How Does Place Matter?

How Torino Met the Challenge for a New Development

Valentino Castellani
Former Mayor of Torino (1993-2001)
How does place matter?

The Torino experience

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Torino in Europe

City of TORINO
Surface 130 sq Kms
Population 896,918

TORINO METROPOLITAN AREA
Surface 1300 sq Kms
49 municipalities
Population 1,800,000
Torino believes that a “Place matters”…

provided that its identity is valorized
The Identity of a Place is based on

• Its Location

• The Quality of the Environment (both Natural and Architectural)

• Its Capacity to build up Memory during Time (it helps to accumulate different Areas of Knowledge)

• The Involvement and Pride in Affiliation of the Community (aware of its own identity)
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Torino is the connection between Italy and Western Europe
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Quality of Environment
2000 years of history and a strong identity, with the need to periodically reinvent itself

Torino Outpost of the Roman Empire for expansion in Europe

1500 years of relative immobility from Rome to the Savoy Dukedom

Torino Capital of Italy

Torino Capital of the Savoy Dukedom

Torino Olympic City

Industrial crisis

Deep Decline after the transfer of Capital to Rome

2006

1990s

1970s

1864

1861

1800

1500

1000

44 b.C.
Roman Empire: Torino, the Gate to France and Spain
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Roman Castrum – 44 b.C.

City Population

4,000
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Torino Savoy Dukedom Capital - 1563

City Population
7,000
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Torino 150 years later as Savoy Dukedom Capital - 1715

City Population

45,000
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Torino
Capital of Unified Italy - 1861

City Population
173,000
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The Industrial City - 1920

City Population

500,000
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The Olympic City - 2006

City Population
930,000
In a Crisis
Torino is a City
(Community!!)
used to reinventing itself
Torino’s Historical Heritage

- **Entrepreneurial and Organizational Knowledge** (as the result of the long experience in Organization of the State)

- **Sensibility to Urban Form and Landscape – Artistic Taste and Attention to the Quality of Life** (Long presence in the City of the Royal Family and the Nation’s Upper Classes)

- **Cultural and Scientific Tradition** (Torino was the Italian cradle of Positivism that produced widespread scientific and technological knowledge)

- **Urban Planning Skills** (all of Torino’s expansions were accurately planned!)

- **Consciousness of being a node in the connections to South-Western Europe** (international vocation towards Europe)
Summarizing

The Culture of the City is characterized by the co-existence of
Fantasy and Innovation with
Know-how and Technological Capacity
The elements of the crisis (mid 70’s to mid 90’s)

- The **decline** of the Industrial Era (Structural Recession of FIAT)
  - Unemployment, Abandoned urban areas,
  - End of the “one-company town” model

- A political and administrative **Crisis of the Local Government**
  - Lack of political leadership, City without future prospects
Recent past: Torino and Fiat
End of the “One company town”

Employees in automobile industry

Automobile production (x 1000)
Between 1986 and 1993

Torino faced several Political Crises in the City Council resulting in the sequence of 4 Mayors and a Government-appointed Commissioner.
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Turning point: 1993

- The Italian Parliament approves the Reform in Mayoral Elections. Instead of being appointed indirectly by a council of elected politicians Mayors would henceforth be directly elected by their own constituents.

- From the one company town to several entrepreneurial initiatives in innovative areas. Cultural and scientific resources are valorized (education and research)

- New urban plan based on new infrastructures, reuse of old industrial areas, new architectures and urban landscape

- Urban requalification and social inclusion

- Use of a Great Event to reposition Torino on the World Map

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- Directly-elected Mayor

- 1st Strategic Plan and ITP (Investment in Turin and Piedmont) Agency

- New Urban Masterplan

- Neighborhood Regeneration Plan

- 2006 Winter Olympic Games
Revolutionary Effects on the City Government

Mayor with new visibility and leadership
Can appoint directly own executives
Accountability and transparency come to characterize the system
Powers expanded by a wave of decentralization legislation

