

Our Studio Is the City. Local Broadcasting and Political Information in the Archives of Videogruppo Piemonte*

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Abstract

The article explores the history and editorial ethos of Videogruppo Piemonte, a local television channel active in Turin between the mid-1970s and early 1990s, situating it within Italy's post-deregulation media landscape. Founded by Sergio Rognà Manassero, Videogruppo embodied a civic, community-oriented model encapsulated in the slogan "Our studio is the city". Programmes such as *Cronache Torinesi* and *La città domanda, risponde il sindaco* configured proximity and participation through direct contact with viewers, limited mediation, and site-specific work. Anchored in the surviving archive—a dispersed corpus of U-matic tapes, administrative records, and "grey" documentation—the study reads these materials as both record and remainder, an index of the contingent conditions under which local television operated. Their fragile, fragmentary state is integral to the argument, showing how Videogruppo's editorial experiment was grounded in civic engagement yet marked by structural precarity. Tracing the interplay between practice and material survival, the article reflects on how local television articulated forms of public discourse and democratic presence that now persist chiefly via archival residues, prompting a rescaling from institutional narratives to the improvisational textures of local media memory.

Keywords: Archival fragility; Local broadcasting; Participatory media; Political television; Turin.

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1 A Local Broadcaster for a Local Community

In a 1981 interview conducted by Laura Cerro and broadcast on the local television channel Videogruppo Piemonte, Rinaldo Bontempi, regional councillor for the Italian Communist Party, comments on a recent memorandum issued by the Regional Council of Piemonte, in northwestern Italy. The document advocates for the coexistence of the national public broadcasting service—specifically Rai—and local private channels such as Videogruppo, provided that these latter remain confined to local or regional transmission. Councillor Bontempi explicitly articulates a dual function for the memorandum: first, it reaffirms the legitimacy of the 1976 Constitutional Court ruling that authorised local private broadcasting; second, it underscores the cultural and political significance of such broadcasters as platforms amplifying the voices of local communities often marginalised within national media discourse.

Bontempi further suggests that the memorandum aims to quell controversies surrounding the potential for private broadcasters to claim national reach, asserting instead the region's official stance that private channels should maintain a distinctly local and community-oriented identity. This seemingly modest piece of regional television, retrieved from the Videogruppo archives, encapsulates a constellation of issues surrounding the evolution of local broadcasting in early 1980s Italy. It functions simultaneously as a manifestation of what has been described as the “unlikely” (Dotto and Piccinini, 2006) or “submerged” (Grasso, 2006) history of local broadcasting – here materialised in a self-reflexive audiovisual moment wherein a local politician discusses, on local television, the sociopolitical role and spatial limits of the medium.

At the same time, Bontempi's interview offers a revealing instance of Videogruppo's distinctive televisual style and editorial practice: an extended, unembellished conversation with a local political figure, filmed in Piazza Carignano—a historically charged square in central Turin—conducted with Cerro's characteristic restraint and understatement. As this article will demonstrate, such a production embodies what may be defined as Videogruppo's *editorial ethos*: a consciously and deliberately local (indeed, hyper-local [Metzgar, Kurpius, and Rowley, 2011]) orientation that privileges the urban specificity of Turin over a broader regional scope. This ethos stands in marked contrast to the contemporaneous ambitions of other private broadcasters—most notably those associated with Silvio Berlusconi in Milan—whose operations would soon expand to national prominence.

2 Assembling an Archive: Videogruppo and the Material Fragility of Local Broadcasting

In the fractured—and in some respects “invisible” (Barca 2007)—landscape of Italian local broadcasting, the case of Videogruppo Piemonte stands as both exemplar and anomalous: a channel founded at the geographical and institutional periphery—launched in Pino Torinese, a small town just beyond Turin's urban limits and fairly close to the French border—yet one that strove to embody a local public service ethos in the wake of national deregulation. The recovery of its archival traces—partly dispersed, never originally intended for long-term preservation, and deeply contingent, as we shall see—forces us to confront not only a forgotten chapter of Turin's media history, but also to interrogate the epistemological and material conditions that frame and shape archival practices in the domain of private television.

