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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The panopticon prison as a “social condenser”: The study of the project for *De Koepel* prison by Rem Koolhaas/OMA (1979–1988)



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Social condenser

Abstract Rem Koolhaas/OMA carried out the study for *De Koepel* prison throughout a decade (1979–1988). However, only its initial stages (1979–1980) were disclosed and have been investigated. The hypothesis presented in this article suggests that Koolhaas implemented his —then— recent thesis present in *Delirious New York* (1978) on “life in the metropolis” and the “Culture of Congestion” in the conception and design of this project. Thus, this article has the aim of examining —by means of the documents compelling the entire period of the study— how the project suggested transforming the domesticity of *De Koepel* prison into a “social condenser” of the contemporary metropolis. By doing so, it makes it possible to consider the role of this project within the first decade of Koolhaas’ career as an architect (1978–1989), and to establish that *Delirious New York* is, in fact, the theory on which it was based on when first conceived. This project anticipated the strategy and the methodology he implemented, at a later time, in other projects, offering a different perspective. On this occasion, this diagrammatic investigation took place in Bentham’s Panopticon; reason why, he was then able to develop the reflections on heterotopias and prisons carried out by Foucault.

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1. Introduction

Midway through the year 1980, Rem Koolhaas/Office for Metropolitan Architecture revealed their project for the renovation and the new construction of the *Huis van Bewaring* (detention centre), in the unique *Strafgevangenis* (penal prison), popularly-known as the *Koepelgevangenis* (dome prison), located in the city of Arnhem, in the Netherlands (Fig. 1). The initial report—containing the study and the project for its intervention—was carried out from April 1979—the moment when the authority in charge of the commission, the *Rijksgebouwendienst* or *RGD* (Government Buildings Agency), commissioned the project—until March 1980, when Rem Koolhaas/OMA presented it (Koolhaas, 1980a). This version of the project was exhibited at the *Biennale di Venezia* that took place in 1980 (Koolhaas, OMA, 1980), and was immediately published in many architecture magazines, such as *Lotus International*, *AMC*, *Artforum*, *Wonen TA BK*, among others (Koolhaas, 1981a, 1981b, 1981c, 1982). However, after that, it was rarely disseminated. The project was defined, even until today, by the version that was made public in 1980, despite its development continuing for long after that. This is so, largely because Koolhaas/OMA left proof of it in the largest volume compiling his work, *S, M, L, XL* (1995). On this occasion, he included some documents relating to the proposal dating 1980, and the text, written in 1981, asserted that “after two years of heated discussion (...) the Project was put on hold, indefinitely” (Koolhaas, 1995a). In light of this statement, there would not have been the slightest doubt about it having been the end of that project.

1.1. The complete study by Koolhaas/OMA for *De Koepel* prison

This research arises in response to the inconsistencies and the changes in dates concerning the period of the study of the *Koepelgevangenis*, both by Rem Koolhaas/OMA as well as by other authors. It is Koolhaas himself who provides clues which lead to the suspicion—with reason—that, the development of the study and the project itself were elaborated throughout a longer period of time. For example, in an interview carried out by Patrice Goulet in 1985, published in *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, Koolhaas explained that the *RGD* had consulted him again, and that he had just finished redoing the project, “now I’m sure about building it and that makes me really happy” (Goulet, 1985).¹ In relevant monographs on the full works by Koolhaas/OMA this is also noted; an example of these being, the one by Jaques Lucan, and the one by de Roberto Gargiani (Lucan, 1991a; Gargiani, 2008). However, it must be said, that they specify different dates, the first one being

1978–1988, and the second one being 1979–1985. The point is that the development and the result of the study—the final project for the *Koepelgevangenis*—was scarcely published (Bosma, 1986), as was the case of his proposal for the specific renovation of the cells (Rodermond, 1986). This omission continues in the more recent studies which approach this first decade of Koolhaas/OMA’s work. For instance, in the selection of front covers carried out by Christophe Van Gerrewey from the period between *Delirious New York* and *S, M, L, XL* (1978–1995), “One Hundred Cover Shots” (Van Gerrewey, 2019a).² In this selection, it can be observed how when having to choose between the two successive covers—of this project and the one for *Bijlmermeer*—in the magazine *De Architect* (1986), the author decided only to include the most famous one of the two, that is, the one for *Bijlmermeer* (Fig. 2).

