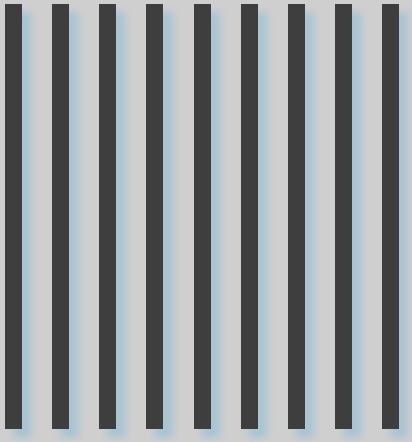
PRISON ARCHITECTURE AND HUMANS

Elisabeth Fransson, Francesca Giofrè and Berit Johnsen (Eds.)



CAPPELEN DAMM AKADEMISK

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Preface and Acknowledgements

This book is a result of collaboration between the Faculty of Architecture at Sapienza University in Rome and the Research department at the University College of Norwegian Correctional Service, KRUS, in Oslo. The collaboration goes back to 2001, when one of the editors had a university scholarship at La Sapienza.[1] Over the past few years this collaboration has been further developed and has involved field visits both in Italy and Norway, seminars, the establishment of the PriArcH network and this book.

Ferdinando Terranova, former professor at the Faculty of Architecture at La Sapienza University in Rome, has played a key role in the network. He has always insisted that collaboration between our countries is of great importance regarding prison architecture, as well as being important in terms of sharing and discussing various analytical and methodological possibilities within architecture and penology.

In 2014 the Research department at KRUS was invited to and visited various institutions in Rome: the Facilities of the Penitentiary Services within the Ministry of Justice, La Rebibbia Prison and Garante dei Detenuti, which is an independent organization working for the rights of prisoners. The year after, in 2015, KRUS arranged the first seminar «Prison, Materiality & Humans». Through the seminar, we wanted to create an opportunity to discuss prison space and enable closer cooperation between researchers, architects and those involved in planning and constructing prisons. To this seminar Italian architects and researchers were invited, among others, to presented their study

1 As part of her doctoral thesis financed by the Norwegian Research Council, Elisabeth Fransson received one year of scholarship from the council to study residential child care institutions in Italy.

fields within prison architecture. Their presentations fit very well into the long empirical and theoretical research tradition at KRUS regarding prison, materiality and the imprisoned body. We also invited our Italian guests to visit Halden Prison. After the seminar we started the PriArcH network and the planning of this book.

Our common interests in prison architecture and humans have also been nurtured through other various connections, relations and networks – all important for this book. Here we will just mention some of the input we see as particularly important. One, has been the possibility to present papers at EUROCRIM in Porto and Münster. Also vital was participation in the Deleuze seminar and conference in Rome in 2016, as well as the Annual Conference of the Royal Geographical Society at the British Geographers Institute in London in 2015, and the first conference on 'Carceral Geography' in Birmingham in 2016. The collaboration between KRUS and Franz James – University of Gothenburg, Gudrun Brottveit – Østfold University College and Linda Grøning – University of Bergen has been inspiring, and represents a valuable contribution to this book.

On the Italian side, interest for the topic arises through different networks with colleagues inside Sapienza University of Rome, University of Camerino, European University of Rome and an Italian architectural firm named Fagnoni&Associate, who worked on the design of a prototype prison that we will introduce to the readers in this book. In the future we aim to extend our networks to involve more academics and more design experts, believing that the strength of the network is the multidisciplinary approach to the topic Prison Architecture and Humans.

The legacy of the classics within sociology and criminology with names such as Michel Foucault, Erving Goffman, Gresham M. Sykes has been important, but collaboration with Professor Terranova has also opened our gaze to the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci. On the other hand, the Norwegian pioneer in the field of criminology, Nils Christie, who has been translated into Italian, has been inspiring to both parties. The organized tightness and pain associated with isolation from society has a crucial impact on research both in the KRUS research tradition, as well as La Sapienza's work regarding the architecture of various types of health and social institutions.

We dedicate this book to Professor Ferdinando Terranova! Thank you for inviting the KRUS research group to Rome and for showing us around, as well

as for the idea of seminars and the suggestion to make this book. We also thank you for coming to Norway and, in the "old academic seminar way", introducing us to Antonio Gramsci's work. Moreover we are grateful to you for bringing researchers together in a very familiar way, insisting that Italy and Norway are countries that have to collaborate!

Oslo/Rome
Elisabeth Fransson, Francesca Giofrè and Berit Johnsen

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CHAPTER 6

Prisons and Architecture. The Italian Framework

Francesca Giofrè

Il carcere l'ha inventato qualcuno che non c'era mai stato [...].
E la prigione non salva nessuno. (From the movie: Riso amaro, 1949)

This article discusses the topic of the 'architecture' of the prison in the Italian context. It argues the Italian context data and it deals with issues related to prison's architectural typology evolution, the needs and performance approach and examples of good practices. The prison lacks architecture in Italy. What is the best design approach and the methodology right? The chapter contends that it's necessary to consider the prison as architecture for life linked with urban life and the design can start from needs of users. The design can promote an environment that respect human dignity, sense of belonging and integration with the neighborhood and wider community. Furthermore, the design can promote and encourage a specific use of space, can promote a good perception of the space and might influence on user's behavior. Overall, the chapter offers design considerations and examples that contribute to open an interdisciplinary debate, to create in the prison a sense of place, a living space and a multicultural atmosphere.

Introduction

Italy's prison-building situation has been the subject of debate in the field of architecture, its vicissitudes linked to the country's contingent political situation. This was especially the case in the 1970s and until the late 1980s, with the issuance of the Regulation on "Rules governing the penitentiary system and the measures involving deprivation of or limits upon liberty" and, in 2001, the holding of a competition of ideas for developing a medium-security prison prototype with a capacity of 200 prisoners. On the national level over the years, the Prison

Plan was issued in 2013, following the decision by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg (2013), which condemned the Italian prison system for breaching article 3 of the European Convention – the prohibition against inhuman and degrading treatment caused by overcrowded prison facilities. The Prison Plan was supposed to initiate a series of interventions to improve the prison situation in terms both of overcrowding and of detention models aimed at bringing about real opportunities for recovery. Currently, the Italian prison system is still experiencing a crisis situation, in terms of overcrowding and dilapidated buildings, causing great discomfort in people's lives.

The topic of prisons from the architectural standpoint has been examined in depth only by a handful of scholars. This is unlike what took place over time for healthcare construction, an area that has many points of contact with prison building, as they are "total institutions." Imprisonment and illness are themes that some societies have always culturally rejected by removing the buildings from cities, considering them as "others" with respect to the established fabric, and reinforcing the idea of being alien to the lives of "others." Today, hospital building is the constant focus of design and research experimentation to guarantee the construction's quality and the users' well-being. This is because cultural attitudes towards illness and where it is treated have changed: the hospital, traditionally understood as a place of diagnosis and treatment, is slowly transforming into a physical environment that promotes health and "a health promoting hospital does not only provide high quality comprehensive medical and nursing services, but also develops a corporate identity that embraces the aims of health promotion, develops a health promoting organizational structure and culture, including active, participatory roles for patients and all members of staff, develops itself into a health promoting physical environment and actively cooperates with its community" (WHO, 1998). The same cannot be said for prison construction, because society's attitude towards detention, and towards prison as a place of punishment, atonement, and suffering, has difficulty evolving towards a conception of rehabilitation.