The very notion of an archive when applied to local and independent broadcasters might call for a methodological recalibration. While institutional repositories—centralised, systematised, and often digitalised—have often served as key reference points in media historiography, they are frequently non-existent or inaccessible when it comes to broadcasters operating outside institutional circuits. This is precisely the case of Videogruppo Piemonte, whose archive is precarious both structurally and historically. Its contingent nature stems from the heterogeneity of its surviving components, which include U-matic tapes, handwritten programme schedules, and a broader repertoire of what information studies identify as “grey literature”: materials such as company records, administrative documents, or legal filings that fall outside conventional archival and distribution frameworks yet retain crucial historical value (Auger 1998). These sources include several extensive files—retrieved, for instance, from the Chamber of Commerce of Turin—documenting the legal and institutional history of Videogruppo S.p.A., beginning with the company's official registration on 10 May 1977. The

act, signed by sole administrator Maria Teresa Fissore (wife of Sergio Rognà Manassero, the station's founder), contains a foundational statement that clearly outlines the company's dual mission: "the production and rental of film and radio-television programmes and equipment; the operation of a local radio-television station in accordance with applicable laws". This statute reflects Videogruppo's hybrid identity from the outset—not only as a broadcaster, but also as a producer of original content. In fact, Rognà had already begun producing short documentary features for local institutions and associations as early as 1974. These materials help reconstruct the institutional and chronological trajectory of the broadcaster, forming an essential base for the aesthetic and editorial analysis that follows. It does not seem inappropriate, then, to include such documents in the broader constellation of what we might call Videogruppo's scattered archive: a dispersed and heterogeneous body of evidence that, unlike the well-curated holdings of public institutions such as Rai, survives more by accident than by design. These ephemeral remnants defy archival conventions yet remain central to any attempt at historical reconstruction—thereby challenging the very conditions of what we consider "archivable".

From a theoretical standpoint, this approach resonates with the broader archival turn that has reshaped media and cultural studies since the late 1990s. No longer regarded as neutral containers of objective data, archives are now understood as sites of negotiation and exclusion, structures that reflect power, memory, and ideology (Foster 2004; Callahan 2023). Videogruppo's archive does not simply *document* the past—it *performs* it, embodying the instability and subjectivity of local broadcasting's material and institutional foundations. The fact that it exists in scattered fragments, often mislabelled and physically deteriorated, is not a shortcoming but a historiographical condition: it compels anyone seeking to engage with the station's history to move beyond conventional archival epistemologies and to embrace interpretive bricolage.

The recovery process began in spaces not originally meant for preservation. A first group of a few hundred U-matic tapes was found in a janitorial closet within the current headquarters of Videogruppo, after its absorption into the Mediapason Group. The tapes bore handwritten labels—some cryptic (e.g., "Processo"/"Trial"), others generic (e.g., "Intervista sindaco"/"Interview with the Mayor"), and a few disarmingly eccentric or frankly humorous (e.g., "Agnelli nudo"/"Agnelli [FIAT's CEO at the time] naked")—which occasionally failed to match the actual content. The storage conditions, though not critically compromised, reflected no archival precaution, and some items were rendered unplayable by magnetic decay. Yet these materials reveal the internal logic of a media institution whose production culture relied on urgency, occasional improvisation, and operational informality. These labels, never intended for long-term consultation, were functional tools for internal circulation—far removed from any archival foresight.

The description outlined so far clearly reveals a set of materials that resist archival formalisation. Dispersed across heterogeneous supports and compiled through personal initiative rather than institutional mandate, they form a dense constellation of fragments—partial, uneven, yet revealing. Through their gaps and discontinuities, a broader picture of the broadcaster's editorial and institutional life gradually begins to take shape. Interpretation here is not obstructed by absence, it is activated by it. The fragility of Videogruppo's archival footprint brings into sharp relief the socio-technical conditions under which local television operated in Italy from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s: minimal budgets, regulatory uncertainty, reliance on informal labour, and a notable degree of editorial freedom. In contrast to the centralised structures and systematic archiving practices of institutions like Rai, local broadcasters left behind traces that are both accidental and deliberate—acts of survival as much as of memory, grounded in civic commitment and editorial urgency.