In this article, it is proven that Koolhaas/OMA carried out the study for the renovation and the extension of the *Koepelgevangenis* throughout a decade (1979–1988). This has only been possible to prove thanks to archival research, to which it was necessary to resort to after coming across several inconsistencies, some of which already aforementioned. Recently, Joost Meuwissen contributed with a short article on the project by Koolhaas/OMA for the *Koepelgevangenis* in Arnhem, titled “Self Portrait of a Society. Panopticon Prison, Arnhem” (2015). However, this article is partial—as so are some others which have been published later—since it only takes into consideration what was initially disclosed. In this article, Meuwissen noted—for the first time—that, differently to what happens in the case of other of Koolhaas’ works, this project—despite it being very “well-known”—has barely been studied nor discussed. He pointed this out and referred to the cause of it, arguing that “the report (of the study) was so hermetic and apodictic that it was barely open for discussion” (Meuwissen, 2015). In contrast of the assessment carried out by Meuwissen, this research suggests that what really seems to have limited the discussion is lack of knowledge, since, the content of the entire development of the study remained restricted and undisclosed to third parties. That is why this investigation has had the aim of studying the project beyond its initial period, to try to clarify what happened afterwards and suggest if, in fact, this project can be of interest to the scientific community, within the field of architecture.

1.2. *De Koepel* prison as a “social condenser”

The hypothesis of this research suggests that this commission was a paradigmatic opportunity for Rem Koolhaas to apply his—then—recent thesis present in *Delirious New York. A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* on “Life in the Metropolis” and the “Culture of Congestion” (Koolhaas,

¹ “Je suis sûr maintenant de le construire et cela me rend très heureux parce que j’avais peur que tous nos projets ambitieux demeurent à l’état de projets et que nous ne parvenions à réaliser que les programmes les plus simples, qui risquaient alors de devenir le seul ‘visible’ de l’OMA”. Goulet, P., 1985. La deuxième chance de l’architecture moderne, entretien avec Rem Koolhaas, Interview with Patrice Goulet. *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*. 238, April, 2–9, p. 6.

² The only cover of the project for *De Koepel* which is included is the one of *Lotus International* (1981), out of a total of 100 covers selected from the 1978–1995 period. Van Gerrewey, C., 2019. One Hundred Cover Shots, in: Van Gerrewey, C. (Ed.), *OMA/Rem Koolhaas. A critical reader: from ‘Delirious New York’ to ‘S,M,L,XL’*. Birkhäuser, Berlin/Boston.

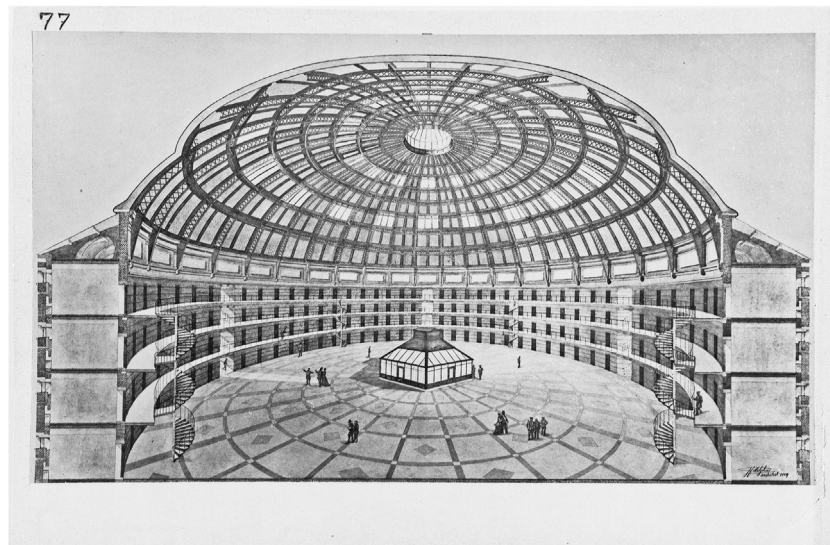


Fig. 1 The *Koepelgevangenis* or dome prison, Wilhelminastraat 16, Arnhem, Netherlands, by J.F. Metzelaar, 1882–1886. Nationaal Archief, Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, Den Haag. NL-HaNA/4. RGD (Rijksgebouwendienst)/1612.32.

