

POST INDUSTRIAL



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Aknowledgments

We would like to thank all the people we met in Torino for taking the time to speak with us and share their experience. Their contributions directly informed the content of this report.

This work also builds on the collective involvement of the group. The discussions and observations carried out throughout the trip played an important role in shaping the analyses presented here.

Finally, this report is the result of a shared effort, bringing together the contributions of all participants.

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Intro

This study trip report, made by the GETIC master students, explores the different stakeholders shaping the city of Torino. Through 9 articles, we present a variety of actors involved in the city's transformation, from public institutions to private companies, as well as associations and more hybrid actors.

The articles are organized to start with the public entities and move to the private actors, despite this distinction not always very clear. In many cases, the limits between these categories are blurred, as some actors operate across different scales and roles, thus reflecting the complexity of Torino's post-industrial transition.

The guiding question informing the analysis throughout the report is as follows:

"Which imaginaries are employed by the diversity of urban actors involved in steering Turin's material, social, and ideological departure from its industrial past and how do they advance distinct notions of sustainability in the city?"

Each article therefore highlights a specific point of view on the city. Through these perspectives, we can observe a diversity of imaginaries, sometimes complementary, sometimes creating tension or even opposition. Behind these visions, the aim of the articles is to unveil different understandings and ways of shaping what the future of Torino should be.

The first articles give a more general and institutional understanding of the city, while the following ones focus on more local and community-based initiatives. Altogether, they highlight not only the diversity of actors, but also the complexity of their interactions in making the city.

ART 1. Urban Lab

This first article explains the evolution of the city of Torino throughout the years and the various challenges it has faced. It notably focuses on the crisis created by the displacement of the Italian capital to Firenze and later to Rome, and on the more recent post-industrial decline linked to the withdrawal of FIAT, which left the city with fewer inhabitants and job opportunities. This historical perspective provides an entry point to understand the current transformation of the city and the priorities of the actors involved in it. The information at the base of the article was presented by the Urban Lab, an independent association created to document and explain the transformation of Torino and its metropolitan area, through the collection of data, the production of knowledge and the promotion of public debate.

ART 2. Aurora Lab

This article presents the Aurora neighborhood through the lens of AuroraLab. The Aurora neighborhood is one of the most diverse parts of the city and also struggles with poverty and the effects of hostile planning. The AuroraLab initiative, led by the Politecnico di Torino, is implemented within a local elementary school and is intent on fostering long-term, bottom-up engagement. AuroraLab works with teachers, students, residents and local associations to co-produce knowledge and imagine new urban futures for the neighborhood. At the same time, it interacts with private actors such as Lavazza and Mattioda, positioning itself as an intermediary capable of guiding their interventions. The article highlights both the importance of this type of actor in grounding urban projects in local realities, and the constraints it faces, especially in terms of funding, continuity and its capacity to influence larger structural dynamics.

ART 3. Città di Torino

Reflecting on a conversation with the deputy mayor of Torino, Paolo Mazzoleni, this article presents the new Master Plan of the city. The plan aims to redefine the city's trajectory by creating the conditions that make it attractive for people, especially young populations, to stay. It relies on several key dimensions such as regulatory stability, demographic renewal, industrial innovation, collaborative governance and the mobilisation of European funds. Together, these elements form a broader vision of sustainability, where economic development, population retention and institutional coordination are central. The article highlights how the city attempts to frame its transformation through regulation rather than direct intervention.

ART 4. Fondazione Bloomberg

As we start to move into the private institutions of the city, this article gives an insight into the role of the Bloomberg Foundation and its involvement in Torino. Through this case study, it shows how philanthropic actors can intervene in urban governance, not only through direct funding, but through strategic frameworks and international experience. Their support in creating the master plan contributed to structuring administrative communication, improving efficiency and introducing approaches inspired by other cities. The article highlights how these actors promote a specific imaginary of sustainability, based on data, performance and coordination, while also raising questions about the visibility and limits of their impact.

ART 5. Torino City Lab

This article gives an insight into Torino City Lab and its role in opening up the city as a real-world testing site. It shows how the organisation promotes innovative solutions to concrete urban challenges and connects different stakeholders, such as universities, industries, governments and civil society. The article also highlights how the City Lab contributes to Torino's mitigation and adaptation strategy, while becoming a well-known incubator at the European scale and attracting new actors to the city.

ART 6. Mattioda Costruzioni Group and Lavazza

This article focuses on private actors and their role in Torino's transformation. It looks at the Lavazza Group and the Mattioda Costruzioni group, both involved in the redevelopment of former industrial sites, particularly in the Aurora neighborhood. Through these two cases, the article questions the emergence of new dominant actors after FIAT and analyses how private initiatives reshape urban space, influence local dynamics and participate in redefining the identity of the city. It also raises the issue of their impact in terms of social and economic inequalities.

ART 7. Torino Stratosferica

This article presents Torino Stratosferica as a social enterprise that focuses on how the city is imagined and culturally transformed. Through projects such as Utopian Hours, Dorado and Precollinear Park, it creates new urban narratives and temporary interventions. The article also questions the limits of this approach, especially regarding inclusivity, gentrification and the lasting impact of their projects.

ART 8. Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo

In a context marked by urban transformation and increasing gentrification, the Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo emerged as a response to social and spatial inequalities. Created from the convergence of several grassroots organisations, it operates as a Third Sector philanthropic structure based on voluntary participation and unpaid governance. The Foundation promotes a model where residents are considered as active agents, involved in decision-making processes and directly engaged in transforming their neighbourhood. The article highlights both the strength of this bottom-up approach and the limits it faces within broader structural dynamics.

ART 9. Vuoti a Rendere

Through the intervention of the urban scholar and activist Erica Mangione, this article explores the housing situation in Torino. It highlights the gap between a significant stock of vacant housing and the persistence of evictions, showing the limits of national housing policies. In this context, the initiative “Vuoti a Rendere” emerged, aiming to mobilise underused housing to respond to social needs. The article raises broader questions about access to housing, regulation and the role of different actors in addressing this issue.

Setting up and presenting these differing perspectives, the report does not aim to give a single or unified vision of Torino’s transformation, but rather to show its complexity. The diversity of actors, their positions and their imaginaries reveal a city that is still in the process of redefining itself after its industrial past.

The articles highlight how these actors follow their own internal goals, and how their visions of the city's future can be aligned or conflictual, yet keep Torino moving. Between institutional frameworks, private investments and the work of associations, the making of the city unveils itself as a complex process that all actors seem determined to carry forward.

As we will see throughout this report Torino takes on the role of a laboratory, where different approaches to urban transformation coexist, interact and sometimes oppose each other, paving the way for various possible futures.

Enjoy your read !

- *Editorial Team,*
Alva and Agnès

***Here can be found the video of our study trip
with testimonies from the students, enjoy !***



OR click [here](#)

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Solène Bonheur and Romane Derouet

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M
M
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R
Y

Aurora Lab

Article by:
Camille André
and
Gracie Ren

Speaker:
Francesco Puletti
Cristiana
Rossignolo

P. 14



P. 10

Urban Lab

Article by:
Emilie Cousson
and
Elise Tamaillon

Speaker:
Chiara Lucchini



Fondazione
Bloomberg

Article by:
Jieun Park
and
Emma Strentz

Speaker:
Caterina Quaglio

P. 26



P. 20

Città di Torino

Article by:
Lise Jerlin
and
Viet Nguyen

Speaker:
Paolo Mazzoleni



Mattioda C. Group
and Lavazza

Article by:
Elif Bulut,
Hazel Koh,
Lucie Pinet

Speakers:
Alessandro Saringella
Alessandra Bianco

P. 36



P. 32

Torino City Lab

Article by:
Patrick Ostermeier

Speaker:
Davide Miceli



P. 42

Torino
Stratosferica

Article by:
Mathilde Le Moing
and
Roselyne Wakaba

Speaker:
Luca Ballarini

Fondazione
di Comunità Porta
Palazzo

Article by:
Rose Chatel
and
Lou Garma

Speaker:
Karl Krähmer

P. 46



P. 52

Vuoti a Rendere

Article by:
Aaron Pietzonka
and
Mathilde Roujansky

Speaker:
Erica Mangione



Urban Lab

Emilie Cousson

Elise Tamaillon



Presented by its regional development manager, Chiara Lucchini, the Torino Urban Lab is an independent association created twenty years ago with the overarching goal of sharing knowledge about the physical and the non-physical or intangible aspects of the urban transformation processes in Torino. Their main mission is informing citizens about ongoing urban transformations and including them in the process of re-thinking the city.

Inside the Urban Lab building, located right next to the city hall, the current lab's exhibitions, titled 'Past, Present, Future', presents Torino's urban transformation process throughout history. It highlights the urban history of Turin, which is deeply shaped by a succession of transformations that have progressively redefined the identity, spatial structure, and socio-economic trajectory of the city. Unlike many Italian cities historically organized around religious power, Turin first developed in the XVIth century as a political and military city. Torino became the first capital of unified Italy in 1861, as it had previously served as the capital of the Duchy of Savoy. The dominance of politics and military are still visible in its urban form, with a rational grid, monumental axes. Another important physical aspect of Turin is the absence of cathedrals or churches at the center of the city, which strongly contrast with the traditional urban development of other Italian cities. However, this political centrality was short-lived. In 1865, the capital was moved to Florence, and later to Rome. With the loss of its status as capital, Turin entered a profound identity crisis. Local political elites, and particularly the mayor at the time, called for innovation and the exploration of new development pathways. Industrialization emerged within this context as a strategic solution, initiating a long-term transformation of the city.

The implementation of a deliberate strategy of industrial growth was closely linked to the expansion of railways and complex transportation networks, which connected Turin to national and European markets and strengthened its economic position. Turin rapidly became the industrial core of Italy, largely due to the rise of the automobile industry. The founding of FIAT in 1899 marked a decisive turning point. Car production, together with heavy metal industries, became deeply embedded in the built environment and the local economic system. For almost a century, the physical expansion of the city and industrial growth were strongly intertwined, with urban prosperity directly dependent on the success of car production. During the 1960s and 1970s, Turin reached its industrial peak. The city had approximately 1.2 million inhabitants, with more than 60% of the workforce employed in manufacturing. This rapid growth was driven by massive internal migration, particularly from southern Italy, as workers were attracted by employment opportunities in the booming industrial sector. Turin became a major European industrial hub, almost entirely structured around automobile production. The Lingotto factory, one of FIAT's most iconic buildings, symbolized the integration of industrial production into the urban fabric.