A "useful prison is one of respect for people and for human dignity,… it is the prison that has not sprouted up on the territory, but that enriches it with its presence…; it is the prison of reconsideration and of individual and collective responsibility. It is the prison that teaches you a job… it is the prison that considers each person, because he or she is a person, as a resource and investment." (Sbriglia E., in De' Rossi D.A. et al. 2016).

As Don Luigi Ciotti pointed out, reality is quite different: "Prison is a sort of modern-day quarantine station, called upon to contain segments of cultural and material poverty, of disadvantage and of illness". It is thus necessary "not to lock up in order to remove, but to be open to redesigning a new corrections model that leaves room for moments of socializing, that relaunches sound, effective paths of re-education and reintegration into society."

The cultural and social value given to the prison has a direct impact on the issue of its spatial configuration, its design.

The underlying question that merits investigation is why, then, over the years, prison building has been relegated to the theme of construction and not "architecture," and, moreover, whether the issue might not be better dealt with by overturning the concept with an oxymoron: prison not as a place of segregation, but as a place of life, albeit in a confined space, with all that this means – that is to say above all as a place for living, for work, rehabilitation, and socialization. Italy's own Constitution states that "Punishments may not be inhuman and shall aim at re-educating the convicted. Death penalty is prohibited' (Italian Constitution, art. 27). It is precisely this term – "inhuman" – that should be discussed from the standpoint of architecture: to what extent can built space be inhuman? What sets the construction of a "human space" apart from an "inhuman" one? And what, today, is the possible organizational approach functional to the topic of prison architecture?

Before examining the architectural and functional questions, an analysis of terminology must be provided, along with a description of the state of affairs in the Italian situation in numerical terms, with the caveat that the data are always highly debated and continuously evolving.

The Italian word for prison, "*carcere*" is etymologically derived from the Latin root denoting an enclosed space, and thus from the Latin verb *coercere*, which means to encircle, surround, restrict, repress; in its current acceptation, the Italian word indicates the "place where persons deprived of personal liberty are locked up by order of the competent authority" (Devoto G., Oli G.C.). Prison is thus a place of limitation of individual freedoms, and therefore of control. In technical language, the term "penitentiary" is used to indicate various types of prison facilities in generic terms: those for preventive custody, for the enforcement of punishments, and for the enforcement of security measures. In detail, penitentiaries are organized into: *casa circondariale* (district jail), which are the most widespread institutions, present in every city where there is a court,

detaining persons awaiting trial and those with sentences of under five years' imprisonment, and making separate accommodations for men and women (in the whole country, there are two exclusively for women), with some district jails having a "criminal section"; *casa di reclusione* (prison), institutions for serving sentences, also accommodating both men and women. There are two *case di reclusione* exclusively for women, and in some cases of detention there is also the "judicial section" for persons awaiting trial; *casa di lavoro* (work house), where persons declared to be "delinquents by habit, profession, or tendency" are assigned once they have served their sentence. Former hospitals for the criminally insane today house a small number of prisoners awaiting transfer[1].

Italy has 193 prisons (Department of Penitentiary Administration of the Ministry of Justice, 31 May 2016), of which 141 are *casa circondariale* facilities, including those exclusively for women; 47 *case di reclusione*, of which two are exclusively for women; 1 *casa lavoro* and 4 former hospitals for the criminally insane that are being removed from service. As for the territorial distribution, 34% of the institutions are located in the northern regions, 22% in the central ones, 27% in the southern ones, and the remaining 17% on the islands.

The institutions' regulation capacity in terms of prisoners that can be housed, as indicated by the documents of the Ministry of Justice's Department of Penitentiary Administration, "is calculated with respect to the standard of 9 m^2 per prisoner plus 5 m^2 for other persons – the same standard for which habitability is granted for homes in Italy." There is lively debate about this standard, since in practical terms not only is it not met in Italian prisons, but there is no certain literature on the subject. In fact, in its sentences, the European Court of Human Rights refers to the parameters identified by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, which establishes an individual cell size of 7 m^2. This underscores the difficulty of precisely establishing the measurement of the personal space that must be granted to each prisoner based on the provisions of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and shows the lack, even internationally, of certain rules of use for defining the minimum requirements that detention centres must meet. Indeed, in their various decisions, the Strasbourg judges have found that the minimum living space to be ensured for each prisoner must be determined on the basis of a variety of factors, such as the duration of deprivation of personal freedom, the possibility

1 Cf. Orizzonti ristretti, glossary available at http://www.ristretti.it/glossario/nomicarceri.htm

to access outdoor walking, and the prisoner's mental and physical conditions (Ministry of Justice, circular of 2008).

In Italy, analysis of the data on regulation capacity shows that the prevailing size of penitentiaries is in the segment between 399 and 199 (58%, 112 institutions), with 6 institutions (3%) having a capacity exceeding 1,000 units[2]. The number of prisoners present in the various types of prison institutions is 53,873. Consider that this number exceeds the population of a mid-sized Italian municipality, like Civitavecchia in Lazio, for example, which has 53,000 inhabitants.

The facilities' regulation capacity is 49,697, thus coming up 4,176 beds short; this figure provides the overcrowding index: calculated on the number of inmates with respect to regulation capacity, overcrowding stands at 108%, with imaginable consequences in terms of quality of life. Overcrowding is to be considered inhuman and degrading treatment, which causes additional suffering on top of that induced by detention. Therefore, while Italian law recommends the standard of 9 m^2 per prisoners, today there are prisoners living in less than 3 m^2, and there are situations in which prisoners in the same cell cannot speak the same language.

The prison population as a whole has a very small number of women, equal to approximately 4%, and a considerable number of foreign nationals, equalling 34%. Forty-one women have children staying with them: 20 are Italians with 22 children staying with them, and 21 are foreign nationals with 22 children with them, for a total of 44 children living in penitentiaries. The prison population counts 18,085 foreign nationals, 54% of whom are from two countries in the Maghreb (Morocco and Tunisia, accounting for 28%) and from two European countries (Romania and Albania, 29%). In Italy's prisons, not counting the population residing in the *case lavoro* and in the former hospitals for the criminally insane (totalling 387 persons), there are 8,978 prisoners in *casa circondariale* facilities and in prisons awaiting their first court appearance (17%); non-definitive prisoners are 9,399 (18%) in number, while 35,104 (66%) have been handed a final sentence. These data provide cause to reflect upon Italy's slow justice system. To complete the analysis, to the number of those we shall define below as "users" of the prison system, we must add prison

2 For the purposes of calculation, 7 capacity categories were developed for the 193 institutes taken into consideration: more than 1,000 prisoners, accounting for 3% of institutions (in numerical terms, 6 institutions); 900–600: 4% (7 institutions); 599–400: 11% (22 institutions); 399–200: 30% (58 institutions); 199–100: 28% (54 institutions); 99–60: 8% (16 institutions); under 60 prisoners: 16 % (30 institutions).

personnel: the *Polizia Penitenziaria* (penitentiary police) which, according to the latest data (Antigone, 2011) is present in a ratio of 1 to 1.9 per prisoner, and an undefined number of mangers, educators, social workers, and technical and administrative staff.