1977, 1978c),³ In *Delirious New York*, Koolhaas identified the *Downtown Athletic Club* skyscraper in New York as a “constructivist social condenser” and he reinterpreted this concept in the heart of the capitalist society. The definition of Koolhaas’ “social condenser” stems from *Delirious New York*. However, it is worth mentioning that even from his academic period at the *Architectural Association School*, he already showed a special interest in the subject—the most notable example is his project *Exodus, or The Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture* (1972), where according to Koolhaas himself, that building was a social condenser. Hence, the reason why this investigation examines whether or not Koolhaas conceived the project for *De Koepel* as a “social condenser”. In this sense, it is worth mentioning that Joost Meuwissen noted another issue which seems to assume this hypothesis, since he asserted that—if it had been less complex—the project for *De Koepel* could have anticipated the “paradigm shift in architecture” which happened some years later with the project for *Parc de La Villette* (Meuwissen, 2015), the project by means of which he then coined his interpretation of the term “Social Condenser” as a Universal Modernization Patent” (Koolhaas, OMA-AMO, 2004).

The project for *De Koepel* is one of the first projects of what is acknowledged as being Koolhaas’ “first decade as an architect” (1978–1989), and the first one he developed during this period without his associate in OMA Eliza Zenghelis. In “OMA. The First Decade (1978–1989)” (2015), Christophe Van Gerrewey and Véronique Patteeuw explained the importance of “the first decade” in the existence of Rem Koolhaas/OMA (1978–1989), where “the ideas and concepts became a spatial and material reality, albeit not as numerous as Koolhaas had hoped” (Van

Gerrewey and Patteeuw, 2015). This research suggests examining in depth the project for *De Koepel* to delve—from its specificity—into the knowledge of the theoretical discourse and practical implementation which he developed during this period. What other nuances does the interpretation of the “social condenser” suggest in such a different context as is the one of a Panopticon prison? As it has been proven, Koolhaas became interested in the studies carried out by Robin Evans on prisons. He used his article on the Panopticon prison, “Bentham’s Panopticon. An Incident in the Social History of Architecture” (1971), particularly, when developing the project for *De Koepel* (Evans, 1971, 1975, 1982). This research suggests that this project is a case study of a very unique kind since it is, not only one of the few pure Panoptic prisons ever to be built in the world, but also very few renowned contemporary architects like Koolhaas have become interested in the topic (Fig. 3). Hence, the consideration

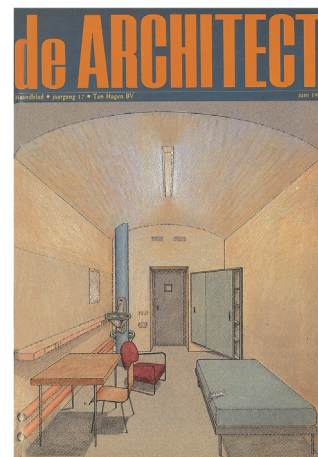


Fig. 2 Front cover for the Dutch magazine *De Architect* published in June 1986, “Prijsvraag standaard celindeling” (Competition for the design of the standard cells).

³ This issue of the *AD* magazine revealed the essence of his manifesto a year prior to the publishing of *Delirious New York* (1978), by means of this article and of the essay “The Story of the Pool”, Koolhaas, R., 1977. Life in the Metropolis or the Culture of Congestion. *Architectural Design*. 47:5, May, 319–325, p. 356.

of it being an interesting contribution within the field of architecture.

2. Materials and methods

This research has aimed to explore the specific hypothesis which has been outlined in the introduction. To that aim, it has suggested analysing the Project for *De Koepel* prison and thus, to examine how Koolhaas was able to transfer his theoretical discourse from that moment to its conception and design. A key part of the materials and the methods which have been used have consisted of archival research, which has enabled to study -first-hand- the original unpublished documents or other less well-known related to the projects. More specifically, this archival research work consisted of the study of the documentation preserved in the collection belonging to the Study Centre of the *Het Nieuwe Instituut* (The New Institute) (Koolhaas, OMA, 1979–1988), as well as those documents provided by the *Rijksvastgoedbedrijf* or *RVB* (Central Government Real Estate Agency), formerly known as the *Rijksgebouwendienst* or *RGD* (Government Buildings Agency), *Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties* (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations) (Koolhaas, 1980a). Another key part of the materials and methods, has been the use of drawings as a tool to study these documents, descriptive reports and graphic documentation. From the beginning of this research, the plans, the sketches and diagrams as well as those drawings which have been of use to develop the analysis and explain it in a better way, were redrawn, and have been included in the article.