From the 1970s onwards, Turin was deeply affected by the Europe-wide industrial crisis. Increased global competition, particularly the rise of Japanese car manufacturers, challenged the Fordist production model that dominated in Italy at the time. Factory closures, job losses, and industrial decline followed. The 1980s and 1990s were marked by a severe urban and social crisis. Industrial spaces were progressively abandoned, losing their original functions and becoming visible symbols of decline. Over 10 million square meters of brownfields emerged across the city. In the 1980s, the Lingotto became the first building officially declared "vacant." Its subsequent reuse, from 1989 on, including the introduction of contemporary art and a concert hall into this former factory building, represented one of the earliest signs of Turin's post-industrial transition. Over the 1980s and 1990s, the city structure and urban form continued to evolve towards a post-industrial state, which notably led demographic and economic structures to change dramatically. Today, Turin has around 853,000 inhabitants, with only 24% of the workforce employed in manufacturing, while more than 66% work in the service sector. The image of Turin as an industrial city has largely faded.

The 1990s marked a turning point in Turin's urban transformation following the crisis of the Fordist industrial model and the restructuring of FIAT, which had long dominated the city's economy and spatial organisation. Deindustrialisation, rising unemployment, and extensive brownfield sites forced local authorities to rethink Turin's development trajectory. In response, the municipal government of Turin took a leading role in initiating an industrial and urban transition, repositioning the city toward services, culture, innovation, and environmental regeneration. This transformation was primarily public-sector led, with the municipality acting as the main coordinator, supported by regional authorities of Piedmont and the Italian national state, particularly in infrastructure and planning reforms. A decisive enabling role was played by the European Union, whose structural funds and early urban programmes (notably the URBAN initiatives) provided financial resources and governance frameworks focused on social cohesion, neighbourhood-based regeneration, and participatory planning. These EU instruments strengthened local capacity and encouraged experimentation with inclusive urban policies. Private actors, especially real estate developers, utilities, and former industrial landowners, became increasingly involved during the implementation phase, notably through public-private partnerships, but largely within strategic frameworks defined by public authorities. An example of this transformation is the Spina Centrale project, launched in the mid-1990s, which transformed former railway and industrial corridors into mixed-use urban spaces and symbolised the shift from an industrial to a post-industrial urban model.

Nevertheless, de-industrialization remains an ongoing process. FIAT has progressively relocated production and weakened its historical ties with the

city. Whereas in contrast companies such as Lavazza continue to anchor their identity and activities in Turin. A major challenge persists in the environmental dimension: Italy lacks a comprehensive legal framework for cleaning polluted industrial land. This results in some brownfield sites being simply covered with concrete rather than properly remediated.

Today, the urban lab fosters resident participation in a new city master plan “Torino Cambia”. The advantage of this long term planning is the ability to thoroughly discuss the future of the city with institutions, stakeholders and citizens. The process includes stakeholders minifestival and grassroots listening campaigns. Urban lab members went in the streets to meet, inform and discuss with residents through a campaign called “Voci di Quartiere”. Most importantly they listened to their analysis regarding the quality of life of their neighborhood. This process led to mapping every area of the city. Through questionnaires, citizens were asked to identify areas of interest in the city, and evaluate negative or positive changes. Moreover, the website “Torino Cambia” keeps informing about every action and intervention made by the municipality that will change Turin, keeping involved citizens in the whole process. The city’s ambition in this effort is one of sharing and aligning expectations and priorities that lay the foundation for new development projects in the coming decades.



Aurora Lab

Camille André
Gracie Ren

Introduction

Making the University enter the neighborhood and renewing the suburbs, here is the main goal of AuroraLab. This university-led initiative was born in 2018, the creation of the project being led by the Geography Department of the Politecnico Di Torino. AuroraLab is located in a pluralistic public school (G. Parini) in which 70% of pupils do not have Italian citizenship. This makes it a very diverse school reflecting the broader demography of the Aurora neighborhood located in the north of Torino. Aurora was a central working class neighbourhood that is now witnessing socio-demographic and economic changes. Those challenges are being addressed by AuroraLab, enabling the university to work hand in hand with marginal communities directly. The main goals of the initiative are educational and academic. Educational because the interaction with students allows them to learn outside the classrooms, by meeting urban actors and local residents (“learning by doing”). Academic because the goal of the project is to collaborate and to co-produce knowledge and thus establish long-lasting sustainable development solutions.

The discussions we had with the representative of the project introduced us to this university-led project which is located at the root/core of the topic it is studying. It gave us insight into the goals and actions of AuroraLab in the context of Torino’s post-industrial transition through various social, institutional, ecological and governance perspectives.

Our article will focus on AuroraLab in the context of the Aurora neighborhood. We will explore Torino’s post-industrial transition as well as explain how the AuroraLab works and how the school and the Lab embody alternative actors. Followed by an analysis of the different constraints and challenges faced by the project and the neighbourhood in a broader context.

Torino’s Post-Industrial Transition

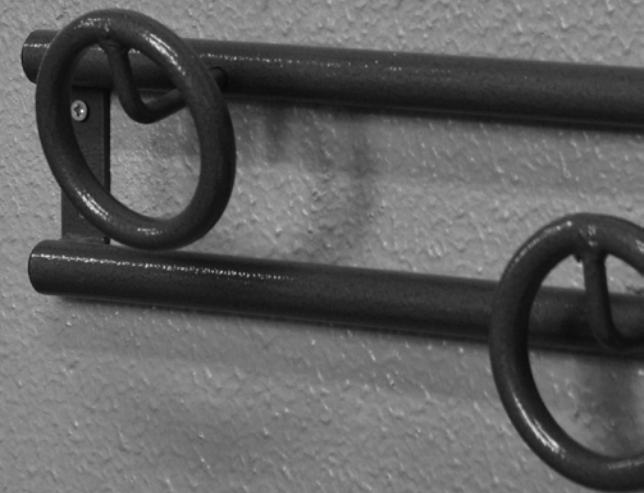
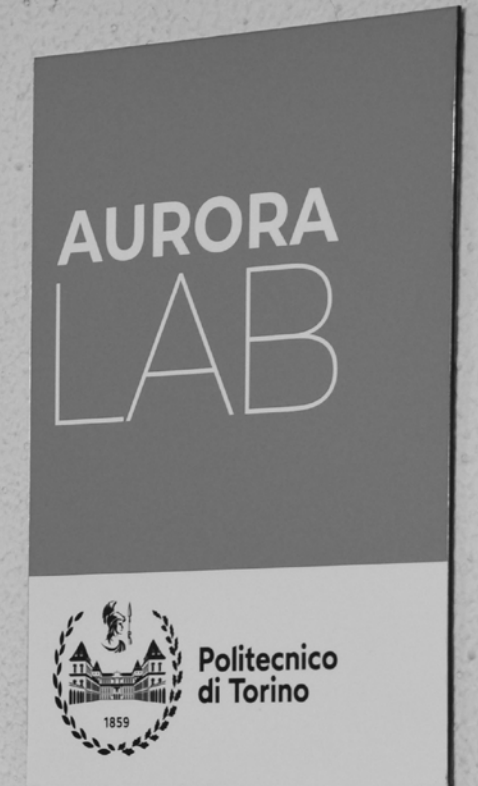
Our meeting with AuroraLab allowed us to discuss Torino’s post-industrial transition. The Aurora neighborhood poses an interesting case study for Torino’s attempts to renew and innovate in various fields. The discussion led to the topic of competing visions of the transformation to execute for Torino’s different actors and inhabitants. In this context, AuroraLab sheds light on the complexity of the neighbourhood and its moving dynamics. Different actors promote various imaginaries of Torino’s possible future, based on different discourses and projects based on innovation, entrepreneurship and social inclusiveness to create a dynamic and attractive city. However, those different visions do not always create a coherent project and many futures are possible. This as a result creates a dynamic of “endless transformation”, as explained by Francesco Puletti, research assistant at the Politecnico Di Torino and member of the initiative. Torino is a city constantly aiming to redefine itself, which depicts a strong determination to change into various potential futures. That way it also reflects weak points and uncertainties in the direction and actions of the city. The continuum of urban transformation projects reflects those multifaceted visions. As a city in search of new purposes, Torino has to rely on different private and public actors to renew itself.

The example of the Aurora neighborhood enables us to understand this dynamic. What we discussed focused around the roles of the multiple actors and how initiatives were made concrete into Aurora. Many different sources of financial funds can help create something at the neighborhood’s scale. Private investors seem to represent an important part of the financing, and they are positioned as key drivers of the redevelopment of the city, since it has no global plan of regeneration and that public investments are not as important. During the trip, the class encountered two examples for those private investments in Aurora. One of them, Gruppo Mattioda, works on

the construction of civil and industrial buildings as well as big infrastructure projects. On the other hand, the group Lavazza is located in Aurora and occupies a very modern and new building that hosts the museum for the brand and its communication as well as its national offices. Reshaping the neighborhood will enable new attractiveness in the area and job creation, while reusing and rehabilitating the areas. Our visits gave us the opportunity to reflect on the tension between economic sustainability and the doctrine of profits when investing in transformative projects while also facing important challenges regarding social sustainability. Economic and social sustainability are however linked and should be considered as such in the aim to create long lasting benefits for the city and its inhabitants. There is a risk of disconnect and isolation for the neighborhood when the changes made are detrimental for social equity and the wellbeing of inhabitants, and thus the attractiveness of Torino itself.

Those exact challenges make the future of Torino even more complex. As a post-industrial city, Torino has to reinvent itself. But the new projects should not be led at the expense of residents and social sustainability. Aurora is a densely populated area and is defined by its socially diverse population. The main demographic is rather young, with some from the working class, some students or young professionals, as well as migrants. This specificity creates diversity but also complicates the regeneration narratives and initiatives. Aurora is a socio-economically fragmented neighbourhood. The fragmentation is reflected in the physical shape the neighbourhood takes: the river separates the area, as well as the former railway that crossed the neighbourhood. Thus, one of the main goals when working in this area is to create a new harmony and to enable a sustainable urban regeneration of the peripheries. Torino is a polycentric city, and neighbourhoods have to be able to communicate coherently within its streets, but also with other areas. An important question to keep in mind for actors of the transition concern the beneficiaries of the changes.

AuroraLab aims at communicating and exchanging with residents, allowing professionals and local stakeholders to interact with the people that are negatively affected by the changes, thus providing a service instead of imposing a vision. AuroraLab has the aim of minimising the effect of urban renewal on the local population, in order to avoid risks of physical and emotional displacement. They also emphasize the importance of research to allow for participative planning





and sustainable actions. It is necessary to consider residents in their diversity, as well as the variety of economic and community-building activities. Some areas are empty, unoccupied or not fit to live in, or unofficially occupied.

