

# The role of architecture in more humane detention

Exploring available materials to compare mother-child detention practices in Europe

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# Preface

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*Ine Werckx*

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# Samenvatting

Als antwoord op de onmenselijke leefomstandigheden in Belgische gevangenissen veroorzaakt door structurele overbevolking, personeelstekorten, frequente stakingen en verouderde infrastructuur, pleit VZW *De Huizen* voor de implementatie van kleinschalige, gedifferentieerde en sociaal verankerde 'detentiehuizen'. Hoewel het politiek en maatschappelijk draagvlak hiervoor groeit, is er nog maar weinig onderzoek gedaan naar hoe hun architectuur kan bijdragen aan humane detentie. Gezien steeds meer onderzoek wijst in de richting dat de gebouwde omgeving ons welzijn en gedrag beïnvloedt, heeft deze thesis als doel de kennis over de rol van architectuur in het creëren van meer humane detentieomgevingen te verruimen. Aangezien dataverzameling in gevangenissen vaak een hele uitdaging is, is een bijkomend doel van deze thesis het testen van secundaire analyse als methode voor kwalitatief onderzoek binnen detentie-omgevingen.

In tegenstelling tot België zijn er in een aantal andere Europese landen met een lange traditie van kleinschalige detentie. Op basis van maatschappelijke relevantie en data-beschikbaarheid werden een aantal kleinschalige gevangenissen voor moeders met jonge kinderen geselecteerd, en onderling vergeleken. Deze projecten waren afkomstig uit drie Europese landen: Duitsland, Italië en Spanje. Om context te scheppen werden ook de detentiepraktijken rond moeders met jonge kinderen in gewone gevangenissen in België onderzocht. De bevindingen suggereren dat ruimtelijk ontwerp weldegelijk kan bijdragen aan het meer humaan maken van detentieomgevingen. Terugkerende ruimtelijke aspecten die mogelijks bijdragen, zijn het gebruik van 'zachte' veiligheidsmaatregelen, alledaagse of speelse gevels, kleurrijke interieurs, ruime privécellen met gewoon meubilair, huiselijke gemeenschappelijke ruimtes en (buiten)speelplekken voor kinderen.

Over het algemeen steunde het ontwerp van de bestudeerde projecten vaak op gelijkaardige concepten als die van *De Huizen*. Over het algemeen deelden ze ook dezelfde doelstelling, namelijk het minimaliseren van detentieschade, vooral voor de kinderen. De Belgische Basiswet van 2005 schrijft een soortgelijk schadebeperkingsbeginsel voor, wat de relevantie van het onderzoek voor de Belgische context verder ondersteunt. Hoewel de analyse van bestaand materiaal nuttig was om data in kaart te brengen en enkele ogenschijnlijk relevante inzichten opleverde, is verder primair onderzoek nodig om inzicht te krijgen in de ervaringen van gedetineerden.

# Abstract

In response to the structural overcrowding, staff shortages, frequent strikes and dilapidated infrastructure resulting in inhumane living conditions in Belgian prisons, non-governmental organization *De Huizen* advocates for the implementation of small-scale, differentiated and community integrated 'detention houses'. Though the movement in favour of these detention houses is gaining momentum, research on how their architecture may contribute to more humane detention is still lacking. Given the ever-increasing evidence that the built environment affects our wellbeing and behaviour, this thesis aims to further knowledge on the role of architecture in creating more humane detention environments. Considering the challenging process of data collection in prisons, an additional aim of this thesis is to explore secondary analysis as a method for doing qualitative research on detention environments.

Unlike Belgium, a number of other European countries already have a variety of long-established small-scale detention facilities in use. Based on relevance and an assessment of data availability, a number of small-scale prisons for mothers with young children were selected as cases, and subjected to comparative analysis. These projects originated from three European countries: Germany, Italy and Spain. For context, mother-child detention practices in regular prisons in Belgium were also explored. The findings suggest that spatial design can contribute to making detention environments more humane. Reoccurring spatial aspects that may be contributing factors include the use of 'soft' security measures, unassuming or playful façades, colourful interiors, spacious private cells with regular furniture, homely communal spaces and (outdoor) children's play areas.

Overall, the design of the studied cases was often guided by concepts similar to those of *De Huizen*. The cases also generally shared the objective of minimising harmful effects of detention, especially on the children. As the Belgian Prison Act of 2005 posits a similar objective of harm reduction, this further supports the relevance of the research for the Belgian context. While analysis of available materials was useful for mapping data and provided some seemingly relevant insights, further primary research is needed to gain additional insight into detainees' lived experience.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This introductory chapter consists of three sections: Section 1.1 contextualises the problem, Section 1.2 explains the research objectives and Section 1.3 delineates the structure of this thesis.

### 1.1 Problem statement

The Council of Europe anti-torture Committee (CPT) has been highlighting the many problems in Belgian prisons in their reports for years, yet improvements remained few and far between (CPT, 2017). The first and most persistent problem is that of overcrowding. In 2014, the European Court of Human Rights found that the issue was structural in nature and strongly denounced the **inhumane living conditions** in which it resulted (ECHR, 2014). However, a lack of capacity is not the only issue Belgian prisons have to contend with. The situation is further exacerbated by staff shortages, absenteeism and frequent strikes (CPT, 2022). The CPT has observed that these strikes negatively impact the wellbeing of detainees, especially when agreements on minimum staffing levels are not respected (CPT, 2022). There is often no *wandeling* ('walk') on strike days, meaning detainees are denied access to the outdoor exercise area and thus have to spend the entire day in their cell. Prolonged confinement in overcrowded conditions further increases tensions between cellmates, which can escalate into violent incidents (CPT, 2017). To add insult to injury, the **material conditions** in the majority of Belgian prisons are unhygienic and dilapidated (CPT, 2022). Given the age of these buildings, this can be expected: no less than 16 out of 37 Belgian prisons were built in the nineteenth century, another six were built during the interbellum (Federale overheidsdienst justitie, n.d.a). Next to existing plans for new prison complexes, some renovations have taken place to recover lost capacity, however, some institutions are simply beyond repair (Daems, 2009).

The negative effects of overcrowded prison conditions described here above are in line with existing research on how prison architecture influences wellbeing. A

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detailed review of existing literature was done by Engstrom and Van Ginneken (2022). In their research, they identified 'design domains' that may affect prisoners' wellbeing. These domains were divided into two categories: personal living space and general prison spaces. One domain pertaining to the latter was that of 'Size and Crowding', with **size** being the number of people residing in a prison and **crowding** referring to building occupancy in relation to its original capacity (Engstrom and Van Ginneken, 2022). Large institutions (1000 people or more) had significantly higher death rates, related to both suicide and ill health, as persistent overcrowding has been associated with high blood pressure and harmful psychological and behavioral outcomes (Engstrom and Van Ginneken, 2022). A Dutch study on cell-sharing found that wellbeing of detainees in double cells is dependent on preference and cellmate relationships (Van Ginneken, 2022). Detainees who prefer single cells but are forced to have a cellmate have poorer ratings of wellbeing, and if they do not get along, reports of any kind of misconduct are more likely to occur (Van Ginneken, 2022). Rate of overcrowding has also been associated with higher rates of staff sick leave in England and Wales (Engstrom and Van Ginneken, 2022), which is also consistent with the current situation in Belgium.

In 2005, the Belgian government passed a law regarding the prison system and legal position of detainees (Daems, 2009). This Prison Act was meant to set new standards for prison conditions and protect the rights of detainees during imprisonment (Dupont, 2005). It states that the custodial sentence must be carried out in psychosocial, physical and material conditions that respect the dignity of the human being (Dupont, 2005). According to the philosophy of this law, when carrying out a custodial sentence, it is essential to minimize the harmful effects of detention before expecting any positive outcomes from the imprisonment. In other words: reducing the damage caused by detention is crucial for achieving the goals of recovery, reintegration, and rehabilitation outlined in the law (Maes, 2009). This **modern penal philosophy** significantly differs from past views, which considered additional punitive elements as a fundamental part of imprisonment (Maes, 2009). Over the past two centuries, there has been a notable evolution in the approach to executing prison sentences. Maes (2009) describes this in terms of shifting focusses: *"from a focus on the criminal act itself (nineteenth century moral-retributive model) to an emphasis on the offender (medical-psychosocial treatment model) to the current approach prioritizing the legal protection of detainees and the reduction of harmful effects of detention"* (p.52). This shift also aligns with broader developments in criminal law, where an act-focused approach gradually evolved to include rehabilitative measures and restorative practices (Maes, 2009).

Hans Claus, a former prison director, recognised that these new principles were incompatible with the existing material reality of Belgian prisons (Claus, 2018). He believed a radically different approach was necessary and founded *De Huizen*, an organisation that advocates for the implementation of '**detention houses**' as a more humane form of detention. These detention houses are small in scale, differentiated based on the different needs of the detainees and located in close proximity to their



community (Claus, 2018). While this movement towards more humane detention is gaining momentum, the handful of projects that have been realised were all initially met with a significant 'Not In My Back Yard' (NIMBY) reaction (De Huizen, n.d.a). The detention houses (as they are currently implemented in Belgium) are small-scale prisons where detainees with sentences shorter than 3 years serve their time (Federale overheidsdienst justitie, n.d.a). A similar concept that was implemented in practice are '**transition houses**'. Transition houses are a halfway house-type facility akin to detention houses, but they are only allowed to house detainees in the last few months of their sentence (Federale overheidsdienst justitie, n.d.a). The first two were opened in 2019 in Mechelen and Edingen, and a third in 2023 in Gent (Federale overheidsdienst justitie, n.d.a). The success of *Transitiehuis Mechelen* prompted the government to anchor the implementation of transition houses in the law, expanding their total capacity to 100 places spread throughout the country (Vervaeck, 2022). Though *Transitiehuis Edingen* closed after its 'pilot phase' because the operator at the time did not continue his candidature, it will reopen in 2024 in the same building (Vervaeck, 2024). All in all, recidivism rates currently indicate that these 'houses' are likely better equipped to set detainees up for success after imprisonment (Vervaeck, 2022).

### 1.2 Research objective

As mentioned in the previous section, *De Huizen*'s solution to the inhumane living conditions that characterise Belgian prisons today would be to close them and build 'houses' instead. The way they propose to gradually transition from a few large prisons to many small detention houses is through a 'step-by-step strategy' (Termote, 2023). This strategy divides the prison population into groups with similar needs, and takes them 'out of prison' one by one. One of these target groups could be detained mothers cohabiting with young children. Arguably, placing mothers and young children in community-based detention would be a logical first 'step'. Women only make up about 5% of the prison population and only a small percentage of the crimes they commit are violent in nature (Bennett et al., 2005). Since women generally pose less of a 'threat' to society, the public might have less of a NIMBY-reaction to this group, especially when they are accompanied by innocent children.

The objective of this thesis, which will focus on mother-child detention, is thus to investigate what spatial aspects could contribute to providing a more humane detention environment. The overarching research question is: *What is the role of architecture in humane detention?*. The way the research aims to answer this question is by conducting a comparative analysis of humane detention projects abroad. Considering the challenging process of data collection in prisons, an additional aim of this thesis is to test secondary data analysis as a method for doing qualitative research on detention environments. Three unique mother-detention concepts throughout Europe were chosen for this analysis: Spain's *Unidades Externas de Madres* (UM), Germany's *Mutter-Kind-Häuser* (MuKi) and Italy's *Istituti a Custodia Attenuata per Detenute Madri* (ICAM). By looking at spatial similarities and differences between these projects, while still being mindful of each country's specific context, a number of design considerations may be formulated to inform the design of detention houses in Belgium.

### 1.3 Thesis outline

This section provides an overview of what is discussed in each of the five chapters that make up this thesis. The introductory chapter, Chapter 1, identifies and contextualizes the problem, highlights the relevance of the research, and formulates the research objective. Chapter 2, Background, contains a brief history of prison models, discusses relevant literature on prison architecture and wellbeing and provides the necessary conceptual framework. Chapter 3 goes into detail about the methods used to conduct this research, which is based on secondary sources. It also explains how these sources were collected and subsequently analysed. Chapter 4 presents a comprehensive overview of the research findings on mother-child detention projects in 4 European countries, namely Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain. Finally, these findings are interpreted and discussed in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 2

# Background

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the foundation upon which the study is built. Firstly, Section 2.1 talks about how penal philosophies have historically shaped prison architecture. Secondly, Section 2.2 summarises key insights from previous studies on how prison design may influence wellbeing. Lastly, Section 2.3 outlines the main concepts that guide the research.

### 2.1 Historical framework

Though it might seem as if prison has always been society's way of dealing with serious offenders, this is not the case. It was only over the course of the eighteenth century that 'prisons' began being used for punishment (Schneider, 1979). Before then, they were more like modern-day jails (then called 'gaols'), and their purpose was solely to *hold* people for short periods of time (Rubin and Deflem, 2019). The detainees in these gaols were often debtors or persons convicted of a crime awaiting **corporal or capital punishment** (Rubin and Deflem, 2019). Imprisonment as a way of *punishing* citizens in Western countries originated from the Catholic Church (Schneider, 1979). All human life is sacred in the eyes of the Church, and therefore they could not in good conscience use the death penalty as a form of punishment. Interestingly, an almost rehabilitative ideal was already present in these first prisons (Schneider, 1979). The **reformation** of the prisoner, through means such as the rule of silence, solitary confinement, and labour, was seen as a basic purpose of punishment (Schneider, 1979).

Historically, the Belgian carceral landscape was heavily influenced by Eduard Ducpétiaux (1804-1868). In 1830, Ducpétiaux became the first inspector-general of the prison system in the newly independent country of Belgium (Martyn and Velle, 2011). His views on punishment resulted in the typical **cellular prison architecture** that still characterises most Belgian prisons today (Feyaerts, 2018). According to Ducpétiaux, the prison sentence served two purposes: **deterrence and moral reform** (Maes, 2009). The latter meant that each prisoner needed to be guarded from bad

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influences, both from society and their fellow prisoners (Maes, 2009). As a result, each person had their own individual cell where they could practice self-reflection in complete silence (Neys and Baeyens, 1994). The overall layout of Ducpétiaux-style prisons was inspired by Bentham's panoptic prison design of 1791 (Martyn and Velle, 2011). Named after the Greek word for "all-seeing", the **panopticon prison** design depicted a circular volume with a central guard tower and individual cells places radially around it (Figure 2.1A). Ducpétiaux took the idea of the central guard post, but instead of a concentric circle of cells, he chose to place long rectangular cell blocks that all connect in that centre point (Figure 2.1B).

These older, **radial** prison models were conceptualised to allow constant supervision over all prisoners from a central viewpoint (Nadel and Mears, 2020). However, research indicates that this focus on surveillance can negatively affect staff-prisoner relationships, which are vitally important in prison (Beijersbergen et al., 2016). More recent layouts, such as the '**telephone pole**' (Figure 2.1C), have a separate security hub for each cellblock, which increases the tight control of movement even further (Nadel and Mears, 2020). Contrary to these models, the **campus design** (Figure 2.1D) chooses not to separate its staff from the prison population, but places their stations in common areas (Nadel and Mears, 2020). This 'new generation' model employs a number of free-standing buildings, similar to a college campus, that house small(er) living units and encourage interactions between staff and prisoners (Beijersbergen et al., 2016). Next to 'dynamic security', which relies on good relationships between prisoners and staff, **security technology** such as surveillance cameras are common in modern prisons (Moran and Jewkes, 2015). While CCTV cameras can add to a feeling of safety by providing evidence of misconduct, the combination of certain prison layouts and the obvious use of surveillance cameras have also been associated with paranoia (Engstrom and Van Ginneken, 2022).

The evolution in prison layouts seems to follow the shift in approaches to imprisonment outlined by Maes (2009) in the introduction: from focussing on moral reformation (radial prisons) to exercising a tight grip on the offender (telephone pole) and ultimately creating environments intended to minimise harmful effects of detention (campus).

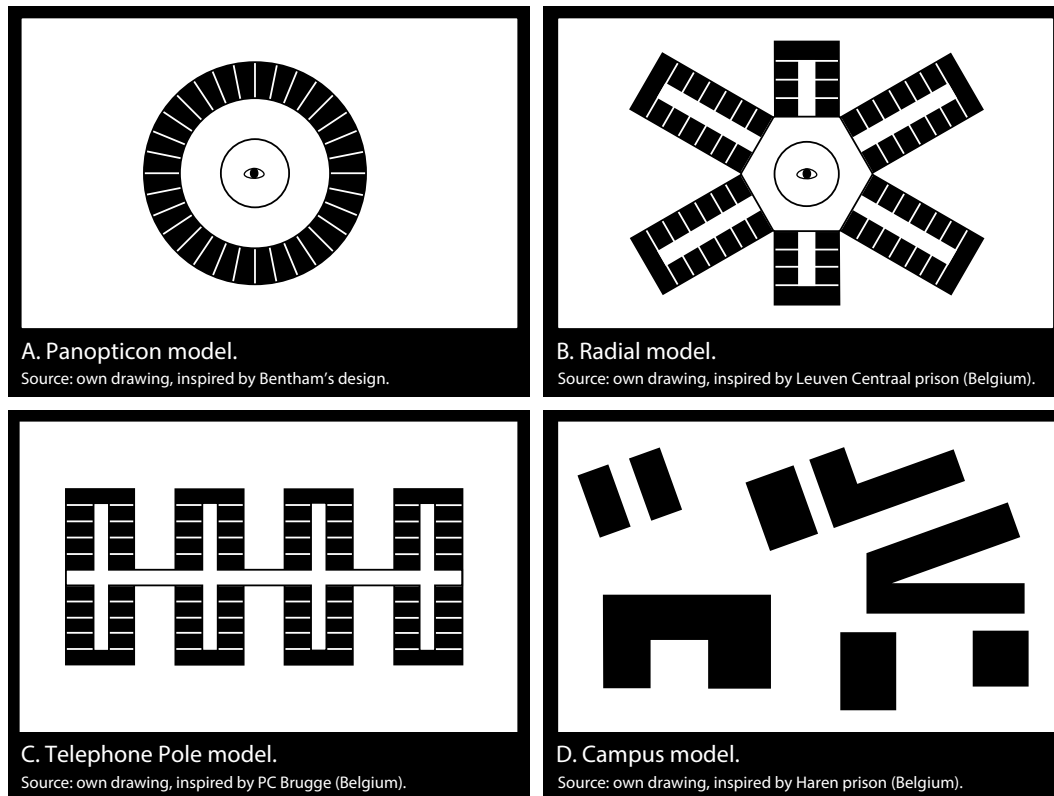


FIGURE 2.1: Conceptual plans of common prison layouts.

## 2.2 Prison architecture and wellbeing

The number of studies on how the built environment influences people's wellbeing has increased substantially in recent years. This also rings true for research on wellbeing within penitentiary environments, however, a comprehensive understanding has yet to be established (Engstrom and Van Ginneken, 2022). As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, a systematic literature review of existing literature was published by Engstrom and Van Ginneken in 2022. In this research, they grouped their findings into 'design domains' that may affect prisoners' wellbeing (Engstrom and Van Ginneken, 2022). A first domain underlines the importance of **lighting**, both artificial and natural, for psychological wellbeing. Cool toned unidirectional lights which are often used in prisons can influence a person's circadian rhythm, because - unlike sunlight - its intensity and colour remain the same throughout the day (Bernheimer et al., 2017). Being able to turn lights on and off yourself was also found to be important for being able to get good quality of sleep (Bernheimer et al., 2017) and for the small sense of control it provides in an environment where that is hard to come by (Engstrom and Van Ginneken, 2022).

Traditional prison designs are often characterised by right angles, hard materials and an absence of colour (Hancock and Jewkes, 2011). The findings of Engstrom

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and Van Ginneken (2022) on the 'design domains' of prison **aesthetics** and **use of materials** suggest that these design aspects could all negatively impact wellbeing. Conversely, the use of colour, rounded shapes and comfortable materials are positively associated with wellbeing. Though soft materials may be less resilient, they help to humanise the space (Bernheimer et al., 2017). Another important benefit of soft materials is that they absorb **noise**. A number of different sources argue that constant and inescapable noise can cause significant stress, which in turn has long-lasting impacts on a person's health (Engstrom and Van Ginneken, 2022; Bernheimer et al., 2017; Ross et al., 2022).

The design domain of **views** and **nature** are closely related and important in many ways. Long-distance window views are associated with reducing boredom, fatigue, irritability and increasing experienced comfort and perceived safety (Engstrom and Van Ginneken, 2022). The importance of nature is best described through the example of *Halden Fengsel* in Norway, a maximum-security men's prison that is often referred to as 'the most humane prison in the world' (Vinnitskaya, 2011). One aspect that is highly praised is Halden's architecture, which is based on principles associated with biophilic design (Abdel-Salam and Kilmer, 2023). 'Biophilia' refers to the idea that all humans have an inherent need to connect with nature (Bernheimer et al., 2017). Biophilic design thus incorporates natural elements to address this need, and is associated with health benefits such as stress reduction (Ryan et al., 2014). In Halden, this is achieved through an unobstructed visual connection with a natural landscape through the large windows, which also allow natural light to enter. The prison provides variation of spatial conditions throughout its numerous communal spaces (open plan kitchen and dining areas, living rooms, game rooms, a library...) and each detainee has a private one-person cell with wooden furniture (Leung, 2014). Both of these aspects - spatial variation and having a place of refuge - are also associated with biophilic design (Ryan et al., 2014).

According to Engstrom and Van Ginneken (2022), **auditory, spatial and visual privacy** are all important factors in creating humane detention environments. All three of these types of privacy are directly influenced by design choices (Engstrom and Van Ginneken, 2022). A study by Abdel-Salam and Kilmer (2023) found that the prisoners of Halden valued their private cell above all other spatial features of the prison. Interviewed prisoners described their cells as *"not only a space to gain some privacy or to decompress, but also help to alleviate negative emotions such as depression, anger and anxiety"* (Abdel-Salam and Kilmer, 2023, p.935). Prisoners at Halden are given the keys to their own cell, which means they are able to retreat to their own space at any time throughout the day, autonomously. The remaining design domains Engstrom and Van Ginneken (2022) derived from existing literature have to do with the general state of the building and its technical installations (temperature, air quality, age of prison, accessibility and facilities), with visitation, and other topics previously discussed (size and crowding, prison layout, security technology). Together, these domains offer a framework to identify areas of improvement in detention environments.

