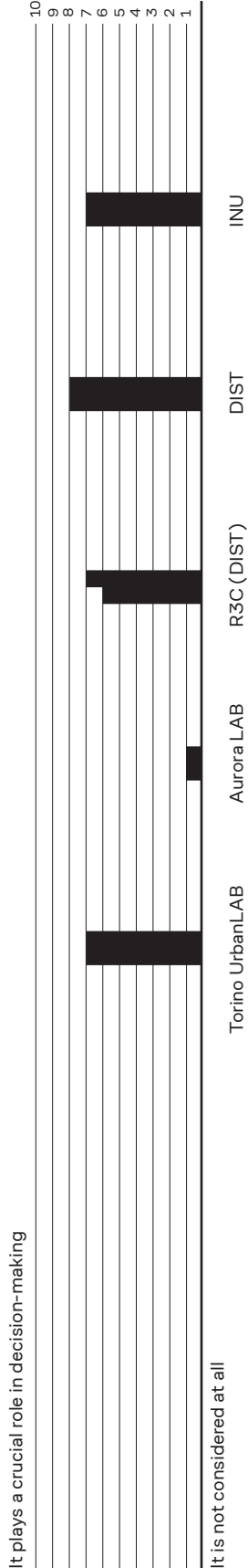
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## SURVEY FOR EXPERTS' REPRESENTATIVES

When speaking about co-production, it is understood as a collaborative framework for the development of urban spaces that involves three key actors: the administration, experts, and citizens. In this context, it becomes essential to assess the extent to which these actors currently have access to participation and decision-making processes.

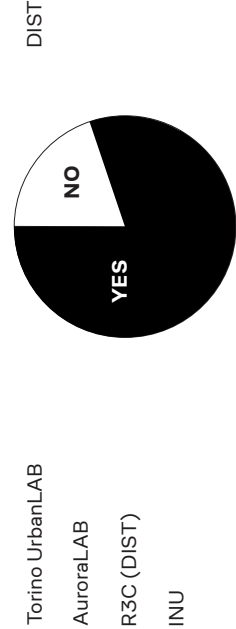
### 1. Could you say that the opinion of the organization you represent is taken into account to a sufficient extent in the decision-making process regarding the development of urban public space?



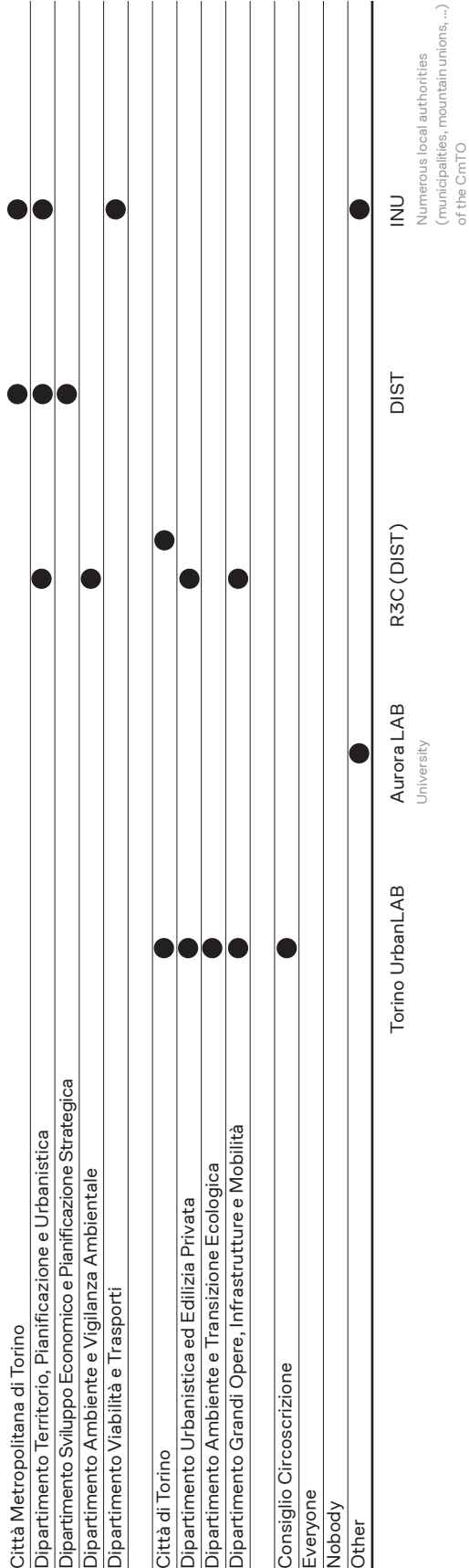
## EXPERTS VS LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The aim of this section is to study in more detail the horizontal interactions between different levels of power and Experts, i.e. representatives of knowledge. We are talking about universities, independent experts and UrbanLivingLabs, as well as Urban Planning and Architectural firms. How often does the administration ask for their participation when making decisions on the development of public spaces, is this a legislatively mandatory stage or just an initiative, how useful and successful are such interactions.