Auroral Lab and the School as Alternative Transaction Actors

Beyond investment-driven regeneration, AuroraLab and the G. Parini school suggest a different pathway of urban transition, one where long-term, bottom-up engagement with the local neighborhood demonstrates more substantial community value than visibility-driven approaches. During the meeting, we also learned that Aurora Lab does not impose predefined urban solutions, but rather works with teachers, families, students, and local associations to co-produce knowledge rooted in everyday realities, which may also offer important theoretical implications for urban practice.

Thus, as a central public actor at the neighbourhood level, the school plays a particularly important role in this model. With about 70% of the students holding a non-Italian citizenship, it reflects the demographic structure of the Aurora neighbourhood in microcosm: a young, diverse and largely migrant population. Beyond merely an educational institution, the school functions more as a civic hub with institutionally guaranteed social inclusion, independent of legal status. Given that citizenship laws remain restrictive, the school becomes a place where citizenship is practiced in concrete terms, such as language learning, course participation and interactions among differences. Education here moves beyond academic achievements to enabling long-term social integration and belonging.

This demonstrates how civic mechanisms can meaningfully shape social cohesion within the neighbourhood over time. Rather than a short-term policy tool, Aurora Lab's approach demonstrates that generational timescales may better support enduring social outcomes. It aims to strengthen the social fabric of the neighbourhood by working with these children and families that will shape its future. From this perspective, the Aurora Lab and the school act as alternative transition actors, privileging relational and social sustainability over immediate economic outcomes. However, this model also reveals limits in addressing structural inequalities alone. While schools and universities can support inclusion, build trust and create environments for open dialogues, they cannot substitute for comprehensive policies on their own.

Funding Constraints and Governance Limits

The meeting also pointed out the structural constraints that shape the transition of Torino. Urban transformation depends on various funding sources, ranging from European, national, municipal to private funds. Thus, financial frameworks might affect priorities and could favor projects that produce measurable results, such as infrastructure upgrades or physical rehabilitation, which often align with funding requirements and political communication strategies. On the other hand, social and educational initiatives may be harder to finance and evaluate within short funding cycles. For example, outcomes such as strengthened cohesion or enhanced educational trajectories might indicate long-term challenges and are less immediately measurable. Furthermore, projects like AuroraLab must navigate fragmented or temporary funding arrangements, which may further threaten continuity and stability.

Moreover, the broader governance context complicates the matter. In a city that appears to be lacking a coherent regeneration plan, private actors and scattered initiatives often play a central role. While this enables flexibility and experience notations, it would also risk producing fragmentation. Bottom-up initiatives would possibly remain local experiences rather than structural solutions without strong coordination and stable public investments. The meeting also indicates that social institutions are increasingly expected to fill gaps left by economic reconstruction with limited public resources. While they play the role of mitigating inequalities, they cannot fully address them.

Conclusion

The Aurora Lab case demonstrates the coexistence of multiple imaginaries of urban transition in Torino. On the one hand, innovation, entrepreneurship and investment-led regeneration builds up public discourse and urban branding. On the other hand, social and educational actors focus on inclusion, citizenship and long-term cohesion in a more grounded method. However, these different pathways might reflect tensions between economic goals, ecological sustainability and social developments.

The meeting emphasized the unique role and potential of non-market actors in governing urban transitions, fostering long-term cohesion in marginalized neighbourhoods. In the meantime, it pointed out the risk of relying on such actors to fulfill structural social justice goals without stable funding and coordinated governance. Aurora Lab thus illustrates both the pros and limitations of socially embedded urban transition in a post-industrial city residing its future.



Città di Torino

*Steering Turin beyond its industrial past.
Urban imaginaries of governance*

*Lise Jerlin
Viet Nguyen*

The visit to Turin's Town Hall and the meeting with Paolo Mazzoleni, Deputy Mayor for Urban Planning, offered valuable insight into how a post-industrial European city is actively redefining itself through planning, governance, and collective vision for the future. Turin's departure from its industrial past is guided by a plurality of urban imaginaries mobilised by political actors, public institutions, industries, and civil society. Turin's ongoing transformation is driven by new regulations, the central role of innovation, and a growing focus on social inclusion, which together form three imaginaries defining what sustainability means for the city.

From industrial capital to regulatory recomposition

For much of the XXth century, Turin was the industrial capital of Italy, a role that profoundly shaped its urban form, economy, and social fabric. However, the decline of heavy industry and especially the departure of Fiat in the 1980s has fundamentally altered the city's path forward. Mr Mazzoleni emphasised that the existing city's master plan dated back to the early 1980s, a period marked by demographic growth, and assumptions of continued economic prosperity through material production. Therefore, Mr Mazzoleni endeavored to renew the master plan. To him, it was not merely a technical exercise but a symbolic and ideological act. Essentially, redefining what the city stands for and builds its future upon.

Mr Mazzoleni described the new master plan as "strictly regulatory", which means it is functioning almost as a constitution for the city. Indeed, it defines rules, land uses, and long-term orientations, leaving investments to be found elsewhere, often through European funding. It does not provide any funding. It does not guarantee financing, nor does it assume that resources are already available. This regulatory tool positions the city as a framework that enables transformation rather than a top-down driver of economic growth. Sustainability manifests through institutional durability, ensuring that urban change remains coherent, flexible, and democratically accountable over time.



Demographic change and the social imaginary of renewal

A second key imaginary concern is population and social sustainability. Turin has undergone demographic decline, largely due to an ageing population and little economic opportunity. However, recent projections suggest a stabilisation and even modest growth in the number of residents, the main drivers being students, young professionals, and international migrants. This demographic shift has prompted the city to rethink its priorities. Instead of planning primarily for expansion, the city now focuses on “retention” which means creating conditions (such as quality of life, employment opportunities, and accessible services) that encourage residents, students, and young professionals to remain in Turin.

The new master plan thus integrates policies for residents of all ages. On the one hand, the city aims to remain attractive to youth who came to study and who might settle down afterwards, emphasizing quality of life, accessibility, and cultural vitality. On the other hand, ageing is explicitly addressed as a planning issue, embedded in spatial strategies rather than treated solely as a social policy concern. Here, the city of Torino tries to resist the industrial decline by acknowledging demographic realities such as the intergenerational balance. Therefore, sustainability here, means focusing on the population’s needs in order for them to stay in the city for the long run.

Innovation and the reimagining of industry

Perhaps the most powerful imaginary mobilised in Turin’s transition is that of innovation. Rather than rejecting its industrial heritage, the city reframes it as a reservoir of know-how and technical culture. Turin is no longer an industrial capital in the traditional sense, but it remains a manufacturing city, now oriented towards aerospace, high-end production such as jewellery, and technologically advanced, low-emitting industries.

Examples such as the reconversion of former factories in the Aurora district or the Cartier plant illustrate this shift. These transformations reflect an industrial sustainability imaginary grounded in adaptation rather than abandonment. While the municipality cannot regulate private investment and actions directly, it exerts control over land use, enabling the coexistence of production, housing, and services within the city. This challenges conventional narratives of post-industrial urbanism that equate sustainability with a shift towards a service based economy instead proposing a hybrid model where industry is relocated, transformed, and made compatible with urban life.

Governance, participation and “doing things together”

The process through which Turin designed its master plan also reveals an important governance imaginary. The city succeeded in coordinating public action internally (only with workers from the municipality), even though architects and urban planners were not involved in the planning phase. This effort, described by Mr Mazzoleni as difficult but ultimately successful, was marked by strong institutional commitment and notable gender representation, with more than half of those involved being women.

Former industrial sites are increasingly reconverted, often through temporary uses, before being integrated into longer-term visions. Sustainability here is procedural, it lies in the capacity to coordinate actors, adapt over time, and allow experimentation within a regulatory framework.

Institutional competences and multi-level governance

Turin’s vision of sustainability is also institutional. In Italy’s multi-level governance system, municipalities and regions are autonomous public bodies, and most administrative responsibilities are assigned to municipalities unless broader coordination is needed. At the same time, territorial governance is shared between levels, the state



sets overarching principles, while regions establish the detailed planning rules. Within this structure, the city’s regulatory capacity is exercised through its political and administrative organs. Within local governance, urban and territorial plans are core decisions formally directed and overseen by the municipal council. In the Comune di Torino, Deputy Mayor for Urban Planning Paolo Mazzoleni is responsible for the master plan, implementation plans, private building regulation, public-space design, and the coordination of major urban and transport projects. Crucially, the “city” that plans is never only the municipality. Beyond it, the Città Metropolitana di Torino (which includes other municipalities around Torino) provides area-wide territorial coordination through its metropolitan plan (PTGM), adding another layer of compatibility and coherence.

Eventually, the Region matters as a gatekeeper of implementation and as a regulator. Regione Piemonte has constitutionally grounded financial autonomy yet operates under EU-derived constraints. Within that frame, it can exercise significant discretion over cohesion-policy resources by translating the approved European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programme into calls, eligibility rules, and project selection mechanisms. In practice, European funding only becomes usable locally when municipal projects align with both regional priorities and the rules attached to the funding programmes.

European funding and the environmental imaginary

Finally, Turin’s post-industrial trajectory highlights an environmental and infrastructural imaginary closely tied to Europe. The city has developed its capacity in securing European funding and has recently been successful in channeling over €3.4 billion into major projects such as Metro Line 2, the renovation of Parco del Valentino, the redevelopment of Cavallerizza Reale as a cultural hub, and the transformation of Manifattura Tabacchi. These projects articulate sustainability through mobility, public space, and cultural reuse.

At the same time, persistent challenges, such as car pollution, underscore the limits of Turin’s transformation. Turin’s relatively small and dense urban form is presented as an asset, offering a high quality of life that contrasts with more congested metropolises like Milan. Environmental sustainability thus emerges as a pragmatic goal, improving livability and reducing pollution while maintaining economic activity.

Conclusion

Turin’s departure from its industrial past is not a linear transition but a reconstruction driven by multiple urban imaginaries. Regulatory stability, demographic renewal, industrial innovation, collaborative governance, and European-funded projects together shape a multifaceted vision of sustainability. Rather than pursuing degrowth, seen as problematic in the context of an ageing population, the city seeks economic growth as a condition for demographic and social sustainability. In this sense, Turin presents itself not as a city in decline, but as a city actively redefining what it means to be post-industrial in the XXIst century.

This being said, Turin’s master plan mobilises a plurality of urban imaginaries that support social and economic sustainability, yet remains comparatively limited in its explicit engagement with environmental sustainability. While the emphasis on economic growth and demographic retention is understandable, the city must remain attentive to environmental well-being alongside cultural and industrial development. Failing to adequately prioritise environmental concerns risks undermining the long-term livability and resilience of the city, as even the most dynamic urban systems are vulnerable to decline when ecological limits are overlooked.