The analysis of the project has been structured into three parts. In the first one, the initial study (1979–1980) is addressed, in the second, the later study (1981–1988), and in the third, the comparison between the initial proposal and the final one is established (Fig. 4). In the first part, the complete original report for *De Koepel*, carried out by Rem Koolhaas/OMA between 1979 and 1980, has been analysed. In this report, there is a large amount of information regarding the initial proposal; of special interest, has been the overview of the study and all of the unpublished graphic material. Among these, there are explanatory diagrams, as well as plan views, sections and elevations, which ended up defining the proposal, along with many perspectives. With the analysis of this complete initial report, the aim has been to acquire deeper knowledge of the proposal beyond the documents which had already been disseminated by Koolhaas/OMA. Moreover, in this part is where the relationship between Koolhaas' theoretical discourse present in *Delirious New York* (1978) —which was published a year prior to when he would begin to work on the project for *De Koepel*— and the project itself, starts to be studied. Koolhaas reflected this relationship, since, this book was not only the culmination of a historic research on the American metropolis, but a document which also served as the theoretical basis for him to develop his career as a project architect.

In the second part of the research, the later development of the *Koepelgevangenis* has been analysed, the one which took place between the years 1981 and 1988. This second part of the study has been divided, potentially, into two phases. The first one comprises the period that goes

from 1981 until 1985, and, it could be said, that it is the one which this investigation has set its focus on particularly, the continuation of the study as such. To approach this period, on the one hand, it is the documents that put forward the strategy of intervention and the organization of the programme of the project which have been analysed. On the other hand, the variants of the original project have also been analysed. The second phase comprises the period that goes from 1985 until 1988, and it is the one where the focus has been set on the final result of the report. To approach this period, it is the documents of the alternative project which have been analysed. The aim has been to get a deeper understanding of the design process leading to this last proposal which responds in a more accurate way to the requirements by the *RGD*. Bearing it all in mind, an evaluation has been done of what the strategy and design method carried out for the project during this specific period were, and a series of comments have been made with regard to the role and the importance of diagrams in the work of Koolhaas/OMA.

In the third part of the investigation, a comparison has been made between the initial proposal and the final one. This way, the main discussion has been regarding to up to what extent the alternative proposal was a continuity of the original one, and what one reveals about the other, by means of the diagrams of the report and the changes carried out in the project. With it, it has been possible to prove why for Koolhaas/OMA, it is the version of the initial project the one which forever defined it, since in the final version, the strategy found itself conditioned, diminished, and the design differs significantly from the one which had been developed throughout the study. Secondly, it has also been possible to consider the role of this project in the first decade of Koolhaas/OMA “as an architect” since the conception of this project as a “social condenser” had already been anticipated and offered a different perspective regarding its definition -which would later be forever established with the project for *Parc de la Villette* (1982). In this way, lastly, the discussion is established with regard to the interpretation Koolhaas made of the concept of a “social condenser” and how from its application on this specific project he was able to develop the reflections of Foucault on heterotopias and prisons. Bearing all this in mind, by means of this analysis, it has been possible to prove the hypothesis put forward from the beginning, and, moreover, to show why this project is of great interest to give greater visibility to the “paradoxes” inherent to domesticity.

3. The unknown documents of the initial study for the *Koepelgevangenis* (1979–1980)

This section focusses its attention on the initial report of the study for several reasons. The first reason being how little this project has been investigated in comparison to others by Rem Koolhaas/OMA, as it has recently been pointed out by other authors, “Arnhem would become one of OMA's best-known but least discussed designs” (Meuwissen, 2015). The second reason, is the partial dissemination which the author himself would carry out of the study and the proposal as a whole, including this first period that he himself had

