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Politecnico di Milano

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MIND Project



From industrial local areas towards innovation districts: implementing, attracting and developing a new territorial structure for new economy and production in Milan region

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Students:

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Objectives

Students will work on the particular structure of existing local industrial areas in the eastern section of Milan region, proposing a way to change their rigid territorial structure (articulated in old, separate clusters) in to a more flexible combination of clusters in form of hot spots able to attract the contemporary industrial and manufacturing economy, aiming at creating **innovation districts**. Students should propose an **innovative territorial model**, understanding how innovation districts are able to change the territorial and economic organization, to catch the productive attitude of the region and to transform the rigidity of the existing districts, proposing a model able to create new supply chain, new smarter information, less impact on the environment reducing travels, new uses and new relations with the existing urban areas, and new visibility fostering the excellence of the economy and the excellence of the territories.

Description

The project aims at understanding the rigid and old territorial organization of Milan region, as many others in Italy, focusing on the eastern section of it. While residential offer and environment organization have been able to update their territorial proposal, despite the high new level of transport offer in the region, industrial areas are still small, separated, old and barely infrastructured, even if at a national/global level local economy is able to produce excellence and open productive dialogs with many markets around the world. Together with the active participation of municipalities, co-op banks, industrialist's associations, territorial organizations, students should study the layout of the areas, find a way to re organize their movements (employees and goods) and propose a different territorial structure able to catch the innovation of the productive processes, the global size of the potential markets and the need to support the relevant regional vocations. Above all, students should understand the exceptional mix of uses, ideas, research and practice, urban and suburban that lay behind the idea of Innovation District, as a new territorial revolution able to consider productive areas as hub of innovation, ideas, cooperation, technology and new urbanity. The project will take into consideration the contrast between districts and industrial processes, and generally speaking between territory, economy and information. They will work following some routes, and above all:

- students will focus on the eastern sector of Milan region, full of local, small and old districts, with old, rigid and no more functional factories; simultaneously they will work on a specific regeneration district, on the Adda river, as former industrial area linked to the water system of Adda and its artificial channels
- students will understand the potentialities of a territory full of urban spots, where everything is nearby and industrial uses are a natural vocation of the area;
- students should study the way districts are combined, in their separation and fragmentation on the territory and in their location that does not take into consideration the combination of vocation and infrastructure
- students will focus on a proposal to re consider districts through the occasion of the regeneration of the Adda river former industrial sites, proposing a new territorial and economic model, able to attract new activities, smart production processed, start up, co working places. It will be important to connect vocations and places, as once upon a time activities clustered around Adda river and its artificial channels combining infrastructures (water), resources (energy) and products (textile, manufactures);
- at the end of the project, students should be able to propose a new territorial model and a new management system to keep activities into information and physical networks, share information about the territorial offers, combine different actors help (such as co-op banks, associations, professional education schools, shopping districts and thematic events) in a more organized and flexible model.
- the model should show to be able to re consider the old model, made by industrial areas and towns towards an integrated, contemporary innovations districts, where innovation changes the way in which

districts relate to the cities, bringing back production to urbanity, and using creativity and technology as the new link between different territories

The extraordinary participation of State University of New York, Department of Geography and planning will give students the chance to be supported by expertise able in the past to invent a new future for the NY Capital Region investing in nanotechnologies and showing the output on the local, depressed territories. Nowadays, the western section of the city of Albany is an innovation hub for new start ups, incubators, and innovation changed everything

Expected results

Students will propose a **new territorial and management model** for a regional territory able to consider it as a hot spot, **combining a smart territorial management model** (including distribution of activities, connection with infrastructures, proximity to services, efficient management of waste, goods, sources, connection among local institutions and between different levels' authorities) **with a strong, contemporary model of sharing information** (about the attractiveness of the organized territory), **finding financial sources** (with a new role for co-op banks), **opening to international markets** through shared logistic platform and **feeding employees clusters** involving professional education schools. The result should be a **strategic integrated plan** able to attract the participation of many institutional and non institutional actors, to cross borders and competences and above all able to re invent a production system basing it on vocation, innovation, urbanity and where proximity and connections are everything. Results will be tested on the territory of the Adda valley in the eastern section of Milan Region, re arranging the agenda of a site and re thinking to the idea of technological and industrial cluster in a more contemporary, and even less physical way. Students should find the chance to convince local managers and public authorities to finance their project, seeing the opportunity to put back again manufacturing at the center of the attention of their territories in a more permeating way.

