

POLYTECHNIC OF TORINO
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Architectural models and imaginary in Turin within 1930 and 1955 by means of the historiographical font of the building licences

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The quantity, for the architectural historiography, is still a term about production or immigration, studied according to the philosophy of history, where the housing problem if it is considered, is understood a priori as an anti-conjunctural economic field, a necessary economic good, an artistic product (..).

Considering the quantity of habitations, services, infrastructures as a critical problem means to change work's methods and repertoires, the same cultural references (...). The use of a serial font, as the one of the building licences, could be an important way to leave rhetoric about history of the city: the city plan as a comprehensive anticipation of urban changes(...), the identification between urban history and history of intellectual elites, the analysis based about the relationship industrialization / urbanization that often has been considered as a monocausal system of explanation, represented each time or by industrial developing or by social changes.

Building licences, even if can't be considered substitutive of built, can however help to precise the relationship instituted, at the moment of the question's formulation, among promoters, planners, institutions and to come out prevailing professional fellows. The period's definition is based on the necessity of a comparison with previous quantitative researches and on the necessity of considering a period enough long to legitimate a long period analysis, about the events that precede and follow the second world's war.



Localization of building licences approved for "new buildings" - 1930-1937

The 1930 represents a transition between the phase of urban great expansion, measurable with the building licences approved within 1925 and 1929; also 1955 is a year of transition: the general city plan, discussed from the early 1900, is finally presented the following year and approved in 1959.

Plan's contradictions and problems of legitimization open a new section in the interpretation of the city's history.



Localization of building licences approved for "new buildings" - 1938-1949

Building licences' elaboration, according to the question, the planners, the localization of the buildings, the customers, has induced me to consider three distinct phases that characterize the period 1930-1955. These phases are: 1930-1937, 1938-1949, 1950-1955.

A concept of continuity in urban construction comes out and finds verification in the research of the protagonists in the urban construction described by building licences, that we can define as the "requested city": the customers, the building firms, the planners.



Localization of building licences approved for "new buildings" - 1950-1955

The elaboration of the font, according to the professional qualification has permitted to point out how the prevailing technical culture, considering the "requested city", is the engineers' one.

They sign the 50% of the projects approved every year. Among engineers' projects, in 1955, the 60% are signed by engineers that practise the profession already in 1930.

Architects' projects represent a marginality in comparison with the quantity of the building licences approved: in 1930 architects' projects constitute the 2.6% of the total of licences approved; in 1955 that value increase to 16%. This increase is not enough to outnumber the projects signed by engineers and surveyors.

The relationship that link planner, building firm and building's localization seems to be one of the most significant aspect of the project. The reconstruction of some professional biographies, thanks to the information derived from the building licences, has permitted to point out a correspondence among planner - customer - building firm - building's localization.

The elaboration of thematic maps, according to the division in phases (1930-1937, 1938-1949, 1950-1955) and the number of projects localized in the same part of the city, has allowed some considerations about the role and the importance of customers, especially if represented by Industrial or Building Societies, or building firms, for urban growth and building localization.

Urban changes seems to be influenced by elements that don't depend on city plan or industrial development: the analysis of building's quantity according to the division in periods - 1930/1937, 1938/1949, 1950/1955 - and building's localization find out, in the "requested city" market, urban growth's quantitative and qualitative characters.