## 2.3 Conceptual framework

This section outlines the conceptual framework guiding this research, highlighting key principles and reflecting on how they are translated into practice. First, § 2.3.1 talks about the normalisation principle. Then, § 2.3.2 goes into detail about the principles underpinning *De Huizen* and RESCALED's vision on the future of detention.

### 2.3.1 The normalisation principle

One of the most important aims the Belgian Prison Act of 2005 put forth is the 'prevention and reduction of harmful effects of detention' (in Dutch: *voorkomen en bestrijden van detentieschade*) (Dupont, 2005). Researchers often refer to these harmful effects as 'pains of imprisonment'. This term was first introduced by sociologist Gresham M. Sykes in an ethnographic study on a maximum-security prison in New York in 1958. In this work, Sykes defines five intrinsic hardships that mark life in prison (for male detainees): the loss of liberty, desirable goods and services, voluntary sexual relationships, autonomy, and security (Shammas, 2017). With the goal of reducing these and other possible pains, the Prison Act of 2005 inscribed a normalisation principle, imposing that life in prison should **reflect life in free society as best as possible** (Dupont, 2005). The concept of the 'total institution', conceived by sociologist Erving Goffman, is helpful to explain how life in organisations such as the traditional prison is vastly different from how life in free society is organised. Goffman's definition reads as follows:

*"A total institution may be defined as a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life."* (Goffman, 1968, as cited in Davies, 1989, p.77)

In this definition Goffman touches on a number of key points. For one, all aspects of life (sleeping, working, leisure ...) take place in the same location and under one authority (Davies, 1989). These daily activities are then also strictly scheduled by said authority, and are in no way adapted to the needs of the individual (Davies, 1989). Contrastingly, Goffman points out that life in modern western society is characterised by spontaneity, and engaging in different pursuits in different places with different people. Research has not yet found definitive answers to what 'normal life' entails and how detention could be organised to more closely resemble it, nor does it seem likely that there is only one 'right' answer. De Vos (2021) studied the normalisation principle and its impact on the theory and practice of punishment in Belgium and Norway. In her research, De Vos uses the metaphor of a mirror to explain how normalisation as a principle is translated into practice:

*"When looking in a mirror, we see a reflection of reality. This reflection differs depending on the qualities of the mirror, the part of reality that has been reflected, and the perspective from which we look at the mirror."* (De Vos, 2021, p.302)

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Through the use of this metaphor, De Vos (2021) argues that a country's prison conditions are a **reflection of their society as a whole**, and that by normalising these conditions, Belgium (and Norway) see their humane self-image reflected back at them in the mirror.

Although implementing the normalisation principle is meant to prevent and reduce harmful effects of detention, some research suggests normalised environments may be damaging in other ways (Hancock and Jewkes, 2011; Puddu, 2022; Abdel-Salam and Kilmer, 2023). Erik Møller Architects and HLM Architects, the designers of Halden, chose to normalise the environment by **emulating domestic spaces** (Abdel-Salam and Kilmer, 2023). The level of comfort that Halden provides compared to traditional prisons is undeniably high, both in terms of amenities as in terms of privacy and safety (Abdel-Salam and Kilmer, 2023). However, a recent study found that this normalised environment can also lead to frustration (Abdel-Salam and Kilmer, 2023). Indeed, the windows in Halden do not have bars in front of them, but they cannot be opened. The natural landscape between buildings is inviting, but you will be reprimanded if you stray from the fixed path. The reality is that detainees have to navigate these normalised spaces with a 'prisoner' **identity**, which is confusing (Abdel-Salam and Kilmer, 2023). In their research on 'spatial pains of imprisonment', Hancock and Jewkes (2011) also bring up the theme of identity and how it can be influenced by the built environment. They argue that the architecture of traditional prisons conveys a strong message about the people it holds:

*"[...] the cage-like interiors and heavy, vandal-resistant furnishings that communicate to inmates that 'you are animals'."* (Hancock and Jewkes, 2011, p.626)

As a result, this messaging may reinforce criminal and criminalized identities (Hancock and Jewkes, 2011). In light of Abdel-Salam and Kilmer's (2023) findings, it appears that normalised environments can send out mixed signals at times, leaving detainees confused and frustrated.

Furthermore, De Vos (2021) calls attention to the complex relationship between normalisation and security measures. While it seems obvious that less of one means more of the other, sufficient security measures are necessary to guarantee the **staff and detainees' personal safety**, as detainees may distrust or even fear one another (De Vos, 2021). Hancock and Jewkes (2011) also bring attention to the moral and ethical implications of **near-constant surveillance** through CCTV technology. This form of 'soft security' is often integral to the functioning of new generation prisons (Hancock and Jewkes, 2011). Prison staff may now also find themselves in a controlled environment, and unlike detainees, this lack of privacy is foreign to them. The effects of this technology on prisoner-staff relationships have not yet been studied (Hancock and Jewkes, 2011). Lastly, Puddu (2022) also warns us about the risk of '**choreographed collectiveness**' when interpreting normalisation as 'home-ification' and to be careful of not prioritising group dynamics over an individual's need for privacy.



It is evident that, while the principle of normalisation can help de-institutionalise prisons, and normalised prisons may provide detainees with a higher level of comfort, its implementation needs careful consideration as to not create new pains of imprisonment.

### 2.3.2 Rescaling the carceral landscape

With an average capacity of about 250 places in each prison (median: 200), the current carceral landscape in Belgium is characterised by large-scale institutions (Federale overheidsdienst justitie, 2024). The largest of which is the St-Gillis prison in Brussels (capacity: 840), not counting the recently opened campus style prison in **Haren** (capacity: 1190). Though Haren was built on a plot of 150 000 square metres and calls itself a *gevangenisdorp* ('prison village'), the Federal Government of Justice underlines small-scaledness as a central concept in Haren's functioning. By this they are mainly referring to the residential units, which range from open to highly-secured and whose layout split the population into living groups of 10 to 35 detainees (Federale overheidsdienst justitie, n.d.c). The design of these units includes a number of communal amenities, which allow detainees to do everyday activities and encourages social interactions within the group.

The principles of **small-scale** and **differentiation** mentioned in this description of Haren were first introduced in Belgium by Hans Claus, former prison director of Oudenaarde. However, Claus' vision on the future of imprisonment did not look like a 'prison village', but rather like one small part of every village. That is to say, the third and most important pillar seems to be missing in Haren: **social anchorage** (Claus, 2018). On these three principles Claus founded *De Huizen*, which translates to 'The Houses', and is a non-profit organisation advocating for the use of small-scale detention houses instead of large prison institutions (Claus, 2018). *De Huizen* later branched out into other countries, together forming the European movement for detention houses RESCALED.

#### Small-scaledness

Something being small-scaled can refer to a multitude of things. *De Huizen* approaches this principle in two distinct ways: quantitatively and qualitatively. The first **quantitative approach** refers to 'small in numbers', and is characterised by more individual living or small living groups, a less structured day-to-day, more independence and a better connection with society (De Huizen, n.d.b). The **qualitative approach** on the other hand, refers to an integrated way of working, direct and clear communication and encouraging everyone to take up responsibility (De Huizen, n.d.b). A concrete guideline *De Huizen* puts forth is to cap the capacity for a single detention house at 30 people (De Huizen, n.d.b). De Vos (2023) explains this maximum by relating it to the number of possible relationships that are created between different numbers of people. To put it into a formula: for N people, the number of possible relationships equals  $[(N+(N-1))/2]$ . So for a group of 30, that number

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becomes 435, which does not even include relationships with staff. It is evident that connecting on a personal level will become increasingly more difficult as capacity increases, and it is precisely the better quality of **interpersonal relationships** that existing research relates to the benefits of smaller prisons (Johnsen et al., 2011 as cited in De Vos, 2023). There also seems to be a minimum capacity: some of De Vos' (2023) colleagues in the field tentatively put this minimum at eight individuals.

### Differentiation

A second underlying principle is that of differentiation, referring to the need of having a variety of different facilities. Two detention houses could differ on a number of aspects, including but not limited to: security level, sentence length, age, healthcare needs, guidance needs and/or available programs (Termote, 2023). In some ways, this principle is akin to that of classification (Beyens et al., 2012). Classification refers to the allocation of a prisoner to a correctional facility with a security level that matches the prisoner's individual risks and adequate resources to fulfil their specific needs (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020). The Belgian Prison Act of 2005 (art.15 §2) does not mention an individual's risks as a basis for establishing different (sections of) prisons, and no needs other than those related to age, disabilities and mental health (Justitie, 2005).

In practice, the current system is not able to meet everyone's needs. A poignant example of this is the issue of **internees** held in regular prisons without access to specialised care (Federaal Instituut Mensenrechten, 2023). According to Beyens et al. (2012) the current lack of (semi)-open detention facilities also means that most **detained women** are held in an overly secured system. The researchers advocate for a continuum of closed to more open regimes, which a detainee can move along during their sentence (Beyens et al., 2012). These 'detention paths' can be written up in individualised detention plans, which article 9 §3 of the Prison Act already calls for, but which have not been implemented as of yet. The higher staff-detainee ratio of detention houses, in tandem with differentiated groups with similar profiles, would make the implementation of such plans possible (De Huizen, n.d.a).

From a sustainability standpoint, it is important that the buildings remain **flexible**, and the spaces should ideally allow multiple usages (De Huizen, n.d.c). While the design has to fit the needs of the current users, over time it should be easily adaptable to function as another type of detention house (De Huizen, n.d.c).

### **Social anchorage**

This final principle was added after an early collaboration with students of Architectural Engineering in Gent, who were asked to reflect on the idea of the 'house' in the context of imprisonment (Claus, 2018). Upon viewing their work, Claus immediately agreed that detention which strives for re-integration should be anchored in society. To counteract the initial Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) response, a detention house should provide an added value in the neighbourhood (De Huizen, n.d.a). For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic the detainees of the transition house in Mechelen maintained the garden of the residential care home next door (G4S, 2020). Acts of service like these also benefit the detainees, as it is symbolic of undoing some of the damage they caused to society in their past. According to Bart Claes, manager G4S Care in Mechelen, this was an important step in their reintegration (G4S, 2020).

In line with the principle of normalisation, this embedding of the detention house in the community should mean that detainees (in open regimes) can use (social) services from the immediate area in order to fulfil the aims outlined in their individual detention plans (De Huizen, n.d.a). Ideally, the detainee would be allocated to the detention house within or closest to their own community. This way frequent visits are actually feasible and detainees are less likely to become estranged from their friends and family (Claus, 2018).



## Chapter 3

# Methodology

### 3.1 Approach

Given the novelty of the subject matter, the research conducted in this thesis is exploratory in nature. Exploratory research is a useful approach when the process of data collection has proven to be difficult, which is often true in the context of penitentiary institutions. As highlighted in Bulman et al. (2012), researchers conducting primary research in prison environments are faced with unique challenges. To start, merely **gaining access** to the prison building is often a struggle. Everything that goes on inside a prison is highly regulated and anything that deviates from the daily routine has to be approved by those in charge (Bulman et al., 2012). This is accompanied by a large administrative workload, and a positive reaction from the institution is never guaranteed. Because prisoners are deemed a **vulnerable population** to research, aspects like informed consent, voluntary participation and other ethical considerations are paramount (Bulman et al., 2012). If one is able to overcome these hurdles, Bulman et al. (2012) warn researchers that their research design might still have to be altered to fit within the proverbial confines of the prison.

Given the time constraints of a master's thesis, focussing on **available materials** seemed a promising course of action. Recognising that fieldwork is generally an integral part of doing qualitative research, it was not certain which results this methodological choice would yield. Consequently, a secondary aim of this research became to explore secondary analysis as a method for learning about the role of architecture in detention environments. If this method should fall short to, for example, provide enough material for in depth case studies, it was argued that there was inherent value in mapping what is already known. The secondary aim would then become the primary focus of the thesis, and the research would be aimed at providing starting points for future researchers interested in the topic.

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After this initial 'mapping' phase, however, enough material was gathered to conduct a comparative analysis of mother-child detention projects in three European countries outside of Belgium: Germany, Italy and Spain. A case from Belgium was also selected to provide insight into the current reality of mothers cohabiting with their children. Beside the argument that detained mothers with young children would be a logical first group to transition into detention houses, the choice to focus on mother-child detention is also a consequence of the chosen methodology. Whilst trying to identify possible cases (see also § 3.4.1), it quickly became evident that architectural plans and drawings of detention facilities are not widely available. Photographs of prison interiors were equally hard to come by, and some countries (like Belgium) even require Google to blur the satellite images of their prisons on Google Maps and Google Earth. Mother-child detention units on the other hand, were generally better documented and photographed. Given the aim to find out the **role of architecture** in humane detention, photographs seemed a necessary and valuable type of data to study the built environment without doing fieldwork.

## 3.2 Researcher characteristics

Reflexivity is a crucial aspect of qualitative research, as it involves a critical self-reflection of the researcher's own role and potential biases throughout the research process (Rossiter et al., 2020). As a researcher, my own characteristics inevitably shape the way I approach the research question, what data I am able to find and choose to include, and how I interpret said data.

### Background

My capacity for empathy may be heightened because like most detained mothers with young children, I am a young woman. Despite not being a parent myself, my own opinion on whether a child should be able to stay with their mother while they are imprisoned will impact how I evaluate mother-child detention facilities. This opinion is informed in large part by my cultural background and own experiences growing up in a loving 'traditional' family where the mother took up the majority of the child-rearing responsibilities.

I was born in the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. Besides my native tongue, I am proficient in English, and - thanks to my high school education - possess a good understanding of the French language, as well as a basic understanding of Spanish and German. Though I am not skilled enough to translate Spanish and German texts completely without help from translation software (i.e. DeepL Translate and Google Translate), my knowledge does allow me to search for potentially relevant data and make me more likely to catch it if something got lost in translation. My choice of higher education also influences the research, as I will look at the data through a lens shaped by my architectural engineering education at KU Leuven.

## Experiences

Prior to this research, I had never come in contact with the (Belgian) prison system, nor did I know anyone who had ever gone to prison. As a result, I was ignorant of the inhumane living conditions in Belgian prisons (ECHR, 2014) and the pains that imprisonment caused. My preconceived notion of 'the prisoner' was an anonymous figure, for whom I had little empathy. For the purpose of learning more about the issue in Belgium, I had the opportunity to follow a college class inside of *Leuven Centraal*, a Ducpétiaux-style prison built in 1860 (Federale overheidsdienst justitie, n.d.d). In this class, titled *Imprisonment as a lived reality*, 12 students from 'outside' and 12 students from 'inside' (referring to the prison's walls) learned about and debated imprisonment and other topics around punishment and justice. Suddenly, the anonymous figure had a face, and a name, and a story. In short, this experience helped me to see that behind the number on the cell door, there is a real human being. What I saw of the living conditions in this nineteenth century penitentiary, convinced me of the need for a different approach.

## 3.3 Ethical considerations

Given the choice for secondary analysis, the research did not call for any participants and thus no time had to be spent to formulate a proposal for the ethics committee of the KU Leuven. However, some data sources are qualitative studies, or include quotes and testimonies from detainees in the projects under study, which makes it necessary to reflect on the ethics of using available materials for research. Jellema et al. (2024) reflect on this theme in the context of doing research on children affected by stroke, which is also a vulnerable group to research. In their research, they point out **two important ethical considerations** for doing secondary data analysis: *"responsibilities towards participants in the original research, and the need to achieve a contextual understanding of the data by identifying and countering risks of misinterpretation"* (Morrow et al., 2014 as mentioned in Jellema et al., 2024, p.7).

For the data specifically on mother-child detention projects discussed in chapter 4: Findings, only one source was a qualitative study (Nuytiens and Jehaes, 2022). In this study, however, Nuytiens and Jehaes (2022) challenge the central role of **'vulnerability' as an ethical concept** in research. They argue that the question should be whether or not participants become *more* vulnerable by taking part in the research, and that this was not the case in their study (Nuytiens and Jehaes, 2022). Instead of reducing the women they interviewed to 'vulnerable subjects', they state: *"we gave them [a] voice as experts of their own experience"* (Nuytiens and Jehaes, 2022, p.138). The role that the results of this research play in my own findings is to identify spatial aspects of the prison (Brugge), and determine how these aspects may contribute to a more humane environment. As far as the two ethical considerations highlighted by Jellema et al. (2024), I would argue that the participants in the original research are not likely to become more vulnerable through my secondary analysis. I did not have access to the 'raw data' (i.e. transcripts of

interviews), so I could only reiterate the insights of the original study, and attempt to link those to spatial aspects. So too do I think that the information provided in the original study, supplemented with my own research into the context of Brugge, allowed me to achieve a sufficient contextual understanding to minimise the risk of misinterpretation. This had been the case for *Transitiehuis Mechelen*, which I had previously used as a test case to explore the methodology (§ 3.4 goes into more detail).

## 3.4 Data collection

The method used for collecting data is **desk research**, otherwise referred to as secondary data research. As the name suggests, it is a research method based on the analysis of available materials. This way of collecting data has several advantages as well as limitations. As stated in Section 3.1, doing primary research in prisons can be challenging in many ways. Doing desk research eliminates most of these challenges, as there is no intention to physically visit any facility or to interview any current detainees or members of staff. The time usually spent on administration can now be spent on finding relevant sources instead. On the other hand, not all data that are available are necessarily credible and the type and quantity cannot be known in advance. Another disadvantage is the risk of biases being transferred from the source data into the secondary findings, if they are not recognized during analysis. Section 3.6 goes into more detail on the type of data that were gathered and how their reliability was assessed.

The methodology of secondary data analysis in detention environments was tested in an early stage of the research. Findings of this 'test' were presented during a joint meeting with research group *Research[X]Design*, whose members have experience in doing qualitative research in a range of environments, including prisons. The case that was tested was *Transitiehuis Mechelen*, the first transition house to open in Belgium, which had been the subject of the masters' thesis of my assistant-supervisor. During this test, I studied the case using anything I could find except for her thesis, and then later compared my preliminary findings to what she had concluded from doing fieldwork (observations, semi-structured interviews, and letting participants make drawings). Compared to the findings of Kinnaer (2023), which were very in-depth and specific, those from secondary data analysis were more high-level, yet still consistent with those of her thesis.

### 3.4.1 Identifying cases

Focussing on available materials enabled me to look beyond the Belgian context, where small-scale detention is still in its early stages, and learn from established projects abroad. The first online inquiries into what small-scale detention projects already existed, led me to *Prison Insider*. Prison Insider is an online information platform that collects, verifies and synthesizes existing data on prisons around the world (Prison Insider, 2023b). Based on their article '*Mapping small scale detention*



throughout Europe (originally posted by RESCALED under the title 'Good practices across Europe'), I did an exploratory search on each small scale detention project they had indicated (Prison Insider, 2023a; RESCALED, 2022). A spreadsheet of information on these projects is available in Appendix A. To synthesize this phase of research, Figure 3.1 graphically indicates the data availability in countries with projects that were identified and visited by RESCALED and/or partner organisations.

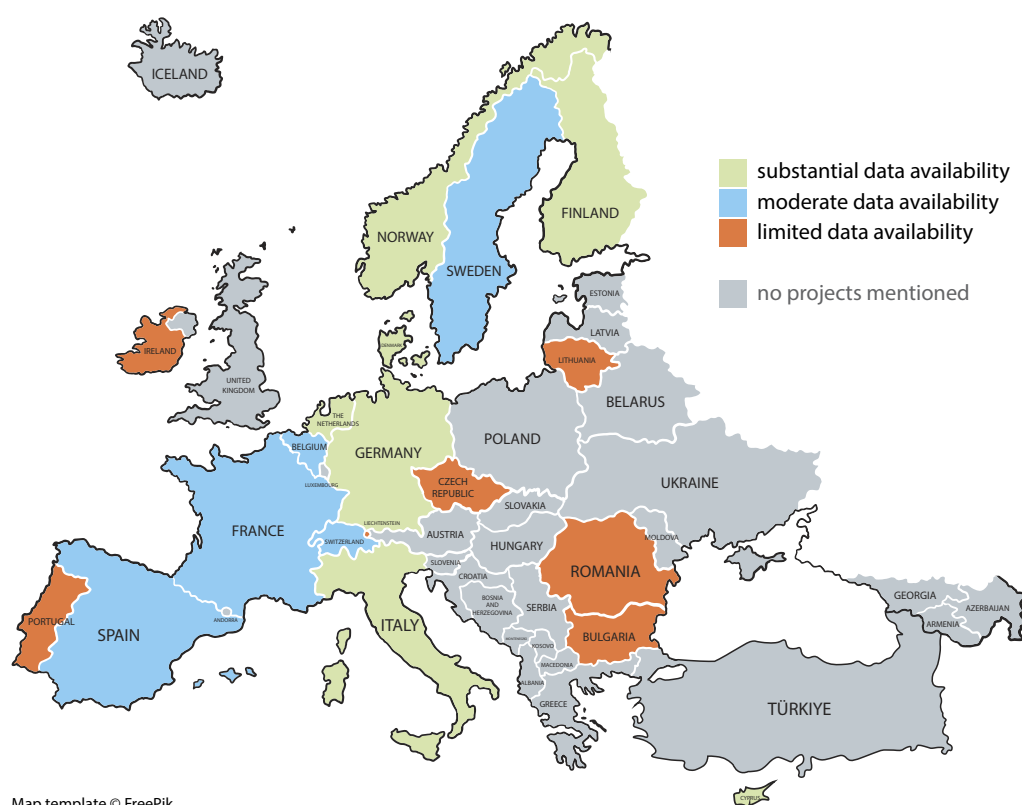


FIGURE 3.1: A map of Europe indicating the data availability on countries with small-scale detention projects identified and visited by RESCALED and/or partner organisations.