PENAL PRISON IN ARNHEM THE NETHERLANDS (1882–1886)
BY JOHAN FREDERIK METZELAAR

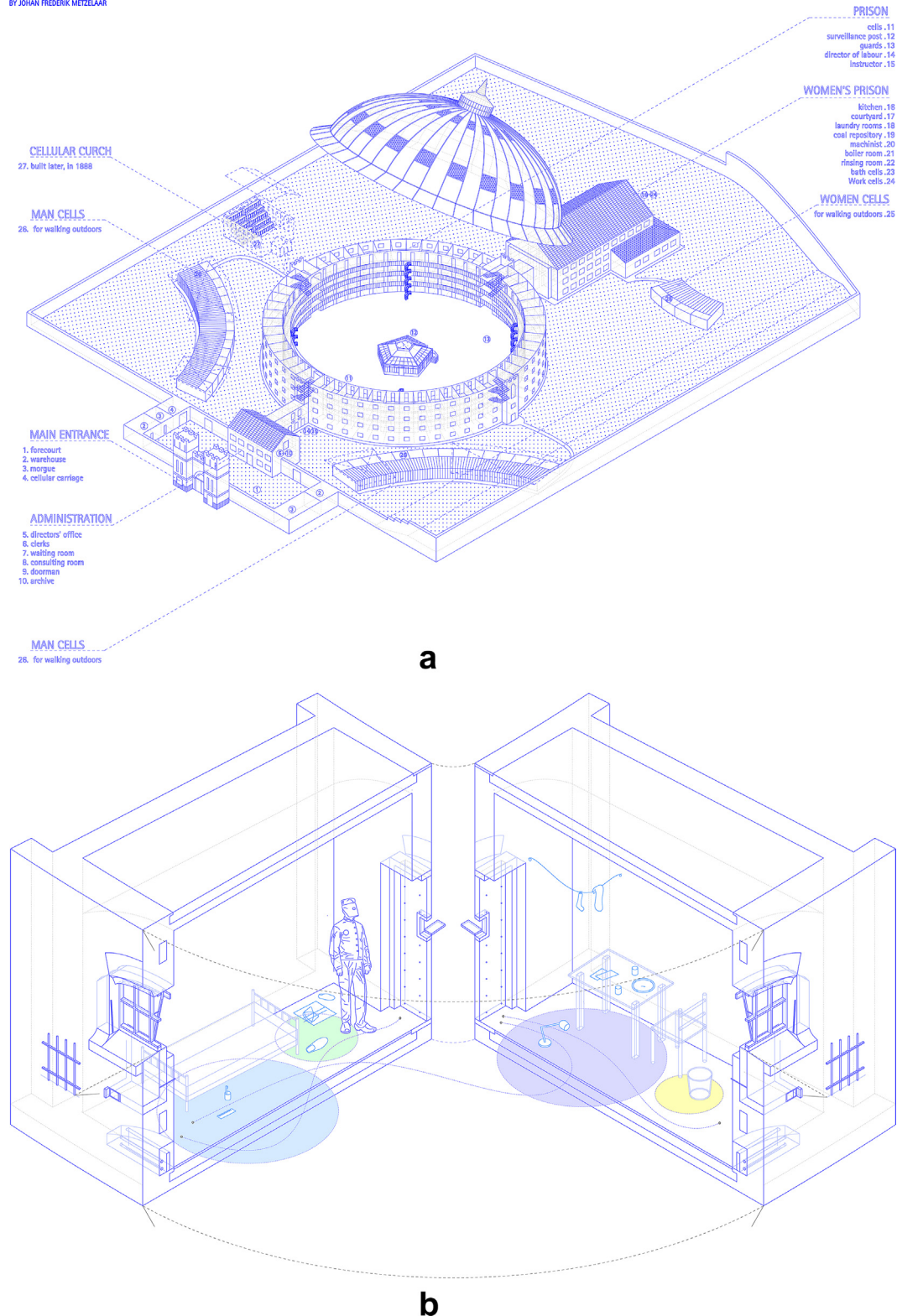


Fig. 3 Drawings carried out for this analysis of the project by Koolhaas/OMA for the renovation and the extension of the *Koepelevangen* in Arnhem, the Netherlands. (a) the original building; (b) the cell (1882–1886).

established as being the final one (Fig. 5). Adding on to what Joost Meuwissen argued with regard to the possible causes which could justify the lack of study and discussion, by

claiming its “hermetic and apodictic” nature, it could be said that, what truly seems to have limited the discussion is, in fact, the mere lack of knowledge. Among other issues, the