### 2.1 In your experience, did you collaborate on project about urban development with any level of authorities?



### 2.2 With what department do you usually interact?



2.3 At what stage of the project do you typically engaged ?

	Torino UrbanLAB	Aurora LAB	R3C (DIST)	DIST	INU
Analyse (gather data, problem definition )	●		●●	●	●
Design (drafting potential plans and solutions )		●	●	●	●
Develop (detailed planning, budgeting, setting timeline)					
Implement (actual urban development, construction)		●			
Monitor					●
Evaluate					
Every stage					
Other					●
					Environmental assessments

2.4 Could you explain how the work between authorities and experts is organized?

Do authorities consult you or request research for specific projects? Is there a system of mandatory meetings where the strategic development of the urban environment is discussed? Are experts treated as contractors, or is there genuine collaboration and ongoing dialogue? Do you also organize joint training seminars?

.....

.....

2.5 Who typically initiates collaborative work between authorities and external experts/researches/universities/UrbanLabs in urban public space projects?

Metropolitan Authorities							
City Authorities	●				●●	●	●
District Authorities							
External Experts/Researchers / Urban Labs							●
Public organizations or NGOs	●						
Other		●					●

Torino UrbanLAB

Aurora LAB  
University course teachers

R3C (DIST)

DIST

INU

Participation forms are increasingly foreseen within the procedures for drafting plans and programmes, so they are partly initiated during the drafting phases. European projects (Alcotra, Life, ...) also usually foresee forms of collaboration between subjects.

2.6 Based on Your experience could you provide an example of co-production/collaborative work with local authorities?

If possible, about a project connected with urban public spaces

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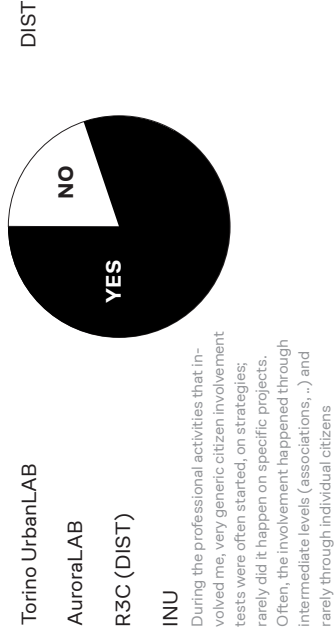
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EXPERTS VS CITIZENS

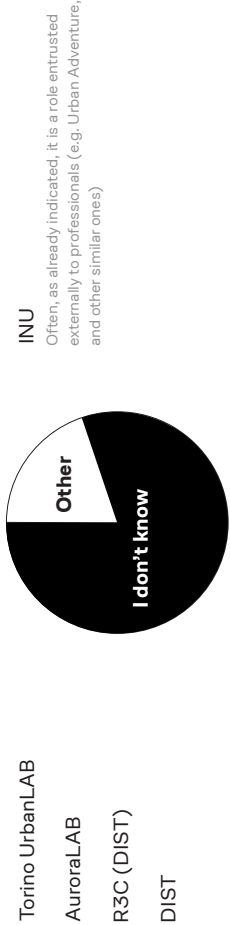
Co-production is largely associated with involving citizens in the urban planning process. Here, we focus more on active citizens and Public organizations . Our goal is to determine how actively they are currently involved and with which levels of government they typically collaborate.

3.1 In your experience, does your department organize collaborative activities with NGOs, public organizations or citizens on the development of urban public spaces?