### 3.4.2 Selection criteria

As mentioned in Section 3.1 on the overall approach, the availability of clear photographs depicting the built environment of cases became the most important selection criterion. This can be explained through the lack of 'classic' graphical architectural information being available such as plans, sections, renders et cetera. To still be able to discuss spatial aspects without relying solely on written accounts, a mother-child detention unit in Palma de Mallorca (Spain) was chosen from the list of small-scale detention projects, as it was the best documented.

After the selection of this first case, *Unidad de Madres Palma De Mallorca*, further research into Spain's mother-child detention practices led to the discovery of three other such external units. Similarly to the initial research phase on small-scale detention projects mentioned earlier, a subsequent phase was characterised by exploratory research on **mother-child detention projects throughout Europe**. From this phase, two other countries were selected: Germany and Italy. The additional selection criteria for these countries were: (1) being separate or external units, not prison nurseries and (2) having multiple projects of one and the same concept. These criteria made it so that both within-case analyses could be done, as well as cross-case analyses between projects starting from the same core concepts but implemented in different areas of a country.

## 3.5 Data analysis

All **written data** (journal articles, newspaper articles, governmental documents, prison observatory reports et cetera) were first translated into English if needed, then organised by case. These texts were then read through carefully and passages talking about spatial aspects were highlighted. Different colours were used for different aspects (e.g. security technology, accommodations, common areas, ...), making it easier to **triangulate** between different sources reporting on the same case.

Next to written data, all **photographs** found during data collection were also saved in order to form the best possible idea of the cases under study, without being able to physically visit the facilities. Google Earth and Google Street View were used to study the surrounding area, as well as to try and identify where the collected photographs were taken. Only a selection of the most telling photographs were included in the findings chapter. For sources such as videos, documentaries and podcasts, written notes were made on any mentions of (subjects related to) the built environment. If detainees mentioned spatial aspects, those quotes were transcribed verbatim. These documents were then also read through alongside the other written data, and colour-coded in the same way.

Aside from facilitating triangulation of data, **colour-coding** also helped determine trends and general patterns across cases and countries. The gathered data was then read through again and analysed in light of the conceptual framework. Normalisation, small-scaledness, differentiation and community integration served as '**sensitizing concepts**', guiding the analysis. Next to writing out the findings from this analysis, some insights were also communicated 'graphically' with simple line drawings. By adding them onto photos of the cases, they are meant to draw attention to certain design aspects.

## 3.6 Reliability of sources

The use of less conventional data sources was discussed in meetings with my supervisor as well as during joint meetings with research group *Research[x]Design*. During these meetings the importance of **transparency** was often stressed. For this reason I will go into detail on the types of data sources that were analysed, and what steps were taken to assess their reliability.

### Journal articles

Articles published in scientific journals are generally considered as reliable because of the process of peer reviewing that they were subjected to (Kelly et al., 2014). The researchers who review the article are experts in the same field, which makes them able to evaluate the quality of the research, gauge the appropriateness of methods and identify any scientific errors (Kelly et al., 2014).

### Governmental documents and laws

In the countries under study, the authority in charge of the prison service is the national government. Because of this, there often were reports available in the online archives of these governing bodies. Such government reports are considered 'grey literature', meaning they may contain valuable information but are not published in traditional publications, thus may not have been subjected to peer review (Paez, 2017). To the best of my knowledge, there do not seem to be specific strategies to verify governmental documents, besides checking **currency, relevance, authority, accuracy and purpose** as one would for any other type of source. The information that was derived from these reports were mostly descriptions of the concept behind the design, or of the infrastructure itself. Where possible, this information was triangulated with other sources of written or visual data.

In addition, the studied countries also have national laws concerning their prison system. These laws spoke of the prison system's general aims for detainees, and often described what mothers with young children should be provided with (spatially) in order to meet their specific needs (Justitie, 2005; Governo Italiano, 2018; Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2021; Ministerio de Justicia e Interior, 1996). Similarly, the Council of Europe has a guidance document called the European Prison Rules, which outlines a set of standards on the management of prisons and treatment of people in prison (Council of Europe, 2006). The Council of Europe also has an annual report on penal statistics (SPACE), which collects statistics from all member states. These statistics are then verified, processed and analysed by a team of researchers of the University of Lausanne, Switzerland (Council of Europe, 2018). This was a valuable resource for mapping mother-child detention practices throughout Europe within the time constraints of a thesis.

#### **Prison observatory reports**

This type of document reports on observations from visits to penitentiary facilities and often formulates recommendations on how to improve (material) conditions. Reports from the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) also fall under this category, as well as independent organisations authorised by the government to visit and report on things such as structural conditions, the prison climate and compliance with penitentiary legislation. For this type of source it is important to keep in mind that these reports are most often written solely based on a short visit and by an unknown author (in name of the organisation), which makes it difficult to check their expertise or examine their biases.

#### **Mass media: newspaper articles, documentaries and podcasts**

What ended up becoming an important source of data was newspaper articles. The unique mother-child detention facilities prompted many journalists to visit them and interview (some of) the detained women about their situation. Other types of what one may call 'mass media', such as documentaries and podcasts, were also used.

There are a number of things to be mindful of when looking at newspaper articles from an academic standpoint. Questions one might ask to analyse such articles are the following: does the message contain facts or merely the opinion of the author? For something that is not common knowledge, does the author cite their sources? Is the language neutral or does it betray some sort of bias? Does the text paint a balanced and fair view, or does it appear rather one-sided and selective? Not only the message itself needs to be analysed critically, the author and the purpose behind the article need to be questioned as well. What educational background does the author have, and for what newspaper do they write? The answers to these questions help give an idea of the reliability of the article (Flierl, n.d.). A similar strategy may be helpful for documentaries and podcasts as well. Table 3.1 summarises these questions.

|                            |          |           |
|----------------------------|----------|-----------|
| MESSAGE                    |          |           |
| <b>Type of information</b> | fact     | opinion   |
| <b>Sources</b>             | cited    | not cited |
| <b>Language used</b>       | neutral  | loaded    |
| <b>Point of view</b>       | balanced | one-sided |
| <b>Coverage</b>            | fair     | selective |

|                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| AUTHOR                 | PURPOSE                   |
| Educational background | Mission statement         |
| Affiliations / biases  | Funding / financial model |

TABLE 3.1: Checking reliability of newspaper articles.

It is important to note that reliability in terms of exact replicability may be challenging in qualitative research (Leung, 2015). Leung (2015) argues that the reliability for qualitative research lies in consistency. For this reason, triangulation was done whenever possible in order to improve reliability of the data.



## Chapter 4

# Findings

This chapter contains a comprehensive overview of the research findings. The first section ( 4.1) introduces mother-child detention practices throughout Europe. Next, Section 4.2 takes a look at a *Moeder-kind afdeling* in Brugge, a prison in Belgium. This section serves as a point of reference to better understand the situation abroad, which will be explored in three subsequent sections: Spain's *Unidades Externas de Madres* (UM) in Section 4.3, Italy's *Istituti a Custodia Attenuata per Detenute Madri* (ICAM) in Section 4.4 and Germany's *Mutter-Kind-Häuser* (MuKi) in Section 4.5. Section 4.6 completes the chapter by drawing a comparison between the different countries' approaches to mother-child detention.

### 4.1 Mother-child detention in Europe

According to the Council of Europe's Annual Report on Penal Statistics of 2022 (SPACE I 2022), women make up 5.4% of the prison population on average. At 5.1%, the median is even lower (Aebi et al., 2023). However, over half of these women are mothers of at least one child (Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, 2008). In most European countries, it is allowed for mothers to bring their young children with them while serving their sentence but the children's **age limit varies**. As Figure 4.1 shows, the majority of countries allow cohabitation up to three years of age, and a few up to the age of six.

However, a child being allowed to join their mother in prison is often conditional on whether or not this arrangement is in the **best interest of the child** (Children of Prisoners Europe, 2014). In many instances, the mother was already the sole or primary caregiver prior to imprisonment (Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, 2008), but if not, alternative arrangements might be preferred over cohabitation in prison. Not every prison is equipped to provide a safe environment that is conducive to raising a child, and some countries do not allow children to live in prison at all. Surprisingly, Norway - home to the most humane prisons in the world - is one of the countries that does not have mother and baby units (Aebi et al., 2023).

## 4. FINDINGS

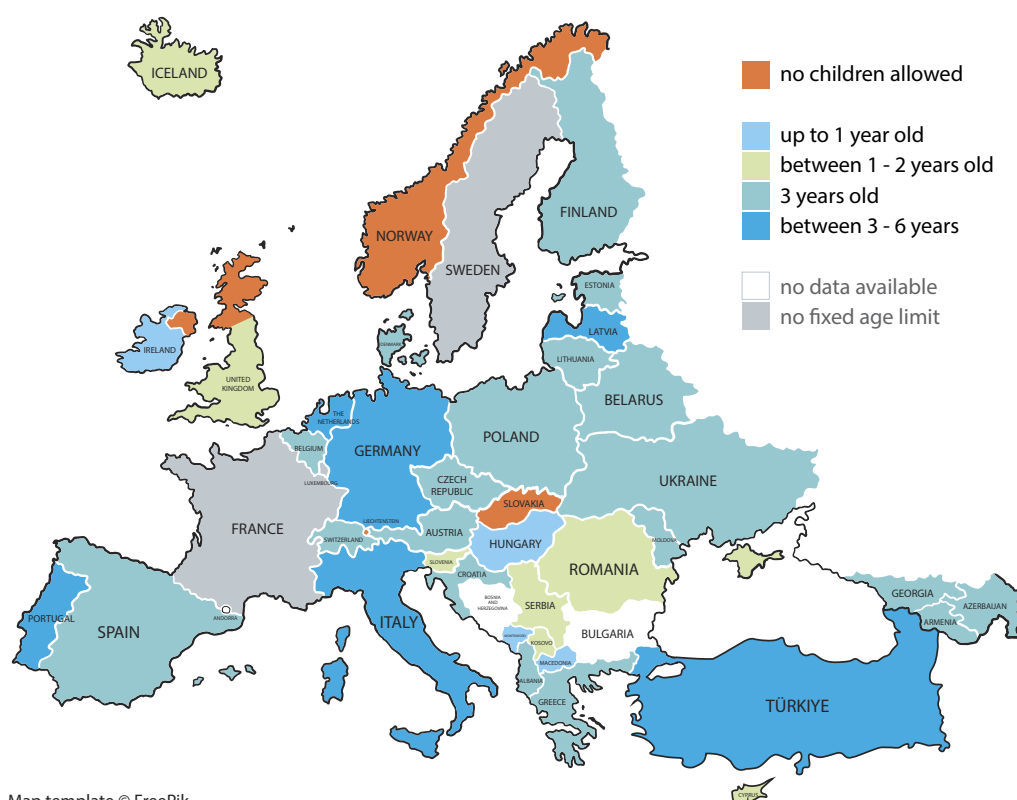


FIGURE 4.1: A map of Europe indicating the age limits of children allowed to stay with their mother in penal institutions, based on data from the Council of Europe's Annual Penal Statistics report (SPACE I - 2022).

While doing research on the topic of children residing in prison with their parents, Pösö et al. (2010) consistently ran into the problem of missing data. Besides the lack of information, they also highlight the lack of theoretical debate around the subject (Pösö et al., 2010). The researchers were able to identify these issues both nationally (in Finland) as internationally, which prompted them to conclude that children in prison are an **institutionally invisible** group (Pösö et al., 2010). The lack of attention to this subject may have dire consequences for the children residing in prison, for existing research has not been able to determine the impact that time in prison has on their development (Pösö et al., 2010).



## 4.2 Moeder-kind afdeling Brugge (Belgium)

This section talks about mother-child detention practices in Belgium, which centre around **prison nurseries**. The term 'prison nursery' commonly refers to the section of a prison that houses pregnant women and mothers who are allowed to keep their young child(ren) with them (Smith Goshin and Woods Byrne, 2009). In the context of this thesis, it is specifically used to refer to mother-child sections in prisons that are **not physically separate** from the main building, as is the case for the *Moeder-kind afdeling* ('Mother-child ward') in Brugge.

There are currently four Belgian prisons that allow cohabitation of mothers and their young children: Brugge (Flanders), Hasselt (Flanders), Lantin (Wallonia) and Haren (Brussels) (Federale overheidsdienst justitie, n.d.b). In Brugge there is a separate wing called the *Moeder-kind afdeling* ('Mother-child ward') housing pregnant women and mothers with newborn babies or children up to the age of three years old. The prison nurseries in the other three prisons only have customised cells in an otherwise ordinary women's section (Pintelon et al., 2023). It is unclear what this customisation entails, as there are no detailed descriptions or images available to provide further clarification. The number of places is also not listed anywhere officially, but non-governmental sources agree that, with 10 places, Brugge is the largest of the four (De Backer and Lohmann, 2023a).

The following sections contain an analysis of Brugge's prison nursery. The analysis is preceded by a description of the complete Penitentiary Complex of Brugge, and is followed by a conclusion highlighting user experiences of the prison nursery as it relates to its spatial aspects in particular.

### 4.2.1 Description

The Penitentiary Complex of Brugge opened in 1991 after a ten-year long construction phase (Federale overheidsdienst justitie, n.d.e). The complex was designed by Belgian architect Axel Ghysaert and is of the 'telephone pole' design type (Ghysaert, n.d.). For a conceptual drawing of this prison layout, see Section 2.1 (Figure 2.1C). As indicated on Figure 4.2A, the core building contains administrative functions, visitation rooms, technical services and work ateliers. From this core, three hallways extend outwards, each connecting a number of rectangular wings, thus resembling the shape of a telephone pole. The two wings making up the women's section are located in the west, but the exact location of the prison nursery is not indicated. Figure 4.2B and Figure 4.2C show the plan of a standard cell and that of a standard wing respectively.

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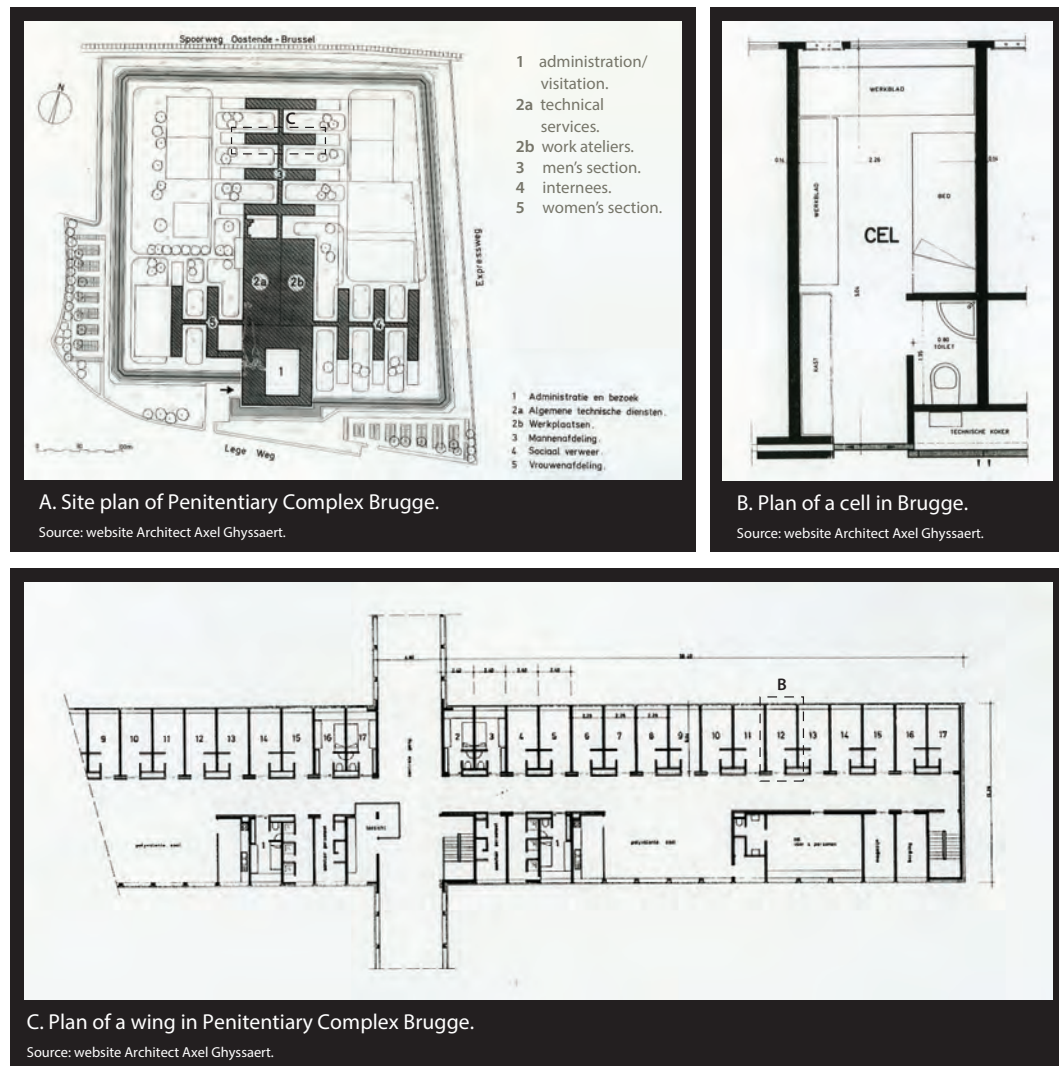


FIGURE 4.2: Architectural plans of the Penitentiary Complex Brugge.

### 4.2.2 Analysis

Despite there being no governmental data to fuel research on Brugge's prison nursery, a handful of valuable sources were identified. The first of which is a research article reporting on a qualitative study conducted in Brugge in 2017. Nuytiens and Jehaes (2022) explored if mothers cohabiting with their children also experience maternal pains of imprisonment, and if so, how these pains are shaped. The researchers immersed themselves in the prison's routine for weeks, deepening their understanding of the mothers' day-to-day lives. During this time, they conducted semi-structured interviews to collect data on mothers' experiences of raising a child in a prison nursery (Nuytiens and Jehaes, 2022). They found that certain maternal pains of imprisonment were still felt by the participants, though they were also very conscious of the advantages of cohabitation. As the researchers concluded:

"These pains were related to witnessing and worrying about their child's pains of imprisonment; the restriction of maternal autonomy; the overwhelming responsibility for their child; and for women with long-term sentences, worrying about the inevitable separation from their child" (Nuytiens and Jehaes, 2022, p.132).

The article briefly mentions how the nursery is spatially different from other sections of the prison complex. For one, the **cells are larger** and are furnished with baby cots (Nuytiens and Jehaes, 2022). By looking at the plan of a standard cell (Figure 4.2B), we know that the mother-child cells must be larger than 10 m<sup>2</sup>, but the exact measurements are unknown. Secondly, there are some additional spaces to support childcare such as a room for daycare, a bathroom, a washing room and a collective (living) room. Children are not allowed to come into contact with detainees from other sections of the prison, which is why the prison nursery has its **own small courtyard** (Nuytiens and Jehaes, 2022). Not being able to mingle with other sections limits the opportunities for detained mothers to participate in activities (sports, work, recreation, education . . . ), which might lead to (or worsen) feelings of isolation (Nuytiens and Jehaes, 2022). When the detainees are not able to work, they are tasked with taking care of their child(ren) all day long. In prison regimes like Brugge, this means that **when mom is in her cell, so is baby**. The participants of the study of Nuytiens and Jehaes (2022) indicated that their children suffered from being confined in such a small space for hours on end, especially when they became more mobile (around the age of 12 months). As Nuytiens and Jehaes (2022) point out, these findings are consistent with previous Belgian research done by Buyse et al. (1996), wherein mothers also expressed worries about the development of their children due to a lack of visual stimulation. Though the mother-child cells were said to be more spacious than regular cells (at least 10 m<sup>2</sup>), when shared with two mother-child pairs they do not provide enough room for the amount of time the children have to spend indoors (De Backer and Lohmann, 2023a). The one-room lay-out also prevents women from taking a moment to decompress, making the mothering experience overwhelming at times (Nuytiens and Jehaes, 2022; De Backer and Lohmann, 2023b).

Besides the architectural plans and information from the qualitative study, a third (auditory) source provided more detailed descriptions of some areas within the prison. A three-part series of podcasts titled *Hier woont mama nu* ('Mommy lives here now') followed the life of mothers in Brugge's prison nursery for a few months in 2023. The series gave detained mothers the unique opportunity to share their experiences with the outside world using their own voices. In between testimonies from the detained mothers in Brugge, the reporter's voice-over provided context on the (physical) environment in which the conversations took place. With regard to the courtyard mentioned in Nuytiens and Jehaes (2022), the first podcast episode describes that is equipped with a swing set, a sandbox and a slide for the children to play on. The main hallway has Disney figures painted on the walls and is described as looking similar to a children's hospital ward by one of the detainees. The reporter also describes a 'room' (one of the mothers is careful not to use the word 'cell' in front of her child) that two women share with their children. It has two beds, two cribs,

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a small refrigerator, a microwave and a television that is always playing (De Backer and Lohmann, 2023a). The windows are barred but can be opened, and curtains can be drawn to choose how much natural light is let in (De Backer and Lohmann, 2023a). One of the mothers shares anecdotes on the **difficulties of living together** with two adults and two children in one cell. For example, her daughter's temper tantrums about not being able to leave the cell often wake up the other detainees' child, which leads to frustration (De Backer and Lohmann, 2023b). There is no space or opportunity to have a moment for yourself, which makes the experience of mothering in Brugge's prison nursery very intense and often overwhelming (Nuytiens and Jehaes, 2022; De Backer and Lohmann, 2023b). Though the regime in the nursery is more flexible and allows for more time outside compared to other sections of the prison, the mother-child pairs still **spend the majority of their day** in a cell (Nuytiens and Jehaes, 2022). For women who do not work, this could mean a total of 21 hours a day. As a result, the children are not able to get their energy out by the time the door closes again at night, which at the time of the qualitative study was at 19:00 (Nuytiens and Jehaes, 2022). When De Backer and Lohmann (2023a) visited the nursery a few years later, the time had been changed to 20:00 but the mothers still expressed the same concerns.