Fondazione Bloomberg

Jieun Park
Emma Strantz



Getting out of the post-industrial era - Philanthropic Vision and Local Ambition

Once the engine of Italy's automotive industry, Turin embodied the technological sublime and the promise of stable employment and a modern future. Its factories and assembly lines symbolized progress, speed, and national ambition. From the 1980s onward, however, deindustrialization and economic downturn reshaped the city landscape. Turin is once again a city learning how to develop, this time not through machines and assembly lines, but through frameworks of philanthropic vision and local ambition.

Philanthropic Vision - An Imaginary of Entrepreneurial Problem-Solving and Global Networks

On January 13th, in Piazza Palazzo di Città, we met Caterina Quaglio, who has been working since 2023 as a consultant from Bloomberg Associates. The organization is a pro-bono city consultancy established by the American entrepreneur, Michael Bloomberg in 2014 within Bloomberg Philanthropies, a global philanthropic organization. She outlined the collaborative work undertaken by Bloomberg and the City of Torino, describing how their partnership supports sustainable urban development through strategic planning, public engagement, and capacity-building initiatives.

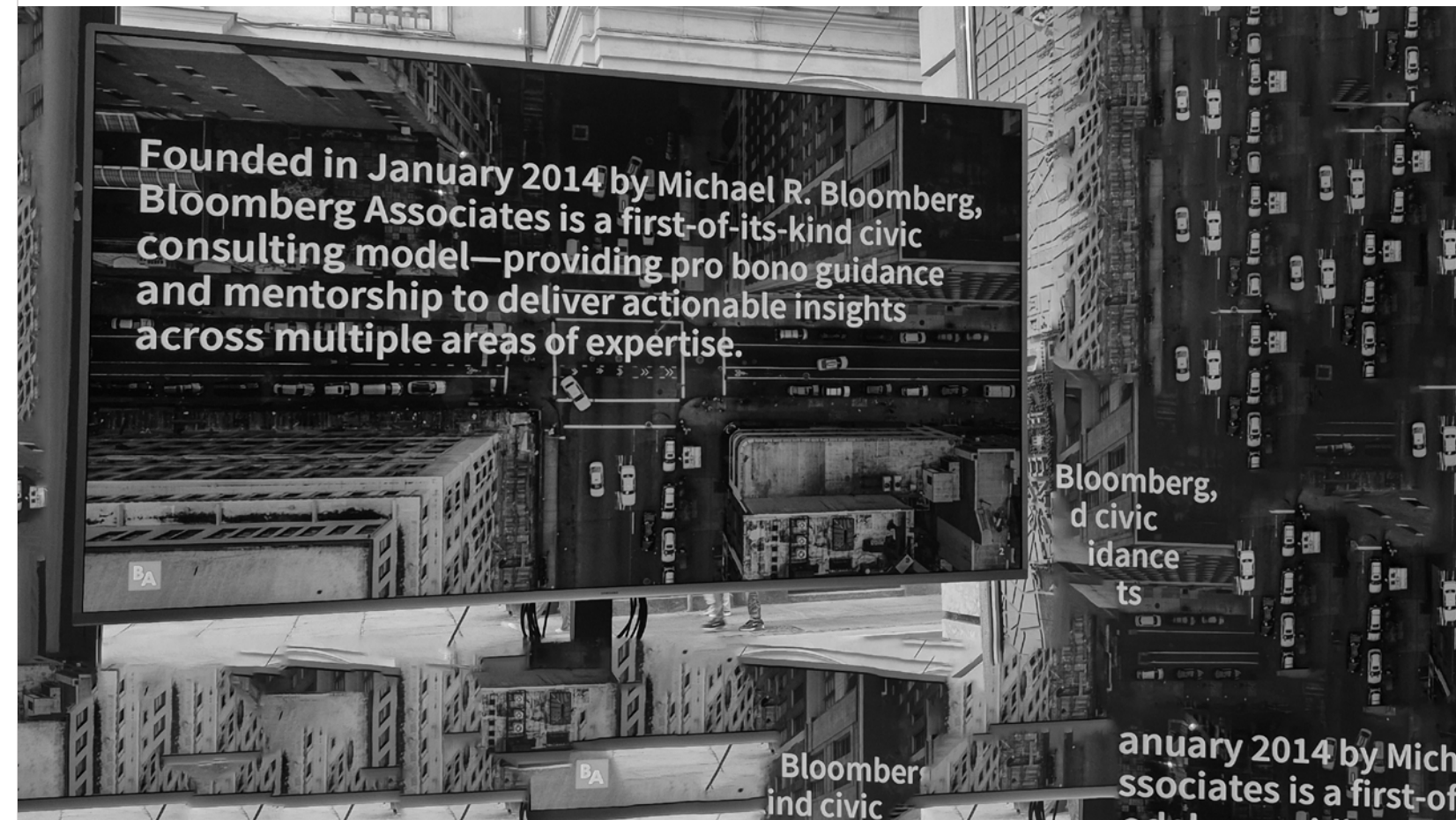
One of the first questions that emerged during the discussion concerned the motivation of the Italian city to engage with an American philanthropic organization and what Turin expected to gain from such collaboration. The answer was largely related to the need for greater efficiency in project implementation. Urban governance structures are often complex and slow-moving, shaped by administrative procedures and institutional constraints. By contrast, Bloomberg Associates brings rather an unconventional way of solving problems. The methodology they introduce resembles an entrepreneurial style of governance—emphasizing efficiency and results, often supported by data, technology, and evidence-based planning. This approach appears to complement the city's traditional governance practices, creating a balance that helps keep projects focused and improves the efficiency of the overall process.

The notable example of applying an efficient and result-oriented approach of Bloomberg Associates is the development of the communicative framework for Turin's new master plan. Traditionally, master planning in Turin had been treated as a technical process, largely confined to urban planners, architects, and administrative experts. However, the new master plan developed thirty years after the previous one, was perceived by the city

not only as a technical planning instrument but also as an opportunity to rethink its urban future by collaborating with the residents. In this context, the organization structured engagement through clearly defined phases, data analysis, and targeted outreach strategies, and supported the development of a communicative framework around the planning process, promoting community engagement and citizen participation, and partnerships with local actors. In this sense, Bloomberg Associates introduced a more result-oriented approach to civic engagement, balancing the traditionally procedural nature of urban governance.

Another important aspect of the collaboration was the opportunity for Turin to leverage international best practices and knowhow of policy design and implications. Bloomberg Associates works with cities across the world and brings expertise derived from multiple urban projects. This allows cities to learn from experiences developed elsewhere and adapt them to their local context. In the case of Turin, several public engagement strategies were informed by approaches previously implemented in other cities. The international experiences of the organization were also applied to innovation policy after Turin was awarded the European Capital of Innovation in 2023. While the city had developed different kinds of innovation projects, these initiatives remained fragmented and lacked a coherent narrative. Bloomberg Associates supported the city in clarifying its innovation strategy and strengthening its communication, particularly in presenting Turin's innovation ecosystem to an international audience.

The exchange between the city and the organization amounts to more than a consulting partnership. It reveals a city actively rethinking its trajectory after decades of post-industrial stagnation through new imaginaries of governance, drawing on entrepreneurial approaches to problem-solving and leveraging philanthropic and international networks. At the same time, the collaboration also reveals certain limitations from the perspective of



ecological transformation and the visibility of outcomes. Although sustainability constitutes a core pillar of Bloomberg Philanthropies’ global agenda, it did not become a central component of the collaboration with Turin. While Bloomberg Associates encouraged the city to recognize the importance of natural assets such as rivers and green spaces within its broader urban narrative, more ambitious sustainability measures such as climate resilience, mitigation, and adaptation strategies, remained largely outside the scope of the collaboration.

Furthermore, this case raises a challenge regarding the visibility of the organization’s impacts. Many of the initiatives supported by Bloomberg Associates aim to improve governance processes, communication strategies, and institutional efficiency. While these process-oriented efforts may generate meaningful long-term effects, their outcomes are often less immediately visible, highlighting the importance of making these impacts clearer and more accessible to broader audiences.

Local ambition - A post-industrial civic imaginary

The local ambition of Torino can be understood as a “back to the future” strategy: a city shaped by its industrial past that now mobilizes this legacy to construct a socially sustainable and participatory urban model. Since 2023, its collaboration with Bloomberg Philanthropies has provided a structured framework through which global



philanthropic principles are translated into local governance practices. A central pillar of this ambition is the drafting of the new General Regulatory Plan. Bloomberg Associates has supported the City and the Urban Lab in embedding structured civic engagement within the technical planning process. This intervention moves beyond advisory rhetoric: it introduces participatory methodologies, consultation tools, and organisational models that strengthen citizens’ access to information and active involvement in shaping Torino’s spatial future. The objective is not only to design regulatory frameworks, but to build shared territorial knowledge and reinforce local expertise capable of sustaining long-term co-planning processes.

Local ambition is equally expressed through institutional and leadership development. In 2023, Torino joined the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative, developed by Harvard Kennedy School and Harvard Business School in collaboration with Bloomberg Philanthropies. This program is designed to equip mayors and senior officials with strategic management tools to address complex urban challenges. Complementing this, the City was admitted to the “Managing Talent in City Government” program, which focuses on recruitment, retention, and professional development within public administration. These initiatives reflect a structural understanding of transformation: sustainable urban change requires not only visionary plans, but competent and adaptive institutions capable of implementing them over time.

Administrative modernisation further reinforces this trajectory. Through collaboration with Johns Hopkins University under the City Support Tracks program, Torino undertook a data-driven reform of its building permit procedures. Over a nine-month period, municipal managers and IT specialists updated digital applications, mapped internal processes, collaborated with professional orders to define technical specifications, and adopted new back-office management software. The initiative enhanced efficiency, transparency, and accountability, key elements in rebuilding citizens’ trust in public institutions.

The participatory dimension of Torino’s ambition is particularly visible in youth engagement and climate governance. Through the Bloomberg Philanthropies Youth Climate Action Fund, the City received funding in 2024 to support youth-led environmental initiatives. By allocating financial resources and technical support directly to young citizens, the program transforms participation into concrete responsibility, positioning the next generation as active contributors to the ecological transition. This civic engagement is complemented by the Bloomberg Harvard Summer Fellowship, which placed a graduate researcher within the municipal administration to develop communication strategies for ecological transition initiatives, particularly within the Climate City Contract framework (Mayor’s Cabinet International, 2024).

Taken together, these programs illustrate a coherent model of local ambition operating across multiple scales: spatial planning, executive leadership, human resource management, administrative reform, and civic participation. Torino’s exit from the post-industrial era is conceived as a comprehensive process of institutional strengthening and civic co-production.

