Politecnico di Torino

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Honors Thesis

Master of Science in Architecture Construction City

Abstract

FREE SPACE.
Design strategies for a democratic learning.

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All over the world, irrespective of the different cultures, a not insignificant number of contemporary school experiences define themselves or refer to libertarian and democratic education, posing themselves as a viable alternative to the dominant conventional system of education and presenting - together with various founding principles of education - a new way of organising learning. In the contemporary school scene, libertarian schools belong to a heterogeneous system of unconventional educational experiences, placing themselves as autonomous and self-managed organisations. In Italy, where the school system is strongly conditioned by the constant debate between private and public school, compared to a more consolidated European and international context, libertarian experiences are still a small established reality. However, recent studies on the use of educational space, identified as the "third educator", have opened up new possibilities and interest in the relationship between pedagogy and architecture. Through the perspective of changing educational needs and the roles of the actors involved in the learning process, which recognise the child as an active and no longer passive subject, the aim of this research has focused on the design of educational spaces. The choice of investigating democratic spaces is mainly driven by the desire to narrate space from a new point of view, starting from an idea of a school with functional and typological characteristics, different from the conventional school. Secondly, the value of freedom has become increasingly central in the sphere of learning, whose aim is to promote ideals of autonomy, independence and social participation. Starting from a profound reflection on the use of space in democratic schools, and the potential of such learning environments, this research aims to define a set of useful tools to encourage the rethinking of school places, providing a democratic approach to the improvement of teaching spaces, even beyond the narrow confines of schools that adhere to these principles.

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