To comprehend the prisoners' life, a significant datum is the number of those engaged in working activities, which stands at around 28% (out of 54,072 as of 30 June 2016, Department of Penitentiary Administration of the Ministry of Justice): the greatest number are engaged in works connected with the sectors of farming, food service, carpentry, assembly of components, laundry, and tailoring.

Starting from this framework, we analyze below what might be the role of design and of a proper approach to the design of prison building, by raising it to the level of architecture, covering its typological evolution, and analyzing what may be defined as best practices in the Italian context. The common thread linking all the paragraphs is the conviction, responding to the questions initially posed, that a proper approach to prison design can promote environments that respect human dignity, a sense of belonging and integration with the neighbourhood and wider community. Furthermore, design can promote and encourage a specific use and good perception of the space, and might have an effect on all users' behaviour.

Prison building and architecture: a slow evolution between design and technicalism

Architecture, as Renzo Piano pointed out in 1998 in his speech for the Pritzker Prize, is a service, in the most literal sense of the term. It has to produce a useful thing. The project as the act of "throwing something out," as denoted by its etymology in the Latin *proicere*, presupposes the existence of something from which the action arises. It is something that has had a historical path, which has a past, and not a monad suspended in a trans-historical space. It may be argued that design is always both prospective and retrospective at the same time; it puts forward hypotheses while conjecturing optimal solutions. It represents the degree of products' compliance with the strategic priorities that every democratic society raises (or should raise) in order to solve its most pressing problems (Maldonado T., 2001). The project is also a place of research and experimentation, between projective action and retroaction, a multidimensional and synergistic place between different kinds of technical

knowledge, as a system of codified information to provide the instructions needed to create any type of intervention, as a generator of space and its functions, of social and environmental values, as a response to a specific need in a given context. The project has a dimension of uniqueness – as does its result – and of timing, and has a historically determined validity. The project, then, is not merely a creative act; it is not a single act; it is not a segment that can be isolated, in terms of decision-making and content, from the entire building process; it is not divorced from its generating context. The project has a very low weight in the building process in temporal terms, but it has a central and strategic role; it is, in its various articulations, the place of the choices that will direct all subsequent phases and decisively affect the quality of the final product and the overall cost of the intervention. The different design operations of which it is composed are aimed, in fact, at making sense of complex elements, activities and pieces of information that are both qualitatively and quantitatively non-uniform, with the objective of implementing an intervention of quality that is technically sound in accordance with the best value in terms of balancing benefits and overall costs (construction, maintenance, operation, decommissioning), and environmentally sustainable in all its moments of life. Through the project, it is thus possible to control, a priori, the quality and quantity of the system's environmental and technological transformations. The product of design reflects a given society and context; it is always the mirror of a historical period. We may argue that design is a 'place' of research and experimentation. It is a 'place' where different kinds of technical knowledge work together, it is a place of synergy. From the technical point of view, design is a system of codified information needed to create any type of intervention. The design has a social and environmental value, as a response to a specific need. It is a unique product that is able to generate a transformation of the environment in which it operates.

How much of the above, this attention to the design's acceptation, may be held as valid for Italian prison building? Is it possible to trace an evolution of the type of prison in Italy, and therefore a maturing and an architectural awareness linked to the specific theme?

A research effort conducted within the Italian Penitentiary Administration in 1997, with the aim of gaining understanding of prison building holdings, developed a register of prison types, considering 219 institutions (Scarcella L. 1998; Scarcella L., Di Croce D.,2001). The analysis highlights a slow evolution

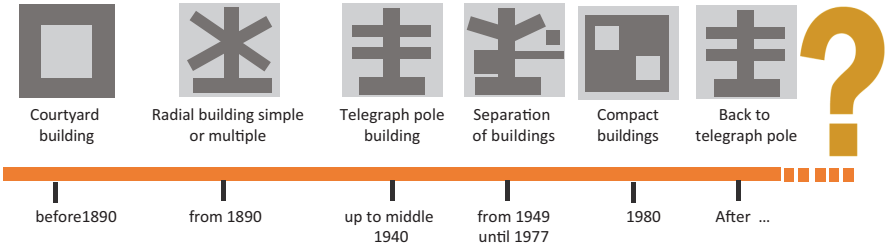

Figure 6.1 The typological evolution of the prison

of the type, closely related to the evolution of our prison laws. Outlining this analysis and placing it over a long time frame, the salient moments in the typological evolution of prisons are covered, with the limitations that a schematization of this kind may have (fig. 6.1).

The 25% of prisons (55 prison complexes) were not designed as prisons, but adapted for the purpose. They are former monasteries, mansions or castles, heritage buildings whose typology was prevalently with a courtyard, and whose trend is now towards closure and renovation. These types may be dated prior to 1890; the *casa circondariale* facility of Lucca (Tuscany), built in the fourteenth century and still in operation, is an example of this.

From 1890 on, buildings and complexes designed as prisons began to be built.

Twenty-two prison complexes, or 10%, are of a type defined as simple or multiple radial, due to the arrangement of the detention pavilions around a central distribution body; these were built in the period leading up to 1890, mostly in urban settings. Examples are San Vittore in Milan (1892) and Regina Coeli in Rome (1882), the latter built with the prisoners' own labour.

Twenty-two prison complexes, or 13%, are of the telegraph pole building type, made into the mid-1940s in accordance with the dictates of the first (1889) and second prison reform (1932)[3]. The 1889 reform of the criminal

3 Until 1931, penitentiary building was managed directly by the Administration, which, starting in 1865, had its own technical office, to which prisoners also belonged, as draughtsmen recruited from the Rome Penitentiary. After 1931, administration was transferred to the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Public Works was responsible for construction. The 1932 reform was launched with no specific funding for prison building, and the financing made available by the Ministry of Public Works was entirely insufficient to deal with the situation of penitentiary building assets (cf. Scarcella L.,1998).

code made way for the "gradual" or "Irish" model; dating to the same year was the first financing plan for prison building. The so-called "Irish" system is defined as mixed and progressive: first, continuous isolation, then night-time isolation and daytime work, followed by intermediate periods in farm or industrial organization and lastly parole. The buildings gradually adapted to this evolution, and gave rise to architectural complexes marked by a cell system creating a building with a continuous floor plan, arranged in parallel bodies linked by a central corridor, thus forming closed or open courtyards on one side so as to bring air and light into the interiors. Although these complexes were built outside urban areas, over time they were incorporated into expanding cities, as is the case with the *Casa Circondariale* in Caltanissetta (1908).

Sixty-five prison complexes, or 26%, are of a kind defined as a development of the telegraph pole typology; the type is losing its compactness, with the separation of buildings constructed between 1949 and 1977. Examples of this are Foggia Prison (1963), Nuoro Prison (1953-64) designed by the architects M. Ridolfi and W. Frankl, Rebibbia Prison (1975) designed by the architect S. Lenci, and Sollicciano Prison, Florence (1977) – architects: A. Mariotti, G. Campani, P. Inghirami, I. Castore, P. Rizzi, and E. Camici. This period was a time of lively research and debate on the issue of prison building, and in general on the various types of construction; the architects themselves grappled with this design issue. These were the years of the first architect's manual (1953) collecting all the dimensional standards and typologies for such different types of building such as schools, hospitals and housing complexes; organizational, functional, and compositional reflections on residential building attempted to find application in prison construction. These were also the years of the 1975 prison reform[4]. Following the terrorism emergency that characterized the entire decade of the 1980s, many of the original designs were revised, thus overturning their innovative capacity.