Conclusion

Torino’s transformation from the post-industrial era is neither purely economic nor purely spatial. It is the product of interacting imaginaries. What we observed in Torino may be interpreted as an ongoing urban experiment supported by a philanthropic imagination that places strong emphasis on efficiency, data, and strategic coordination. This approach is premised on the belief that administrative fragmentation and structural constraints can be mitigated through result-oriented reform and capacity-building.

In the Torino case, Bloomberg Associates’ contribution centered on identifying governance barriers and institutional inefficiencies through stakeholder engagement and communication. While this method is arguably necessary in a fragmented post-industrial governance landscape, its impact often remains less tangible and difficult to measure. Their outcomes are often embedded in processes, coordination, and administrative capacity, changes that may not be immediately visible but can shape long-term governance trajectories.

At the same time, the relative invisibility of process-oriented reform raises important considerations. For philanthropic models to consolidate their role in urban regeneration, clearer operational frameworks, systematic evaluation mechanisms, and ongoing monitoring may strengthen both institutional learning and public transparency. Furthermore, the effectiveness of transferring practices across global networks could benefit from sustained comparative research that accounts for contextual differences among cities.

Nonetheless, the positive contributions of philanthropic engagement remain significant. Access to global knowledge exchange, methodological innovation, technical expertise, and in some cases financial support, expands the range of tools available to local governments navigating post-industrial transformation. Rather than replacing or weakening local governance, philanthropic actors appear to function as complementary catalysts within a broader multi-level governance system.

Ultimately, the Torino case illustrates how urban transformation in the post-industrial era unfolds through the alignment of imaginaries operating across scales. Philanthropic vision provides methodological orientation, European institutional frameworks offer structural support, and local ambition grounds transformation in civic practice. Whether this configuration will prove durable over time remains to be seen, but it demonstrates that contemporary urban regeneration is increasingly organized through frameworks of coordination rather than through the productive infrastructures of the industrial past.

Torino City lab

Patrick Ostermeier

Turin has set out to reinvent itself on every level. A central pillar of this reinvention narrative and agenda is the real and imagined power of innovation. This force is supposed to propel the city forward, far from the decline that has plagued it for many decades, in the direction of renewed economic success. Read this article to find out more about how innovation has been institutionalized and woven into the city's (new) urban fabric.

To meet our hosts for this visit we took the tram all across the city to the CTE NEXT - Casa delle Tecnologie Emergenti, where we met representatives of Torino City Lab. What seemed to be a former industrial complex, has now been transformed into an innovation hub - the perfect symbol for Turin's rebranding. Torino City Lab, as we learned during the presentation, was born out of its predecessor - the Living Lab (launched in 2016), to create an urban innovation ecosystem. The City Lab can be best described as an urban innovation platform with a triple mission: *opening up the city as a real-world testing site, promoting innovative solutions to concrete urban challenges, and connecting relevant stakeholders*. Imagine the city to be a playground, where new ideas, which may be restricted elsewhere, can be tried out easily under the careful watch of experts. The most important task of the platform's expert is to "translate" between actors from different disciplinary backgrounds and functional domains. One major success, according to our hosts in this regard, has been to "normalize" the presence of the urban authorities around the tables where innovation is discussed. They managed to create an atmosphere of trust and mutual empowerment, which is perceived as very conducive to the stakeholders' shared aspirations. Issues the City Lab addresses are manifold and range from smart roads to urban air mobility and artificial intelligence applications. As a member of the Net Zero Cities Network, its projects also align, in part, with Turin's climate mitigation and adaptation strategy around themes like energy systems, nature-based solutions, and sustainable transportation. In order to advance its goals, the platform relies on the 'quadruple helix', which brings together actors from universities, industry, government, and civil society (see below for more details). The resulting network can count on a strong array of assets, which are spread out over the whole city, or integrated into its inner workings:

- *8 Community Houses as Physical Backbone*
- *Stress Test Facilities*
- *Technological Infrastructures*
- *Competence Centers*
- *Innovative Administrative Toolboxes*
- *Immaterial Assets like Contracts*
- *OGR Torino: Innovation and Business Acceleration Hub*
- *CTE (Technology Transfer Center): Valuable for Startups and SMEs*
- *The City's Ethical Board for Emerging Technology: Supervisional Body for Translation into Responsible Services in the Future*

As we were told during our visit, the combination of diverse actors and assets seems to produce measurable results. For instance, I3P which is managed by the technical university of Turin, now ranks among the top 100 best public incubators worldwide and the city-wide innovation ecosystem has evolved into a well-known test site at the



European level, which increasingly attracts start-ups, know-how, and funding. Until 2025 the City Lab had also organized over 400 events, had collaborated with 210 companies, and allocated over one million euros in funding to companies. Despite these successes, there are challenges the City Lab has to address, like finding strategies to retain (young) talents and businesses to secure long-term benefits for the local economy, which has proven difficult so far, according to our hosts. Still, all in all, the City Lab team seems to be content with its performance and has a sense of pushing Turin forward, in the direction of change.

Technological innovation is indispensable to the dominant imaginary employed to guide Turin’s material, social, and ideological remaking. Materially, innovation has been manifesting itself through the technological and physical infrastructures, which facilitate the testing and scaling of “solutions” as well as the production and exchange of knowledge, with the objective of monetization. It is impressive how Turin has fostered an environment, which encourages experimentation and progress through trial and error. Other cities, which are facing diverse adaptation pressures may benefit from this “let’s give it a try” mindset, rather than remaining stuck on formalities and what is working for now but may fail under changing conditions in the future. We do, however, feel the urge to advice the involved stakeholders to interrogate the palette of projects they currently promote, as Turin’s reinvention should also explore possibility to depart from classic models of growth and innovation, which all too easily end up pointing towards overconsumption and “techno fixes” to bring about growth, rather than more holistic societal benefits. Socially, this (induced) run on innovation has been attracting people from close and far, to benefit from the encouraging conditions Turin offers, while the city has been struggling to retain both talent and lasting benefits. We could not help, but feel like Turin has been pouring its efforts into attracting what it needs from elsewhere, while paying less attention to how it could employ and transform the immense social and cultural capital that it carries within. How will smart roads and air deliveries improve the lives of disadvantaged communities throughout poorer districts, like Aurora, for instance? How could young people from all backgrounds, not just university students, profit from their city’s transformation professionally? In the interest of a just and inclusive transition, this dimension should be considered in how the city intends to innovate. Ideologically, this neoliberal imaginary does not mark a departure from dominant narratives of economic growth and an overreliance on technological solutions in our cities and societies. Does Turin simply want to be a winner again in the economic race and urban competition, or is there perhaps a path forward on which its progress and “success” will be measured in social, cultural, and ecological dimensions as well? What if Turin became the European capital of ideological innovation?



Mattioda Costruzioni Group and Lavazza

*Elif Bulut
Hazel Koh
Lucie Pinet*

Following in Fiat's Footsteps? The Role of Private Actors in Aurora's Redevelopment

The impact of Fiat's relocation of its headquarters out of Torino in 2014 is deeply felt to this day, especially in the Aurora neighborhood where it long served as a key pillar of the community's identity. On the third day of our trip, we had the opportunity to speak with two private actors, the Mattioda Costruzioni Group and the Lavazza Group, seeking to enrich this former Fiat district. Alessandro Saringella, the Head of Civil and Industrial Construction Management at Mattioda provided a tour of the abandoned Officine Grandi Motori site and presented the company's vision for a multi-use complex in its place. This was followed by a visit to Nuvola, the Lavazza Headquarters, where Alessandra Bianco, the Lavazza Group Corporate Communication Director, engaged in a discussion about the company's engagement with the Torino community and sustainability goals. Belonging to the same private sphere as Fiat, both Mattioda and Lavazza appear to aspire to having a role in Torino's urban development by giving a second life to the industrial desert left by deindustrialization in Aurora, spurred greatly by Fiat's departure. However, to what extent do these two actors seek to fill Fiat's former role and succeed in doing so? This article will begin by examining the goals of each actor before analyzing their impacts on the Aurora community and landscape.

Both Mattioda and Lavazza see the private sector as central to Turin's post-industrial redevelopment. Following the relocation of industrial activity, much of Torino was left with abandoned factories and polluted neighbourhoods. These two private reconstruction projects attempt to give these industrial wastelands a 'second life', but they do so in different ways and with different ambitions. Aurora, historically shaped by industrial labour and deeply influenced by FIAT's manufacturing presence, is now becoming a laboratory for regeneration led by the private sector.

Lavazza's 'Nuvola' project, the company's new headquarters, was built between 2013 and 2016 at a cost of €120 million. It is located on the site of a former power plant, just a few steps away from Lavazza's original headquarters. Inside the building, the connection between Lavazza and Aurora is highlighted with a panel entitled "Aurora and Lavazza: an ever-evolving story," which links the transformation of the neighborhood with Lavazza's growth and innovation, thus placing the company within the history and future of the neighborhood. Nuvola employs 600 people. Nuvola's location was chosen by cross-referencing a map of employees' places of residence with a map of places in need of a second life, suggesting an attempt to spatially anchor the corporate identity within the geography of a community. These elements seem to indicate that Lavazza presents itself as the natural successor to FIAT, as an economic force rooted in local employment and urban identity.

During our visit, it was mentioned that following the construction of Nuvola, rents in the surrounding area had risen by around 15%, which was seen as a positive development by the company, as it would stimulate economic



growth by increasing land values. In addition to Nuvola, Lavazza owns several buildings in the Aurora district, invests in student housing (on the site of its former headquarters) and sports facilities, and also has partnerships with several major universities in the city. All these elements can be interpreted as an objective to develop the economic sustainability of the company, the city of Turin, and the Aurora neighborhood by attracting younger and wealthier populations and creating an ecosystem around Lavazza.

Unlike Lavazza, Mattioda Immobiliare is not seeking to symbolically replace FIAT. Instead, it is operating as a property developer, maximising the land value of a 72,000 m² abandoned industrial site (Ex Officine Grandi Motori).

The Officine Grandi Motori is a former factory that manufactured boat and aircraft engines and employed many people. The site has been abandoned for 25 years. Its redevelopment is planned and must comply with certain technical and legal constraints, particularly regarding the facades of the remaining buildings, which must remain intact for heritage and architectural reasons, as well as the creation of a public park of a minimum size. Overall, the redevelopment plan includes commercial areas and a car parking facility, residential buildings, a logistics area, a hotel and the aforementioned park. The general plan has been approved by the local council, and more detailed plans for each individual unit are still to be examined. This project will also help to increase the attractiveness of the neighbourhood, increase land values, develop tourism and stimulate the market, which is a desired objective for a property development company. With this project, Mattioda's role in the development of Aurora is less symbolic in nature and more that of an economic operation aimed at restoring urban functionality to an industrial area abandoned by FIAT.

