



POLITECNICO
DI TORINO

Honors thesis

SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE

Abstract

Inside Out_

Observe, cooperate, act.

**Proposal for recovery of the M.Ar.Di.Chi in a prisons soft surveillance solution in via
Bologna, Turin.**

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by

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ABSTRACT

The idea for the subject of my graduation thesis comes from the direct experience I've had working in the Lorusso Cutugno penitentiary in Turin, within the students' team, Spazi Violenti.

From November 2014 to September 2015, we have worked in synergy with a group of legal practitioners from the Faculty of Law of the University of Turin to carry out a self-building project within Le Vallette penitentiary in order to actively involve the detainees, the students and the penitentiary staff.

In June the building phase started, allowing us (15 including students and former students) to work closely with a group of detainees (Art. 21). We have created an outdoor living space of about 1000 sq m for the detainees family members' meetings and another one for the penitentiary staff.

The experience acquired allowed me to delve into the critical aspects and the potential of the penitentiary system starting from the idea that prisons, as Dostoevsky used to say, are the reflection of societies: "*The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons*".

The main pillars of the society, namely the respect of dignity, moral and civil rehabilitation of the offender, his rights and opportunity for rehabilitation are nowadays relevant more than ever. They've created several theoretical target models in the past years but they've never taken into consideration the psychological, human and perceptive aspect of living in a constricted place.

The space and the time of prison sentence are the variables on which the sense of humanity, dignity, respect and therefore rehabilitation are founded. Rethinking the physical space of the prison means to rethink the meaning of word "sentence".

It's with this in mind that my project started, supported by the analysis of socio-economic emergencies in European prisons, the comparison of data and stressing virtuous examples.

Afterwards I've analyzed the Italian situation, legally and economically, and I came out with two possible Actions to take.

I've tried to create guide lines for operational practices in order to take into account the two stakeholders involvements: on one side, legal and political Actions (named System Actions) within the power structures (the State Property Office, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Defense, the Deposits and Loans Fund, the Supervision Office, the Region, etc.) in order to create partnerships, collaborations and consortia aimed at renovating, managing and maintaining the military unused architectural heritage.

On the other side, Actions (Contrast Actions) dealing with the inaccessibility and complexity of the prison system and with the impossibility of a drastic change in such institutions, but also aiming at acting informally within the prison, involving the detainees and the prison staff: small reversible architectural interventions with the use of solid technologies. Through work groups, workshops and little worksites, the Contrast Actions aim at changing and improving the quality of housing in the common spaces within the prison area, in the light of the new possibilities opened by Article 21 (detainees who can live in an open cell regime during the day and can work inside and outside the facility)

through a participatory planning and involving the detainees and their families with external organized groups (university teams, trade associations, professional schools). A chance of an auto-determination of our spaces.

SYSTEM ACTIONS represent all the Actions (political, legal, entrepreneurial and building) taken by public and private actors' partnership with the goal of renovating and regenerating the unused state properties and use them as detention facilities with a studying and working rehabilitation purpose.

In my specific case, the combination between the prison overcrowding emergency and the need to convert the industrial heritage of Turin would create the possibility to have a new "attenuated custody satellite pole for education and work".

CONTRAST ACTIONS represent all the Actions that the Organized and Non Organized Groups could take within a total institution (penitentiary), aiming at the active involvement of the detainees and at the practical use of the technical knowledge in order to improve the common spaces within the prison.

The study and the tools of valuation (comparative analysis of data, SWOT, CIA_ Community Impact Analysis, cost-benefit analysis, identification of the stakeholders, public-private partnerships) allowed me to develop proposals of feasibility of the project and to implement my requalifying intervention of the former barrack M.Ar.Di.Chi Magazzino di Artiglieria e Difesa Chimica, in via Bologna 190, Turin.

After having studied the building and its architecture I've re-functionalized the former barrack, already former "Lanificio fratelli Piacenza", in an attenuated custody satellite pole for education and work.

This facility intends to be a link between indoor and outdoor areas, the citizens and the detainees, the prison and the neighborhood. Through the green shared areas and the indoor market open to the costumers and the trade associations, the new pole intends to create new synergies based on cooperation, raising awareness and skills generation. A know-how apt to the idea of sharing , social reinsertion of the offender and positive knock-on effect (socially and economically) on the whole community, neighborhood and city.

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