Twenty-eight prison complexes, or 13%, are defined as compact in type, with a single building. These are chiefly maximum security prisons built after the 1980s, like Palmi Prison (1989) for example.

4 Law no. 354 of 26 July 1975, "Rules governing the penitentiary system and the measures involving deprivation of or limits upon liberty," launched the new overall reform of the institutions of penitentiary law, which was being discussed since the second postwar period.

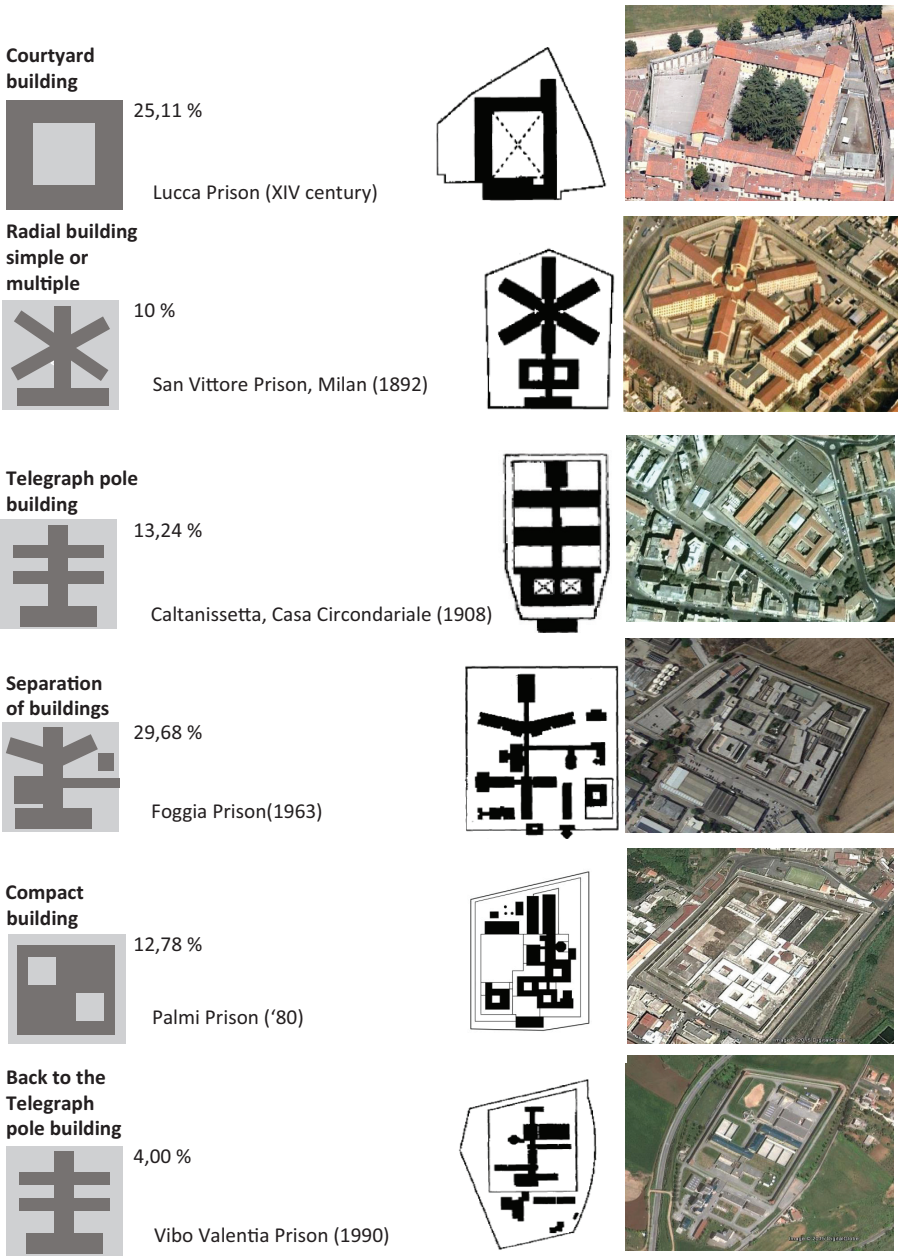

Figure 6.2 The prison typology: examples and percentage

Eight prison complexes, or 4%, returned to the telegraph pole typology after the 1990s, as was the case with Vibo Valentia Prison (1990), marking a regression in the search for design solutions capable of responding to the new needs and demands affirmed over time (fig. 6.2).

The typological evolution thus follows that of the prison reforms, and mirrors the country's social culture and political choices at a given moment in history. It is also true that few architects have grappled with prison architecture over time, since prison design was mostly relegated to mere technicalism exercised by internal technical offices. For these reasons, some scholars maintain that we cannot speak of prison architecture, and there are several reasons for this: there is no easy access to prison projects, out of security concerns, unlike what occurs in other countries; there is no significant body of literature on prison building; the topic is not taught at Architecture and Engineering schools, hence there is a lack of education and academic research; and lastly, there is no debate on this topic among architects and urban planners, and the project is therefore usually carried out by technicians (Marcetti C., 1998; Burdese, C. 2011).

As may be observed from what was stated above on the typological evolution, prison building was at the centre of design experimentation interest mainly in the postwar years until the second half of the 1970s. Without a doubt, the topic of prisons is a difficult one for architects, who find themselves having to respect rigid constraints of organization, space, and function dictated by the laws of the moment, which discourage an attempt at design experimentation.

As the architect Sergio Lenci wrote, "When the problem of the prison comes to the architect, many scenarios that may qualify the results are already completed…, and it is moreover no easy matter to determine the type and quality of the spaces if the definitions of the requirements that the convict's life might have are unclear, as a consequence of the rights that must be accorded to the convict" (1976).

Just a few illustrious figures in Italian architecture have grappled with prison design, reflecting the cultural and political trends of the era while at the same time offering reflection on the issue. In the 1950s, Mario Ridolfi, in collaboration with Wolfang Frankl, designed the Nuoro and Cosenza prisons, dealing with the issue of the prison in continuity with traditional residential typologies. His contribution concentrated more on integration into the context, composition and architectural language, materials, and details. Certain design

solutions used in residential building have been re-proposed in prisons, such as for example the detail of the diagonally-set window, which offers the possibility of looking out into the distance and guaranteeing greater privacy (Pirazzoli N., 1979).