Beyond its immediate evidentiary function, Videogruppo's archive invites broader historiographical reflection. How can one reconstruct the history of a medium defined by ephemerality—by blurred tapes, incomplete metadata, and regional memory rather than institutional continuity or systematic record-keeping? In this context, retracing the broadcaster's editorial identity becomes a form of speculative historiography: an endeavour grounded less in narrative linearity than in discontinuity, inference, and an ethics of care. As has been noted, local broadcasters have long occupied a marginal position in media historiography, their complexity often reduced or ignored (Barra, Fassone 2024). The case of Videogruppo—along with those of other broadcasters explored within the ATLAS – Atlas of Local Televisions project—calls for a revision of historiographical scale: from the macro to the micro, from institutional stability to operational improvisation.

Despite the constraints of a modest budget and limited infrastructure, Videogruppo articulated an editorial model centred on civic participation, cultural proximity, and pluralism. Through news programming, cultural

features, and investigative reporting, the station cultivated a space for discursive heterodoxy within a media system increasingly shaped by commercial standardisation. Even in its fragmentary state, the archive allows us to glimpse the contours of this editorial project and to reconsider the trajectories through which local television engaged with its publics. Such a perspective gains further depth when situated within a broader European framework. The 1980s witnessed the progressive dismantling of public service monopolies across the continent and the emergence of hybrid television ecosystems, in which public and private actors coexisted in often precarious configurations. This transformation generated a proliferation of content (Ellis 2000, 2020), but also a dissolution of common frames of reference. Videogruppo emerged within this paradox: it embodied the promise of local expression while lacking the institutional solidity to safeguard its own legacy. What remains of its archive bears the imprint of that contradiction—evidence of possibility and precarity intertwined. Its disorganisation, material vulnerability, and hybrid nature invite us to think about the archive less as a stable foundation for historical knowledge, and more as a discursive terrain shaped by loss and partiality. It challenges us to account for forms of memory that are embodied, distributed, and often at odds with conventional archival rationality. This is not only a methodological concern, but an ethical one: which materials are preserved, according to which criteria? And what are the implications of reconstructing a media history never designed to endure?

Rather than lamenting the fragmentary nature of such sources, we might foreground their analytical power. The informal archive of Videogruppo offers a vantage point from which to interrogate both the history of local broadcasting and the historiographical methods we deploy to study it. As such, it is a media artefact whose instability becomes its most telling feature. In this perspective, following Stockinger's notion of "active appropriation" (Stockinger 2012:42), the work of engaging with these archival fragments becomes a critical gesture in itself: one that reorients the archive through present-day interpretive needs, while illuminating how Videogruppo once addressed its community not merely as viewers, but as participants in a shared civic discourse—through practices of proximity, participation, and civic commitment.

3 Our Studio Is the City: the Editorial Ethos of Videogruppo

Though its schedule featured a variety of light entertainment formats—prize-based quiz shows, home organisation advice, music programming, and popular telenovelas such as the Mexican *Anche i ricchi piangono* (*The Rich Also Cry*)—Videogruppo's founding ethos pointed elsewhere. From its earliest days, the station foregrounded a civic and investigative approach, rooted in proximity to the city's social and political life. This orientation was clearly expressed by Sergio Rognà Manassero, the channel's founder, in a 1977 interview, about a year after broadcasting had begun. Speaking to *La Stampa*, the national newspaper based in Turin, Rognà declared: "Today we try to use an authoritarian medium like TV in a non-authoritarian way [...] We don't want to produce shows but simply give an image of what is happening in the city. Here, if you want a slogan, it could go like this: *Our Studio Is the city*" (Scagliola 1977).

This commitment to proximity, presence, and political vigilance shaped Videogruppo's programming. Its editorial line did not shy away from confrontation or complexity. Rather than adopting the aesthetic and structural conventions of national television, Videogruppo cultivated a stripped-down, content-driven style—one that prioritised message over spectacle. This approach was particularly evident in *Videonotizie*, the station's daily news programme, which attracted a substantial local following and was, according to several professionals interviewed during our research,¹ widely regarded as more effective and relevant than Rai's newscasts in the city of Turin.