Although these two projects promote economic sustainability in the neighbourhood and the city, they also demonstrate an isolation and disconnection from the rest of Aurora, with increased land values, a desire to attract different populations, services that do not reflect the needs of neighbourhood residents, and especially in the case of Nuvola's limited physical integration of the proposed buildings into the neighbourhood's existing built environment.

However, both projects nevertheless make important contributions to the community, the environment, and the economy that cannot be overlooked.

While Mattioda’s project primarily aims to promote commercial activity and tourism, the company has made efforts to involve the local community in shaping its legally mandated public space contribution. Under Italian planning law, private developments are required to provide minimum amounts of land for public spaces and infrastructure. In this context, Mattioda voluntarily collaborated with the mayors of each district to gather feedback from their constituencies. Although not all demands were met, the project incorporates requests for a public park and a mixed-use development intended to serve a broad segment of the population. When prompted, Saringella also expressed openness to the inclusion of social housing within the planned residential units, suggesting some flexibility in addressing more social concerns at this early stage of the project.

The project also engages in environmental sustainability. The redevelopment of brownfields carries inherent environmental significance, as it involves addressing potential contamination from past industrial activity. To date, Mattioda has not identified major contamination beyond the presence of hydrocarbons and chromium. The company plans to remediate and manage the groundwater beneath the site and to cap it with a protective barrier to prevent exposure and limit the spread of contaminants. A public agency will conduct ongoing monitoring to ensure that contamination does not migrate and that the site remains safe for its intended use. Mattioda’s requirement to preserve the façade of the historic Lingotto building also entails an adaptive reuse design that limits material waste. However, moving forward, the project’s environmental dimension could be improved by a commitment to fully remove existing contamination and abide more concretely with sustainable building practices, such as the use of recycled materials or energy-efficient design.

Finally, while the project may stimulate the local economy through job creation and increased commercial activity, it is difficult to defend that it promotes long-term economic sustainability. The economic benefits are likely to serve a limited segment of the population, such as property owners, while other residents may experience increased financial pressures as a result of rising rents and gentrification.

Mattioda’s project therefore illustrates how regulatory frameworks can play a crucial role in shaping development

outcomes that involve environmental remediation and serve the public interest. Indeed, many of the project’s most tangible benefits appear to stem not from voluntary corporate initiative, but from compliance with legal obligations.

On the other hand, Lavazza deliberately presents itself as a central actor in the social, environmental, and economic sustainability of the Aurora neighborhood. It has sought to maintain the Nuvola complex as a space “designed for the well-being of employees and with the utmost respect for the environment, but above all a place open to people” (Lavazza Press Kit).

The company has made several efforts to support this vision of openness. For instance, La Centrale functions as a venue for local and international cultural events. The complex also hosts the headquarters of the Institute of Applied Arts and Design and preserves the remains of a paleochristian basilica for public viewing. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the site was repurposed as a vaccination hub (Lavazza Press Kit). According to the company’s Head of Press, Lavazza further engages the surrounding community by requiring each employee to complete ten hours of volunteer work annually, developing student housing on the site of its former headquarters, sponsoring athletes, and investing in the region’s first nursing school. The Lavazza Museum also introduced guided tours in Arabic, reflecting its recognition that the language is widely spoken in the local community. Moreover, our independent research has revealed that Lavazza is a key contributor to the initiatives of Stratosferica, an urban knowledge agency (to be elaborated upon in the following article), suggesting that its involvement in Torino’s urban transformation may be even more extensive than initially presented.

Lavazza has also demonstrated a strong commitment to environmental sustainability. Its headquarters have achieved LEED Platinum certification, the highest distinction awarded for building environmental performance. The complex integrates renewable and efficiency-oriented energy systems, including solar panels and energy generated by gym equipment, which together supply a portion of the building’s power. The site also enforces policies that reduce printing paper use and ban smoking within a seven-meter radius of the building, which contribute to further reducing its overall environmental footprint. Employees are also encouraged to commute with active modes of mobility through the provision of an on-site bike park.



Finally, Lavazza strives to promote economic vitality through its efforts to help revitalize Torino's legacy as the former capital of Italy. By establishing Nuvola Lavazza in Aurora, the company has contributed to extending the city center beyond the River Dora and enhancing the neighborhood's overall attractiveness. However, this narrative of economic growth cannot be untangled from the reality of gentrification, as evidenced by the aforementioned rise in property values. Without a solution to this affordability problem and greater awareness of the economic inequalities Nuvola Lavazza engenders, it remains uncertain whether Lavazza's presence will ultimately produce an equitable and broadly beneficial impact on the local community.

Conclusion

Both projects strive to integrate themselves into the Aurora neighborhood and give back to the local community, especially through the creation of public spaces and jobs and their commitment to sustainability. However, such initiatives may inadvertently lead to unjust consequences, such as gentrification, that cannot be overlooked. The two projects thus illustrate the complexity of perpetuating the private sector's dominant role in the development of a neighborhood.



Torino Stratosferica

Mathilde Le Moing
Roselyne Wakaba

Torino Stratosferica, the bull leading the cultural war :

The visit to Torino Stratosferica provided a new lens of vision, which fundamentally challenged the reasoning that had been developed from the earlier visits. Following two days of institutional discourses on planning and governance, this visit unveiled a type of urban thinking framed in a consciously challenging way. Rather than questioning how cities are governed, Torino Stratosferica introduced the issue of how cities are imagined and by whom. This shift suggested that urban meaning can also be constructed through culture, participation and even speculation. By so doing, it compelled a re-evaluation of whether formal planning was the sole or even the main actor in the urban transformation in Turin.

Torino Stratosferica operates as a platform that produces narratives of the city by engaging both local creatives and wider European networks. Its strength as a non-traditional urban actor lies in its ability to construct a compelling 'imaginary Turin' one combining its existing realities with their reinterpretation. One of the guiding statements attributed to the organization is that *"cities are [mental] weapons"* which summarizes that urban surroundings influence how individuals' reason, act and view the future and hence need to be consciously designed within culture and space.

Events, as instruments of urban intervention, are one of their manifestations of this logic in their fundamental pillars. Through events such as the Utopian Hours, the city, as a concept, is showcased, positioned and renegotiated. Torino Stratosferica enhances their strategy through effective communication and a clear brand identity making them go beyond their immediate context and create stories that spread at higher levels. In this sense, their work blurs the line between cultural production and urban practice by having the event as the intervention and visibility as the form of impact.

Their Corso Farini, Dorado and Precollinear projects further elaborate their work. On one hand, urban spaces such as Dorado illustrate the possibilities of re-using underutilized urban spaces as interactional and exchange spaces which supports the notion that a significant urban change may start on a small localized level. Alternatively, the Precollinear Park project presents the constraints of this approach. The temporality of it, being terminated by the expiration of a government tender, poses thoughts of whether such interventions are really transformative or simply ephemeral in nature.

One compelling thought that was raised during their presentation concerned the contemporary use of historic urban spaces. "Why not replace monuments with parks? People today need more parks than churches" This provocation around notions of heritage and whether space has a value in its historical context or its contemporary application was deliberately radical. The concept discloses one of the main principles of their work, namely that nothing in the city is sacred. Everything could be reconsidered. Yet this speculation raises another uncomfortable question: At what point does reimagining become detachment from social, cultural and political realities? The work of Torino Stratosferica plays a vital role in how cities can be perceived allowing a new voice and interpretation to be heard. However, there is the risk of being parallel to, instead of enclosed within, the structures which eventually form the city. The lack of clear linkage to formal planning processes so dominant in the previous

*Cities are
mental weapons.
Welcome to
Torino Stratosferica*



visits imply that this approach operates in a different realm altogether. Whether or not Torino Stratosferica is effective is maybe not even the question at hand. Rather, the main question remains: where does this efficiency lead and can there ever be any point of convergence of these two urban logics?

The paradox of the hipster : the conflict over the priority of the cultural and the economic drivers of change

Walking into the old warehouse transformed into a colorful start-up office, the concept of the hipster came to our minds, although we could not quite grasp its significance in Italian culture. If we define the hipster as an urban person with cultural capital, Stratosferica seems essentially composed of hipsters. The hipster is often mocked for their progressive political ideas and their paradoxical privileged lifestyle, although it can also be admired for its success of reconciling a good quality of life and leftist ideals, welcomed political ideas amongst their peer group. The criticisms against the hipster lifestyle revolve around the fact that due to the under-acknowledgement of their privileged position in society, they are usually White, wealthy, supported by their family, highly-educated, and hipsters tend to think of themselves as outside of the powerful ones. This distance to the reality of their social position can create a distrust in the projects they put in place, especially if one tends to favor bottom-up approaches. The hipster projects are top-down projects disguised as bottom-up ones because of this very differentiation to the powerful. Therefore, questions emerge especially on the (in)compatibility between capital and social and democratic projects. How can one act if they are on top of the social hierarchy but want to participate in the social and ecological transition? Should hipster projects be discouraged just because their organizers are privileged? Can a top-down project which aims at inviting democratic participation be considered as a success? The Stratosferica social enterprise is a great case study for these remarks.

During our visit in the office of Stratosferica, we were told that “creative cultural people [were] overlooked in the transformation of the city” – meaning that they felt left out of the decision-making process. Other visits in the week put these claims into perspective, especially those of more grassroots movements which are in fact excluded from it. Even if they do not interact directly with the political sphere, with the funds they attract and the large-scale projects they organize, they are part of the cultural and the economic sphere. Thus, they do indirectly have an influence on the political choices made within the social and ecological transition.

At Stratosferica, the emphasis is put on cultural projects which promote a good quality of life and fun. They believe that a good social transition is centered around “what makes citizens happy”. This perspective is interesting, especially in a context where environmental claims are considered as restrictive and punitive. However, while they push forward the importance of a cultural change, they tend to overlook the economic factors to be considered when transforming society, and notably the economic consequences of their cultural projects – namely, gentrification. But, looking at the profile of gentrifiers – hipsters–, and the economic boost new infrastructure and cultural events can bring to a place, one can understand the centrality of these aspects, although they were left out of the discussion.

Another aspect of the cultural importance of the social transition brought forward by Stratosferica is the diffusion of ideas across the hipster class. Thanks to international events like the Utopian Hours, Stratosferica allows for successful projects to be shared, transposed into a new context, and thus expands the scope of the social transformation. However, one can wonder about the diversity of the participants and of their projects.