4.2 Is there a department/person responsible for coordination?

Based on your experience of participating in various joint activities with representatives of the administration or experts, perhaps some department/organization or person was the main link, coordinator, organizer? Perhaps someone systematically manifests themselves in this role? If your answer is yes, please select the “Other” option and specify the name or the person’s role/position

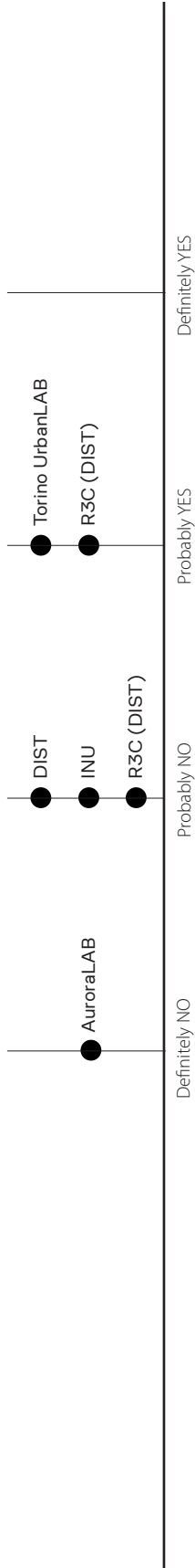


4.3 Could you give an example of how joint work was organized?

Perhaps there is a system for collecting data from citizens, and then discussing it with representatives of the city district and experts? perhaps some joint workshops were held for everyone? perhaps there is a platform that unites all participants?

4.4 Would you say that the institutional tools currently in existence allow for the effective regulation of interactions between local authorities, experts and citizens?

By tools we mean those methods of organization as well as laws that exist today



“TRINCERINO” CONTEXT

In the context of the Aurora district, there has been a problematic area for many years - the unused railway trench “Trincerino”. At the district level, studies were carried out with the help of experts from the Politecnico di Turin and AuroraLivingLab, as well as a series of workshops with city residents. The general decision, supported by local authorities and summarized in the documents P.S.L.C Piano di Sviluppo Locale Condiviso e il Documento Programmatico di Circoscrizione, as well as in the Rapporto di Ricerca by AuroraLAB, was the need to use this territory to organize a public space that would increase the connectivity of the territory, improve the quality of life in the quarter and contribute to reducing the level of marginalization. At the city level, this trench was important for the organization of tram service between remote areas and the city center. Despite a number of meetings, it is difficult to talk about a productive dialogue and joint decision-making. The project has already received funding, and in the coming years the former railway tracks will be used for tram 12.

Are you familiar with this project?

Could you please share your opinion on how the process was organized, how you feel about the decision that was made, and what role you played in it?

In your subjective opinion, what is the most effective way to work with a complex area, whose development the district and the city have different visions?

Anything else?

Your opinion and experience are very valuable for this work! Perhaps the questions did not allow us to fully discuss some aspects. In this section, you can write any additional comments and suggestions.



# SURVEY FOR CITIZENS' REPRESENTATIVES

When speaking about co-production, it is understood as a collaborative framework for the development of urban spaces that involves three key actors: the administration, experts, and citizens. In this context, it becomes essential to assess the extent to which these actors currently have access to participation and decision-making processes.

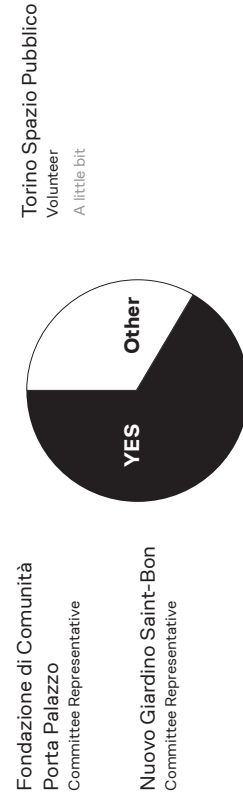
**1. Could you say that the opinion of the organization you represent is taken into account to a sufficient extent in the decision-making process regarding the development of urban public space?**

It plays a crucial role in decision-making	Nuovo Giardino Saint-Bon Committee Representative	Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo Committee Representative	Torino Spazio Pubblico Volunteer
10			
9			
8			
7			
6			
5			
4			
3			
2			
1			
It is not considered at all			

## CITIZENS VS LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Co-production is largely associated with involving citizens in the urban planning process. Here, we focus more on active citizens and Public organizations. Our goal is to determine how actively they are currently involved and with which levels of government they typically collaborate.

## 2.1 In your experience, do you interact with local authorities? (especially about urban public spaces)



## 2.2 With whom did you collaborate?

As part of a formal or informal organization, what levels of authority have you collaborated with in the context of urban development?