The attention to local culture and urban detail also shaped *Cerchiamo Torino* (*Looking for Turin*), a programme aired in 1977 on Friday nights in a late evening slot. Each episode was dedicated to a curiosity of the city—architectural, cultural, or historical—underscoring Videogruppo's civic ambition to frame Turin as a space to be explored and narrated. A more eclectic and formally open register characterised *Cronache Torinesi* (*Turin Chronicles*), a long-running infotainment programme that blurred the boundaries between news, commentary,

1. See the interview with Cristina Gallo, former assistant camera operator at the station (conducted on December 12, 2023), and the interview with Sergio Amprimo, a technician at Videogruppo (conducted on February 9, 2024), both available on the ATLAS Web Database: <https://historica.unibo.it/handle/20.500.14008/81141> (last accessed: July 2025).

and local storytelling. Structured as a flexible container, it accommodated a wide variety of content: from cultural items and historical anecdotes to reports on urban life and current affairs. Segments ranged from studio-based interviews to on-site reports shot across Turin—in both iconic locations and lesser-known spaces rarely accessed by the city’s own inhabitants. In tone, the programme oscillated between light curiosity and sober scrutiny, depending on the subject.

Far from relegating “local” content to filler or soft reportage, *Cronache Torinesi* constructed a discursive space in which the city’s contradictions—labour, culture, sexuality, memory—could emerge. The studio, often minimal to the point of austerity, served not as a backdrop for polished formats or charismatic hosts, but as a platform for testimony, dialogue, and analysis. Guests were given time to speak. Silences were left intact. This editorial patience reflected a conception of broadcasting as civic engagement rather than pure display. A particularly emblematic example of this editorial philosophy was the episode of *Cronache Torinesi* dedicated to the FIAT layoffs of 1979. In a moment of acute political tension, when the national press was divided and the labour movement was under siege, Videogruppo opened its studio to two of the dismissed workers. The conversation, framed not by a host’s narrative voice but by the workers themselves, unfolded in long, uninterrupted takes. The studio set was stark, with minimal lighting and no visual distractions—just four chairs, a table, and the camera. In this way, the *mise-en-scène* mirrored the gravity of the subject. The format resisted emotional manipulation or aestheticisation; instead, it invited viewers into a raw, direct encounter. This is certainly due to economic and technological constraints, but this almost frugal, unapologetically direct, style is often described as a partly deliberate choice by interviewees.

This commitment to civic confrontation extended beyond industrial conflict. Another remarkable case was the station’s coverage of the Giornata mondiale dell’orgoglio omosessuale (International Gay Pride Day), celebrated in Turin on 29 June 1979. The programme, again under the banner of *Cronache Torinesi*, featured a studio conversation between Laura Cerro—a central figure in Videogruppo’s editorial project, alongside Federico Peiretti and founder Sergio Rogna Manassero—and Enzo Francone, then regional secretary of FUORI! (Fronte Unitario Omosessuale Rivoluzionario Italiano, or United Revolutionary Homosexual Front of Italy). Francone was given time to articulate the movement’s goals and to contextualise the day’s significance. The programme included a short recorded clip from the event itself, in which Alfredo Cohen—an Italian actor, singer-songwriter, and one of the earliest activists of FUORI!—performed to a big, attentive crowd. The footage was technically rudimentary—shot handheld, with ambient sound and unstable exposure—but it captured the atmosphere with a realism that eluded mainstream productions. Once again, the aesthetic minimalism became an expressive strength: what mattered was not visual sophistication, but the act of showing, of making present.

