



**POLITECNICO
DI TORINO**

Honors thesis

Degree in Architecture for Sustainability

Abstract

**THE MULTIETHNIC VILLAGE AND ITS MEETING WITH A
LITTLE REALITY. Saluzzo's Palazzo di Giustizia
redevelopment hypothesis.**

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Reutilization of the patrimony of already existing buildings is a topic that has been recently brought up in the international debate concerning architecture and urban settlement. It is an important current topic. The European Union is convinced that reusing can be one of the main strategies to face the waste of soil and energetic resources.

Keeping in mind those aspects and considering the different unused buildings or areas which are present in the province of Cuneo, we regarded the ex-courthouse in Saluzzo (an Italian town with 17,057 inhabitants in the province of Cuneo, in Piedmont) as an interesting example. This building is an imposing palace with an area of about 6,000 square metres, built in the 1960s. It is currently unused – except for a few offices used by the justice of the peace – as a consequence of the Legislative Decree n.148, dated 14th September 2011, paragraph 1, clause 2 related to the new organization of ordinary courts and offices of the public prosecutor.

We have seen in this building, now unused, a starting point in finding a possible solution to the current issue of immigration. The question has caused an uproar and lots of political debates, not only internationally but also in a small context, as Saluzzo, because of the large number of immigrants that arrive in the municipality every year that are the origin of various difficulties.

The inconvenience and discomfort is visible to all the inhabitants of the town. Therefore, we decided to analyse the situation thoroughly by contacting “Caritas Association” in Saluzzo. They gave us a set of useful interesting facts. Most the foreigners come from Mali, Burkina Faso, and Ivory Coast. There are also a few minorities coming from the sub-Saharan countries. Most of them are young people aged 25 to 35, but a small number of teenagers aged 17-18 or men over 50 are present as well. Many of them have residency permits due to humanitarian reasons or since they have non-self-employed jobs.

*The major issue concerns the housing process. Companies prefer to employ seasonal foreign workers directly, because there is no obligation for the employer to give accommodation to the employees. **

Such facts were essential to develop our project. The hypothesis behind our project is reusing the huge building of the ex-courthouse to accommodate the immigrants, so that they can integrate themselves - and avoid ghettoization - into the setting of a small town, like Saluzzo, a setting where foreigners are not always welcome.

Considering these aspects, we defined a series of functions that aim at helping the integration of immigrants concretely. The main intervention strategies are:

- *promoting social housing, so that these people can get appropriate accommodation and the opportunity to join their families;*
- *promoting laboratory activities, which can give Italian or foreign people the chance to teach or learn a job or a new skill, and which can support cultural integration;*
- *creating a commercial area where the products of the different laboratories can be sold, so that people can gain their own personal earnings and can be partly independent from the municipality funds.*

The hypothesis behind our project may seem risky in a small town like Saluzzo, and is a real challenge to commonplaces. We are convinced that integration is possible but time and efforts are essential to defeat the narrow-minded attitude we assume when confronting someone who is different, an attitude that is still deeply-rooted in our local culture, unfortunately.





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