Conclusive remarks

Stratosferica faces some challenges regarding the type of projects they conduct and the way they put them in place. First, their projects are limited in time either by design or because no one takes over their initiative to maintain it. Secondly and consequently, the temporary nature of the projects raises the question of their usefulness. What is the lasting impact of such projects? Are they worth the resources invested in them? Third, on the matter of participation and the creation of the projects, Stratosferica seems to invite participation rather than to invent it, following the top-down approach, which, we believe, does not allow for the project to be linked with the needs and wants of the local residents – meaning they asked local users to be part of the projects, but the projects themselves did not stem from the people. And by bringing an activity which was not necessarily asked for by neighbors, it attracts people who like the activities offered : gentrifiers. Finally, the links between the political actors – namely the municipality –, and other social companies were not clear to us.

Overall, although the promise of bringing societal change thanks to a shift in imaginaries is tempting, the social and ecological transition cannot solely rely on the cultural aspect, and must consider economic forces at play, and actors must be aware of their socio-economic position in order to use it as a strength. Here, Stratosferica embraces its privileges, although without really acknowledging them, to shape the way they participate in the transition. The idea of building on already existing competences to organize one's participation is interesting, although it lacks accounting for the greater picture.

Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo

Rose Chatel
Lou Garma

What is Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo ?

Origin and development

The *Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo* is a foundation that was created in response to the social, economic, and spatial transformations affecting the neighborhoods of Porta Palazzo, Borgo Dora, and Aurora in Turin. These areas, located in the north of Turin, are marked by strong multicultural traditions and civic engagement and have also faced increasing challenges related to housing insecurity, social fragmentation, and gentrification. Indeed, this neighborhood has long been marked by strong social contrasts. Located near Turin's historic center but outside the city until the nineteenth century, the Aurora–Borgo Dora area developed as a working-class district that welcomed successive waves of migration, particularly from southern Italy during the post-war industrial boom. Despite urban renewal programs launched in the 1980s, it has remained one of the city's poorest and most multicultural areas. In recent years, however, new processes of urban transformation and gentrification have begun to reshape the neighborhood, contributing to the displacement of more vulnerable residents. In this context, the Porta Palazzo market and its flea markets have played an important social and economic role by offering spaces for informal trade and social interaction. Municipal attempts in the late 2010s to regulate and relocate parts of these informal markets sparked local mobilization and formed an important backdrop to the creation of the *Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo* in 2019.

The Foundation emerged from the convergence of multiple long-standing grassroots organizations, including Fuori di Palazzo, the Oltredora Committee, the Arcigay Torino “*Ottavio Mai*,” and the CoAbitare Association. These groups had developed practices of mutual aid, cultural mediation, and collective management of urban spaces. Their collaboration led to the creation of a stable institutional framework capable of coordinating community action while maintaining a bottom-up orientation.

Karl Krähmer, is the vice-president of the Foundation and led our tour of the Aurora neighborhood. With a degree in Territorial Planning and now a PhD researcher on degrowth, he combines his academic expertise with a continued engagement in civic activism. His involvement in the Oltredora Committee and in ecological movements such as the “*Movimento per la Decrescita Felice*” contributed to shaping the Foundation's social and environmental orientation. As of 2024, the Foundation has expanded even further through the integration of artistic and intercultural organizations, reinforcing its role as a platform for dialogue and social innovation.

Organization and functioning

The Foundation operates as a nonpartisan Third Sector philanthropic organization based on voluntary participation. All governance roles are unpaid, in an effort to ensure independence from private interests and to reinforce community accountability.



The governance structure of the Foundation is divided into five main operating bodies. The Territorial Council represents all members and defines priorities. The Board of Directors is responsible for strategic planning and monitoring. The Executive Committee (of which Karl Krähmer is a member) is in charge of daily management. The Scientific Committee provides academic and technical support. Finally, the Supervisory Body ensures financial and legal compliance. A Secretary General coordinates operational activities and participatory processes. Projects are organized through open thematic working groups that are open to all individual participants, representatives, and members of the Foundation. They may avail themselves of the collaboration of external entities. The Foundation adopts a dual approach: it supports local actors while also developing its own initiatives. Participatory planning, fundraising, and impact evaluation are integral to its operational model.

Mission, strategic orientation and thematic areas

The Foundation's action is guided by its *Manifesto*, which emphasizes the value of intangible heritage, social networks, and collective responsibility. Community members are regarded as active agents rather than beneficiaries, and governance is based on shared decision-making. Rejecting traditional grant-making models, the Foundation promotes co-design and co-programming of local policies that involve the active participation of the community, sparking transformations that improve the lives of those living in the neighborhood, especially those in vulnerable situations. The role the Foundation is trying to fulfill is one that enables local actors, strengthens social capital, and facilitates dialogue with public institutions.

To pursue these objectives, the Foundation structures its work around four main thematic areas.

- **Public Space** focuses on promoting public spaces as inclusive common goods that foster social interaction, conflict mediation, and civic engagement.
- **Proximity** aims to strengthen local support networks and mutual aid practices, particularly for vulnerable and migrant populations, through communities of practice and microfinance tools.
- **Housing** addresses risks of displacement and exclusion by promoting affordable housing, collaborative living models, and measures to reduce evictions and gentrification.
- **Climate Energy Welfare** seeks to support socially just ecological transitions by developing participatory energy communities and addressing energy poverty.

Across these areas, the Foundation aims to reinforce social cohesion, improve access to rights and services, and enhance community capacities. The priority of this place-based organisation is to increase the quality of life of the inhabitants.

Analysis of the Foundation as an actor of change in the city of Torino

The bottom-up approach to changing the city with inclusivity

The Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo is a gathering organization for the different communities and initiatives of the Aurora neighbourhood. As the Foundation considers that the neighbourhood belongs to its inhabitants, it is strongly engaged against eviction of all types, from exclusion of the public space to gentrification. The Foundation, through the mobilisation of local residents, formulates demands to the public authorities regarding the quality of life in the neighbourhood. However it does not only make demand to the policy-makers : it also directly acts very concretely to improve the neighbourhood.

Aiming to foster inclusivity in the public space, the Foundation led an information campaign regarding homelessness, in order to avoid conflicts between neighbours and homeless people. Homeless people were generally having lunch in a park, and they were used to leave their garbage on the picnic tables. This situation was uncomfortable for the

other users of the park, finding garbage all over it. To avoid a conflict, the Foundation intervened. They started to dialogue with both the homeless and the other users of the park, to understand where there could be a solution. Following these discussions, volunteers came to the park everyday at lunch time, to sit with the homeless and to explain to them that it would be better for everyone if they could put their garbage in the trash can. After a few weeks, no more support from the Foundation was needed as the open dialogue led to understanding on both sides.

Following these discussions, volunteers came to the park everyday at lunch time, to sit with the homeless and to explain to them that it would be better for everyone if they could put their garbage in the trash can. After a few weeks, no more support from the Foundation was needed as the open dialogue led to understanding on both sides. Furthermore, the Foundation also participated in the enhancement of the Aurora public space. In fact, it participated in the transformation of a former church ground that was no longer in use into a park.

Finally and most importantly, the Foundation fights to provide affordable housing to the inhabitants of Aurora. They created the first Community Land Trust (CLT) of Italy in 2019. A CLT is an international approach for affordable housing. A CLT allows prices to not be submitted to the fluctuations of the market. This system separates land ownership from home ownership. The Foundation selected a 16 apartments building that could be renovated for their CLT project. They had only 6 months to raise the money necessary for the acquisition process. However, the specific CLT Foundation had not been officially founded and registered yet. Thanks to their associations network, the San Paolo Company and a public Italian institution, they managed to raise more than 1 million euros within the 6 months. In the same time, they created the CLT Foundation and were thus able to buy the building. The 16 apartments will be accessible for 70% of the market price. A mortgage option is also available : people would not buy directly but rather pay a rent and become the owners after 30 years. Should the owner of one of the apartments want to sell theirs, it has to be sold back to the Foundation or to someone on the waiting list, that's to say the person is pre-approved to benefit from the affordable housing. Most importantly, selling the apartment is not meant to be profitable. Indeed, the apartment is sold at the price it was bought, with a small additional value that corresponds to the evolution of inflation. The CLT Foundation continues owning the land, while the buyers only own their apartment unit. This system allows to protect the homes from land speculation, and thus to keep them affordable.

The strengths and limits of the Foundation

The main strength of the Foundation lies in its bottom-up approach, which enables it to be the best placed actor to understand the needs of residents by being on the ground, being led and sustained by residents, and representing the local voices in a legitimized context through building projects with and for residents. In addition, the Foundation acts as a bridge between the various organizations and associations in the neighborhood, helping to create connections, dialogue, sociability, trust, and understanding between people. The Foundation also promotes inclusion by bringing together diverse voices in its assemblies, including representatives from community associations such as the Filipino association, the Italian-Chinese association, and the Muslim association Dag Aligma. Nevertheless, certain limitations can be identified. Indeed, even though the Foundation is very aware of the issue of implementing ecological transition without exacerbating inequalities, gentrification is difficult to avoid. Karl Krämer himself stated that when the Foundation was created, its members were mainly "gentrifiers." But today, the Foundation is much more diverse and tries to avoid this phenomenon by engaging in continuous dialogue with residents, responding to their specific needs and building a social community.

Conclusion

To conclude, the case of the Fondazione di Comunità Porta Palazzo shows how urban renewal in post-industrial Turin can be shaped by imaginaries rooted in proximity, social justice, and collective responsibility rather than in competitiveness or large-scale redevelopment. By focusing on everyday life, local relational networks, and common goods, the Foundation promotes a form of sustainability that integrates social cohesion, housing stability, and ecological transition. However, their approach and projects operate under significant constraints, including limited resources and persistent market pressures that sustain risks of gentrification. At the same time, strong associative networks, institutional recognition, and growing attention to social and environmental justice create important windows of opportunity. Overall, the Foundation illustrates how grassroots actors can contribute to Turin's material, social, and ideological renewal by advancing locally grounded, justice-oriented visions of sustainable urban development, while remaining embedded in broader structural tensions.



UN PROGETTO DI
Fondazione
Comunità
**Porta
Palazzo**

Vuoti a rendere

How Citizens Engage with Housing Policy in Torino

*Aaron Pietzonka
Mathilde Roujansky*

Introduction

European cities face a housing crisis. Rents have risen by 18,9 percent on average in the last 10 years across the European Union¹. While the housing market in Torino can be considered relaxed, when compared to other Italian and European cities, the city's outlook of moderate population growth and urban renewal might tighten this market. This in turn has the potential to negatively impact vulnerable populations and lead to evictions. To understand the housing issue in the context of Torino and come up with possible solutions, we talked to the urban scholar and activist Erica Mangione.

