

POLITECNICO DI TORINO  
FIRST SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE  
Master of Science in Architecture Construction City  
***Honors theses***

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**LIVING THE INFORMAL NEIGHBORHOOD IN *BANLIEUE***

**A bottom-up housing project in Bagnolet\_Montreuil**

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The degree thesis concerns an area included into two different *banlieues* of Paris, which are Bagnolet and Montreuil, in the north-east of Paris. This area seems to be very interesting since it has got many potentialities which can be improved.

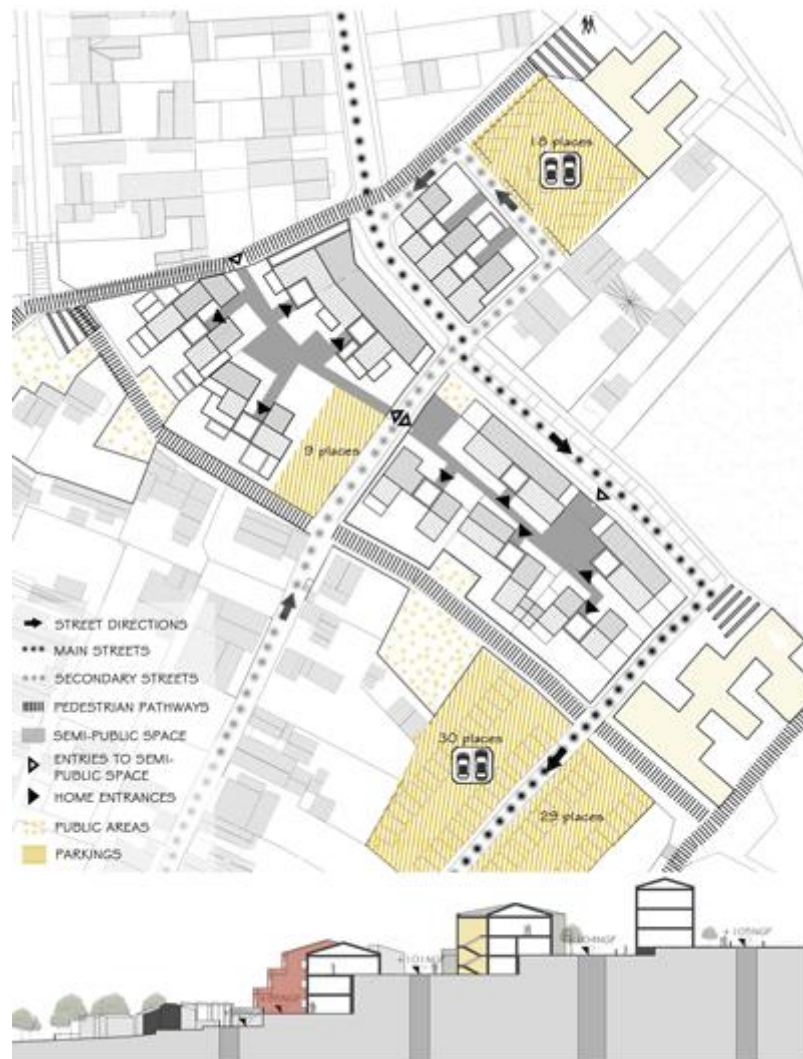
Geographical features, a long historical tradition especially in agriculture and architectural fields, many social energies, a strong sense of community show a fascinating picture of a complex neighborhood.

We deeply studied the “Côte des Guilands” area, which is the informal neighborhood now not really integrated to the total area. After a careful description of the population growth, our main interests are about architectural aspects as the quality of public or private spaces. We are talking about traditional housing composition and territory management which sometimes reflect local tradition and history.

The result of this analysis is a complex and stimulating network of elements which are the keys to understand better our urban and architectural project. The first goal was to emphasize the energies and potentialities now existing in the neighborhood; we refer to the important roles taken by some associations and to the peculiar landscape that characterizes the site and inevitably influenced our project.



From the urban scale to the architectural one we tried to find some real architectural solutions to densify an empty and not designed area which now is characterized by some sheds and problematic infrastructures. New residential buildings and new facilities aim to stimulate the economic development and make this area more interesting and attracting.



In respect to local and traditional customs, our architectural ideas encourage the use of simple construction methods and the self-help building to define a bottom-up approach. In this way, every people can take part in their own home building and in the same time share many experiences with neighborhoods. In the project strategy the relationship between public and private spaces is fundamental. The design of shared space evokes the social dialogue made during the building site so that people can continue the philosophy of self-help construction, where private isn't totally detached to public and the inner and the external aren't opposed. We think that this way of life can re-establish and reinforce the social identity of the project area.



We really believe that the design strategy could make active the neighborhood, stimulate innovative ideas, support local people and spread technical skills and politics about future developments. The project aims to preserve the social cohesion to stimulate the participation of the inhabitants in the process of building, to look for innovative technologies for future self-sustainability and cooperation.

Finally, we think about a city where living the neighborhood doesn't mean only residing in a specific place but producing an important urban environment and a special social quality. People should have the possibility to identify themselves in architectural objects for reading deep meanings in it. When the inhabitants create their site, shapes acquire important social values and spaces get sense and meanings deeply rooted in the collective memory.

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