Students should foster their ability in reading a territorial geography, understanding how manufacturing work according to the uses and the vocation a territory should show, learning how institutional territorial management work and above all understanding the degree of connection between industries, local communities, regional and national transport networks, environment and international markets, proposing through their models themselves as contemporary managers of regional territorial re organization processes.

FIRST PHASE

Calendar

First phase – ending on July 22nd 2016

First review of the project. Feedback/first report presentation

Working at:

Recognition of the topic, places and practices – creating the first knowledge to start the project and preparing the first analysis

Recognition of the stakeholders – How and who should be involved in the project

Preparation of the work plan and preparation of students' budget

Preparing:

Report #1

Students' budget

Meetings:

MTG1 June, 23rd 9:00am – Politecnico di Milano – DASTU – Second floor meeting's room. Marco Facchinetti lecture #1 and lecture #2, addressing the issues and the first phase's activities

MTG2 June, 28th 2:00pm – Politecnico di Milano – DASTU – Second floor meeting's room. – Co tutor Alessandra Mazzei's lecture

MTG3 June, 30th 9:00 am – Politecnico di Torino – DIST – Co tutor Patrizia Lombardi's lecture

(all activities from second to fifth phases should be scheduled and decided. This calendar just takes into considerations now the official deadlines)

Second phase – ending on November 2016

Second review of the project. Feedback/second report presentation

Working at:

Strategic plan. First draft.

Preparing:

Report #2

Meetings:

Trip to.. End of September

To be scheduled

Third phase – ending on January 2016

Third review of the project. Presentation to the jury members of ASP

Working at:

Strategic plan. Second draft.

Preparing:

Report #3

Meetings:

To be scheduled

Fourth phase - ending on March 2016

Winter school – Final review of the projects

Working at:

Strategic plan. Third draft.

Preparing:

Report #4

Meetings:

To be scheduled

Fifth phase – June 2016

Preparation of the final examination

Meetings:

To be scheduled

1.

Final result should be always in our minds...

(first phase)

The MIND project works at the idea of innovating manufacturing to transform its physical presence on the territories, shifting from a model based on a “clusters and zoned areas” organization towards a more integrated, urban, innovative districts layout. To achieve this goal students’ final result will be the development of a strategic plan, able to foster innovation in the manufacturing processes to bring them back to urban environments and, on the other side, to reinvent a new form of sustainable urbanity, able to host once again industrial areas and industrial manufacturing processes. The strategic approach refers to the development of a plan as a complex and articulated system of *projects, policies and strategies*, and above all it means a *selective* process able to include in the plan only ideas and tools that can really activate innovative processes. In the mean time, the use of the word “plan” means the necessity to prepare an urban planning, multi scalar, perspective, able to make things happen, involving different levels and managing the coordination between different actors.

For the past 50 years, the *landscape of innovation* has been dominated by regions like Silicon Valley—suburban corridors of spatially isolated corporate campuses, accessible only by car, with little emphasis on the quality of life or on *integrating work, housing, and recreation*. A complementary new urban model is now emerging, in the form of what many are calling “innovation districts.” These districts, by my definition, are “geographic areas where leading-edge anchor institutions and companies cluster and connect with start-ups, business incubators,

and accelerators. Compact, transit-accessible, and technically-wired, innovation districts foster open collaboration, grow talent, and offer mixed-used housing, office, and retail.”