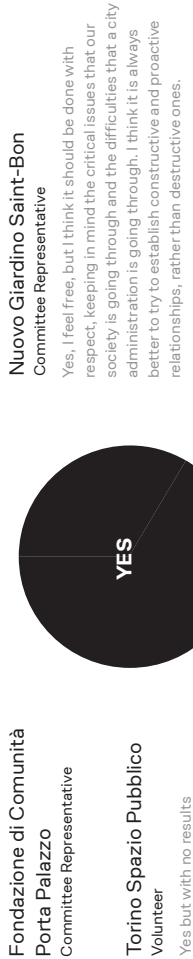
	Metropolitan Authorities	City Authorities	District Authorities	Nobody	Other
Nuovo Giardino Saint-Bon					
Committee Representative					
Other citizens' committees, Third Sector associations, professionals who live in the same neighborhood					
Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo					
Committee Representative					
Torino Spazio Pubblico					
Volunteer					

2.3 Who typically initiates these collaborative work with authorities?

Metropolitan Authorities	●			
City Authorities	●		●	
District Authorities	●		●	
External Experts / Researchers / Universities			●	
UrbanLABs			●	
You (or association)	●	●	●	●
Other	●			

2.4 Could you provide an example from your experience illustrating joint work with local authorities on issues related to urban public space?

2.5 Do you feel free to contact the administration with your ideas or complaints about urban space?



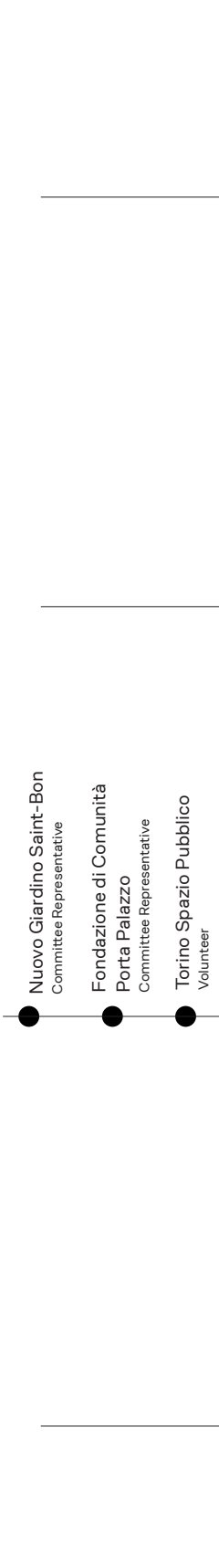
2.6 What changes in communication with local government would help you feel more involved in the city planning process?

2.7 How does the interaction with authorities happen?

Could you please tell us in more detail how your interaction is organized? Do you have any systematic meetings? Perhaps you have a platform for interaction?

2.8 Strong institutional capacity for co-production or personal initiatives of individual actors?

Do you think the interaction between the administration and local residents occurs primarily due to existing laws and required procedures, or is it driven by the initiative of individuals who, understanding the importance of participation, organize this process? However, if these individuals are replaced by others who are less interested, do you think co-production would cease to exist?

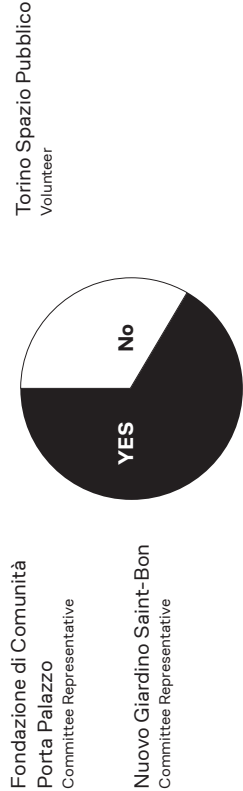


Regulation by the law is very weak, the main interaction is based on the initiative of specific people from the administration	Some part is occupied by the official part, however, most of the interaction is based on personal initiative	Most of the interaction is formal, but the personal initiative is also important	All interactions are strictly regulated by law and follow established procedures
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## CITIZENS VS EXPERTS

Interaction with experts and UrbanLABs is also an integral part of the co-production process. In this section, we will explore the current connections between residents and experts.

### 3.1 In your experience, do you interact with External Experts/Researchers/Universities/ UrbanLABs according urban public spaces?