As mentioned in Chapter 1: Introduction, a legislative proposal concerning the rights of detainees in Belgium was passed into law in 2005 (Dupont, 2005). The normalisation principle included herein calls for (material) conditions that resemble life in free society as much as possible, given that the punishment should solely be **deprivation of liberty** (Dupont, 2005). No sources point to any major changes to the infrastructure of Brugge, which was built before the law was passed. The testimonies of the women interviewed by Nuytiens and Jehaes (2022) and De Backer and Lohmann (2023a,b,c) from long after the law was passed, do not mention any sense of normalcy created by the space in and of itself. Instead, detained mothers in Brugge had to get creative to make it more homelike, as is evident from this interaction between two detained women (De Backer and Lohmann, 2023c):

detainee commenting on interviewee who is cleaning out her cell to leave prison:  
*"Je had er echt een huisje van gemaakt hier hé"* ("you really made it into a little house here, didn't you")

interviewee: *"Beetje aangenaam maken hé, anders kunt ge niet overleven hier."*  
("You have to make it a little comfortable, otherwise you can't survive here.")

### 4.2.3 Conclusion

The Belgian Federal Administration of Justice (FOD Justitie) does not register any data about children co-habiting with their detained mothers (Aebi et al., 2023), which makes studying mother-child detention significantly more difficult. Despite the very limited number of sources available to substantiate the analysis, the results still showed that being a (small) part of a larger prison has some consequences. For

#### 4.2. Moeder-kind afdeling Brugge (Belgium)

one, the closed regime in Brugge makes detainees spend the large majority of their days in a cell. As a result, the children are not able to get their energy out by the time the door closes again at night. Not being able to leave upsets the children, and makes the mothers feel guilty about their situation (De Backer and Lohmann, 2023b).

In addition to this, there is a rule that prohibits children from coming into contact with detainees from other sections, resulting in their outdoor space being restricted to a separate and smaller courtyard (Nuytiens and Jehaes, 2022). Though it is equipped with children's toys, the opportunity to run around more freely in a bigger yard could help mitigate the time spent in a cramped cell. As indicated on Figure 4.3 by the dashed line, there may be room within the secure perimeter of the prison to expand the courtyard, which is likely located in between the two wings of the women's section. However, it is possible that this space is no longer open since the image was not taken recently. In this case the parent-child duo could benefit from going to regular playgrounds in the community, but the strictly closed regime currently prohibits such outings.

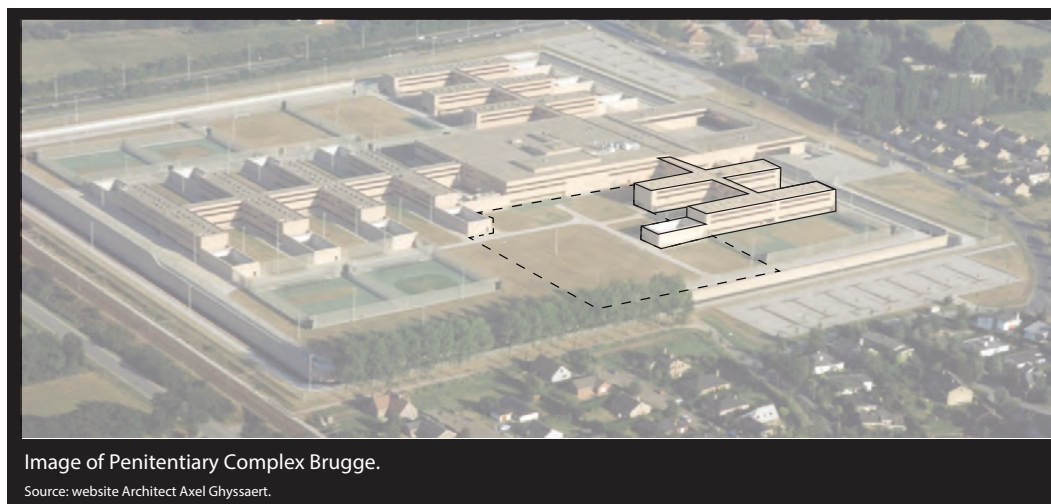


FIGURE 4.3: Image of Penitentiary Complex Brugge indicating the women's section and possible expansion of outdoor space for mothers and their children.

The detained mothers try to make the best of their situation by decorating their cells to make them more homely, as well as by taking care not to use prison-specific language around their children. The findings of Nuytiens and Jehaes (2022) mainly highlight the **unsuitability of closed prison regimes for children** and suggest Belgian policy makers to consider semi-open or open regimes for mothers. The testimonies in the podcast series of De Backer and Lohmann (2023a,b,c) also support this conclusion.

### 4.3 Unidades Externas de Madres (Spain)

*Unidades Externas de Madres* (UM), which translates to 'External Mothers' Units' in English, are special units within some Spanish prisons that accommodate detained mothers and their children under three years of age (Ministerio del Interior, 2009). In contrast to the Belgian prison nurseries, *Unidades de Madres* are housed in **separate buildings**. This separation allows the UMs to **function completely independently** of the main prison (if there is one), and to establish a regime more suited to the needs of the young children and their mothers (Ministerio del Interior, 2009). The type of prison to which a UM is usually linked is a *Centro Inserción Social* (CIS) (Ministerio del Interior, 2009). A **CIS** is a penitentiary institution for detainees serving sentences in a (semi-)open regime, focussed on improving social integration after release (Díaz Gómez, n.d.). The CIS is meant to provide administrative support and basic services to the UM, but detainees from the *Unidad de Madres* do not normally come into contact with CIS detainees or staff seeing that only specifically trained staff members are allowed to work in the UM (Ministerio del Interior, 2009).

Unique to these *Unidades de Madres*, in comparison to the rest of the Spanish carceral landscape, is that their structure, furnishings and facilities were specifically **designed to meet the needs of its prospective users** (Ministerio del Interior, 2009). To help identify these specific needs, potential users (mothers with young children incarcerated in regular prisons back then) were asked for their opinion through a survey (Ministerio del Interior, 2009). According to Feintuch (2013), the detained women appreciated the opportunity to share their suggestions, as it gave them a small sense of control in an environment that is usually void of any agency. Additionally, the living situation in prisons at that time was studied to better understand what needs were not being met (Ministerio del Interior, 2009). This information allowed the project's team to identify possible site locations and gave them an idea on how to arrange all the spaces needed for childcare, recreation and training for the detained women (Ministerio del Interior, 2009).

The *Unidades Externas de Madres* first came into being after Article 38 of the General Penitentiary Law (LOGP) was amended (Ministerio del Interior, 2009). This amendment allowed detained mothers to keep their children under the age of three years with them while they serve their sentence (Ministerio de Justicia e Interior, 1996). In 2005, the Spanish government agreed to fund the construction of five External Mothers' Units by 2012 (Ministerio del Interior, 2010). As of 2024, four such units have been realised: *UM Palma de Mallorca* in Mallorca (2008), *UM Andalucía* in Sevilla (2009), *UM Jaime Garralda* in Madrid (2011) and *UM Irene Villa González* in Alicante (2020) (Figure 4.4).



FIGURE 4.4: Map of Spain indicating project locations.

An important aspect of life as a mother in an External Mothers' Unit is attending the *escuela de madres* (Ministerio del Interior, 2009). This 'mothers' school' is the name given to a series of rehabilitation initiatives and parenting classes provided by the unit with the help of external organisations (Feintuch, 2013). The objective is to cover the specific (training) needs of the detainees, aimed at supporting them in their role as mothers as well as facilitating their integration through education and/or job training (Ministerio del Interior, 2009).

The *Unidad Externa de Madres* should be located in an area that allows the detainees to maintain (or ideally, strengthen) contacts with their social network (Ministerio del Interior, 2009). The children should be able to experience their family environment daily, starting from six months of age and increasing in frequency over time (Ministerio del Interior, 2009). In reality, many detainees have family outside of Spain and frequent visits are not feasible (Feintuch, 2013). Cell phones are not allowed inside the UM, so they must rely on phone calls from the prison's telephone or letters to stay in touch (Feintuch, 2013). Feintuch (2013) highlights how the small-scaledness of the unit actually makes it harder to maintain family ties for these women: phone calls are more costly than in bigger prisons (because companies will not offer them the lower 'bulk' price) and there are generally less opportunities to work inside the unit. The detainees are allowed to work in the community on the condition that the hours fit into their own and their child's educational schedules (Feintuch, 2013). In practice, Feintuch (2013) found that this condition made finding work near-impossible.

The *Unidades Externas de Madres* having re-integration as an objective does not mean detainees are free to come and go as they please. A UM is still a detention facility, which implies the need for near-constant supervision, and control of movement. Electronic surveillance systems such as cameras, alarms and motion detectors are consciously integrated to keep the building secure without giving it an aggressive appearance (Ministerio del Interior, 2009).



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### 4.3.1 Description

This section introduces the four cases that will be subjected to a comparative analysis in § 4.3.2.

#### UM Palma de Mallorca (Mallorca)

The *Unidad de Madres* in Palma de Mallorca was the first UM to open back in 2008 (Ministerio del Interior, 2009). The project is designed by architecture firm *árgola arquitectos* and structural engineering company *Qube* (Qube Ingeniera, n.d.). The total architectural project consists of a Mothers Unit, housing around 20 mothers, and a large CIS prison complex with a capacity of 300 detainees (*árgola arquitectos*, 2003). Figure 4.5 shows an image of the complete project, with UM Palma de Mallorca in the foreground and the CIS complex behind it. It is located in an industrial area in the suburban periphery of Palma.



FIGURE 4.5: Image of *Unidad Externa de Madre Palma de Mallorca* (Mallorca).

#### UM Andalucía (Sevilla)

Only one year later, in 2009, the second *Unidad Externa de Madres* opened its doors in Sevilla (Figure 4.6). The site for *UM Andalucía* was chosen in a rural area over 15 kilometres outside the city centre of Sevilla, right next to the existing prison Sevilla I and the CIS complex *Luis Jiménez De asúa*. The building was designed by architect Jose Julio Diaz Moreno in collaboration with consultancy company *FHECOR Ingenieros Consultores*, who were in charge of realising the reinforced concrete structure (FHECOR, n.d.). Building volumes of different heights wrap around a central courtyard, a typology inspired by traditional Andalusian patio houses (SIEPSE, n.d.a) The Sevillian *Unidad de Madres* has room for 33 mother-child pairs (SIEPSE, n.d.a).



#### 4.3. Unidades Externas de Madres (Spain)



FIGURE 4.6: Image of *Unidad Externa de Madre Andalucía* (Sevilla).

#### **UM Jaime Garralda (Madrid)**

In 2011, the Spanish government inaugurated a third unique Mothers' Unit, this time in the country's capital. Named after a priest who dedicated his life to helping those in need (Fundación Jaime Garralda, 2023), *UM Jaime Garralda* in Madrid immediately stands out thanks to its colourful façade and lack of harsh security measures (Ministerio del Interior, n.d.). Figure 4.7 shows the view of the UM one would have when passing by on Juan de Vera street.

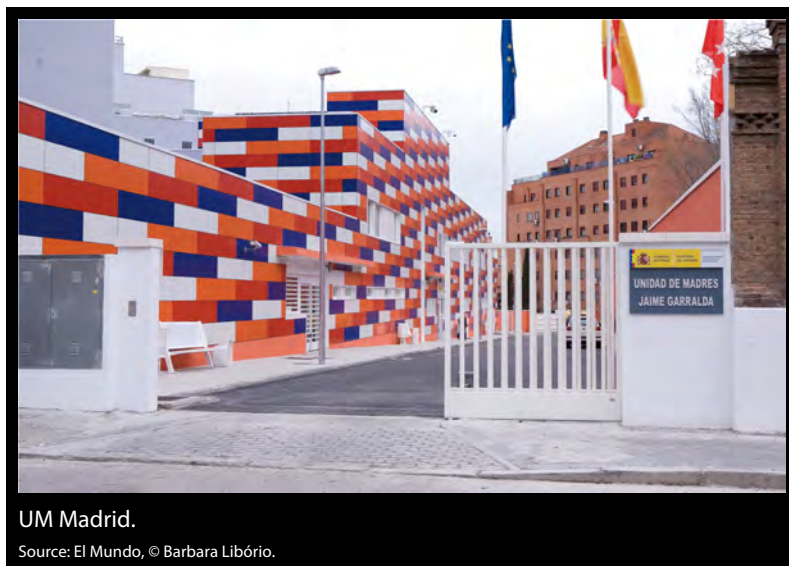


FIGURE 4.7: Image of *Unidad Externa de Madre Jaime Garralda* (Madrid).

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The building follows the triangular shape of the plot, brushing up against the Centre for Social Integration *Victoria Kent* on two sides and leaving plenty of space at the centre to serve as a courtyard (SIEPSE, n.d.c). Much like UM Sevilla, this courtyard typology was inspired by traditional Spanish architecture. In the case of *UM Jaime Garralda*, the inspiration were *corralas* or 'corridor houses', typical for Madrid's Delicias district where the *Unidad de Madres* is located (Libório, 2016). The project has 33 rooms, with one double room per floor to house a mother with her child and a second detainee who is in need of support (Ministerio del Interior, n.d.).

##### **UM Irene Villa González (Alicante)**

The last UM opened more recently, in 2020, and was established in Alicante (SIEPSE, n.d.b). It is made up of four volumes of equal height that create a large rectangular patio in the middle, keeping in line with the typology of the other *Unidades de Madres*. Its location is at the foot of the Serra de Fontcalent mountain range, some 8 kilometres west of the city centre (Prieto, 2021). At max capacity, it can welcome 32 mothers and their young children. Figure 4.8 shows the main entrance to the UM.



FIGURE 4.8: Image of *Unidad Externa de Madre Irene Villa González* (Alicante).

There was significantly less data to be found on this most recent project, which is why the comparative analysis of the following paragraph will feature the first three *Unidades Externas de Madres* more than UM Alicante.

### 4.3.2 Comparative analysis

#### Site and surrounding area

The choice to establish the first Mother's Unit on an island seems contradictory to the principle of strengthening detainees' social networks. Given that Mallorca only makes up about 2% of Spain's entire population (Statista Research Department, 2023), this forced many detained mothers to choose between keeping their child and thus uprooting them, or going to a normal prison close to their family but without them (Feintuch, 2013). For those women who do have connections in Palma, the location is not ideal either. The big-box stores and industrial sites surrounding the project do not seem to provide many meaningful activities. The public infrastructure in the area is very car-centric and not geared towards walking, which is evident by the amount of parking space, narrow curbs and lack of greenery to provide shade. Given the highway that passes near the Mothers' Unit (Figure 4.9A), the car is also the easiest mode of transportation for people visiting from outside of Palma.



FIGURE 4.9: Satellite images of the area surrounding the *Unidades Externas de Madres*.

If one looks at the aerial view of UM Andalucia in Sevilla (Figure 4.9B), it is immediately clear that the Spanish Government had to compromise on the community-centred principle for the second project as well. Though this rural area could provide some nice views on the natural landscape, the detainees will mainly see the adjacent



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(closed-regime) prison buildings, a large field of solar panels or a nearby industrial site through their windows. The most centrally located *Unidad de Madres* is the project in Madrid (Figure 4.9C). Important steps in the re-integration process like bringing your child to nursery school by yourself, finding work and maintaining relationships are easier to take because the necessary services are at walking distance from the unit (Ministerio del Interior, n.d.). In theory, the location of UM Madrid can thus be considered the most suitable, though the UMs current rules still make these steps difficult in practice (Feintuch, 2013).

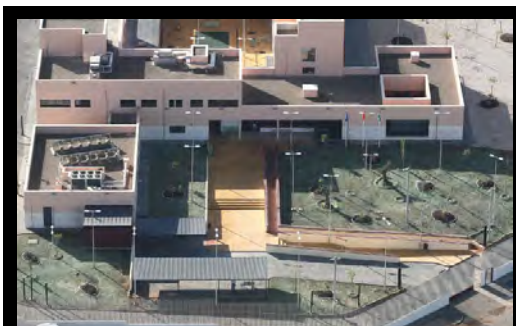
#### Exterior

The project in Palma de Mallorca (Figure 4.10A) was finished with materials that are traditionally used on the island (SIEPSE, n.d.d). The façade of the ground floor is tiled with limestone slabs and the upper floors are plastered and painted white. In contrast to this traditional look, there is also a tall skinny volume covered in purple-coloured polycarbonate panels which contains the staircase (SIEPSE, n.d.d). The semi-transparent polycarbonate reveals its function and also gives the project its own identity, especially when the lights are on (SIEPSE, n.d.d).



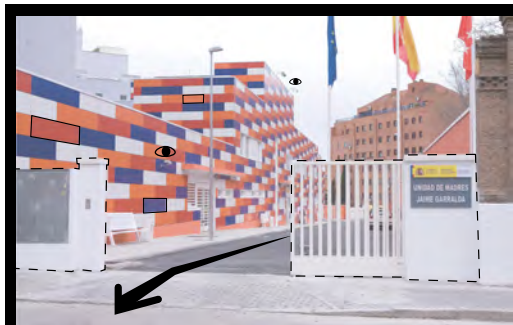
A. UM Palma de Mallorca.

Source: website árgola arquitectos.



B. UM Sevilla.

Source: website SIEPSE.



C. UM Madrid.

Source: El Mundo, © Barbara Libório.



D. UM Alicante.

Source: Todo Alicante, © Alejandro Hernandez.

FIGURE 4.10: Image of the exterior of the *Unidades Externas de Madres*.

#### 4.3. Unidades Externas de Madres (Spain)

Similarly, the façade in Sevilla is also characterised by a stone plinth and painted upper sections (Figure 4.10B). The salmon colour of paint was specifically chosen to give the building a warm and friendly appearance (SIEPSE, n.d.a). UM Madrid (Figure 4.10C) has the most distinct exterior, which was designed with a dual purpose: giving the building an identity in the neighbourhood and simultaneously demystifying “the prison” (SIEPSE, n.d.c). Lastly, UM Alicante has a less distinct look, with an orange-coloured entrance that is lower than the main building behind it (Figure 4.10D).

#### Interior

In UM Palma, the mothers are housed in apartment-like accommodations (Figure 4.11A), which are designed to **mimic familial settings** as much as possible (Pintelon et al., 2023). The accommodations in UM Sevilla (Figure 4.11B) and UM Madrid (Figure 4.11C) have similar spaces: a living/ dining room area connected to the main hallway (with a normal door), a separate bedroom and a private bathroom. The windows are barred, however, the thin metal profiles are placed horizontally and almost resemble blinds, though no source stated that this was the intent of the designer. In UM Madrid and UM Sevilla, the residential floors are colour-coded to make wayfinding easier for children (SIEPSE, n.d.a; Libório, 2016).

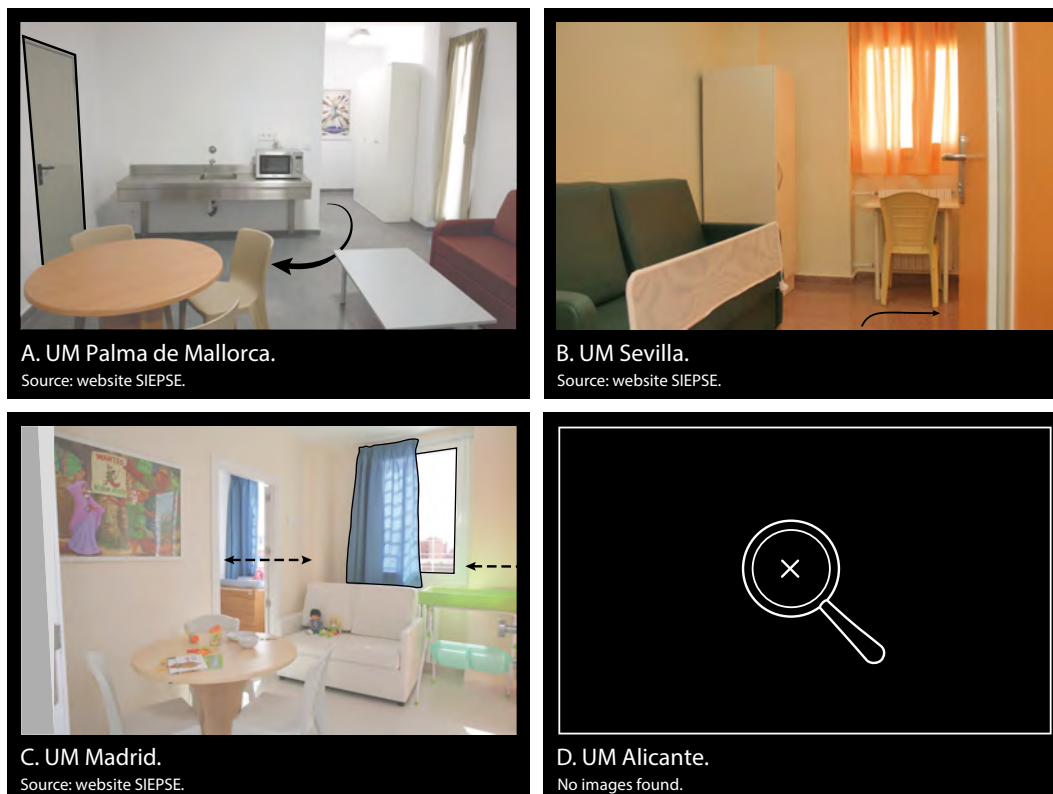


FIGURE 4.11: Images of the *Unidades Externas de Madres*’ accommodations.

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No architectural plans or images were available of the rooms in the latest UM project in Alicante. An article in the local newspaper did provide the following description: each room has a living-dining room, an office, a bedroom and a bathroom, for a total area of 22 square metres (Hernández, 2023). This description is in line with the previous projects, though the article did not state how they came across this information and the description could not be confirmed by another source.

Each *Unidad de Madres* has at least one dedicated playroom for the children to spend time playing with their mothers or with other children living in the UM. Figure 4.12 shows their similarities in colour scheme and in overall interior design. Aside from the thin horizontal bars in the window, these spaces are almost indistinguishable from how a daycare in free society might look.