A third notable example was the episode titled *Giulio Einaudi Editore a Marienbad*, which tackled the complex relationship between Turin’s most famous publishing house and the city’s contemporary cultural dynamics. Rather than celebrating Einaudi’s literary legacy, the programme critically addressed what it framed as a growing detachment of the publishing giant from the social fabric of Turin. The report—shot inside the premises of Giulio Einaudi Publishers, in various non-studio interiors that were often poorly lit and acoustically imperfect—was narrated off-screen by Federico Peiretti himself. His voice-over, deliberate and composed, guided the viewer through editorial offices, empty corridors, drawing an implicit contrast between the publishing house’s prestige and its perceived estrangement from local life. The segment was neither aggressive nor ironic—it was analytical, even melancholic. By opting for a slow pace, sober tone, and unvarnished imagery, the broadcast expressed a kind of mourning for a lost cultural symbiosis.

These three cases—labour conflict, sexual identity, cultural critique—illustrate the thematic range covered by *Cronache Torinesi* and the recurring features of its editorial style. The programme’s reliance on in-depth interviews, minimal editing, and a focus on socially or politically sensitive issues contributed to defining a television practice that diverged from both amateur experimentation and standardised national formats. Its local character lay not in provincialism, but in a sustained attention to context, accountability, and territorial engagement. Rather than seeking consensus or adopting a neutral tone, Videogruppo aimed to register the city’s tensions and contradictions. It did not provide definitive answers; it offered visibility, proximity, and recognition. In a 1977 interview, Rogna stated that the station “stands politically on the left, although it is not aligned with any specific party” (*Stampa Sera*, September 23, 1977). This positioning informed the broadcaster’s editorial

orientation, which was marked by attention to conflict and divergence, without adhering to a singular political agenda. The conditions that allowed for this approach were also those that exposed Videogruppo to economic and institutional fragility. Operating with limited resources, outside the commercial market and without the obligations of public service broadcasting, the station retained a degree of editorial flexibility that would have been more difficult in more consolidated contexts. It developed a mode of engagement based on presence and duration: spending time where others passed quickly, giving space to voices often excluded, and allowing complexity rather than imposing simplification.

At the level of form, the roughness of Videogruppo's productions can be understood not only as a result of technical limitations, but also as a stylistic decision. The absence of elaborate sets, the visible transitions between studio and on-location footage, and the irregular montage rhythms contributed to a visual language that stood apart from national models. In this sense, the imperfect image functioned less as a flaw than as a trace of situatedness. The station's relationship with its audience was similarly direct. Unlike Rai and unlike other emerging commercial networks, Videogruppo addressed viewers as neighbours, witnesses, and interlocutors rather than consumers or demographic targets. The boundary between broadcaster and citizen was porous: journalists were often familiar local figures, and audience feedback was immediate. This closeness fostered a sense of editorial responsibility that went beyond ratings or market share—anchored instead in accountability to a shared urban space.

In retrospect, the methodological implications of Videogruppo's experience are perhaps more revealing than its historical legacy, offering a case of media practice responsive to the demands of democratic life. Its blend of immediacy, imperfection, and intensity unsettles dominant narratives around professionalism, aesthetics, and editorial neutrality. In an era when digital platforms increasingly filter public discourse through algorithms and affect, the raw, deliberate, and locally grounded television of Videogruppo feels unexpectedly current in its commitment to slowness, proximity, and critique. "Our studio is the city" is, of course, a slogan—but one that articulates a method, an ethic, and an ambition. It encapsulates the distinctive position Videogruppo held within the ecology of local media—a position defined by responsiveness and a sustained engagement with the city's civic fabric. This ethos extended well beyond cultural commentary or social reportage: institutional politics, party dynamics, and urban governance were central pillars of the station's editorial agenda. Political life in all its tensions—explicit, procedural, conflictual—was treated as part of the everyday life of the city, and therefore as central to its broadcasting mission.

4 A Direct Line with the Mayor. Videogruppo's Hyperlocal Politics

Among Videogruppo's most representative programmes, *Spazio Regione* provides a valuable lens through which to observe the formats and editorial orientations that came to define the station's distinctive televisual style. In a 1980 episode, Sergio Rognà Manassero di Costigliole—Videogruppo's founder and principal anchor for political content—interviews the architect Giovanni Astengo about a proposed expansion of Turin's urban grid. During the exchange, Rognà Manassero references Berlusconi's Milano Due, a self-sufficient satellite city outside Milan, as an example of contemporary urban and media development in northern Italy. He characterises Berlusconi as a real estate developer "who is also starting to do my job" (that is, the work of a private television owner), alluding to Berlusconi's use of Milano Due as a testing ground for his early broadcasting experiments.