### 3.2 Could you provide names of organisations/experts with whom do you usually interact?

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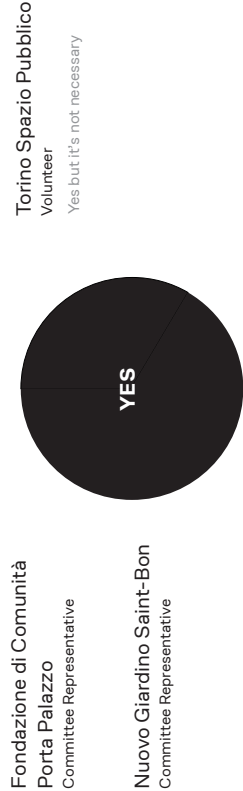
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### 3.3 Who typically initiates these collaborative work with Experts?

Metropolitan Authorities					
City Authorities					
District Authorities					
External Experts/Researchers/Universities					
UrbanLABs					
You (or association)					
Other					

	Nuovo Giardino Saint-Bon Committee Representative	Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo Committee Representative	Torino Spazio Pubblico Volunteer
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### 3.4 In your experience, do you interact with External Experts/Researchers/Universities/ UrbanLABs according urban public spaces?



### 3.5 Could you give an example illustrating joint work with External Experts/Researchers/Universities/ Urban-Labs son issues of urban public space?

Perhaps you have participated in a study or interview or in some kind of joint workshop? Perhaps you yourself turn to experts for advice or help? How does this usually happen?

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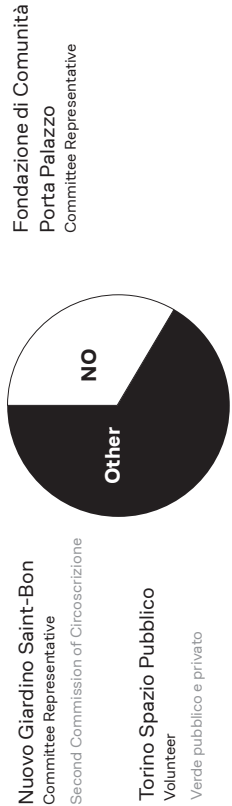
## COORDINATION

The key question of successful co-production is how the process is organized. In this section, we aim to understand, in today's context, who acts as the initiator, organizer, and facilitator of interactions between various stakeholders. How is the organization of joint work between local authorities, experts and citizens, taking place today.

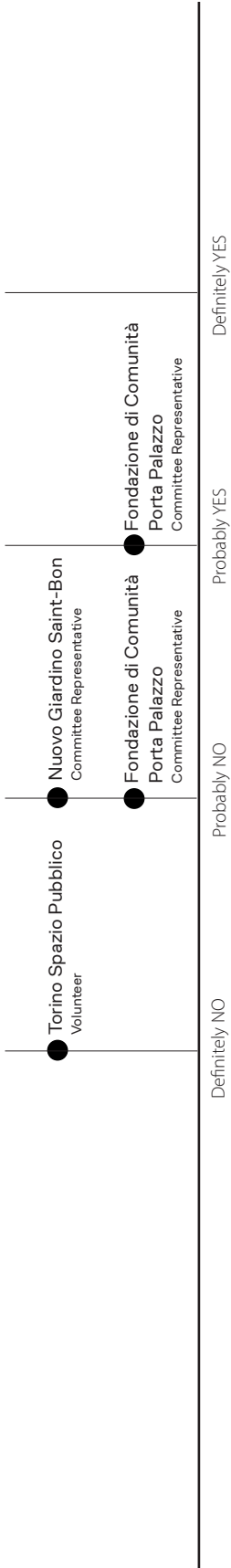


4.1 Is there a department/person responsible for coordination?

Based on your experience of participating in various joint activities with representatives of the administration or experts, perhaps some department/organization or person was the main link, coordinator, organizer? Perhaps someone systematically manifests themselves in this role? If your answer is yes, please select the “Other” option and specify the name or the person’s role/position, or the name of the department.



4.2 Would you say that the institutional tools currently in existence allow for the effective regulation of interactions between local authorities, experts and citizens?



4.3 Do you have any suggestions or ideas on how to improve the quality of interaction and collaboration to make work on design urban spaces more effective?

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In your subjective opinion, what is the most effective way to work with a complex area, whose development the district and the city have different visions?

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Anything else?

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