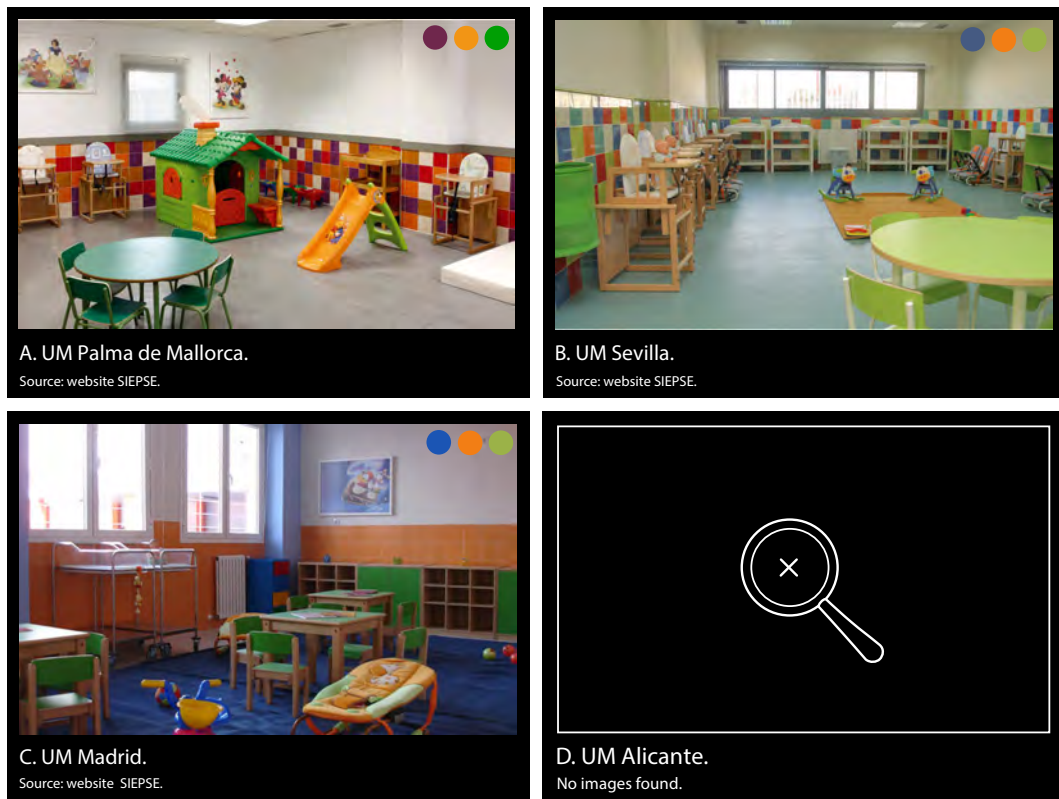


FIGURE 4.12: Image of the indoor playrooms of the *Unidades Externas de Madres*.



#### Building type

Although some Unidades de Madres claim their typology was inspired by local Spanish architecture, all four of the projects are ultimately quite similar. As the satellite images of Figure 4.13 show, they all have a central courtyard around which the project is built. This essentially means that **the building itself provides the needed secure enclosure**, which makes it less obvious that you are not free to leave, compared to being in an outdoor space surrounded by a high wall or fence (SIEPSE, n.d.a)

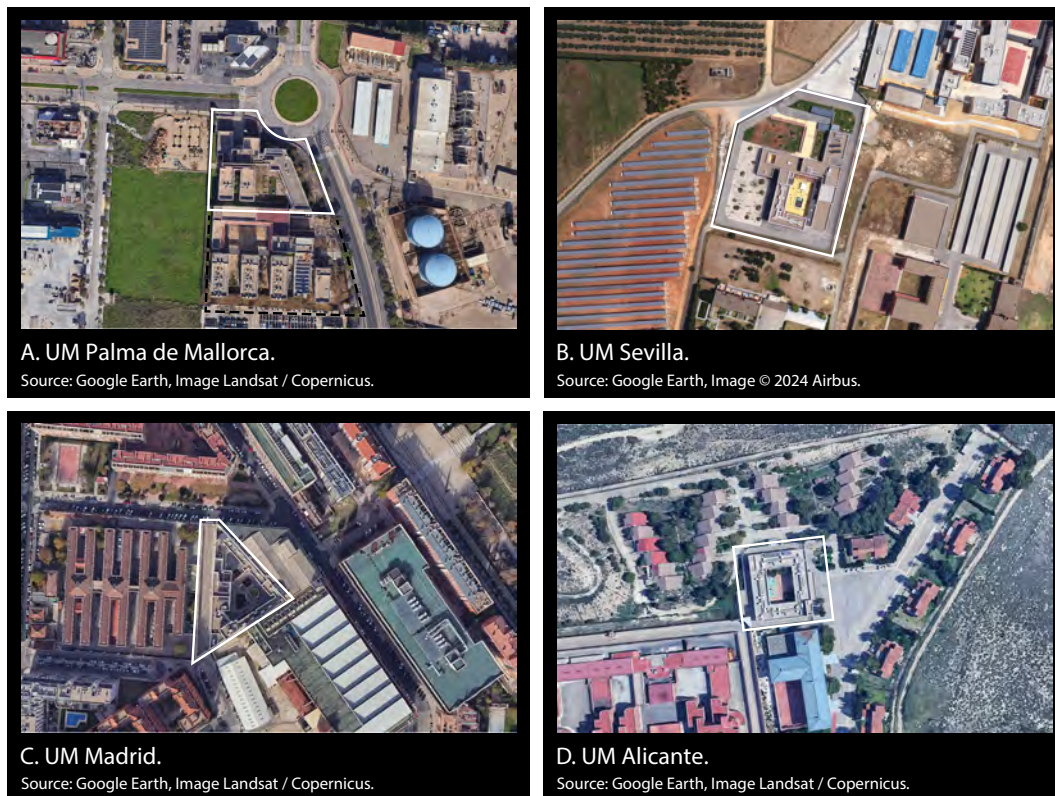


FIGURE 4.13: Satellite images of the *Unidades Externas de Madres*' building sites.

Taking a closer look at the courtyards (Figure 4.14), they also have some aspects in common. Firstly, they are adapted to include child friendly and safe play areas for small children. Secondly, the courtyards are flanked by covered areas on one or more sides, which provide shaded outdoor spaces on particularly warm days. UM Palma goes a step further, building one of their residential blocks on columns, therefore extending the inner courtyard and simultaneously creating more covered spaces (Figure 4.14A).

UM Madrid is the only project that does not incorporate plants in its courtyard, though the trees in other UMs are still very young on Figure 4.14 and therefore do not seem to add much to the environment yet. In time these natural elements will still

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FIGURE 4.14: Image of the inner courtyards of the *Unidades Externas de Madres*.

be beneficial because a number of studies have shown that having a view on nature has health benefits for detainees (see for example Engstrom and Van Ginneken, 2022), and some suggest interaction with nature may also have therapeutic benefits (Jewkes, 2018). On the other hand, **Madrid is the Spanish city that has the largest number of playgrounds and children's play areas in public parks** (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2014). These playgrounds are called *áreas infantiles* or *parques infantiles* and there are more than a dozen located near UM Madrid. Figure 4.15 shows photos of playgrounds in the area and their locations are indicated on a satellite image of the neighbourhood. The low fence demarking the edges of the play area, always painted in primary colours, make these community spaces **easily recognisable**. The same type of fence is used in the courtyard of the Jaime Garralda Mothers' Unit, suggesting that this place could just be another *área infantil*. Given Madrid's high building density, it is not unusual for these areas to be flanked by high-rise buildings. For example: Área infantil 02057 and Parque infantil Torres Miranda (number 9 and 10 on Figure 4.15 respectively) are built on a long narrow plot between high-rise apartment buildings. It is important to note that the choice of fence material is never mentioned in any documentation on the building of UM Madrid. Whether it was a conscious design choice or not, spatial details like these may also contribute to normalising the prison environment.



#### 4.3. Unidades Externas de Madres (Spain)



FIGURE 4.15: Images of parks nearby UM Madrid and indications of their location on a Satellite image of the area surrounding the project.

#### Security technology

In terms of security measures, tell-tale signs of a prison environment are avoided as much as possible. Though all four projects still have perimeter fences, they are

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designed to appear less threatening and more transparent (SIEPSE, n.d.a). For example, UM Palma's fence is made up of a 1m tall concrete plinth, topped with a metal fence with thin vertical profiles (SIEPSE, n.d.d). Looking at Figure 4.13D, the Mothers' Unit in Alicante seemingly has no perimeter fence and the immediate environment could be mistaken for a suburb. In reality, the staggered houses and villa-looking buildings are also a part of the larger penitentiary estate and the chain-link perimeter fencing simply wraps around the entire property. To keep tabs on detainees' whereabouts and to compensate the loss of control by no longer locking detainees in their cells, the Unidad de Madres projects rely very heavily on the use of cameras, motion detectors and alarm systems (Ministerio del Interior, 2009). Since these electronic devices are small and thoughtfully integrated into the architecture, they do not have a strong visual impact (Ministerio del Interior, 2009).

### 4.3.3 Conclusion

Spain's goal of keeping children out of prison led the Spanish government to organise mother-child detention in external units. The architecture of these *Unidades Externas de Madres* contributes to normalising the environment in several ways.

For one, the building tries not to signal that it is a prison. Many aspects contribute to this. For example, choices of finishings that make the project either blend in with local architecture or stand out through its unique materials. Additionally, securing the facility does not rely on harsh security measures such as concrete walls or barbed wire. Instead, the courtyard building typology - which is inspired by traditional Spanish architecture - makes it so that the building itself forms the needed enclosure. More transparent perimeter fences, surveillance cameras, motion detectors and alarms provide an extra layer of security without making the environment look more threatening.

Secondly, instead of 'cell', the word 'apartment' is often used to describe the accommodations for the mother-child pair (Ministerio del Interior, 2009, n.d.). Everything is provided to enable the detainees to take care of their own child(ren): a living/dining room, a bedroom and a bathroom, in three separate rooms. Playrooms decked out with toys where the children can do activities together are also present in each Mother's Unit.

Third, the use of colour is striking throughout all projects, which is what immediately distinguishes them from regular prisons. For some projects colour is used to differentiate between different areas of the prison (such as floors), making wayfinding easier for children. Others use it to achieve a particular (child friendly) atmosphere, or to make clear associations with the surrounding neighbourhood. All these aspects, supported by the regime, may contribute to making a more humane environment for women to raise their young children in.

## 4.4 Istituti a Custodia Attenuata per detenute Madri (Italy)

Italy has the legal foundations to arrange mother-child detention for women with children up to the age of 10 years old (Governo Italiano, 2018). In practice, newborn babies never spend time behind bars because postponing the mother's sentence is mandatory if her child is less than a year old (Pellegrini De Luca, 2023). Children up to three years of age can be accommodated in prison nurseries, and up to six years old in special institutions called *Istituti a Custodia Attenuata per detenute Madri*, or 'ICAM' for short. There are four ICAMs in operation in Italy today. These 'Attenuated Custody Institutions for detained Mothers' are located in Milan, Turin, Venice and Lauro (Camera dei deputati, 2022). As shown on the map in Figure 4.16, these institutions are not distributed evenly throughout the peninsula. The ICAMs of Milan, Turin and Venice are all concentrated in the northernmost part of Italy, and ICAM Lauro is located in the south, near Naples.



FIGURE 4.16: Map of Italy indicating project locations.

According to Paolo Pastena (director of ICAM Lauro) the fundamental difference with a prison lies in one principle that informs every level of decision making: minimising the impact of the detention environment on the **children** (Guidelli and Di Meo, 2022). For Pastena, this is obvious in many ways, such as: the design of the facility, the staff not wearing uniforms and the use of video surveillance over other measures to keep the space as open as possible (Guidelli and Di Meo, 2022).

The same law (no. 62/2011) that provided the legal grounds for ICAMs, also established the concept of *casa famiglia protetta* or 'protected family homes' (Pellegrini De Luca, 2023). These homes provide a supervised home-detention environment, where children can stay until their tenth birthday (Pellegrini De Luca, 2023). Unfortunately, due to a lack of funding, there are currently only two protected family homes: *Ciao* in Milan and *Casa di Leda* in Rome. The analysis in § 4.4.2 will be limited to mother-child detention in *Istituti a Custodia Attenuata per detenute Madri*.

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### 4.4.1 Description

This section introduces the four cases included in the comparative analysis in § 4.4.2. A fifth case is also described briefly but will not be analysed because it is not in use.

#### ICAM Milano San Vittore

The first ICAM to open is located just outside the historic centre of Milan (Figure 4.17). The building has held a number of functions, including serving as an orphanage for a time, prior to its conversion into a mother-child detention facility (Guidelli and Di Meo, 2022). ICAM Milan first opened in 2006 as a pilot project. Its success led to the establishment of four additional ICAMs through amendments in the law of 2011 (Guidelli and Di Meo, 2022). Although the 2023 report of *Associazione Antigone* (Italian prison observatory) mentions that some parts need renovating, they describe the structure as generally being in a good condition. There are four very spacious bedrooms, each with two or three beds (and cots) (Associazione Antigone, 2023b). After the COVID-19 pandemic, the organisation decided to reduce its capacity from 16 to 11 (including children), mainly to give children from three years and up more space to explore (Patti et al., 2023).



FIGURE 4.17: Image of *ICAM Milano San Vittore*.

The detainees are allowed to move around freely within the ICAM, and can spend several hours in the small 'garden': three hours before noon, four 4 hours after (Associazione Antigone, 2023b). However, the mothers are not allowed to leave the facility, so they must rely on staff and volunteers to bring their children to kindergarten (Patti et al., 2023). Due to the closed regime the mothers are under, contacts with the outside are mainly maintained through prison-authorised (video) calls (no personal mobile phones are allowed) and visits inside the ICAM are possible on the weekends (Associazione Antigone, 2023b).



##### ICAM Venezia

Contrary to the other ICAMs, the institution in Venice is not located in a separate building. Instead, it is located in a section of the Giudecca Women's Prison (Associazione Antigone, 2023d). Giudecca is one of Venice's small islands, and since there is no bridge to mainland, it can only be reached by boat. According to *Associazione Antigone's* report, the facility is in good condition, despite it dating all the way back to the 12th century (Figure 4.18). The facilities for mother-child detention are spread out over two floors, and its six bedrooms can house 12 detainees in total (Ministero della Giustizia, 2023). As a consequence of sharing a roof with the other sections of the women's prison, the ICAM operates under the same (medium security) regime (Associazione Antigone, 2023d). Despite this, the ICAM still allows free movement throughout all of the common spaces, which include a living room, playroom, a library, a laundry room, kitchen and garden equipped with children's toys (Ministero della Giustizia, 2023).



FIGURE 4.18: Image of the Giudecca Women's Prison, ICAM Venezia is located in the same building.

The prison is host to the 2024 Venice Art Biennale. For this occasion, artist Maurizio Cattelan was asked to paint a mural on the exterior of the prison, which can be seen on Figure 4.18. Visitors are guided through the exhibition titled 'With My Eyes' by detainees (katsikopoulou, 2024).

##### ICAM Giuseppe Lorusso e Lorenzo Cutugno Torino

The ICAM in Turin (Figure 4.19), which opened in 2015, is a renovation of a four-story apartment building from the early 1980s (Associazione Antigone, 2023c). The architect responsible for the project is Cesare Burdese, who spoke about his design process and decisions in an interview with journalist Francesco Floris in 2018. When nobody could provide Burdese with an answer to the question of what spatial requirements an ICAM needed, he decided to start from the concept of **domesticity** (Floris, 2018). Wanting to create a home, he questioned common practices within prisons such as putting signs on doors that spell out their function, bolting furniture to the floor and installing heavy steel doors (Floris, 2018). Having worked on many penitentiary buildings in his career, the architect recognises the **temporality** that characterises life in prison. For this reason he made it so that the detainees had to move throughout the building, from upstairs to downstairs, from room to room, for different activities in their daily routines. In Burdese's words: *"Il cambio di stanze permette di articolare una quotidianità detentiva"* or in English: 'The change of rooms allows us to articulate daily prison life' (Floris, 2018).



FIGURE 4.19: Image of *ICAM Giuseppe Lorusso e Lorenzo Cutugno Torino*.

Burdese chose not to decorate the ICAM with Disney figures, as he believes children's imaginations are powerful and do not need such things. What he did find important was the use of colours in the façade of the building. The architect wanted every child to be able to draw his 'house' like kids normally do, and be able to proudly point to a window and say "The blue one is my house!" (Floris, 2018).

##### ICAM Lauro

The ICAM in Lauro is a detached section of the Avellino prison, located 14.5 kilometres away (Agenzia DIRE, 2016). The director of ICAM Lauro described the facility as **a compromise between a prison and a family home**. From the outside, it still looks just like the prison for detainees struggling with substance use that it used to be (Guidelli and Di Meo, 2022). On the inside however, it is renovated to cater to the needs of its current occupants. There are twenty rooms in total: 4 regular single bedrooms and 16 'mini-apartments' (Guidelli and Di Meo, 2022). As is the case in the other ICAMS, the doors are always open during the day and detainees can move around within the secure perimeter of the tall green wall, a part of which can be seen on Figure 4.20. The yellow bus in the background of the picture is a school bus. The institution made an agreement with the municipality that the children living in the ICAM are the first to be picked up and the last to return 'home', so that their peers do not see where they live (Guidelli and Di Meo, 2022).

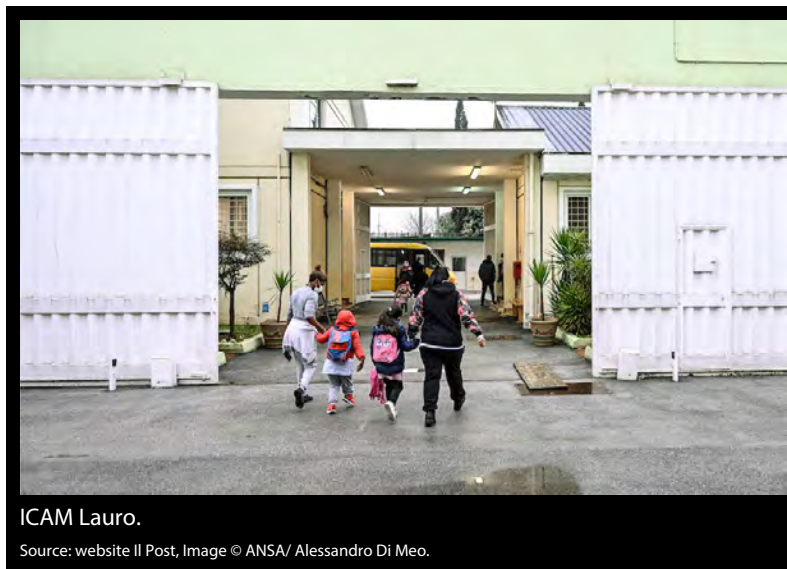


FIGURE 4.20: Image of ICAM Lauro, taken from inside the prison.

##### ICAM Senorbì (not in use)

A fifth ICAM was built in Senorbì, located on the isle of Sardinia, but never became operational due to a boycott (Sclippa, 2022). The protest was not spearheaded by neighbours or other external parties, but by the prospective users themselves: detained mothers in the Cagliari prison. One of the worries the mothers expressed was the distance to healthcare facilities. In case of an emergency, they would have to travel quite far. Senorbì is over 35 kilometres from the city of Cagliari, which is where the nearest hospital - and the main prison - are located (Associazione Antigone, 2023a). The mothers also feared being too isolated from loved ones and therefore preferred to remain in the less comfortable, but more centrally located regular prison (Sclippa, 2022).

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### 4.4.2 Comparative analysis

#### Site and surrounding area

As is evident from Figure 4.21, all four institutions are embedded in quite different environments. ICAM Milano (Figure 4.21A) and ICAM Torino (Figure 4.21C) are located in - or in the periphery of - big cities. The available public transportation services (bus, tram, train) make these institutions easier to visit for family members. ICAM Lauro (Figure 4.21D) is a small town and lacks such services, though it remains reachable by car. Oppositely, ICAM Venezia (Figure 4.21B) is located on a small island that has no bridge to the rest of Venice, so public transport (by boat) is most likely the main mode of transportation for visitors.



FIGURE 4.21: Satellite images of the area surrounding the ICAMs.

#### Exterior

Despite the type of security measures being similar, their design differs greatly from project to project. In ICAM Milano (Figure 4.22A), there is an alarm on the fence that encloses the small 'garden'. The security system is designed not to be recognizable by children (Pellegrini De Luca, 2023), yet in practice they are made aware of it out of necessity. For example, in the ARTE documentary *In Prison with Mom*, a little girl is playing in the garden when her mother reminds her not to put her hand through the fence to avoid triggering the alarm. As for the building itself: though



#### 4.4. Istituti a Custodia Attenuata per detenute Madri (Italy)

it has wrought iron bars on the windows, they do not stand out as much because they are commonly used as parapets on this type of historical building (Pellegrini De Luca, 2023). From Figure 4.22C it might seem that there is only a low wooden fence around the grassy play area in ICAM Torino. Yet, if we look at the outdoor space from a different angle (Figure 4.23A), we can see how the ICAM is actually surrounded by a tall metal fence. ICAM Lauro inherited security measures from its previous function as high-security prison: an insurmountably tall concrete wall. The buildings of ICAM Lauro form a central courtyard (Figure 4.22D), from which the presence of the outer wall is less obvious. All projects also use surveillance cameras extensively.

