

## **Milan and Ticino (1796-1848), Shaping the Spatiality of a European Capital'**

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This research aims to study the evolution of Milan and of the Swiss Canton of Ticino between 1796 and 1848, thanks to an international cooperation and an interdisciplinary partnership. The study of the city's physical transformations and its projects is based on the use of a cross-cutting approach to the three fields that had a strong impact on the shaping of public space: legal changes, editorial policies, public opinion and political thought. The research addresses urban spatiality – a physical and cultural reality – taking the example of Milan and its territory and the Swiss Canton of Ticino in the first half of the 19th century: a case-study that can be used to construct a sophisticated model of hybridisation, in which physical, architectural and urban transformation, changes in culture and legal frameworks, were determined by the domination first of Paris and then Vienna, while not interrupting the continuity of practices and customs specific to the Italian-speaking areas in Italy and Switzerland that were its field of influence. Adopting a major hypothesis defining spatiality as a reality both physical and cultural, this research combines in an interdisciplinary perspective approaches used by the history of law, cultural history and history of architecture.

The study period, 1796-1848, corresponds to the time when Milan assumed the status of a capital city, first "French" and then, from 1815, "Austrian" in the Lombardo-Venetian Kingdom. This historical shift, with its impact on the city's physical and cultural transformations, also saw Ticino acquire a political identity under French domination. In Milan there emerged an assertion of a consistent cultural policy that occupied its physical and intellectual space and turned it into a laboratory of modernity for all Italian-speaking areas, a laboratory that caused Ticino to examine the specific nature of its membership of the Helvetic Confederation. Milan will be presented as the archetype of a contemporary European capital: an alternative to the model of national capitals that involves an idea of spatiality combining the city's physical, intellectual and cultural dimensions.

The project's general objective is to develop, starting from the Milanese example, a method and instruments that are valid for addressing a wider corpus of European cities, and thus to propose a new paradigm that will identify, indeed assert, the characteristics and values of relative centrality within a complex territorial system in which Ticino played a leading role.

## **Subproject 1. *Legal space and modernisation: the role of law in the development of Milan and Canton Ticino.***

- 1. Making Space – Making State: Building Modernity through Law**
- 2. Policies and legal instruments of urban and architectural transformations**

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The formation of Milan as a capital city in the first half of the 19th Century has to be viewed as part of a broader process of redefinition of physical and cultural space that is commonly termed modernisation. Law was not only the instrument but also the object of this process: the modern State is defined as a “Constitutional State”, in accordance with which law increasingly becomes the principal instrument, and at the same time the limit, of politics. The definition and the administration/control of the territory, the judicial organisation, the relationship between “private” and “public”, education and culture are just some of the areas that are principally shaped, physically and culturally, through the instrument of law. The primacy of the legislator and the claim to limit legal sources to State law alone, whose maximum expression was the codes, also required a transformation of law. In this respect, law itself was an object of modernisation, subjected to radical reforms. Milan as a “capital” can therefore be seen as the result of the interaction between the evolution of law and that of other areas of society. The proposed research project intends to contribute to a greater knowledge of this transformation by following two paths:

(A) Analysing how law contributed to creating the new spatiality. The modern vision of sovereignty contrasts with the fragmentation and spatial discontinuity of pre-modern societies and conceives the territory as a neutral tabula rasa coinciding with the borders of the state and subjected to the will of the latter. Political power implements various strategies to achieve the congruence between “imagined” space and “lived” space, and law is one of the principal instruments within these strategies.

The project will have to analyse how, and with what outcomes, the Austrian and French regimes constructed this modern spatiality through law.

For the Canton Ticino, the project will have to analyse the troubled construction of modern statehood. Ticino presents itself as a laboratory of modernity very different from that of the Milanese area, by which it is still influenced. The project will therefore focus on the same factors as will be analysed for Milan, thus allowing for comparison and the accurate detection of reciprocal influences. Also for Canton Ticino the project will deal with the codificatory dimension and the role codifications played in the nation-building process.

(B) The second path to be followed concerns the legal dimension of Milan's urban-architectural transformations. The starting point lies in the legislative action on the concept of private property. On the one hand, civil codes are considered as instruments necessary for affirming bourgeois and capitalist interests, the liberalisation of the economy and the dynamism of the real-estate market for the purpose of urban expansion and the growth of building. On the other hand, liberalisation does not mean anarchy, but new order, and therefore the imposition of a very precise regulatory, material and procedural framework. Apart from the programmatic declarations and the contents of laws, the research will focus on the methods of implementation of the new private-law model, and the influence that the regulatory framework exerted on urban planning and building.