As in other politically oriented programmes broadcast by Videogruppo, *Spazio Regione* weaves together the local and the national by asking whether a "Torino Due" might ever exist. In doing so, the programme implicitly connects debates on urban planning with the evolution of media infrastructures—a prefiguration of the convergences that would later shape the Italian media landscape of the 1980s. Despite its thematic modernity, the programme's style remains markedly austere: against a monochrome blue backdrop, Astengo delivers long, uninterrupted reflections in a professorial tone (he was then a professor at the University of Venice). The format recalls *Tribuna politica*, the long-standing Rai series that allowed politicians to present their platforms at length with minimal intervention from the moderator.

If *Spazio Regione* reinterpreted established public-service genres, *La città domanda, risponde il sindaco* (*The City Asks, the Mayor Answers*) advanced a more experimental approach to televisual mediation. In this weekly

programme, the mayor of Turin—initially Diego Novelli, later Giorgio Cardetti and Maria Magnani Noya—sat in Videogruppo's studio and took live phone calls from citizens, responding directly to their questions, which ranged from the pragmatic to the philosophical, from the ideological to the anecdotal. This form of radical dis-intermediation became one of Videogruppo's most distinctive innovations in political broadcasting: the mayor, as the embodiment of local governance, engaged with citizens through the medium of live television, while Videogruppo positioned itself as a transparent interface between the public and political institutions. This dynamic is in line with what Abruzzese and Borrelli (2000) describe as territorialisation, that is the integration of the public service's civic mission operated by private actors on a local level.

Such a format, although relatively novel within the context of local private television, drew heavily on the participatory practices pioneered by *radio libere* ("free radio") during the previous decade. As media historian Peppino Ortoleva (2001, p. 169) observes:

[By the mid-1970s in Italy] the television language itself had begun to change, adopting rhythms and structures increasingly similar to those of radio stations—characterised by daily programming, continuous twenty-four-hour presence, and constant dialogue, including through the use of the telephone, with an audience typically more fragmented than that of traditional television.

From this perspective, *La città domanda, risponde il sindaco* can be read as a televisual continuation of the dialogic ethos introduced by free radio, and particularly by Rome's *Radio Radicale*. This connection is explicitly acknowledged by Rogna Manassero di Costigliole, who recalls:

We had learned from [Marco] Pannella [of Radio Radicale]. Pannella used to come to us whenever he was in Turin. He would say, "You take all the calls that come in. People talk for thirty seconds, and then you turn down the mixer." [...] Whatever comes through, comes through—so, [Mayor Novelli], do you feel up to answering?

The *telefono aperto* (open-line broadcasting) format, popularised in Italy by the *radio libere* movement and later institutionalised by *Radio Radicale* as a form of ideological resistance to the perceived artificiality and reticence of national radio, was thus deliberately incorporated into Videogruppo's schedule to generate a recognisably "radio-like" immediacy.

However, radio was not the sole reference point for Videogruppo's experiment in civic dialogue. Rogna Manassero also cites the influence of the local press:

The most popular column in *La Stampa* [the Turin daily newspaper] was *Specchio dei tempi* [a reader correspondence section on city life]. So we said, "We can use the telephone. Are we a one-way or a two-way channel? And how do we achieve two-way communication?" We were theorists as well, of course. And so, at that point, the telephone became our weapon—but it was also the weapon of the radio, let's not forget that.

This testimony reveals a dual dynamic at the core of Videogruppo's editorial philosophy. On one side lies a conception of *territoriality* grounded in reciprocal communication on issues of civic relevance, echoing the dialogic ethos of *La Stampa's Specchio dei tempi* and its cultivation of proximity between the press and its readership. On the other, it signals a pursuit of immediacy and accessibility—both through live broadcasting and through the direct participation of viewers—where the telephone becomes an instrument of mediated civic engagement.