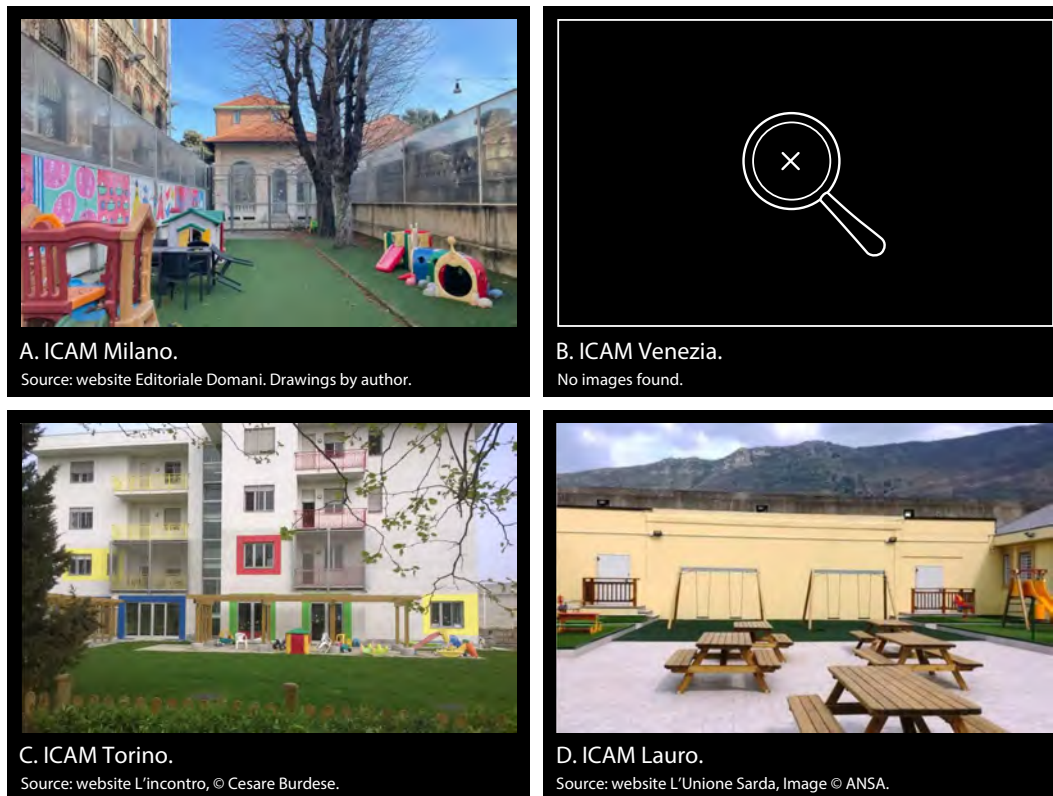


FIGURE 4.22: Image of the ICAMs' outdoor areas.

Unique to the ICAM in Turin is that the rooms have their own private balconies. The two balconies on the first floor have been turned into 'loggias' using a metal woven wire mesh (as shown on Figure 4.23B). According to architect Cesare Burdese, this material is commonly used in homes for solar shading without losing too much visibility (Floris, 2018). However, the main reason for this intervention is to make sure detainees who are struggling with their mental health cannot hurt themselves or their children. Additionally, the choice of this material keeps the space as normal as possible (Floris, 2018).

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FIGURE 4.23: Image of the fences around ICAM Torino.

#### Interior

Because the detainees and their children spend the vast majority of their time inside the institution, it is important to take a look at accommodations and common spaces. Figure 4.24 shows one of the common rooms from each ICAM. In addition to a living room with a television, an ICAM usually has a large communal kitchen, playrooms, a library, laundry room ... In the ICAM in Venice these rooms have signs that display their functions. This was also the case in ICAM Torino until the architect came back and took them down, convinced that they were detrimental to the normalisation of the space (Floris, 2018). The interior is always kept very tidy and clean by the detainees. A staff member of ICAM Milan attributes this to the human impulse we all have that when someone offers you beautiful things, you will want to put in effort to keep them that way (Canziani, 2017). Being allowed free movement throughout the premises essentially eliminates the need for heavy steel internal doors. The sounds of keys and cell doors are therefore also not heard often in ICAMs (Patti et al., 2023).

While a certain degree of domesticity is present in all projects, the architect of ICAM Lauro is the only one who calls the institution a home and not a prison (Burdese, 2022). The detained mothers and staff generally stress the fact that it is a detention facility first and foremost, and children in ICAM Milano are even taught to say "let's go back to mother" instead of "let's go home" by the educators. What the children think, is not clear. Though they can often sense things are different from the home they might remember, some will refer to prison staff in a familial way, as 'uncle' or 'grandfather' (Pellegrini De Luca, 2023).

#### 4.4. Istituti a Custodia Attenuata per detenute Madri (Italy)

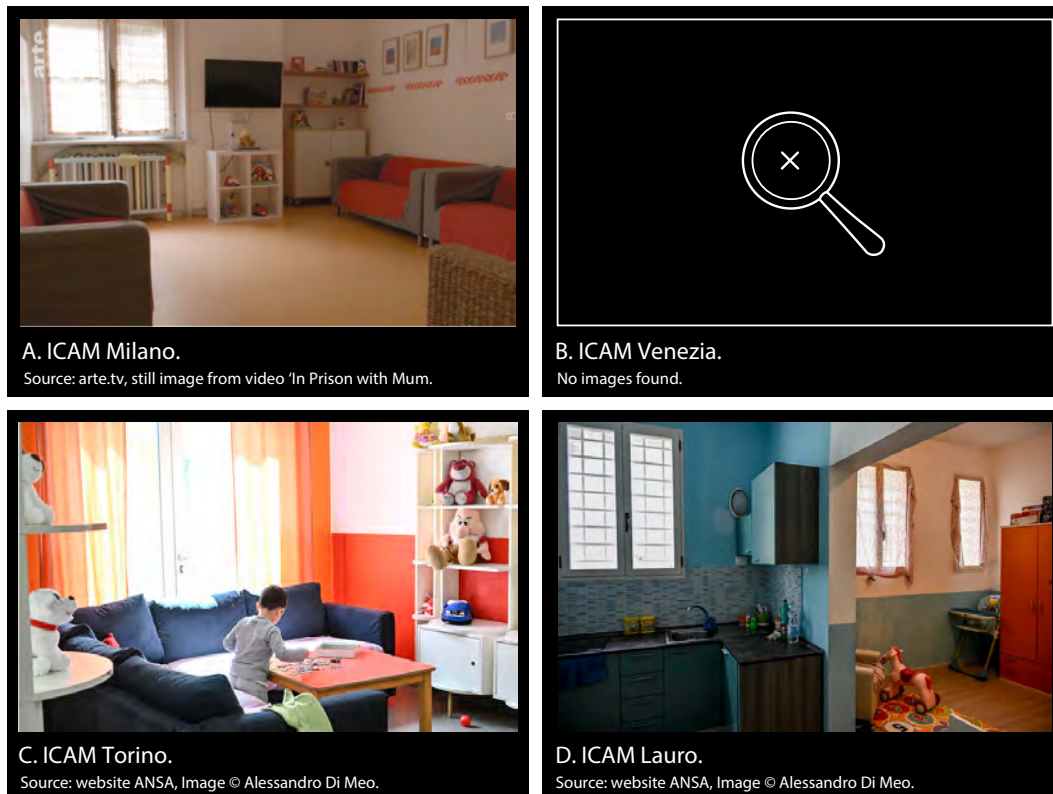


FIGURE 4.24: Images of (some of) the ICAMs' common areas.

An interesting design feature of ICAM Torino is its furnishings for the bedrooms. The building itself already existed, so the architect thought of a furniture design that allowed two detainees to live together in one room with sufficient privacy for both women, while still keeping a lot of space for children to run around. The design, shown on Figure 4.25, is one symmetric piece of furniture, integrating two beds, two closets, some shelves and two changing tables. By placing it in the centre of the room, both mother-child pairs have natural light coming into their respective private 'nooks', and simultaneously creates a circuit for the children to run big laps around the room. The furniture was made in the carpentry workshop of the main prison (Floris, 2018).

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FIGURE 4.25: Image of the bedroom furniture in ICAM Lauro, designed by architect Cesare Burdese and made in the prison's carpentry workshop.

### 4.4.3 Conclusion

Italy has a wide range of solutions to the issue of mother-child detention: from postponing the sentence over prison nurseries and ICAMs to supervised 'home-detention' in protected family homes. The analysis was limited to the *Istituti a Custodia Attenuata per Detenute Madri*, which are concentrated in the northernmost part of the country, ICAM Lauro in the south being the exception. If mothers want to keep their young children with them, this uneven territorial distribution could require them to move far away from family and friends. The failure of the fifth project in Senorbì highlights the importance of social anchorage, because a fear of social isolation and the distance to emergency medical services led to a boycott.

ICAMs primary aim is to provide a physical environment that is less damaging to children, when compared to prison nurseries. While the interiors of most ICAMs resemble domestic spaces, the exteriors of UM Torino and UM Lauro still very obviously signal that they are detention facilities. Mothers and children may live there, have spacious bedrooms or 'mini-apartments', but staff and detainees often stress that it is not a *home* (Pellegrini De Luca, 2023; Carrer, 2024). This is obvious about the way children are taught not to refer to the ICAM as 'home', and arrangements that are made to make sure the children's place of residence remains private. Granted, all projects were renovations or repurposed buildings so they had to work within existing boundaries.

## 4.5 Mutter-Kind-Haus (Germany)

### 4.5.1 Description

Germany's Federal Prison Act (Strafvollzugsgesetz or StVollzG) governs the administration and enforcement of prison sentences (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2021). The principles outlined therein are: (1) life in prison should be as similar as possible to general living conditions, (2) harmful consequences of deprivation of liberty must be counteracted, and (3) reintegration of the prisoner should be facilitated (StVollzG, §3). This act also describes the types and establishment of correctional facilities, which should be differentiated based on the different needs of prisoners as well as on their flight risk (StVollzG, §141).

For women in particular: institutions should provide facilities to accommodate mothers with young children (StVollzG, §141), and the total capacity of the institution should not exceed two hundred places (StVollzG, §143). In closed regimes, these 'facilities' are prison nurseries, and children are allowed to stay up to the age of three (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2021). In semi-open or open regimes, detained mothers with children can serve their time in *Mutter-Kind-Häuser* (MuKi), which translates to 'Mother-Child-Houses' in English. The terms *Mutter-Kind-Heim* ('Mother-Child-Home') and *Mutter-Kind-Haft* ('Mother-Child-Custody') are also common. To avoid confusion, only 'Mother-Child-Houses' or the abbreviation 'MuKi' will be used from here on out. The Senate Department for Justice has set standards for the joint accommodation of mothers and children in prisons, and explicitly calls for: adequate washing and sanitary facilities, an adequate sleeping area, play facilities and an outdoor area (Senatsverwaltung für Justiz, 2013). There are currently ten prisons with facilities for mother-child detention in operation (von Borstel et al., 2014), which all together can house about 100 detainees (JVA für Frauen, n.d.a). The maximum age for children in MUKIs is six, because the law dictates that children must be released when they are of school-going age (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2021). In some states, cohabitation is only allowed if the mother's sentence can be completed before her child reaches this age, to avoid separation (Senatsverwaltung für Justiz, 2013).

The idea for Mother-Child-Houses first came from Helga Einsele, who was head of the women's prison in Frankfurt in 1947 (Maelicke, 2005). During her career, Einsele saw the devastation that separating detained mothers from their babies caused, and wanted to find a way to avoid it. After many years of advocacy, in 1975, the first MUKI was built on the prison grounds of *Justizvollzugsanstalt* ('prison', JVA) *Frankfurt am Main III* (MKH Preungesheim e.V., n.d.). In addition to this first one, named *MuKi Frankfurt-Preungesheim*, three other facilities will be analysed to better understand Germany's approach to mother-child detention. Figure 4.26 shows the location of the four Mother-Child-Houses that are included in the analysis. In order of opening year they are: *MUKI Frankfurt-Preungesheim* (1975), *MUKI Vechta* (1996), *MUKI Aichach* (1999) and *MUKI Chemnitz* (2018).





FIGURE 4.26: Map of Germany indicating project locations.

### **MuKi Frankfurt-Preungesheim**

As mentioned above, the first MUKI was opened in Frankfurt in 1975. The U-shaped building was constructed as a free-standing volume, but within the high-security perimeter of the JVA Frankfurt am Main III prison. Some years later, in 1988, the prison wall was rebuilt in order for the Mother-Child-House to be accessible from the outside (MKH Preungesheim e.V., n.d.). As can be seen on Figure 4.27, a wooden fence now separates the MUKIs garden from the rest of the neighbourhood (Schaible, 2014). There are 18 places for women with children in MUKI Frankfurt-Preungesheim, and five in the main prison under closed regime (Schaible, 2014).



FIGURE 4.27: Image of *Mutter-Kind-Haus Frankfurt-Preungesheim* (Hesse).

Detainees in the Mother-Child-House are expected to work for five to six hours a day (inside or in the community), and they are allowed an agreed-upon number of hours of free time a week (Horbach, 2024).

##### **MuKi Vechta**

The Mutter-Kind-Haus in Vechta (Lower Saxony) was opened in 1996 after a complete renovation of the building seen on Figure 4.28 (JVA für Frauen, n.d.b). There are 13 places available in the Mother-Child-House and five in the closed women's prison further down the road (JVA für Frauen, 2020). The building is completely surrounded by lush greenery and only the play area at the back of the building is fenced off. All mothers are required to work from 8:00 till 12:00, and after some time adjusting to the facility, they are allowed to spend two and a half hours in the community daily (JVA für Frauen, 2023). Thanks to its central location, all necessary services are within walking distance.



FIGURE 4.28: Image of *Mutter-Kind-Haus Vechta* (Lower Saxony).

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##### **MuKi Aichach**

The third Mother-Child-Home included in this thesis is one under closed regime (Bayerisches Staatsministerium der Justiz, 2022). It was built in 1999 in Aichach, a town in Bavaria ( 4.29). Out of the 16 states making up the Federal Republic of Germany, Bavaria is the largest in terms of area, and the second largest by population (Bayerisches Staatsregierung, n.d.). Despite these facts, the prison in Aichach is the only facility that allows mother-child detention in the state, so the ten places it offers are always in high demand (Finke and Hix, 2018). A new open-regime establishment was built a short distance from the closed prison in 2007, adding another six places (Bayerisches Staatsministerium der Justiz, 2022).



FIGURE 4.29: Image of *Mutter-Kind-Haus Aichach* (Bavaria).

In line with the aim of facilitating reintegration, development of parental skills and general education are both an integral part of the MUKIs mission (Finke and Hix, 2018). In Aichach the educational plans are individually tailored to each detainee's specific needs, but the closed regime makes this more difficult (Finke and Hix, 2018). A more detailed description of the day-to-day life and experiences of women and children in this facility was not available at the time of this research (2024).



##### **MuKi Chemnitz**

The most recent Mutter-Kind-Haus opened in 2018 in a suburban area outside of Chemnitz (Saxony) (Sachsen, n.d.). The open regime grants the mothers a large amount of responsibility and autonomy: shopping, cooking, taking their child to kindergarten, to the doctor... (Hasselmann, 2021a). The fence around the perimeter is therefore not designed to keep people from escaping, but rather to create a physical boundary, delineating the edges of the facility's premises (Hasselmann, 2021b). As Figure 4.30 shows, the building's ground floor is clad with green coloured panels.

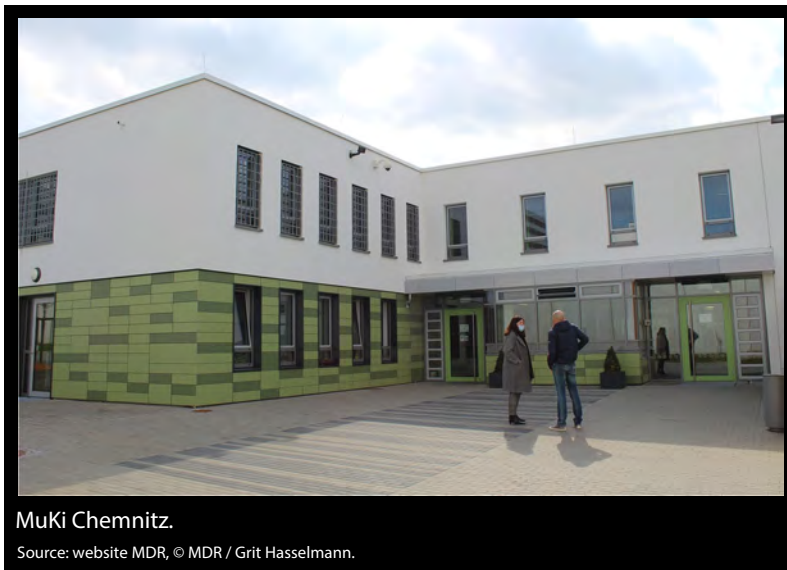


FIGURE 4.30: Image of *Mutter-Kind-Haus Chemnitz* (Saxony).

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### 4.5.2 Comparative analysis

#### Site and surrounding area

All four projects are embedded in urban fabrics of varying density. MUKI Frankfurt (Figure 4.31A) and MUKI Chemnitz (Figure 4.31D) are located in the suburban periphery of a city. Detainees will thus have to rely on public transport for running errands in the city centre, which is available (bus and/or tram). MUKI Vechta (Figure 4.31B) and MUKI Aichach (Figure 4.31C) were established in the middle of a town, which means detainees might have less options but every essential service can be found within walking distance. The most unique location is that of MUKI Vechta: a large green area right in the middle of town, outlined by the remnants of a star-shaped moat (Figure 4.31B). It is the only facility that is not built next to a closed prison, so the area is in no way inherently associated with the prison system. There is no obvious urban core either: everything is low-rise, quite spread out and built in the same architectural style. The same goes for Aichach, which almost looks like urban sprawl from the satellite image on Figure 4.31C.



FIGURE 4.31: Satellite images of the area surrounding the *Mutter-Kind-Häuser*.

Judging from the satellite images on Figure 4.32, there is no specific building shape or typology that characterises a Mutter-Kind-Haus. MUKI Frankfurt (Figure 4.32A) and MUKI Aichach (Figure 4.32C) are the most similar, as they both wrap around their outdoor space on three sides resulting in a U-shaped building. The outdoor

areas of MUKI Vechta (Figure 4.32B) and MUKI Chemnitz (Figure 4.32D) are to the south and to the east of the building respectively, enclosed with garden fences and trees.

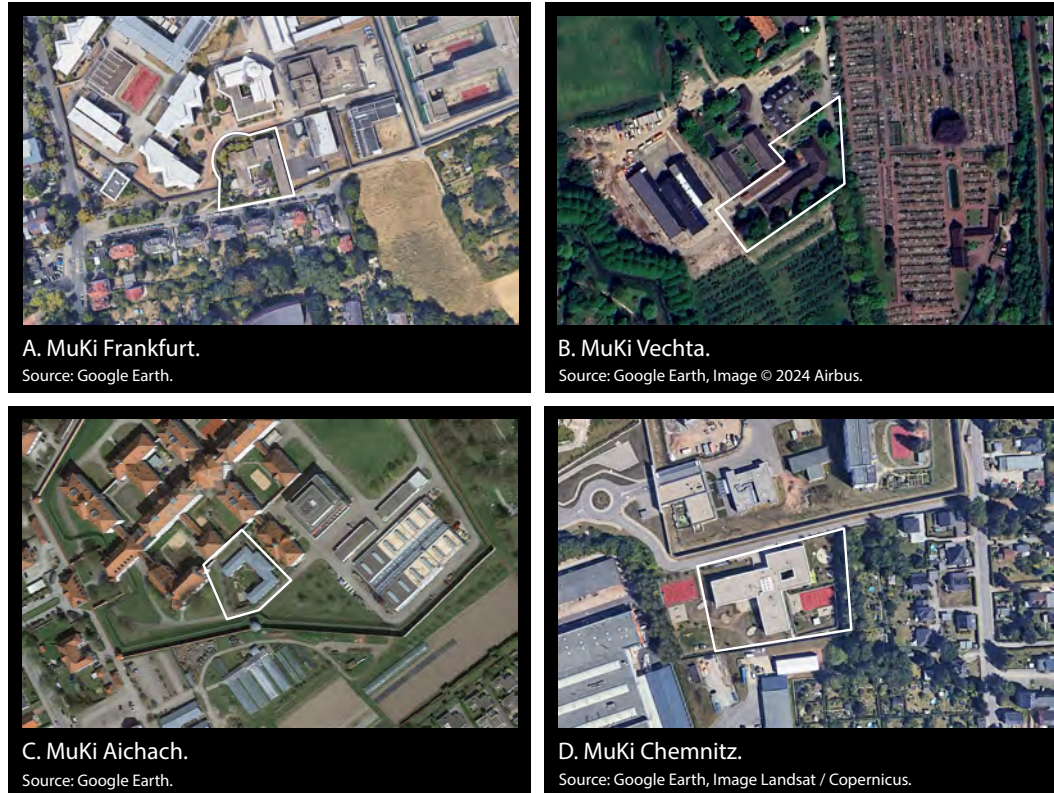


FIGURE 4.32: Satellite image of the *Mutter-Kind-Häuser* building sites.

### Exterior

The façade of MUKI Frankfurt is very plain. The structure was built in the seventies and looks a bit weathered, though the bright blue window blinds make it look a little more cheerful. From Figure 4.33A it is evident that the facility is only separated from the street by a normal garden fence. Looking at the exterior of MUKI Vechta (Figure 4.33B), there seems to be no indications of it being a detention facility: no security fence, no barred windows, and the building materials are common in the area. The exterior of MUKI Aichach (Figure 4.33C) is not visible from the street because of its position on the site and the outer prison wall. Comparing the exterior to buildings in the neighbourhood shows that MUKI Aichach has a similar architectural expression as other big residential buildings. The only significant differences are the bars on the windows on the first floor, and the bright red colour of the solar shades. The most recently built Mother-Child-House (Figure 4.33D) has a rhythmic facade, with modular panels in different shades of green to give the building its own character and making the modern white building look less institutional.