The architect Sergio Lenci worked in the sector of prison design until the mid-1970s, during the period prior to the 1975 prison reform. Anticipating certain aspects of the reform, he contributed and provided significant impetus towards driving prison architecture to seek a design guided by principles of humanization, and by criteria of functional spaces and architectural expressiveness. Lenci designed the *casa circondariale* of Rebibbia (1959) – inaugurated in 1972, 12 years after planning began – the *carcere mandamentale* (local jail) of Rimini (1967), the *casa circondariale* of Spoleto (1970), and the *Casa Circondariale* of Livorno (1974). The architect had direct knowledge of the prison housing stock through his work at the technical office of the General Directorate of Prevention and Detention Institutions. From the experience gained during inspections at prisons, Lenci over time developed a series of suggestions for their design: from applying the criteria of building hygiene in terms of light, air, and easy maintenance; to planning a proper distance between the cell views in order to avoid the use of window screening that would hamper introspection; to immersing the buildings in greenery in order to maintain a relationship with nature. An example of this is the design for the Rebibbia prison, where Lenci exploited open space and the greenery system, introducing 12,000 trees into the areas freed from the built-up area. He designed a prison complex with overall dignity, paying attention to certain details such as: views looking out from the buildings; the entry gate, a symbolic element of great importance for the relationship with the surrounding area; and the placement of some artworks.

In the design of the *casa circondariale* of Spoleto, Lenci worked on the shape of the buildings, in order to give the prison complex a "non-oppressive" image and guarantee a certain permeability with the interior. In this design, the architect also introduced the criterion of "convertibility," which is to say the possibility that the complex might be converted to a different use in the future.

In 1974, at the height of the pre-prison-reform debate, the competition for Florence's Solliciano prison was held. The history of this design, won by the group of Florentine architects, bears witness to how Italy's social and political

events profoundly influenced the work. The design and its development clashed with the new needs imposed by terrorism and by the prison emergency, and thus the initial design, which had interesting innovative content, was overturned during construction, thereby distorting its very nature. The design's interesting innovative content may be summed up as follows: the building's floor plan, inspired by the Florentine lily, schematized this flower structure with semicircular pavilions and connecting corridors, and elaborated the telegraph pole scheme that had been deemed the most suitable for generating a corridor capable of fostering relationships of exchange between the various activities carried out inside; the buildings in the shape of convex semicircles oriented towards the city, set up as dormitories, were arranged to delimit an equipped interior space; their entire complex was organized in paths, squares, sports facilities, and green areas; there were no metal bars or grilles on the cell windows (Ministry of Justice). Construction work ended in 1982 and delivery took place the following year.

Looking to the history of these designs, we note that there is a wholly Italian anomaly between design times and construction times, and therefore the times needed to bring the project online: the passage of time between the two is quite long, and this generates – and not only in prison construction – problems linked to the buildings' actual ability to respond to the new needs imposed as the years go by.

It may be stated that the design for the Sollicciano prison complex marks the end of design experimentation, and in the years following the approval of prison reform in the second half of the 1980s for reasons connected with the emergency and terrorism, prison design was reduced to mere technicalism. In fact, "the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Public Works, through the General Directorates of Prevention and Detention Institutions and of State Construction, produced a typical design for all new constructions. The requirement of design quality gave way to other characteristics, such as having buildings be as compact as possible, and drastically reducing distances, with no further reflection on reasons, spaces, and architectural forms. The translation of the typical project into a framework, cast in stone, of the design/production cycle, in which any critical independence disappears, was done by a small group of companies and designers. With these premises, a large quantity of serial, decontextualized prison complexes was produced and dropped into the landscape" (Marcetti C., 2009).

To understand how the frame of reference changed after the second half of the 1980s, as the terrorism emergency declined in Italy, it is necessary to take a step back in time and cite the content and main guidelines emerging from a research effort performed at the international level in 1970 by the United Nations Social Defence Research Institute, titled "Prison Architecture" (1975), as the findings influenced new Italian regulations from the late 1980s on. A number of Italian scholars, including Sergio Lenci and Di Gennaro G.[5], took part in the research. The research team discussed the role that the architect plays in the planning of penal structures for adults, and defined the guidelines related to the trends in prison design.

The most significant guidelines emerging from research may be outlined as follows:

"The appropriateness of differentiating institutions according to the type of prisoners; the realization of different levels of security in a single institution, as well as a differentiation of living conditions (including architectural forms) according to the progress or regression of prisoners; the appropriateness of programmes for different categories of prisoners, such as women, young adults, drug addicts and long term prisoners. For pre-trial detention, the principal recommendation was to construct a special institution,… Concerning the size of prisons…, the minimum criterion was specified as a capacity of between 100 and 300 prisoners,….

The location of penal institutions was considered from different and contrasting points of view. Nearness to the urban centre was considered positive for allowing the staff a normal social life,..., and offering the prisoners easier contact with their families, with work opportunity in extra-mural industries, and with the opportunities for various types of professional counselling. Distance from the urban centres was on the other hand considered advantageous because of the relative cheapness of land and the easier surveillance of prisoners…. The twin tendencies to install prison industries and work-shops both inside and outside prisons.., in either case…, conditions such as

5 The following group of scholars performed the research: Di Gennaro G., project director; Lenci S., technical director; Fairweather L., technical consultant; Vetere E., research officer; Cacciapuoti B., technical assistant; Eriksson T., Leroy C., and Moyer D. F., contributors; Leone U., executive officer; Simpson P., bibliographical assistant. The research analyzed the setting and architecture of 27 prisons located all over the world.

ventilation, light and industrial safety must be equal to those prevailing in the free-labour market. … Common free time activities ..., that areas dedicated to these functions should be well suited for…; it was desirable to have playing fields, swimming pools,.., theatre, concerts, cinema. In addition to areas for common activities, rooms for individual activities, or being by oneself, were advocated…, Single cells are the best rooming arrangement… On the size of the cell,…, the guiding principle must be referred to the standard of civil architecture. The standard … for visitor's facilities was to make them as pleasant as possible in order to produce a genuinely relaxing atmosphere,… Less use of high walls for perimeter defense is suggested. A substitute could be a broad green belt around the institution equipped with means of surveillance such as lookout towers... The windows should be of the same size as in normal residences of the area, and as far as possible other techniques of closure should be substituted for the traditional bars."(Di Gennaro G.; Lenci S., 1975).

To these guidelines, others of equal interest were added, which, when systematically subdivided by key word, provide an overall and still quite current picture. For the purposes of this discussion, for each key word, the main findings with direct impact on prison design are reported.

"Identity. Since correctional objectives involve interaction with community resources and volunteer workers, facility construction should support this interaction and involvement… Facility design should indicate that elements of security and detention are secondary; they should not be permitted to dominate facility identity...; to reinforce integration of the facility into the community, facilities should fit into the external environment in which they are set. Effective facility design can ease communication and the development of inter-personal relationships.

Scale. Large scale facilities convey an atmosphere of anonymity to the individual client, and tend to engender in him feelings of powerless, meaninglessness, isolation, and embitterment…; large, isolated facilities strongly reinforce the image of rejection of the offender by society, contemporary programme objectives of resocialization and reintegration of clients into the community are thwarted…Size less than 300 is recommended….Individual room occupancy is considered a basic requirement…. Dining is preferable in decentralized smaller group settings,… Long corridors (in excess of 15-20 m in large facilities, or 10 m in smaller settings) should be avoided unless relief is

provided in some manner. In order to facilitate the integration of corrective programmes into the community settings…, an important contribution will be made when the facility design bears a harmonious relationship to its surroundings…It should be remembered that the considerations of scale relate not only to interior spaces but also to the development and definition of exterior spaces.

Institutional size. An ideal residential size will be in the area of 100-125 residents.

