Re-coding. Rethinking the rules of cities

# the Future *Urban Legacy* Lab

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# a report 2017-2021

# Re-coding

## Rethinking the rules of cities

TYPE
Research project

YEAR
2018 - ongoing

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Throughout history, the codification of urban rules has taken many forms:

- The control and exploitation of nature-related phenomena;
- The regulation of litigation in the city of the modern age;
- Hygiene control during the second industrial revolution;
- The control of the image of the city through the catalogs of ornamentation;
- The coordination of urban forms in the practices of the new urbanism.

The Re-Coding project investigates the ordinary making of the urban fabric. In this context, the city is conceived as the combined result of spatial planning, market forces, swinging frames of reasoning, conformity to norms and individual expectations and aspirations. To do so, the Re-Coding project focuses on the role of urban codes in shaping the structure of our cities. Specifically, F*UL*L aims at exploring the intertwined connection between urban codes and city morphology. With urban codes a set of rules should be intended that regards singled out 'elemental types' (such as height, roofing, windows, and the like) and their relations within the built environment with no correspondence to a predetermined and unique location. Yet, the complexity of regulation system might hinder the immediate understanding of the extent and impacts that such regulations have on the built environment, particularly when the overlapping of well-intentioned regulations generated in different time frames result in distorted outcomes, such as use segregation, contradictory directions and scarce flexibility, to name a few, in a time in which cities have to deal with progressive modifications rather than massive greenfield expansions.

The complexity of the Italian regulatory system is an obstacle that we face daily. It slows down administrative works, makes it difficult to foreseen the effects of rules, and impinge heavily on the economic activities of citizens and businesses. The need for rationalization and optimization of such system is not new. Simplification and streamlining of bureaucracy have been keywords in the international political environment since the post-war period. Despite many efforts have been taken to overcome such issue – also due to the progressive increase of complexity of our societies and the consequential accumulation of rules and laws – the issue of complexity of regulation system cannot be considered solved yet.

## 1 An Effective Solution

F*ULL* has created the Re-coding project, as well as a research team that deals with the simplification of urban rules. The scope is to support policymakers and administrations to optimise the complex system of rules.

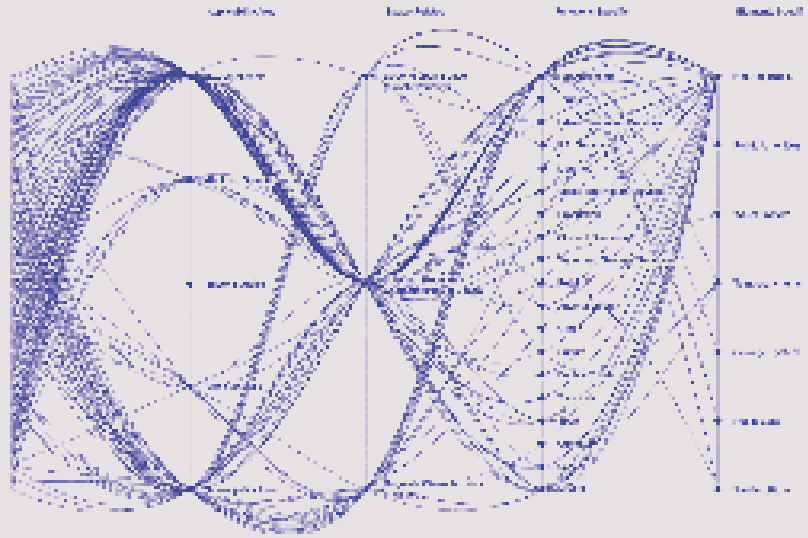
## 2 An Alternative Method

F*ULL* proposes a more radical alternative to the current procedural simplification approach. The method involves: reduction of procedural steps and distribution of responsibilities between actors involved. Existing rules are systemised and put in order. Overlaps, redundancies and contradictions are identified and reduced. Opportunities to reorganise the content within regulations or even to rewrite parts of the rules emerge.

## 3 An Opportunity to Be Seized

Making rules more readable and transparent means unlocking the potential for transformation of cities and regions.
A 'simple' city is a city in which:

Citizens can easily understand how to transform their properties, feel active in urban transformation and more involved in the system.
Municipalities – as well as provincial and regional administrations – can effectively facilitate ongoing procedures and transformations, rather than resolving disputes.
Companies are encouraged to invest in a context with clear rules that enable clear risk assessments.
Professionals can offer more competitive design costs thanks to simpler compliance verification.



## 4 An Exportable Model

The Re-coding team has been experimenting with this approach since 2018, working alongside the Municipality of Turin. Thanks to its interdisciplinary nature, the group has the skills to operate in different regulatory areas, including construction, energy, urban planning and environmental design. Through this method, which puts simplification at the core of the activity, F*ULL* is (re)defining an exportable and replicable model.

## Natalia Bonilla Research fellow

finished her major in Architecture at the Universidad de Costa Rica, Natalia gained experience for two years in design and construction as a junior architect in the San José based firm Grupo Térraba. In 2015, she undertook the masters joint programme PLANET Europe, part of Erasmus+, between Radboud Universiteit (Netherlands) and Cardiff University (United Kingdom) in European Spatial Planning and Environmental Policies.

## Caterina Montipò PhD candidate

is an architect and PhD She graduated from Politecnico di Milano in 2013, and earned her PhD from Politecnico di Torino in 2019 with the thesis "Loft Working. Urban manufacturing spaces in North American cities." She has a rich and diversified international experience developed both as a student as well as a professional between Spain (Universitat Politècnica de València), Chile (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile), and USA (Carnegie Mellon University). She has been collaborating with different architectural studios and engineering companies between Chile (2013-2014) and Italy (2015-current).

## Maicol Negrello Research fellow

is an architect and research fellow at F*UL*L and DAD (Politecnico di Torino). Graduated in Architecture after two international experiences at TTÜ Tallinn and at the CCA (Montréal), he holds a PhD at Politecnico di Torino with the thesis "Architecture for urban agriculture". He is currently involved in studying the different forms of integration of nature in the city in the research NUI- Nature as Urban Industry.

## Emanuele Protti PhD candidate

is an architect and PhD student in Architecture History and Design at Politecnico di Torino. He collaborated with Carlo Ratti Associati, Plateau Collaboratif, UdA Marcante-Testa. In 2016, he won in collaboration with Plateau Collaboratif the international competition for the redevelopment of the industrial sector Pasubio in Parma. He lives and works in Turin.

## Elisa Sirombo Research fellow

architect, leed ap bd c, o m, itaca protocol expert Since 2011 he has been a consultant on energy-environmental sustainability issues and on the LEED and Itaca certification processes and since 2014 he has been collaborating with Macro Design Studio. Since 2013 research fellow at the Department of Energy of the Polytechnic of Turin, he carries out research in the field of sustainable construction. Author of several technical and scientific publications.



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