#### 4. FINDINGS

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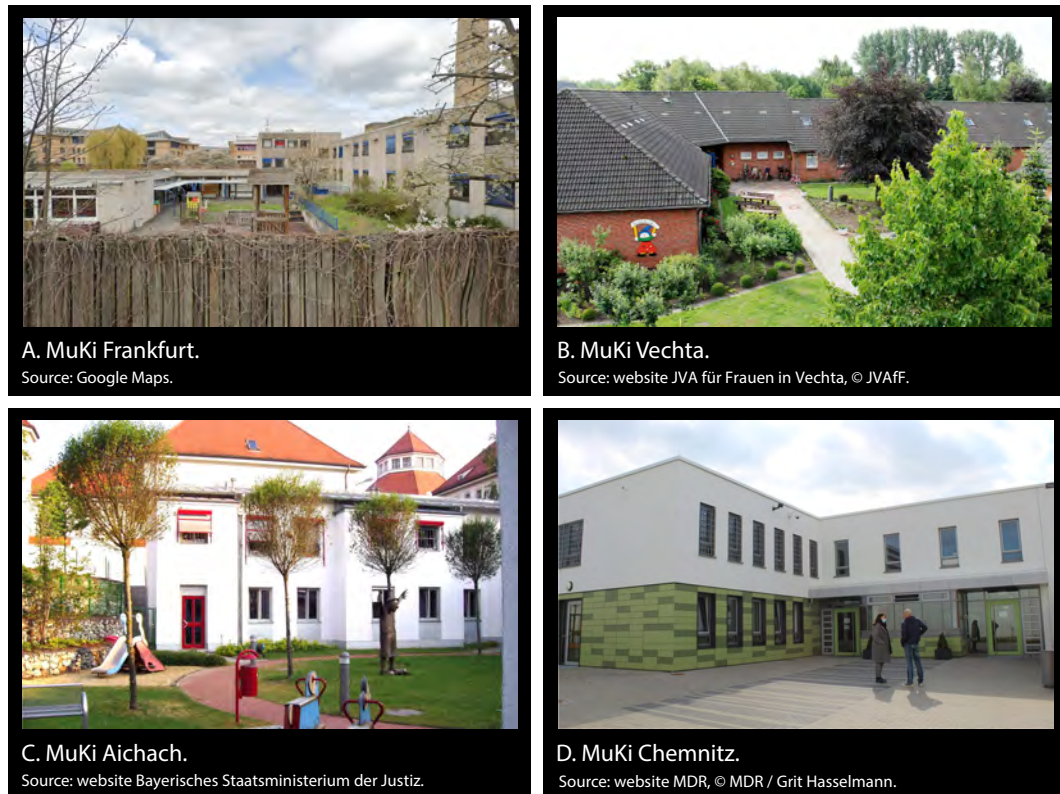


FIGURE 4.33: Images of the exterior the *Mutter-Kind-Häuser*.

The outdoor (play-)areas of the Mother-Child-Häuser (Figure 4.34) all provide the children with a range of natural textures: grass, tree bark, sand, dirt, stone. The (semi-)open regimes in Frankfurt, Vechta and Chemnitz eliminate the need for high-security measures, therefore privacy screens and garden fences are sufficient. The closed-regime MUKI in Aichach has a different solution. The sunken central courtyard is surrounded by the building on three sides, and along the fourth by a retaining wall that steps up to ground level (see the left side of Figure 4.33C).

#### 4.5. Mutter-Kind-Haus (Germany)



FIGURE 4.34: Images of the outdoor (play-)areas of the *Mutter-Kind-Häuser*.

#### Interior

Inside MUKI Frankfurt the detainees can move around freely, as they have keys to their own room (Horbach, 2024). The prison staff wear civilian clothing. According to a staff member of many years, they often build a strong bond with the mothers, though some can find this close contact difficult (Horbach, 2024). Contrary to most prisons, televisions are not allowed in the private rooms in Vechta (Hadem and Laue, 2014). There is one communal living room that has a television where everyone can watch together. However, it is mentioned in testimonies from both Vechta and Chemnitz, that this 'forced community' aspect is challenging (Hadem and Laue, 2014; Hasselmann, 2021b). From the available sources, it is not clear how these common spaces are used throughout the day.

There were little to no data or images available of the accommodations in these projects. During an interview, one mother mentioned the poor sound insulation of MUKI Vechta, which made it hard for her to 'escape' the other detainees and kept her daughter awake at times (Hadem and Laue, 2014). The single rooms in MUKI Vechta are 9.75 square metres and the doubles 19.5 square metres, and all detainees share a sanitary area (JVA für Frauen, 2020). What was among the available material was photographs of the children's playrooms. Similarly to those of

#### 4. FINDINGS

Spain's UMs, Figure 4.35 shows that there are little to no indications of this being a detention environment.

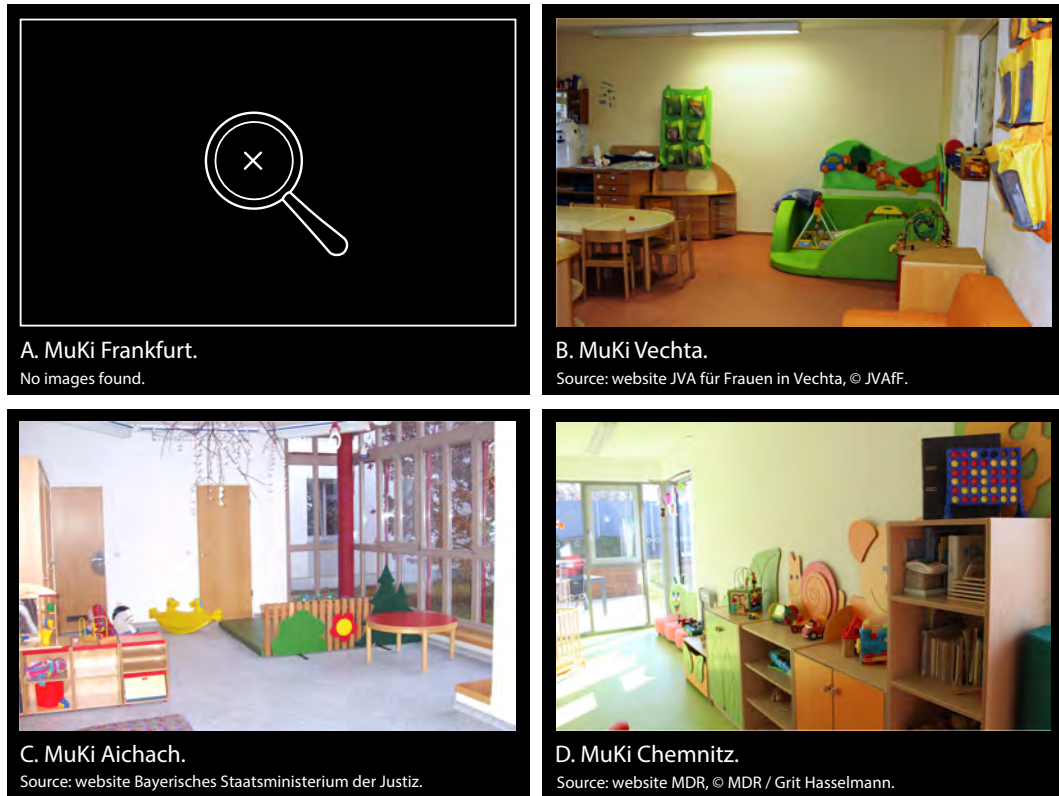


FIGURE 4.35: Image of the indoor playrooms of the *Mutter-Kind-Häuser*.

The kitchen in MUKI Vechta was renovated in 2004 to be more child-friendly (JVA für Frauen, 2020). As is evident from Figure 4.36, the space is very bright and open thanks to the large windows and layout, there are child-sized tables and chairs as well, and everything is kept very clean. The kitchen tables provide the detainees with the option of all sitting together as in Figure 4.36, or splitting up into smaller groups by rearranging them (as suggested by the dashed lines).

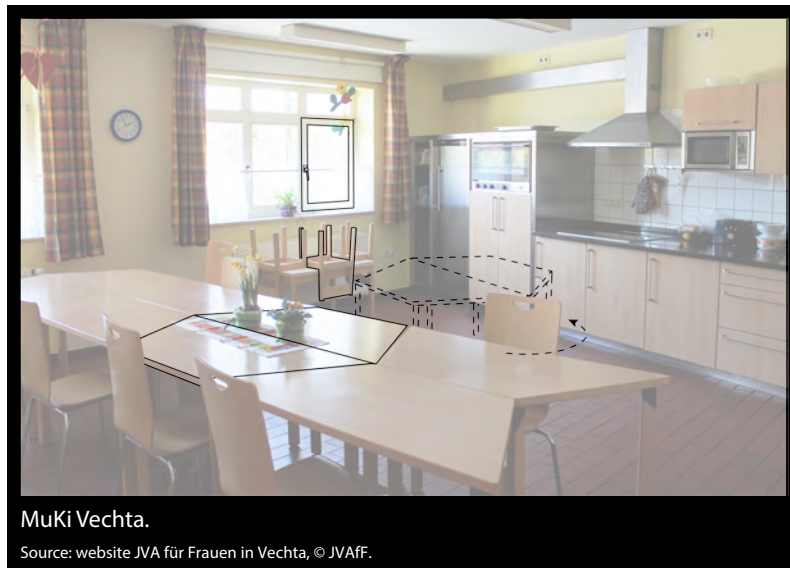


FIGURE 4.36: Image of the communal kitchen in MUKI Vechta. Dashed lines indicate possible alternate arrangement to sit in smaller groups.

### 4.5.3 Conclusion

When we look at the principles that underpin Germany's Federal Prison Act: (1) life in prison should be as similar as possible to general living conditions, (2) harmful consequences of deprivation of liberty must be counteracted, and (3) reintegration of the prisoner should be facilitated (StVollzG, §3), most spatial aspects of the *Mutter-Kind-Häuser* seem in line with these aims.

Though most MUKIs are (semi-)open detention facilities, meaning mothers are allowed to go outside daily, there were still pains associated with imprisonment. The main ones were related to the community regime, which was referred to negatively as a 'forced community'. In terms of security, the more open regime of MUKIs renders harsh security measures unnecessary. Especially in Vechta, where there is no immediate indication that you are entering a detention environment. Instead of static security elements, 'dynamic' security based on mutual trust and respect between detainees and staff is implemented.



### 4.6 Comparison across borders

Comparing projects of the same concept and implemented within the same country, as was done in the previous section, offers insight in the extent to which local conditions may influence practical implementation. This section however, draws comparisons between the different country's approaches, thus revealing trends and general patterns that transcend national conditions.

#### Spatial aspects

Several spatial features that characterise the ICAMs in Italy are also prominent in Spain's UMs. For one, the use of **'soft' security measures** such as surveillance cameras, alarms and motion sensors are integral to the functioning of those projects (Ministerio del Interior, 2009; Patti et al., 2023; Pellegrini De Luca, 2023; Burdese, 2022). These types of security technologies are often **integrated into the architecture**, in order to eliminate their visual impact as much as possible (Ministerio del Interior, 2009). Similarly, Germany's MUKIs mostly rely on dynamic security through good staff-detainee relationships, rather than harsh security elements (Horbach, 2024; Finke and Hix, 2018). By contrast, the prison nursery in Brugge is a classic example of a telephone pole model prison (see Figure 2.1C), whose perimeter is secured by a moat, chain-link fence *and* concrete walls (Ghyssaert, n.d.).

Related to the use of 'soft' security measures is the design of the building's **façade**. On the whole, the cases under study attempted not to signal the building's function to the outside world. In cases where this was not possible, such as ICAM Lauro, other practical arrangements were made to protect the children from potentially being stigmatised by peers for where they live (Guidelli and Di Meo, 2022). The façades were often colourful, had their own identity or simply looked like any other building in the neighbourhood. To describe the architecture of the UMs in Italy, sources often used descriptors like **'warm' and 'friendly'** (Ministerio del Interior, n.d.; SIEPSE, n.d.a), which is antithetical to the cold hostility that usually characterises prison buildings.

The architectural programs of the studied cases seem to suggest that the needs of women and children throughout Europe do not differ greatly. The project descriptions often call for sufficient space for children to **explore**, which is arranged in a number of ways. One of which is by making their private accommodations (relatively) spacious. In stark contrast to the prison nursery in Belgium, mothers in Italy, Spain and Germany are not confined to their 'cells' for any amount of time during the day. The community regime, while coming with its own difficulties, allows them to move around inside the detention facility freely. Children also need **opportunities to play**, which is why each case (including Belgium) has dedicated play areas for children. Both cheerful day care-esque playrooms indoors, as child friendly outdoor areas equipped with age appropriate toys. As for the needs of the mothers: Italy and Spain focus on the **education** of the detained women to find work when they

return to freedom (Ministerio del Interior, 2009; Patti et al., 2023), while Germany places emphasis on working and **becoming self-sufficient** while still in detention (Hasselmann, 2021a).

### Language

Another pattern that emerged had to do with the language used to describe the architecture of mothers' units, particularly words used to describe detainees' living quarters. Instead of the word 'cell', which is the term most commonly used to describe the small room where a prisoner lives during their sentence, words like *stanze* ('rooms' in Italian), *apartamentos* ('apartments' in Spanish) or *Schlafbereich* ('sleeping area' in German) were used (Pellegrini De Luca, 2023; Ministerio del Interior, 2009; Senatsverwaltung für Justiz, 2013). Even in the prison nursery in Brugge (Belgium), one of the mothers was careful not to teach her young daughter prison-specific language (De Backer and Lohmann, 2023a). This was not an easy task, as some prison guards did not respect her wishes in this regard and phrases like *einde wandeling* ('end of walk') and *iedereen terug op cel* ('everyone back in their cells') are said through the speaker system multiple times a day (De Backer and Lohmann, 2023a). Whenever her daughter might hear the word 'cell', the mother would talk over the announcement or correct it herself and say *kamer* ('room') (De Backer and Lohmann, 2023a). Similarly, none of the names of the projects outside Belgium have the word 'prison' in them, instead there are more ambiguous terms like *istituti* ('institutions' in Italian) and *unidad* ('unit' in Spanish), or even *Haus* ('house' in German), which are not exclusive to penitentiary contexts.

An important note to add is the general sentiment expressed by women who had previously stayed in a regular (German, Italian or Spanish) prison nursery, that detention in a mothers' unit (a MUKI, ICAM or UM) provided a significant improvement in living conditions (Hadem and Laue, 2014; Horbach, 2024; Patti et al., 2023; Pellegrini De Luca, 2023; Feintuch, 2013). A mother in MUKI Frankfurt describes it 'like night and day' (Horbach, 2024). Her young son also offered his opinion to the journalist, stating he liked it better in the MUKI than at home with his grandmother, because he could play with other children, climb or watch series in the TV room (Horbach, 2024). Aside from such anecdotes found in newspaper articles, no further detailed information was available to more specifically pinpoint what made the small-scale detention facilities more pleasant.



## Chapter 5

# Discussion and conclusion

This chapter discusses the findings of this study, which explored mother-child detention practices in four European countries: Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain. The purpose of this comparative research, based on available materials, was to formulate an answer to the question: '*What is the role of architecture in humane detention?*'. The discussion is organised in three main sections. First, key insights are summarised and interpreted in light of existing literature in Section 5.1. Then, Section 5.2 discusses the conceptual similarities and differences between the cases studied and the 'detention house' model to further demonstrate the relevance of this research for Belgium. Subsequently, Section 5.3 reflects on the benefits and limitations of the methodology of this study, and proposes areas of future research on the topic. Lastly, Section 5.4 concludes this thesis.

### 5.1 Key insights

Comparative analysis of mother-child detention practices in Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain revealed a few trends as well as some noteworthy differences in terms of spatial design.

A first trend has to do with the **outward appearance** of the mother-child units (not including the prison nursery in Belgium). As Moran and Jewkes (2015) point out in their research, the majority of prisons have exteriors that make them immediately recognisable as places of detention. This is also the case in Belgium, especially for the nineteenth century radial prisons built under Ducpétiaux. Their gatehouses were designed in neo-Tudorstyle, precisely for the reason that this style carried the right connotations, and thus made prison architecture 'legible' (Feyaerts, 2018). The *architecture parlante* ('speaking architecture') of these buildings clearly conveys their purpose through sheer size, and the use of military features such as battlements (Dutch: *kantelen*) (Feyaerts, 2018). In this regard, the design of a mother-child unit's façade is generally much 'quieter'. Thanks to advancements in security technology (alarms, sensors, camera's et cetera), these mother-child units can look quite

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ordinary without compromising the level of security required for the prison's regime. However, existing research has not been able to determine how near-constant surveillance might affect detainees and prison staff (Hancock and Jewkes, 2011).

Projects within a specific country were often differentiated by using **building typologies, architectural styles or materials local to the area**. As a result, the building is more able to blend in with the existing urban fabric. Examples of this were found in both Germany and Spain. In terms of local materials, UM Palma de Mallorca was finished with limestone, hydraulic lime mortar and white silicate paint, which are materials traditionally used on the island (SIEPSE, n.d.d). Next to the use of local façade materials, the UMs courtyard-building typology was also inspired by traditional architecture. Similarly, most of Germany's MUKIs were built in the local architectural style. Both countries had one exception to this rule. For Spain it is UM Madrid: the project's team wanted it to have its own unique identity and thus be recognisable in the neighbourhood, but in a way that demystifies detention environments (SIEPSE, n.d.c). Instead of scaring you away, as regular prisons were meant to do, its bright and playful façade seems rather welcoming. For Germany it is MUKI Chemnitz, which has a distinct look due to coloured panels in different shades of green covering the facade on ground floor level.

Italy's ICAMs were arguably already differentiated and specific to the local conditions because all four projects were **renovations** of existing buildings. However, most had already served as penitentiary institutions in the past, so these ICAMs inherited security elements from previous and vastly different regimes. Especially at ICAM Lauro, where an incredibly tall green wall surrounds the building, staff are very aware that a child may be stigmatised by peers if they were to see where he or she lives. For this reason, the institution made an agreement with the municipality that the children living in the ICAM are the first to be picked up and the last to return 'home' (Guidelli and Di Meo, 2022). Contrastingly, Architect of ICAM Torino wanted the children to be able to identify with the ICAM. During renovation he decided to paint the existing façade different colours so that a child could draw the building, point to a window and proudly say 'the blue one is my house!' (Floris, 2018). Research by Hancock and Jewkes (2011) on spatial pains of imprisonments suggests that the spatial design of prison environments may influence the detainees' **identity**, potentially reinforcing criminal and criminalized identities. This research did not involve children, thus it is unclear how the prison environment may influence young children's identities and the development of their sense of self.

The cases included in the comparative research ranged from closed (i.e. the ICAMs in Italy), over semi-open (i.e. the UMs in Spain) to open prisons (i.e. most MUKIs in Germany). While freedom of movement outside the walls differed between countries, inside the units detainees could move around freely. The mother-child units were all subject to a **'community' regime**. This means that the detainees have a private room (perhaps shared with another mother and her child) and a number of common spaces they all share. Findings from Germany's MUKIs suggest that living in close

proximity to other people you did not choose to live with comes with its own specific pains (e.g. disputes about the kitchen, washing and cleaning). The detainees respect each other, are helpful, but friendships are unlikely to happen (Hadem and Laue, 2014). Another source of frustration is the lack of auditory privacy due to insufficient sound insulation between adjacent accommodations (Hadem and Laue, 2014). Existing research indicates that unpredictable and uncontrollable noise can cause significant stress (Engstrom and Van Ginneken, 2022). The **spatial organisation** and furnishings of the communal spaces is another potential factor affecting detainees' experiences in this 'forced community' environment (Heylighen et al., 2020). For example - as in the kitchen of MUKI Vechta - being able to move furniture around to make a space more comfortable is a form of **spatial autonomy**, which is a theoretical notion linking prison design aspects and wellbeing (Engstrom and Van Ginneken, 2022).

**Colour** was a constant throughout all analysed projects, the Belgian prison nursery in Brugge included. It was not solely used to enhance spaces aesthetically, but also for additional purposes such as differentiating between different areas, improving wayfinding and helping children to recognise their own private space within the larger structures. This was the case regardless of whether the buildings were specifically designed to function as mother-child units (e.g. the UMs in Spain) or renovated to fit this new purpose (e.g. the ICAMs in Italy). Research on how prison design aspects influence detainees' wellbeing suggests that the use of colour is beneficial to a person's wellbeing (Engstrom and Van Ginneken, 2022). It is interesting to note that the colourfulness and overall aesthetic quality of the projects was associated with the willingness of detainees to keep the spaces **tidy and clean**. In Spain, UM Palma de Mallorca claims it is a 'strategy' to create appreciation for the material environment, thus preventing vandalism without making all furniture 'vandal-proof' (Pintelon et al., 2023). In Italy, a staff member of ICAM Milano attributes it to an innate human urge to treat beautiful things with care (Canziani, 2017). Cleanliness is an important aspect in prison environments, as research indicates that dirty conditions undermine not only wellbeing, but one's sense of identity, self-control and self-respect (Engstrom and Van Ginneken, 2022).

Out of all project types under study, Germany's MUKIs had the most **greenery** by far. While views of natural elements have been associated with restorative influences in institutional settings (Engstrom and Van Ginneken, 2022), Abdel-Salam and Kilmer (2023) and Jewkes (2018) both highlight the importance of actually being *in* nature. Next to having such views, the findings seem to indicate that detained mothers in Germany are able to do the latter as well. Some of the projects in Spain had young trees planted in their courtyards, but were otherwise lacking natural elements. While UM Madrid may not have nature on site, the mother-child pairs are able to visit the many small parks and playgrounds in the neighbourhood. While not all projects may provide a real grass lawn to run around on, they do all have safe outdoor spaces for young children to play. Similarly, colourful indoor playrooms were also seen as a must.

### 5.2 Significance

Given the aim of the thesis to learn from humane detention projects in Europe, the conceptual similarities and differences between the cases and the proposed 'detention house' model are discussed to demonstrate the relevance of the research for Belgium. § 5.2.1 is therefore structured around the three guiding principles of *De Huizen*: small-scale, differentiation and social anchorage. After, § 5.2.2 takes a look at the projects through the lens of the normalization principle.

#### 5.2.1 Conceptual comparison

##### Small-scale

The first principle underpinning the detention house model is small-scaledness. As was introduced in § 2.3.2, *De Huizen* has both a qualitative and a quantitative approach to this principle. For the cases under study, their qualitative approach - which refers the internal functioning of the facility - was never explained in detail in available sources which is why this discussion will focus on the quantitative approach. This approach has to do with capacity, and *De Huizen*'s guideline suggests groups of 15 to 30 people for each detention house (De Huizen, n.d.b).

