



**Politecnico
di Torino**

Honors Thesis

Master's degree Science in Architecture Construction City

**Reconceptualizing the Right to Housing Through Assemblage Theory – Activisms
and Social Movements in Turin**

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Abstract

This thesis is an attempt to rethink the idea of the right to housing by moving beyond traditional and structuralist frameworks. Housing isn't only about walls, roofs, or a matter of ownership, but it is more a site where life takes shape, the idea of belonging is negotiated continuously, and justice or exclusion can emerge and be experienced. Having said that, the "right to housing" is often framed through narrow perspectives merely as a moral claim, or a legal entitlement that must be granted only by the state, or as a technical matter which is reduced to supply, demand, and distribution. It's undeniable that traditional Marxist frameworks provide valuable insights about the power of commodification and capitalist accumulation, but their tendency to reduce housing struggles to fixed categories of class and capital neglects the messy, relational, and affective aspects of urban life. This thesis follows a different approach then. Drawing on Assemblage Theory, the idea of the right to housing is reframed as an open-ended process which is emergent rather than predetermined, collective rather than individual, and situated rather than universal. Through this framework fixed categories are rejected in favor of multiplicity, process, and emergence. Moreover, Housing is no longer a finished product, but instead, it is a continuous process of becoming that is always open to change. In this thesis, it is examined how the city can be shaped through different logics: territorial assemblages divide and exclude, state assemblages are based on standardizing and controlling, capitalist assemblages mainly prioritize commodifying and financializing, and finally nomadic assemblages tend to experiment with fluid, just, collective, and radical forms of living. However, it is important to remember that none of them exist in isolation, but each housing struggle can be composed of all these forces that interact and can bring both conflict and creativity. Through this approach, what emerges is a new understanding of the right to housing which is not a static entitlement but a constructive political project, one that is always uncertain and unstable and is continuously recomposed through contestation, solidarity, and care. Housing movements thus, shouldn't be considered only as defensive reactions to crisis, but they need to be regarded more as generative spaces where new forms of belonging, cooperation, and urban futures are practiced in an active way. Rather than seeking the essence of the right to housing or considering it in a fixed state of being, this reconceptualization regards this right as a process of becoming. In fact, rather than manifesting a stable ideal, Housing struggles are more like spaces where right to housing is endlessly reassembled through the contingent encounter of different forces. This reconceptualization also reminds us that city is not only a site of lack, control, and regulation, but rather it is a site where new possibilities for living are constantly taking shape. Seen this way, housing struggles open the city to potential futures that are unknown yet, but already in the process of becoming. In this sense it can be argued that the right to housing isn't anymore a finished demand, but an open-ended horizon.

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