Innovation districts are already attracting an eclectic mix of firms in the app economy and high tech sector as well as in high-value, research-oriented sectors such as life and material sciences, clean energy, and data computing. They are also home to companies in highly creative fields like architecture, design, theater production, advertising, and marketing. There is a return to cities of small-scale and customized manufacturing, made possible by 3D printing, robotics, and other advanced techniques. Much of this activity reflects a fundamental rethinking by corporate management about how and where innovation happens. In turn, it is making the case that discrete urban geographies can be instrumental in strengthening the competitive advantages of specific firms and clusters.

2. Activities

Recognition of topic (first phase)

The final result that the project requires to students focuses on the way in which manufacturing processes and generally speaking industrial or production activities are nowadays staying on the new, post metropolitan organization of some of the most advanced regions of the (western) world. Above all, it is important to understand how the term “industrial” or the word “production” are now able to identify different categories of goods, such as information or technological products. These new manufacturing processes, together with a different way of interpreting and transforming the production of more traditional goods, are supposed to be able to change the way in which industrial areas are connected to cities. Students should investigate in the first phase these aspects, showing, with the use of case studies, how territorial organization is proposing new elements and new combination of industrial areas, production clusters and urban areas. At least, considering the first deadline, students should prepare a first investigation of topics and elements able to be developed in full report during the second phase.

Lecture #1 will address the issue, and it will help students understanding the topic. Lecture#1 will be given during MTG1.

Recognition of places and stakeholders (first phase)

The project works on a specific section of the Milan’s region, historically identified as Martesana Adda, taking its name from the artificial canal called Naviglio Martesana, running from the city of Milano towards the Adda river, on a west – east direction and from the Adda river, running from North to south and historically drawing a line of separation between two provinces and two different ways of interpreting industrial manufacturing. Many of the small towns that dot the territory have been building their own industrial districts. The majority of them have been planned zoning them out of the residential areas and more or less connected to roads and highways, some of them connected to the railways. For many reasons, this organization creates impacts and unsustainable behaviors, for the movement of goods and for the way in which users,

employees or clients should move around according to this territorial layout. On the same area, there are chances to organize new innovative manufacturing clusters set on a different idea. Students should start working at the analysis of Cassano d'Adda former Linificio's area, whose transformation's plan has been recently approved by the Municipality. The area will be considered as a playground to test the plan students are called to prepare and as a testing place to see if innovation can really create urban and productive places.

This phase should include the recognition of the stakeholders that could be involved in the project.

Lecture #2 will introduce all the details about Cassano d'Adda's place and it will help with the identification of the stakeholders. . Lecture#2 will be given during MTG1.

Recognition of practices

(first phase)

The way in which innovation has been able, in some places of the western world, to reform the relations between cities/urban areas and manufacturing should be investigated with a in-depth analysis. New forms of production and new outputs are maybe more conveniently locating on more urban clusters, or on the other side some places are able to express a different idea of urbanity, taking shape thanks to relations between knowledge, urban behaviors, creativity, proximity and leisure. Students should start understanding thanks to which practices these changes are occurring and where.

At the same time, manufacturing is changing the way in which products are done, maybe it is also changing products themselves and the way in which they are dispatched and distributed all around the world. The old organization has changed and students should be able to understand how innovation is now positively affecting manufacturing to change it into something lighter and with less impacts.

Innovation is also affecting the communication strategies with which manufacturing present their products and their decisions. Students, together with the help of co tutor Prof. Alessandra Mazzei, should understand in the first phase the importance of communication in industrial processes and how communication can keep together industrial strategies and aims with consumers, clients and users' desires. Students should also understand how territorial communication is used to promote and sustain the innovative way of bringing back manufacturing to urban areas and how/if innovation is considered a key word in these communication's strategies involving territories.

Lecture #3 by Alessandra Mazzei will help students work on these aspects. . Lecture#3 will be given during MTG2.

3.

Materials and sources

Students can download all the materials they need from Beep or Dropbox folders. Directions will be given, on how to operate and download, as soon as possible.

Maps and pictures will be given, and during lecture#1 tutor will direct students on how to develop first phase reports.

4. Student's budget

During MTG1, students and tutor will work together at the preparation of the budget, to be submitted on July, 22th to the School.

Simultaneously, tutor and students will decide how to allocate available funds.

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