Conceptual design. The facility should be seen as a device which tends to structure human activities and as an environment which can provide and develop individual decision-making on the part of its residents….Visiting, counselling, legal assistance, volunteer programmes, professional services and many other activities have special importance for the conceptual design of the facility.

Individual occupancy. The basic standards in the planning and design of the closed institution should be the provision of single-occupancy sleeping rooms…together with the provision of a well-rounded activity programme…; a single room is to provide sleeping accommodation and an area of privacy for its residents for approximately eight hours a day.… the room should contain a single bed…Also provided should be adequate shelving, recognizing that residents will accumulate various articles which have the purpose of furthering their self-expression. The opportunity should also be available in the individual room for reading and writing. A small desk area with a movable chair or seat, together with sufficient lighting… A minimum amount of storage area provided to the individual resident should be included … clothing storage, lockable drawer, and closet space.… All rooms should be provided with direct outside exposure for natural light and view… The single occupancy room should also be viewed as an important environmental component which supports the correctional efforts.

Flexibility. It is desirable so that programmes may be adapted to changing needs. Principle among the considerations affecting future flexibility is the determination of materials and methods of construction…Use of construction systems which have demountable features. Planning features may include clear floor and ceiling construction with infill of partition subdivisions…Also, premanufactured systems or systems of components offer features ... suitable … to respond to future change. Several approaches are available to achieve the

adaptability to future changes in facility characteristics, role or size. One of these involves the construction of a central service core containing basic services, such as mechanical, fixed equipments, major utilities,…, and others surrounded by neutral programme modules…. Another approach calls for the planned obsolescence of the entire facility.

Control. The planning and the design of the correctional institution … must be approached as an integral part of its activity programming… The concept of zoning various functional units … with close staff supervision, further assists the planning effort which seeks to avoid redundancy in controls, excessive constructions cost, and the development of counterproductive physical environments ... Another approach to security zoning involves the establishment of a mixed perimeter with an undulating security edge ... The security edge is created by facility masses themselves rather than by construction for security purposes only. The imagery as well as the expenses for the traditional prison wall are thus avoided. Also provided with a mixed perimeter is the potential for definition of an exterior space "within" the facility environment. At the same time, the mix of 'soft' functions on the edge decreases the hostile character which the facility may otherwise present and 'soft' components become filters for interface with community programme volunteers, visitors, and other participants.

Guard Towers. (*omitted*)

Economics. Various new construction materials also add to the possibilities for attaining security and improving the treatment programme environment while at the same time reducing construction costs ... Most interesting among these … is the development of new composite glass and plastic window materials which replace traditional steel bar grillage..

Staff housing. It will be noted that many feature the provision of staff housing in close proximity to the institution…On the one hand, it is recognized that the immediate proximity of the staff to the facility allows for their quick response in times of emergency… Another reason … is that such housing frequently constitutes a portion of staff payment and benefits … An approach to the housing of staff now gaining prominence is based upon the premise that corrections staff serve as an important link between the residents of the closed institutions and the outside community…

Climate. Local climate conditions in the particular country in which the facility is planned have importance ... In amenable climates,…, opportunities

are offered for exterior programme activity, and here interrelationships between interior space and exterior space take on a new significance. …In less amenable climates the consideration of climate for design is equally important. Consequently, various activity spaces such as sleeping rooms, living areas, group activity spaces and others, should be organized in the facility design to allow the maximum orientation to the warmth and light of the winter sun (D Moyer, 1975).

The authors of the research highlight a new conception of prison architecture aimed at reintegrating the prisoner into society, and therefore are more attentive to the relationship with the city, to the interaction with the community, and to the prisoner's personal needs, while not neglecting the needs connected with the facilities' security and control: an architecture, then, that communicates an identity of its own, in which aspects of security and control do not dominate.

As discussed above, the study influenced the design criteria of the late 1980s in Italy, and this period saw the enactment, in 1986, of the Gozzini Law (Law no. 663 of 10 October 1986), which emphasized re-education over punishment, instilling a climate for actions aimed at humanizing detention, achieved also through the construction of the prison space.

The ministry circular of 1989, "Criteri per una moderna edilizia penitenziaria" ("Criteria for modern prison building")[6] provides a series of requirements and suggestions for the provision of spaces and for construction technologies to be adopted for the construction of new penitentiaries, making no reference to a typical scheme. For the purposes of this discussion, the content of the circular is grouped into three points: the requirements of a general nature that the building must meet; suggestions regarding the provision of spaces; and technological aspects.

As to the requirements, the following are defined:

- Flexibility: design in order to allow for easy changes to the building over time, without altering the work's ordinary arrangement
- Functionality: building typology in such a way as to limit the operating costs, especially with regard to the control staff
- Aesthetics: the colours of the environments.

6 1989, Ministry Circular (?), "Criteria for a modern design of prison building."

With regard to the types of spaces, the circular's guideline is to see that the prison offers the prisoner the possibility of being engaged in a variety of activities for most of the day – work, educational activities, and so on – outside the cell.

Spaces for this purpose are identified:

– Spaces for working, educational, recreational, activities, etc.

As to the technological aspects, the circular provides suggestions with regard to:

– Technologies and building materials: low cost, but attention to the quality of aesthetic perception, living comfort, internal and external flexibility
– Using industrialized building technologies instead of prefabricated technologies
– Restricting the use of prefabricated technologies solely to storage, laboratory and service spaces
– Using a mix of building technologies (prefabricated + traditional) for services and support housing.
– Using a mix of building technologies, thus making it possible to pare down costs and construction time
– Using traditional materials with human and affective values.(Burdese, 2011).

In 1998, 9 years after the aforementioned circular, the Department of Penitentiary Administration provided, in a circular, the framework of prison assets, underscoring the typological inadequacy and the general state of decay of a large part of prison buildings. The circular emphasized the need for investment in upgrading the buildings, and, with the objective of considering the work as a sub-set of the prison system, proposed a "new element" represented by a building – separate but within prison walls – for productive activity: a small factory employing prisoners. The 1989 circular posed the problem not only of new buildings, but of upgrading existing prisons – an issue still highly current today.

With regard to the topic of upgrading, one of the interventions of greatest significance for the participation process it activates, its values and the social message it bears is the "giardino degli incontri" ("the meeting garden") in Florence's Sollicciano prison, begun in 1985 and concluded in 2007.

The process and design was led by the architect Giovanni Michelucci, who held a highly critical position with regard to institutions and their architecture.

In a 1983 interview, a journalist asked Michelucci: "But how would you build a prison if you were asked?" His reply: "I wouldn't build it. I would have it done by someone else. In this case, my cowardice would be up to here. Unless, that is, I were allowed to build a whole city" (interview by Francesco Colonna, *La Nazione*, 24 February 1983).

This statement makes perfectly clear Michelucci's relationship with the issue of prison architecture and his approach to the *giardino degli incontri* design. Developed by a group of prisoners, the design is dedicated to a special moment in the prisoner's life, that of visits and encounters with family members, where children are also present. That it is called a "garden" clearly shows that a part of the city is brought within the prison, for the purpose of breaking down its walls and repairing the relationship with the city. The design has a strong impact on the issue of humanizing punishment: degraded spaces are upgraded and returned to the prison, a new building and the open-air theatre are built, and special attention is given to the needs of the prisoners and of visiting children, through the construction of comfortable environments with architectural value. In this regard, Michelucci wrote: "Beyond our own intentions, it will above all be the children who discover the sense of space and their many ways of being able to use it." The architect followed the design until his death in 1990, and the executive design was subsequently carried out by the Board of Engineers of Tuscany, with the collaboration of Fondazione Michelucci (Marcetti, 2008, 2009).