In this dual lineage, Videogruppo emerges as a key case study in the evolution of Italian local media, translating the dialogic practices of radio and the participatory ethos of the local press into a televisual form. Its programmes illuminate the emergence of a *media ecology of proximity*—one that prefigures the hybrid, interactive, and community-oriented dynamics that would later characterise Italian local broadcasting in the 1980s.

5 Conclusion

The case of Videogruppo Piemonte illustrates a formative yet often overlooked phase in the development of Italian local broadcasting: the brief period between the Constitutional Court's 1976 ruling, which legitimised private transmissions on a local scale, and the subsequent consolidation of commercial networks during the 1980s. Within this transitional framework, Videogruppo functioned both as a site of civic experimentation and as an indicator of the structural fragility inherent in local media initiatives. Its trajectory exposes the tension between an editorial project grounded in proximity, participation, and public accountability, and the institutional and economic constraints that ultimately limited its sustainability.

From an editorial standpoint, Videogruppo elaborated a coherent and distinctive approach to local communication. The channel's programmes—ranging from *Cronache Torinesi* and *Cerchiamo Torino* to *Spazio Regione* and *La città domanda, risponde il sindaco*—were unified by an emphasis on directness, duration, and civic visibility. Rejecting the spectacle-oriented formats of national television, they privileged long-form dialogue, minimal mediation, and on-site reporting. This stylistic austerity, while partially conditioned by limited resources, should also be understood as an intentional mode of address. The resulting aesthetic of proximity produced a form of television whose legitimacy derived less from technical refinement than from its capacity to articulate the social and political dynamics of Turin as a shared civic space.

This orientation aligns Videogruppo with a broader set of European experiments in local public communication during the late 1970s, which sought to translate the principles of public service broadcasting into decentralised and community-based frameworks. Yet Videogruppo's position was distinct in that it emerged outside any formal institutional mandate. Its self-defined ethos—epitomised by founder Sergio Rognà Manassero's assertion that “our studio is the city”—proposed a model of television as civic infrastructure: a medium for the negotiation of urban identities and for the mediation between citizens and institutions. Programmes such as *La città domanda, risponde il sindaco* materialised this ambition through formats of direct interaction, integrating the participatory ethos of the *radio libere* movement and the dialogic conventions of the local press into a televisual framework.

The analytical relevance of Videogruppo extends beyond its programming to the material and epistemological conditions of its archive. The station's surviving corpus—comprising U-matic tapes, incomplete documentation, and administrative records—exemplifies the fragility of non-institutional media archives. Its dispersed and partial state does not simply reflect the precariousness of local broadcasting infrastructures, but calls for a methodological reconsideration of what constitutes an archive in media historiography.

In this respect, the process of reconstructing Videogruppo's history operates at two interconnected levels. On the empirical plane, it enables the documentation of a local media institution that contributed to the civic and cultural life of Turin between the mid-1970s and early 1990s. On the methodological plane, it foregrounds the need for interpretive frameworks capable of addressing informal, partial, and non-institutional archives.

The significance of Videogruppo's experience therefore lies less in its longevity or commercial success than in its articulation of an alternative televisual paradigm. It exemplifies a form of local broadcasting conceived at least partially as public engagement rather than entertainment, where immediacy and transparency were pursued through minimal mediation and technical economy. This model, however, proved structurally unsustainable in the face of increasing market consolidation and the absence of systematic support for local public service media. By the mid-1980s, the nationalisation of private broadcasting effectively marginalised such experiments, transforming what had been plural and heterogeneous media ecologies into hierarchised commercial networks.

In conclusion, Videogruppo Piemonte's history underscores three interrelated dimensions of Italian media modernity. First, it demonstrates that local television, despite its structural fragility, played a significant role in articulating forms of public discourse distinct from both state-controlled and commercial paradigms. Second, it reveals the extent to which archival incompleteness is not an impediment but a constitutive feature of local media historiography. Third, it situates the study of local broadcasting within a broader critical reflection on the epistemologies of the archive and the politics of media memory. In these respects, Videogruppo's

experience remains an instructive case for understanding the intersection of civic media practices, institutional marginality, and the contingent materialities through which audiovisual history survives.

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