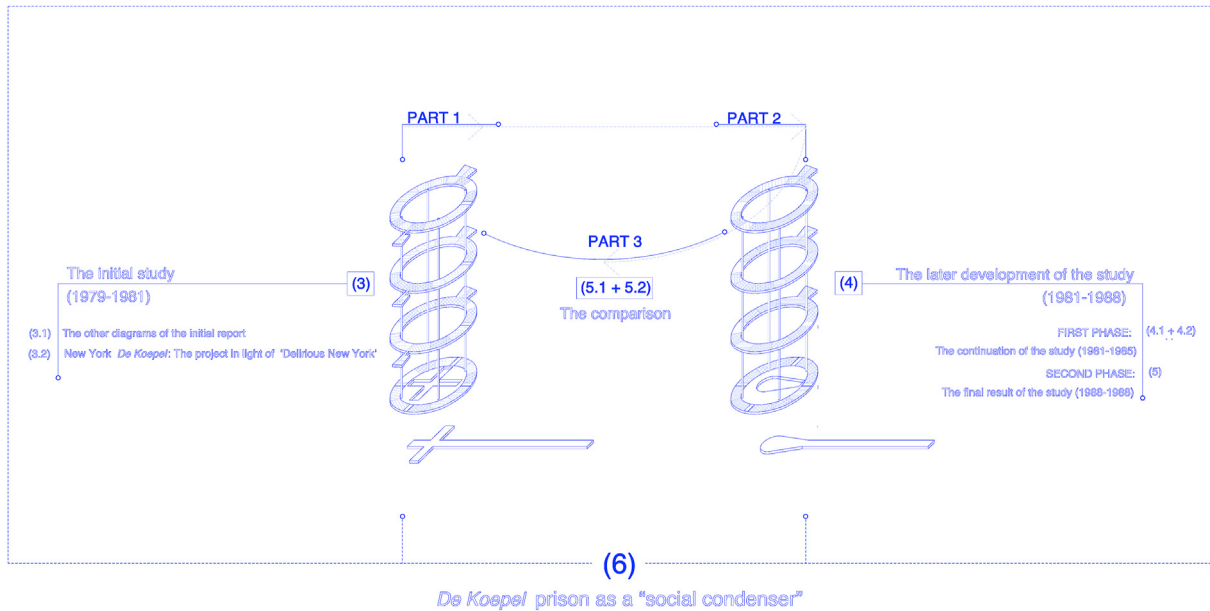


Fig. 4 Graphic diagram of the main structure of this article, The Panopticon prison as a “social condenser”: The study of the project for *De Koepel* prison by Rem Koolhaas/OMA (1979–1988).

access of third parties to its content was restricted. It also evidences the lesser interest that seems to arise, among learned scholars, when it comes to the field of penitentiary architecture, even when the author is a renowned architect who gives access to his documentation. Another —no less significant— issue, is that this is the first project that Rem Koolhaas carried out in OMA without Elia Zenghelis, since, as he mentioned himself, “Elia was teaching at Princeton then, and I asked Stefano de Martino, another student at the AA School, to work with me” (Goulet, 1985).⁴ Thus, the hypothesis suggested in this article which links it with his own theoretical discourse.

The original report contains, as the title itself suggests, the “Study to determine if, overall, the current *Huis van Bewaring ‘De Koepel’* in Arnhem can be used for a period of 50 years, bearing in mind the current knowledge on accommodating prisoners” (Koolhaas, 1980a). This report is compelled by a 17-pages long description and a 44-pages long booklet with graphic documentation. By going over the first period (1979–1980), it is possible to check which parts were disclosed and which were not. It is also possible to verify which were the most complete versions of this study to be published first, and up until today. It is worth mentioning two publications in particular: with regard to the graphic documentation, the *AMC* magazine (1981) and, with regard to the text, the one of *De Architect* (1986) (Koolhaas, 1981a, 1986). They both feature a good sample of the initial report. The first one stands out because of the plans and perspectives that defined the specific project, and the other because it contains the more extensive

explanation of the proposal, even if it is only in Dutch. The in-depth revision of these documents makes it possible to identify and put forward those matters that have passed unnoticed. After comparing the descriptive text with the different extracts which were published, it has been possible to determine that it appeared almost entirely —except for the third and last chapter which was not included (Koolhaas, 1980a).⁵ The dissemination of the content of the 44 pages containing graphic documentation was very scarce, especially when considering that six of them contain significantly important diagrams with regard to the proposal.