An essential passage was marked by the issuance in 2000 of the Regulation on the penitentiary system and on the measures involving deprivation of or limits upon liberty (Decree of the President of the Republic no. 230 of 30 June 2000).

In brief, the regulation stresses the following: the prison as a place of resocialization; efforts at resocialization should include security settings corresponding to the socialization levels of offenders, the involvement of prisoners in different activities, such as cooking and room cleaning, the involvement of prisoners in different working activities and at the level of constructing the building; it is necessary to apply all technologies in the electronic and energy fields.

Based on this regulation, in 2001 the penitentiary administration in Italy initiated a "call for ideas for the development of a prototype medium-security penitentiary institution with qualified treatment." The competition asked the candidates for a penitentiary institution model accommodating 200 prisoners over an area of 80,000 m², with modular and repeatable detention units for 60-70 prisoners; interpreting the new regulatory dictates, the model would permit qualified treatment for the prisoner from the standpoint of opportunities for education, employment, and professional training, cultural activities, recreation, and sports. All this was directed, on the one hand, towards improving the quality of life inside the institution, and on the other towards ensuring the performance of activities aimed at the prisoner's recovery and reintegration into society, without neglecting the need to achieve the best possible economy in the employment of human resources in the operation phase and to improve and strengthen residential building and housing structures for personnel.

Twenty-two design groups answered the call, 4 of which garnered awards: two winners in a tie, and two honourable mentions[7].

The competition brought no follow-up – not even publication of the catalogue of the show that was subsequently organized. But it did have the merit of making prison architecture a topic for discussion again, despite the very bitter criticism by some, foremost among whom was Burdese, who wrote that designers are not suitably equipped to grapple with this issue, and that the administration was imagining, outside itself, entirely non-existent spheres of competence (Vassella, 2016).

So we are back to technicalism, with the presentation by the Penitentiary Administration in 2009, at the first Salone della Giustizia trade show in Rimini, of a prototype modular penitentiary institution accommodating 200, 400, 600, and 800 prisoners. The prototype adopts a radiocentric scheme over a distribution hub, with an eye to flexibility and modularity, security and control, and affordable operation (De' Rossi, 2016).

The idea of a prototype, serialized and undifferentiated, yet functional and efficient from the standpoint of operation and so on, is the negation of the relationship with the surrounding built-up fabric, and it would at the very

7 The two winners, in a tie, were: "La città ristretta," studio Fagnoni&Associati; "Comb1," studio Ap+st architettura. The two honorable mentions were: "Sicurezza e vivibilità," Studio Delfini; "Fortes et firmi carceres construantur," 1229, studio Planrch.

least be necessary to investigate the procedures for bringing the "prototype" into dialogue with the context of reference into which it is inserted, so as to activate the dialogue that has been discussed, between society, the city, and the prison.

This begs the question: "Are we currently unable to open the issue of prisons to 'architecture,' relegating it to the mere technicalism of a handful of experts? And, given this will – because that is what it appears to be – why can't, at the very least, forms of collaboration with scholars and technicians included to do studies and experiments on the subject be found?"

Prison as architecture for living linked with urban life: some opening considerations

Prison design cannot and must not be relegated to the mere activity of the architect – an idea that is now obsolete – but to an interdisciplinary group that includes the participation of experts in various sectors, from the urban planner to the sociologist and so on, also with a view to participation with the end users when possible.

The approach to the topic of prison architecture must necessarily focus on the various categories of users, starting from identification, in the design process, of what the actual needs are, in compliance with the regulations in force – without losing sight of the fact that the prisoner is a person like everyone else. As pointed out a number of times, a prison's design is the expression of the policy a country has towards detention and punishment and towards its laws, as well as its actual ability to enforce laws, and its political will to invest in this sector. When dealing with the design of a new building, an initial aspect is connected with its placement with respect to the surrounding context – a choice that determines the relationship not only between the prison and city, but the relationship that, depending on the case, prisoners may have with life outside prison. It is an important choice, that obviously cannot be made separately from a series of considerations connected to the project's setting (topography, climate, etc.) and therefore to its environmental sustainability. The questions that must be posed prior to embarking on a prison design are those underlying any process: Who are the users? How many are they? What are their needs? What kind of activities are users allowed to do? What kind of spaces do users need? What kind of connection among spaces is