Where is the City going ?

Part 1: State of housing in Torino

Sitting on child-sized chairs in the Scuola Elementare G.Parini, in the Aurora neighborhood, our encounter with Erica Mangione was like a throwback to school. Enriched by her research as an academic at the FULL (Future Urban Legacy Lab) of Politecnico di Torino, Erica was able to paint a clear picture of the state of housing in Italy and in Torino. As any good Professor, Erica started by providing us with definitions related to our subject. What is called the public housing stock in Italy is the stock of state-built and funded dwellings, rented for a very low rent, under conditions of low income for its inhabitants. It is therefore different from social housing which is either private-built or built through a public-private partnership. At the national level, the statistics are striking. 350 000 families are on the waiting list for public housing compared to the 16 000 per year that receive it, a low 4,5% of the families in need of support. On the other hand, on average, 80 000 evictions are conducted in Italy per year. No national policies have been put in place to address evictions as a whole. Instead legislators have been addressing this issue by criminalizing the occupation of derelict sites, thus making the crisis all the more severe. Those who are found guilty can face 2 to 7 years in prison but it also costs them the right to apply for public housing. With such a low percentage of families entering public housing each year (4,5%), there is still a clear lack of action at the national level to populate the vacant housing which adds up to 27% of buildings in Italy.

Now looking at the case of Torino. A walk through the Aurora neighbourhood showed us the most recent Turinese public housing building, built in the 1970s. That is revealing of the national context as the most recent large-scale investment in public housing dates back to the 70s in all of Italy. This half century of lack of investment brings about quality and quantity issues. Indeed, there is, on the one hand, a lack of available housing, but also on the second hand, issues of run-down public housing for the current stock. In Torino, the stock of emergency homes is very limited with around 300 homes in the city. In terms of evictions, Torino is ranked second highest in the country with an average rate of 1700 evictions per year. At the same time vacant housing represents a high share of the city's built environment. Indeed, 16% of available buildings in Torino are vacant. In particular, 2500 public dwellings are vacant. Given the city's plan to increase its population and working force by embracing immigration, the housing needs will only increase in the coming years.

¹ <https://www.oecd.org/en/data/datasets/oecd-DE.html>

APPROVARE VUOTI A RENDERE

Un primo passo per attuare il
Piano dell'Abitare.



Part 2: Proposition by Vuoti a Rendere

A community-led initiative called “Vuoti a Rendere” put forth a proposition aimed at addressing this need for housing by making use of private apartments in the city of Torino. This movement was created by residents of Torino. The movement was founded in 2024 by residents of Torino who are worried about the decreasing affordability of the housing in the city. They collected 1500 signatures in support of their proposition, which was then presented to the city council.

In creating their proposition, Vuoti a Rendere first looked for examples of existing policies in Europe. Three examples informed the demands they submitted to the city council. In Catalonia, Hàbitat3 – one of the main public foundations in charge of social housing – developed a scheme in 2015 that offered secure rental income and climate adaptation-focused renovations to owners of long-term vacant apartments willing to temporarily put their apartments at

the foundation’s disposal ².

Wallonia in Belgium, tackled the issue of vacant housing by passing three decrees in 2021 aimed at (i) the identification of vacant apartments through low electricity consumption, (ii) a procedure that forces owners to put their apartment on the rental market, and (iii) fines in cases of non-compliance with the aforementioned procedure. This is complemented by regulations dating back to 2017 that created the possibility for owners to put their apartment at the temporary disposal of public housing agencies (as was done in Wallonia) and offered substantial subsidies to incentivise owners to engage in the programme ³.

Scotland, which sees vacancy rates at twice the UK average, also decided to create new policy tools. The new policies fall under the “Scottish Empty Homes Partnership” which works with homeowners to bring apartments back to the market, and the possibility to increase the council taxes on empty homes by up to 100% ⁴.

With these best practice examples, Vuoti a Rendere proposed a three-step plan: know, prevent, manage. First, they underlined the necessity to create solid databases and map vacancies. They argued that the data already exists yet is currently spread over different agencies but can not yet be mobilized. Secondly, they pushed for the prevention of evictions through help from the public housing agency (“agenzia sociale per la casa”) and a stop to the sale of public properties. Lastly, the movement proposed the introduction of higher taxes for empty apartments as well as contact procedures to force homeowners to put their property on the rental market. In case of non-compliance by the owners, a requisition of the apartment would make possible the temporary housing of people in need.

The proposal is indicative of three strategic choices. Perhaps most importantly, the policy would only apply to landlords owning five or more apartments. The movement’s rationale had one clear catchphrase: “We do not take your grandma’s house.” Furthermore, rather than presenting a fleshed-out legal proposal with all details accounted

² <https://www.habitat3.cat/que-fem/projectes-innovadors/pisos-buits/>

³ https://urbagora.be/IMG/pdf/pdf_urbagora_-_politique_publique_logement_vacant-2.pdf

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/more-homes/empty-homes/>

for, the movement limited their work to three main ideas, thus allowing the city administration to find the solution most adapted to Torino. Lastly, the movement actively refrained from engaging with expropriation, as this would likely not have been politically feasible.

The proposition was passed in the city council of Torino in October 2025, a first in an Italian city. This step complements the city’s housing plan which was passed in June 2025. No concrete implementation plan has been presented thus far. It thus remains to be seen whether the proposition will help to address the vacant housing issue in Torino. The fact that similar proposals have worked in other cities outside of Italy, however, gives reason for optimism.

This being said, as the city moves in the implementation phase three challenges remain. Firstly, collecting and managing the data on housing vacancies in Torino will be a daunting task and require substantial efforts by the city, as the experience of similar proposals in other cities showed. Secondly, the policy will have to deal with conflicts between different population groups. With the city trying to attract young students, professionals, and tourists, as well as keeping current residents in the city, conflicts are all but inevitable. Lastly, it remains uncertain whether the policy meets significant political resistance on the municipal level. While 1500 signatures are a considerable amount, they might not represent the majority of Torino. In the next section, we will present some ideas on how to address these challenges.

Part 3: Potential for cooperation and solutions

Vuoti a Rendere initiative is a promising plan to address issues related to the built environment in Torino, at the crossroads of a large vacant housing stock and a social housing crisis. Aiming to bring suggestions for cooperation between different stakeholders that we met in Torino, our question here is: what solutions can be scaled to address increasing housing needs in a context of lacking public housing and vacant housing? While the city has a plan, published in June 2025, aiming to address public housing renewal, Vuoti a Rendere’s framework aims to build

its solutions on available, existing housing that is empty. While the plan sounds perfectly sound and the theory of rendering accessible built housing sounds like an economically, environmentally and socially efficient plan, we have seen in the previous part that some challenges remain.

The share of vacant housing is easily measurable. However, the keystone in implementing this reform is identifying the exact location and ownership of said buildings. This comes at a high cost for the municipality of Torino. A potential solution can be found in the use of Bloomberg tools for data collection and matching. Going back to Fondazione Bloomberg (P. 26), the city has been collaborating with Bloomberg Philanthropies, working in particular in the integration of digital solutions in the municipality’s administrative processes. Considering the challenge that this reform represents in terms of data, the collaboration seems well-suited to fluidify this reform process.

TORINO,
65.000
CASE
VUOTE

I nuovi dati sul
patrimonio
abitativo



Taking inspiration from the Urban Lab Torino (P. 20): Voci di Quartiere a similar public communication system could be implemented to inform the population about the reform. Stands spread out across the city and especially in areas with high levels of vacant housing and families waiting for public housing, would inform people directly about the reform and the opportunities it brings.

All the while, there are conflicts between various uses of the built environment. The city is welcoming immigration as a labour force, and is also attracting young talents, coming as students and settling in Torino as young adults. Then again there is an interest in the development of tourism. These conflicting interests might result in apartment owners capitalizing on their property for short-term rentals or student housing. Therefore, we have identified some measures used in other cities to incentivize landlords to rent out on the long-term. For example, in the Basque Country, there is a mandatory compensation mechanism: for each second home converted into a furnished tourist accommodation, the owner must put a property on the rental market, on a yearly basis, in the same city and with an equivalent surface area. In Barcelona, since the end of 2021, when a tourist rental closes in a “saturated area,” another can only open in a “sustained growth area,” i.e., outside the city and its suburbs. The city council is cracking down on unlicensed accommodation: it asked Airbnb to deactivate 4,100 illegal listings in July 2023 and fined the platform €60,000 for “advertising unlicensed rooms” (source: Voyage au pays du surtourisme: Une menace, des solutions, Lainé, 2024). To ensure the efficiency of this reform, we think that it would be very useful to cumulate it with such measures that aim to limit the profit-oriented use of vacant housing.

Conclusion

What we have seen during our study trip is that Torino is a complex city that faces a variety of challenges. The city has embarked on a transformative journey towards sustainability with the urban actors each defining sustainability on their own terms. This brings us back to the guiding question we had suggested at the beginning of our report:

"Which imaginaries are employed by the diversity of urban actors involved in steering Turin's material, social, and ideological departure from its industrial past and how do they advance distinct notions of sustainability in the city?"

As we were able to learn from the visits, every actor has their unique approach of answering this question. The imaginaries operate at different scales from the socially sustainable neighbourhood all the way to becoming a regionally influential metropolis. Private actors are playing their part in ensuring the economic continuity necessary for demographic sustainability. All in all it can be said that this series of articles highlights the complexity of forces at play in the city.

Starting with the articles that cover the public sector we can see a nostalgia for the historically powerful role that the city once played and the determination to revive it. This revival comes through ambitious policy work and the strategic use of national, EU-level, and international support. Technological innovation seems to be the main tool used to receive funding for infrastructure projects and ensure that the city becomes attractive to outsiders.

On the side of the private sector, the relocation of Fiat out of its historic seat in the city has left a vacuum. This manifests physically through the numerous brownfield sites that used to be key manufacturing sites with jobs and incomes attached to them. As shown through the examples of the Mattioda construction company and Lavazza, the gap is being filled with new enterprises and more long-term economic sustainability in mind.

Community organisations, together with researchers, are intent on shaping the city from the bottom up. There is a recurring image of the democratic city that guided our visit. Turin's revival should, in the ideal case, be led and decided on by all that live in the city. We have seen this through the installation of public furniture, the creation of an ambitious collective housing project, and the city masterplan that set neighbourhood engagement front and center.

Overall, this report aimed to display the complexity that makes up a city, especially one that is shifting its narrative and reimagining its future like Torino. On our study trip we were able to interact with the diverse set of urban actors, each moving the city forward into its post-industrial revival. Sustainability was understood to be a social, economic and demographic issue, instead of the usual ecological interpretation.

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