If one looks at the capacities of the studied cases, all ICAMs and MUKIs fall below this maximum. The capacity of ICAMs range from 11 to 20 detainees, and MUKIs from 13 to 18. UMs exceed the upper limit, but not by much: their capacity ranges from 20 to 33 detainees. While the cases are mostly in line with *De Huizen*'s quantitative definition of small-scale facilities, it is important to note that most of these numbers do not include the detainees' children. Depending on the size of the building it might be favourable to include the children in this maximum, making sure they have enough space to explore. In ICAM Milano the functional capacity was reduced from 16 to 11 (including children) for this exact reason (Patti et al., 2023).

Kinnaer (2023), who did research on the transition house in Mechelen, observed that living together with 14 other adults (not counting staff) creates a dynamic that is complex and not often found in free society. While the participants were generally positive about their experiences in the transition house, the amount of people and intense group dynamic can be draining for some (Kinnaer, 2023). In line with Heylighen et al. (2020), Kinnaer (2023) suggests to make *room for being apart together*. For example, by replacing the one long table they have now by a number of smaller ones that can be moved around.

##### Differentiation

*De Huizen* argue that the design of a detention house cannot start as long as the target group is not known, as this will determine the security level (De Huizen, n.d.c). Differentiation may also be based on aspects such as sentence length, age, healthcare needs, guidance needs and/or available programs (Termote, 2023).



The most obvious way in which the studied mother-child facilities are differentiated is by target group, as they only allow pregnant women and mothers with young children. Because these mothers' units solely house detainees in similar situations, their needs are also similar and mostly center around providing the best care for their child(ren). Spatially, this child-centric approach shines through in many areas. For example, opportunities for play are provided by dedicated playrooms and safe outdoor play areas. In Spain's UMs, **maternal autonomy** is supported by private accommodations that allow them to prepare food any time of the day without having to go to the communal kitchen (Ministerio del Interior, 2009). This is in stark contrast to the prison nursery in Brugge, where Nuytiens and Jehaes (2022) found that maternal autonomy was restricted in many ways. The prison's strict rationing of food and other necessities, not being able to make medical decisions for your child, as well as the tight schedule, all while constantly being judged by staff, made it a difficult environment to be a mother (Nuytiens and Jehaes, 2022).

In terms of security level, there was mostly one type of regime within each country. Germany is an exception to this rule, as MUKI Aichach now has places under an open and under a closed regime (Bayerisches Staatsministerium der Justiz, 2022). The choices of dynamic security and camera technology over harsh static security elements also fit the differentiation principle, as these choices generally create less scary and more open environments for children. No mention was made of any other type of differentiation within the group of detained mothers.

### **Social anchorage**

Social anchorage pertains to several aspects of life. For one, maintaining the detainee's connections with their friends and family asks that the detention house is located nearby (De Huizen, n.d.b). Furthermore, dependent on the regime they are under, a detainee should be able to use (social) services provided by the local community. Ideally, the presence of a detention house should provide an added value to the neighbourhood to counteract NIMBY reactions. From secondary analysis, it is difficult to make a statement on the first aspect of connectedness with friends and family, as personal information on detainees was not among the available data.

What the research can comment on is the **locations** that were chosen for the detention facilities. While the UMs in Spain expressed very similar principles of facilitating reintegration into the community, only one of them (UM Madrid) was located in an urban fabric dense enough to provide necessary services. In Italy, Half of the ICAMs were located in or just outside of big cities. However, their regime is closed so frequent trips into the community are not possible. Even in this case the location is important because the children of the detainees have to go to school, and can go outside with other family members or volunteers. The boycott of the fifth ICAM in Senorbì, which was located too far from medical services and the social networks of the detained women, further highlights the importance of location. Germany's MUKIs are arguably the most socially anchored, located on the periphery of cities

or in the heart of smaller towns. The daily contacts with the outside world made possible by their (semi-)open regimes are also the most in line with *De Huizen's* vision on how to facilitate reintegration.

### 5.2.2 Normalisation in practice

The normalisation principle inscribed in the Belgian Prison Act of 2005 imposes that life in prison should **reflect life in free society as best as possible** (Dupont, 2005). Implementation thereof should reduce or even prevent harmful effects of detention on detainees. Germany's Federal Prison Act contains very analogous principles (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2021), and the projects in Italy and Spain were similarly motivated by the aim of getting children out of harmful environments. Home-ification or **imitating domestic spaces** seemed to be an important concept in the studied cases for translating this principle into practice. This was especially clear in the choice of furnishings, which were often regular beds, cribs, couches, closets et cetera. From a design standpoint, these projects quite literally chose to normalise the spaces by making them look as normal as possible.

The architect of the ICAM in Turin (see Figure 4.19) wanted to do more than make spaces look normal and explicitly set out to create a *home* (Floris, 2018). He rejected common practices such as putting signs on doors, bolting furniture to the floor and installing heavy steel doors (Floris, 2018). The use of regular doors without a small window at eye-level is an obvious departure from regular prison environments, and is a design choice that directly impacts **visual privacy**. Engstrom and Van Ginneken (2022) point out the three main purposes of having privacy in detention environments: to cope with imprisonment, for introspection and to regain one's sense of self. The architect's appreciation of the importance of privacy in detention environments is also tangible in his furniture design for rooms that house two detained mothers (see Figure 4.25) The design essentially divides the room in half, providing them both with a space of their own.

The use of language around these projects would suggest that their attempts at normalising the interior spaces was successful. Instead of by the word 'cell', the accommodations are described with **terms not specific to detention environments** like 'rooms' or even 'apartments'. The latter is often used to refer to the UMs accommodations, which consist of a living/ dining room area connected to the main hallway (with a normal door), a separate bedroom and a private bathroom (see Figure 4.11). Though the interior spaces may be homely, anecdotes from detained women in Germany mention that the children do realize that they are not at a regular home, suggesting that complete normalisation is not possible.

## 5.3 Reflection on methodology

Given it was an additional aim of this thesis to explore secondary analysis as a method for doing qualitative research on detention environments, this section talks about the advantages and limitations thereof, and proposes areas of future research which further address gaps of knowledge on the topic.

### 5.3.1 Advantages

As mentioned in Chapter 3 on methodology, secondary analysis can be a useful approach when the process of data collection has proven to be difficult. From supervising theses centering around detention environments in the past, my supervisor knew this can also be the case in the context of penitentiary institutions. The unique challenges that come with doing primary research in such environments, such as gaining access to the facility, having your research approved by an ethics committee et cetera, were thus able to be avoided. Given the limited time to complete a thesis, I experienced not having to wait for approval and potentially getting a negative answer as an advantage in and of itself.

Furthermore, this method allowed me to explore practices abroad, which would likely not have been possible with doing fieldwork. The few small-scale facilities in Belgium have already been studied by many students, thus the likelihood of contributing new insights also seemed lower. Thanks to this method, the amount of possible cases to choose from were considerably more numerous. In the initial phase of research I spent a significant amount of time researching as many as I could, which allowed me to gain a high-level understanding of different approaches throughout Europe. These 'interim results' were already of value, for familiarising myself with the topic, and for mapping current data availability for future researchers (see Figure 3.1).

### 5.3.2 Limitations

While the method succeeded in providing some interesting insights, it also had several limitations. The first was **data availability**. Initially the focus was on *experiences* of people in humane detention facilities, though it quickly became clear that this type of data was not available. Because the goal was to study detention facilities conceptually similar to the proposed 'detention house' model of *De Huizen*, possible cases to study were limited and had all opened relatively recently. As a result, not much peer-reviewed qualitative research had been done.

A second limitation was a **lack of relevance**. Even with expanding the search to materials such as documentaries, podcasts and newspaper articles, rarely were they specifically talking about the architecture of the project. The data collection phase was therefore very time consuming, as you first have to spend time looking for sources before you can conclude that there are (next to) none. Specific jargon and terms also made this phase more difficult. For example, *De Huizen* often refers

to itself as *alternatieve detentie* ('alternative detention'), yet when searching for this specific term (in English) on the internet, the search results are mainly about immigration detention. Significantly more relevant data was found once the right words (in the right language) were found.

Because of the need to resort to materials that had not been subjected to peer-review or other quality testing mechanisms, a third limitation is the increased workload to assess **reliability** and potential **bias**. For sources such as documentaries, podcasts and newspaper articles, it is important to think about the currency, relevance, authority, accuracy and purpose of the information. In terms of bias, reports written by prison observatories and governments - which count as 'grey literature' - are often written by an unspecified author in name of the organisation, which makes it impossible to do background checks to uncover potential bias.

### 5.3.3 Future research

Because of the limitations outlined here above, questions arose during research that were not able to be answered using available data. The most important of which is the question of how the built environment influenced the **experiences** of detained mothers and children in the studied cases. Future research could use the findings of this research as a framework to specifically gain knowledge about the role of architecture in the detainees' day-to-day lives.

Another question has to do with the difference between projects that were specifically **designed** for mother-child detention and existing buildings that were **adapted** to fit this new function. The research would explore if repurposing existing buildings (previously used for other purposes than detention) contributes to 'normalisation' since the building starts out as an ordinary non-carceral structure. Conversely designed and renovated projects could be compared to see whether the renovated projects were over-secured to overcompensate not having designed the whole building from the ground up.

Other future research could explore the **NIMBY reactions** from local communities. Some mother-child units explicitly aimed to blend in with the surrounding structures, others had their own unique identity, thereby hoping to demystify the 'prison' for the people in the neighbourhood. Future research could be targeted at finding out which strategy evoked what type of response from the neighbourhood, with an aim to further understand how the outward expression of detention projects may influence their (initial) success.

## 5.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis set out to investigate the role of architecture in humane detention. This was done through comparative analysis of available materials on mother-child detention facilities in four European countries: Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain. The findings from this study suggest that spatial design may contribute to more humane detention environments for mothers cohabiting with their children.

Reoccurring spatial aspects that may be contributing factors include the use of 'soft' security measures, unassuming or playful façades, colourful interiors, spacious private cells with regular furniture, homely communal spaces and (outdoor) children's play areas. The architectural design of the studied cases was often guided by concepts similar to those outlined in the Belgian Prison Act of 2005, and those underpinning the 'detention house' model of *De Huizen*. However, further primary research is necessary to gain more insight into detainees' lived experiences.

Since an additional aim of this thesis was to explore secondary analysis as a method for doing qualitative research on prison environments, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. Due to the relative newness of these small-scale detention facilities, high-quality secondary data were not widely available. Therefore, the research also included other materials, which made it less straightforward to evaluate credibility and recognise bias. The insights gained from this research provide a foundation for further exploration and highlight the need for continued investigation into the role of architecture in humane detention environments.



# **Appendices**





## **Appendix A**

# **Small-scale detention projects**

## A. SMALL-SCALE DETENTION PROJECTS

| Naam                                                   | Locatie                              | Land      | Jaar | Capaciteit | Type                             | Doelgroep                                                          | Gemiddelde lengte van verblijf | Bevoegde instantie              |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|------|------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Penitentiaal schoolcentrum (PSC) van Hoogstraten       | Gelmelstraat 131, 2320 Hoogstraten   | België    | 1931 | 198        | penitentiaal schoolcentrum       | volwassenen                                                        | 1-2 jaar                       | Belgian prison administration   |
| PLC Ruiselede (Penitentiaal Landbouwcentrum Ruiselede) | Bruggesteenweg 128, 8755, Ruiselede  | België    | 1936 | 60         | boerderij ingezet als gevangenis | volwassen mannen                                                   | 1-2 jaar                       | Belgian prison administration   |
| Detentiehuis Kortrijk                                  | 8500 Kortrijk                        | België    | 2022 | 57         | detentiehuis                     | laagrisico gedetineerden met een gevangenisstraf onder 3 jaar      | 44 dagen*                      | Belgian prison administration   |
| Transitiehuis Mechelen                                 | Hanswijkstraat 48, 2800 Mechelen     | België    | 2019 | 15         | transitiehuis                    |                                                                    |                                |                                 |
| Vratsa Correctional Home for Male Juvenile Delinquents | Seehaus 1, 71229 Leonberg            | Bulgarije | 2018 | 32         | correctioneel huis               | 14-18 jarige jonge mannen                                          | 4 maanden                      | Bulgarian prison administration |
| Skejby Udslningsfængsel                                | Yläneentie 26, 13430 Hämeenlinna     | Denmark   | 1969 | 27         | gevangenis                       | 40% burgers 60% gedetineerden op het einde van hun gevangenisstraf |                                | Danish prison administration    |
| Seehaus Leonberg                                       | 7601 PZ Almelo                       | Duitsland | 2003 | 21         | jeugdgevangenis                  | 14-23 jarige jeugd met gevangenisstraffen van 1-5 jaar             | min. 1 jaar tot max. 3 jaar    | Seehaus E.v                     |
| Vanaja (open) Prison (for women)                       | Overtoom 103-105, 1054 HD, Amsterdam | Finland   | 1994 | 60         | open gevangenis                  | vrouwen                                                            | 4 maanden                      | Finnish prison administration   |

| Naam                       | Locatie                              | Land      | Jaar | Capaciteit | Type                                                                            | Doelgroep                                           | Gemiddelde lengte van verblijf | Bevoegde instantie                           |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Ferme Emmaüs Baudonne      | Spetsebrugweg 4, 9566 TK Veelerveen  | Frankrijk | 2020 | 12         | boerderij ingezet als opvanghuis/ externe eenheid                               | vrouwen met lange gevangenisstraffen                |                                | Emmaüs Baudonne Farm Management Organization |
| Ferme Ker Madeleine        | Gravdalsveien 240, Laksevåg/Bergen   | Frankrijk | 2021 | 13         | boerderij ingezet als opvanghuis/ externe eenheid                               | volwassen mannen aan het einde van hun straf        | 9 maanden                      | Sources d'Envol                              |
| Loughan House              | Langgata 1, 3187 Horten              | Ierland   | 1973 | 140        | open gevangenis met lage veiligheid                                             | volwassen mannen                                    | variabel                       | Irish prison administration                  |
| Shelton Abbey              | Åsengata 8, 0480 Oslo                | Ierland   | 1973 | 115        | open gevangenis met lage veiligheid                                             | volwassen mannen                                    | variabel                       | Irish prison administration                  |
| Casa Betania               | Olav Bjordalsvei 63, 5111 Breistein  | Italië    | 1973 | 20         | gemeenschap die mensen uit gemarginaliseerde groepen opvangt en een thuis biedt | gedetineerden/ mensen in voorarrest                 |                                | L'Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII  |
| Madre della Riconciliazion | P. O. Pedersens Vej 1, 8200 Århus N  | Italië    | 1973 | 20         | gemeenschap die mensen uit gemarginaliseerde groepen opvangt en een thuis biedt | gedetineerden/ mensen in voorarrest                 |                                | L'Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII  |
| Alytus halfway house       | 323 route Abbé Pierre, 40220 Tarnos  | Litouwen  | 2016 | 20         | opvanghuis                                                                      | gedetineerden aan het einde van hun gevangenisstraf |                                | Lithuanian prison administration             |
| Vilnius halfway house      | Via Marecchiese, 53, 47922 Rimini RN | Litouwen  | 2017 | 40         | opvanghuis                                                                      | gedetineerden aan het einde van hun gevangenisstraf |                                | Lithuanian prison administration             |

## A. SMALL-SCALE DETENTION PROJECTS

| Naam                                                       | Locatie                                          | Land      | Jaar | Capaciteit | Type                                          | Doelgroep                                                                                               | Gemiddelde lengte van verblijf   | Bevoegde instantie                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Sister Marija AdeleBaldacchino                             | Via Pierino Albini, 15, 47835 Saludecio RN       | Malta     | 2016 | 10         | detentiehuis                                  | volwassen mannen aan het einde van hun straf of die in aanmerking komen voor voorwaardelijke vrijlating | 1 jaar                           | RIS Foundation                       |
| Huis van Herstel                                           | 40 St. Christopher's Street, Valletta, VLT 1464  | Nederland | 2019 | 29         | beperkt beveiligde afdeling                   | mannelijke gedetineerden van PI Almelo met complexe problematieken aan het einde van hun straf          | min. 1 maand tot max. 18 maanden | Dutch prison administration          |
| Stichting Exodus Nederland                                 | Henric van Veldekehof 29, 1064 JG Amsterdam      | Nederland | 1979 | 16         | opvanghuis/ professionele en open organisatie | volwassenen                                                                                             | 1 jaar                           | Stichting Exodus Amsterdam           |
| De Spetse Hoeve (Stichting Ter Wille)                      | C. del Camp de Déu, 07007 Palma Balearic Islands | Nederland | 2015 | 15         | zorginstelling                                | volwassen mannen                                                                                        | min. 6 maanden                   | De Spetse Hoeve, Foundation Terwille |
| KVJ Amsterdam (Kleinschalige voorziening Justitiële Jeugd) | Tingshusgatan 10, 953 37 Haparanda               | Nederland | 2016 | 8          | kleinschalige voorziening justitiële jeugd    | 12-23 jarige jonge mannen in afwachting van uitspraak                                                   | 5-6 weken                        | Dutch prison administration          |
| Lyderhorn Halfway House Bergen                             | Kårhusvågen 10, 977 56 Luleå                     | Noorwegen | 2005 | 18         | opvanghuis                                    | volwassenen aan het einde van hun straf met nood aan extra zorg                                         | 9 maanden                        | Norwegian prison administration      |

| Naam                                      | Locatie                                                             | Land      | Jaar | Capaciteit | Type                                                      | Doelgroep                                                                           | Gemiddelde lengte van verblijf | Bevoegde instantie                    |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Nordre Vestfold fengsel, Horten afdeling  | Rue du Simplon 43 - 1006 Lausanne                                   | Noorwegen | 1862 | 13         | hoogbeveiligde gevangenis                                 | volwassenen met een lange gevangenisstraf met probleemgedrag in grote gevangenissen | 3 jaar                         | Norwegian prison administration       |
| Oslo overgangsbolig Torshov afdeling      | 3 Bezimenna Street, 3000, Vratsa                                    | Noorwegen | 1995 | 16         | transitiehuis                                             | volwassen aan het einde van hun straf                                               | 8 maanden                      | Norwegian prison administration       |
| Bjorgvin Prison - Youth Unit              | Ferne de Ker Madeleine, 44530 Saint-Gildas-des-Bois                 | Noorwegen | 2015 | 4          | jeugdafdeling                                             | 15-18 jarige jongeren in voorarrest of veroordeeld                                  | 9 maanden                      | Norwegian prison administration       |
| Establecimiento Prisional de Torres Novas | Arklow, County Wicklow, Y14 T638                                    | Portugal  | 1995 | 38         | gevangenis                                                | volwassen mannen                                                                    | variabel                       | Portugese prison administration/DGRSP |
| Penitenciarul Ploiești                    | Blacklion, County Cavan, F91 NY76                                   | Roemenië  | 2022 | 40         | gevangenis/ werkplaats en accommodatie voor gedetineerden | volwassen mannen                                                                    | 2 maanden tot 2 jaar           | Romanian prison administration        |
| CIMI Medina Azahara                       | Ulonų g. 31, LT-62505, Alytus                                       | Spanje    | 1998 | 87         | Heropvoedingscentrum                                      | 14-18 jarige jonge mannen in voorarrest of veroordeeld                              | 9 maanden                      | Diagrama Foundation                   |
| CIMI Los Alcores                          | Sniego g. 2, Vilnius                                                | Spanje    | 1998 | 104        | Heropvoedingscentrum                                      | jongeren met behoefte voor speciale zorg                                            | 9 maanden                      | Diagrama Foundation                   |
| Unidad de Madres de Palma de Mallorca     | Rua do Pomar dos Meziões, R. das Casas Altas, 2350-434 Torres Novas | Spanje    | 2008 | 22         | open gevangenis/ moeder-en-kind eenheid                   | zwangere vrouwen en moeders met jonge kinderen (tot 3 jaar oud)                     | 1-3 jaar                       | Spanish prison administration         |

## A. SMALL-SCALE DETENTION PROJECTS

| Naam                              | Locatie                                                          | Land        | Jaar | Capaciteit | Type                            | Doelgroep                                            | Gemiddelde lengte van verblijf             | Bevoegde instantie                       |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------|------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Praha Ruzyně Remand Prison        | Floresti Prahova, Romania                                        | Tsjechië    | 1996 | 56         | arresthuis                      | volwassen vrouwen                                    | 2-3 jaar                                   | Prison Service of Czech Republic         |
| Svetlá nad Sázavou                | Ctra. Palma del Río, km 4,5 CP 14005. Córdoba                    | Tsjechië    | 2002 | 15         | moeder-en-kind gevangenis       | moeders met jonge kinderen (tot 3 jaar oud)          | min. 3 maanden                             | Prison Service of Czech Republic         |
| Jiřice Prison                     | Camino de las Palomas s/n 41410 Carmona, Sevilla                 | Tsjechië    | 1994 | 32         | open gevangenis                 | laagrisico gedetineerden aan het einde van hun straf | 3-18 maanden                               | Prison Service of Czech Republic         |
| Haparanda prison (Kriminalvården) | Vazební věznice Praha Ruzyně K Šancím 50/6, 163 00 Praha 17-Řepy | Zweden      | 1888 | 22         | gevangenis                      | 18-24 jarige jonge mannen                            |                                            | Swedisch prison administration           |
| Anstalten Luleå                   | Rozkoš 990, 582 91 Svetlá nad Sázavou                            | Zweden      | 2002 | 12         | gevangenis/arresthuis           | 18-24 jarige jonge mannen                            | min. 4 maanden                             | Swedisch prison administration           |
| Établissement du Simplon          | P.O. BOX 8, 28922 Jiřice                                         | Zwitserland | 2012 | 40         | opvanghuis met meerdere regimes | volwassenen                                          | 20 / 95 / 120 dagen afhankelijk van regime | Swiss prison administration (Vaud state) |

Source: Prison Insider. (2023, June 29). *Mapping small scale detention throughout Europe*. Prison Insider. <https://www.prison-insider.com/en/articles/mapping-small-scale-detention-throughout-europe>

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