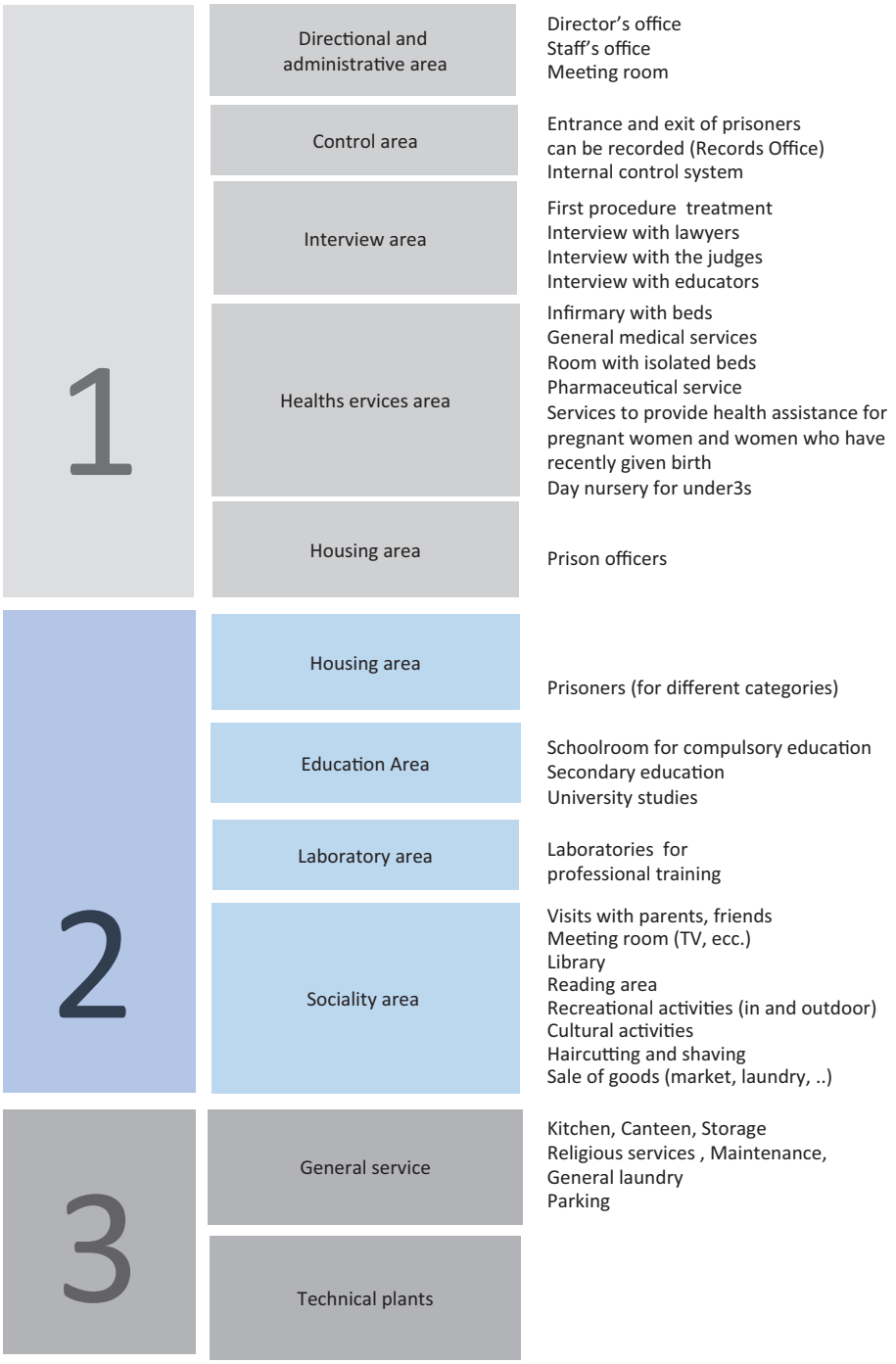

Figure 6.3 The identification of three sectors of prisons and their functions

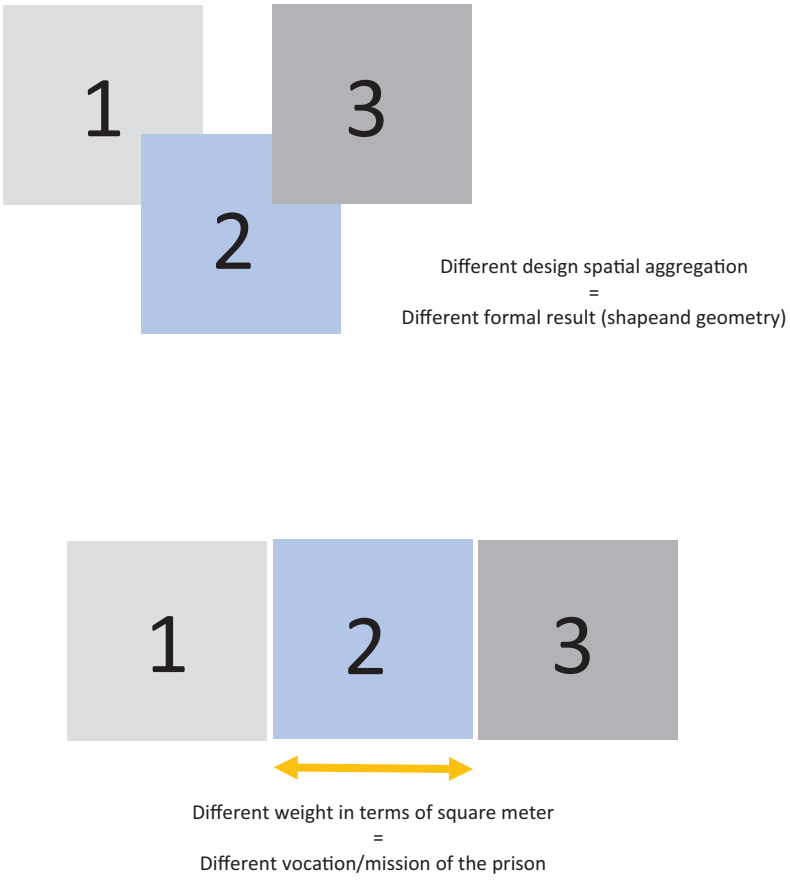

Figure 6.4 The different aggregation of the prison's sectors: What does it mean?

useful? What are the pathways? What activities will be carried out outdoors or indoors? What is the ideal relationship between indoor and outdoor spaces? As regards the users, we may identify the different categories of prisoner in relation to: level of the punishment, gender (male/female), age (starting from babies), health status, psychological status; in addition to prisoners are other users, such as the director, prison officers, psychologists, criminologists, social workers, prison doctors, the multidisciplinary team for drug addicts, the service team for alcohol addiction, educators/teachers and vocational training workers, chaplains and other religious ministers, volunteers, general services staff, and visitors. In terms of spatial aggregation, three sectors may be identified, broken down into functional areas and environmental

units (fig. 6.3). Depending on the three sectors' aggregation, a variety of spatial configurations may be obtained; in particular, in relation to the weight that each of the sectors has in terms of percentage of the built-up space, the prison's mission may be defined, if it is aimed at rehabilitation, and thus with great importance given, in terms of floor space, to re-education and reintegration activities (fig. 6.4).

It may be said that from the technical standpoint, the realization of a technically sound, quality project, with the aim of striking a better balance between overall construction cost, maintenance, and management, must at any rate comply with the indications of the regulations in force for other categories of buildings: reducing the use of non-renewable resources, maximum reuse of natural resources, high maintainability, improved energy efficiency, durability of materials and components, substitution of elements, technical and environmental compatibility of materials, easy monitoring of performance over time, safety and health.

From the human point of view, the process of arriving at the design, and the design itself, can promote environments that respect human dignity and the sense of belonging to and being integrated into the neighbourhood and the wider community. These aspects are highly important because the prison's placement, and thus its design, its connotations of material and of sensory perception, can promote and encourage a specific use and good perception of the space, and might have an effect on the prisoners' behaviour.

Final note: What is the next step?

This papers offers a brief history of Italian prison "architecture" and the design considerations and examples that contribute towards initiating an interdisciplinary debate to stress how a connection with the context, a sense of place, a living space and a multicultural atmosphere may be created in the prison. It is necessary to keep in mind the article of the Constitution of the Italian Republic that focuses on two key concepts: human dignity and the rehabilitation of the prisoners. Today, the Italian situation is still far from achieving the Constitution's dual objectives. The Italian problem is linked not only to the construction of new penitentiary buildings, but above all, as the data we have discussed show, to the upgrading of existing ones.

Many critical areas emerge from the analysis. Of the two chief ones, the first is the presence of a sound regulatory apparatus that is disregarded; in other words, there are laws, but the political will to seriously come to terms with them and to invest in this direction is lacking. The second critical area is the absence of "architecture" in prison design. I believe that research in this sector must be incentivized and brought forward in comparison with experiences outside national boundaries, in an interdisciplinary perspective, so as to activate a cultural debate on the issue of prisons that breaks through the wall of pure technicalism. It is thus necessary to counter the trend that sees prison prototyping as the only solution, and relaunch research and design for the prison as a place to promote the prisoner's human respect, a place of rehabilitation for the persons experiencing it, and a place in a close relationship with the cultural, social, and physical setting it belongs to.

Writing about prisons, it is impossible for me to ignore the reality described by a famed Italian prisoner, Adriano Sofri, who spent 22 years behind bars: "Every time I say this is a comfortable prison, better than in the past, bystanders look at me with perplexity; then someone comes up to me, softly saying, 'Jail is jail; it's still jail'. Don't forget: your windows have gratings, your doors are made of iron, and they make an iron noise; a jailer passes through every hour during the night, with heavy footsteps; he switches on the light and looks inside your cell; don't forget that everyone screams; (...) don't forget you are a prisoner" (translated by the author).

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