I was elected Mayor in June 1993 leading a center-left political coalition. Confirmed for a second term in 1997. Continuity in the Government of the City, confirmed by the election of my successor (Chiamparino) leading the same coalition until 2011.
Strategies and Operational Tools

Strategic Plan

• Torino was the first City in Italy to adopt this innovative governance tool

• A wide bottom-up process was stimulated promoting the participation of the main actors of the whole Community (both public and private, institutional and social)

• Six main strategic lines were identified.
Strategies and Operational Tools

ITP (Invest in Turin and Piedmont) Agency

• The first Italian Regional Agency dedicated to attracting foreign direct investments

• A non-profit organization created by public institutions and associations of private companies

• The one-stop-shop for foreign businesses that want to start operating in Torino and Piedmont.
The New Backbone of the City

• strengthening of the Torino railway node
• reuse of the adjacent abandoned industrial areas

The “Spina Centrale” (Central Backbone)
• a North-to-South 15 Km urban boulevard over the railway track.
• a link among the old industrial areas transformed to mixed-use development areas (3.7 millions of sq m)

The “Passante” (Underground Railway Link)
• The old railway track is increased in capacity and completely underground.
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Torino Central “Backbone” (La Spina)
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New Central Backbone

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**Lingotto as paradigm:** Converting a “monument” to automobile production…

Reuse of Old Industrial Areas
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Reuse of Old Industrial Areas

…into a cultural and commercial center
Social inclusion

• Several projects in different neighborhoods, both in gray areas of the city and near historical downtown

• In all projects, an integrated approach to social exclusion was crucial

• Direct involvement of people from the project phase on

• The Local Actors are involved and they invest human, cultural, social, economic resources
An example: Project “The Gate”

Porta Palazzo is the biggest open air market in Europe

Some figures

52.000 sq.m Piazza della Repubblica
1.000 Market Traders
4 covered pavillons with
250 permanent shops
300 shops and crafts
40.000 customers/day
100.000 customers on Saturday
15 tons/day garbage
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An extraordinary opportunity

- To promote the international image of Torino (intangible legacy)
- To concentrate huge financial resources over a very short period (six years) for sustaining investments in infrastructures
- To create involvement for an immediately recognizable improvement
- To generate a sense of affiliation.
• The Community rediscovered the city spaces as opportunities for meeting together and celebrating

• The Olympic Games were the turning point from the depression of the late 90’s to a new pride in affiliation
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Intangible Legacy
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Olympic Ice Hockey Venue
and
Ceremonies Stadium

Tangible Legacy
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Palavela: Olympic Short Track and Figure Skating Venue

Tangible Legacy
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Lingotto Area: Olympic Village and Speed-skating Stadium
After the crisis of the 90’s the question was:

“Will Torino succeed in overcoming the decline?…”

AND NOW

The most frequently-raised question is:

“Will Torino succeed in maintaining its capacity for innovation?…”
What about the future?
Torino’s New Claims

Sapere e saper fare

Passion lives here

Always on the move
What about the future?
Torino’s New Challenges

Forthcoming Events

- 2008 Torino World Design Capital
- XXIII World Congress of Architecture Torino 2008
- 2011 Celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy
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New Urban Architectures

New Porta Susa Railway Station

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New Multimedia Library
New University Structures in the heart of the city

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New Headquarters of
Intesa-Sanpaolo Bank
(Major European Bank
founded in Torino)
New Piedmont Region Administration Building
Lessons Learned

• **A crisis** causes problems and depression in a community. It can also be an **opportunity for change and innovation**.

• **It is important to identify and share the city’s strengths** and relate them to its historical heritage. A **vision shared by the whole community** is needed.

• **Usefulness of a Great Event (2006 Olympic Games) to:**
  - increase investments
  - focus a deadline
  - create pride in affiliation
• Planning through a **bottom-up process and flexible governance tools**

• **Integrated approach to regeneration projects** (urban upgrading, security plans, social inclusion projects and community involvement).

• **Strong political leadership** to make the projects credible.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

Suggested reading:
A. Winkler “Torino City Report” - Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) Research Centre of the London School of Economics (www.lse.ac.uk)