3.1. The other diagrams of the initial report for the Rijksgebouwendienst or RGD

The diagrams presented in the initial report summarize the strategy of the proposal, which aims to update the domesticity of the *Koepelgevangenis* on the basis of the “two key principles” which defined it from its origin, in accordance with new penitentiary policies. In Koolhaas’ words, “in less than a century, the two key principles on which the existence of *De Koepel* seemed to be based on —central surveillance and solitary confinement— have been contested or inverted 180° due to cultural changes”

⁴ “Oui, Elia enseignait alors à Princeton et j’ai demandé à Stefano de Martino, un autre étudiant de l’AA School, de travailler avec moi”. Goulet, P., 1985. La deuxième chance de l’architecture moderne, entretien avec Rem Koolhaas, Interview with Patrice Goulet. *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*. 238, April, 2–9, p. 6.

⁵ The original text is structured in three chapters with a prologue before them. In the first chapter, *Enkele constatering* (Some observations), Koolhaas/OMA outlines the conception of the proposal by means of five points: The Panopticon principle, Verdict, Former vs. New, Renovation as a revision, and Description of the work. In the second chapter, *Toelichting voorstel* (Explanatory report), he describes the strategy and the design for the project. In the third chapter, *Bijlage* (Appendix), he compares the proposal with two other previous ones which were not developed; one of which was carried out by a different architecture office (1973), and the other had been designed by the RGD itself (1978).

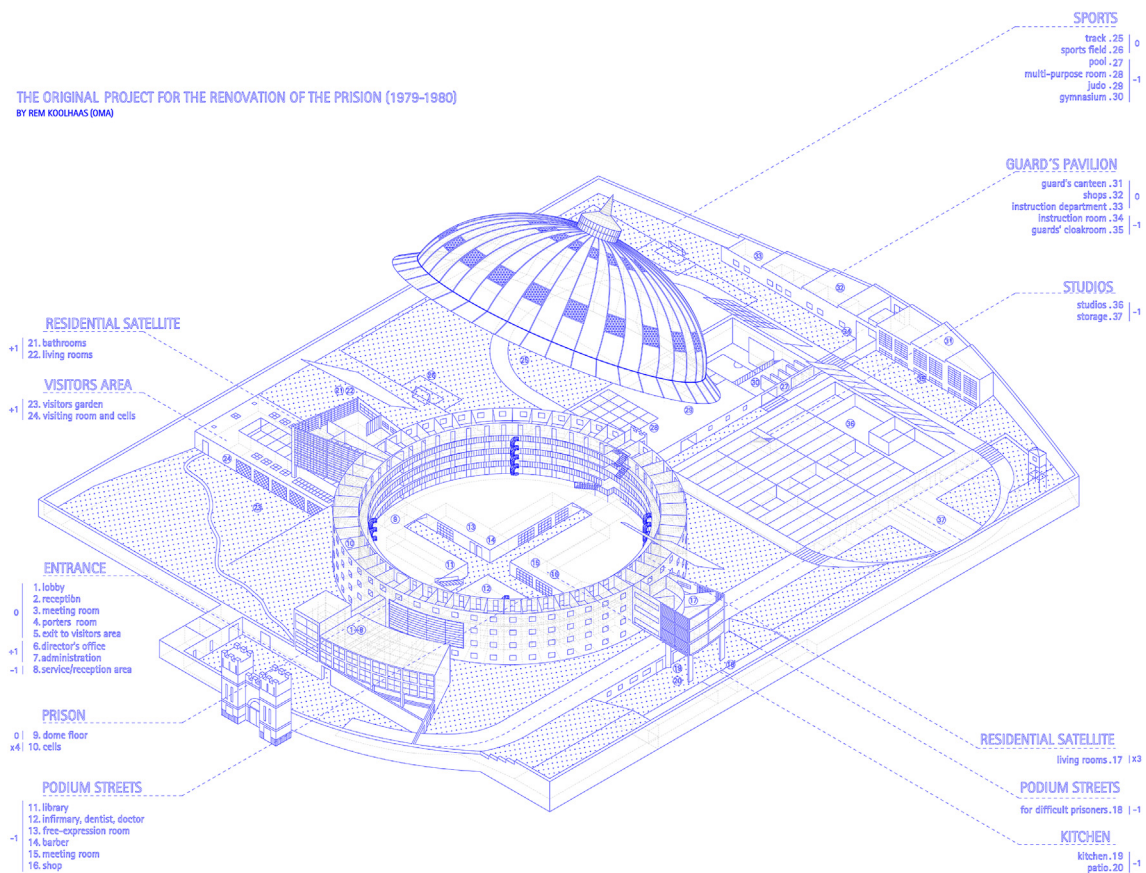


Fig. 5 Drawing carried out for this analysis of the project by Koolhaas/OMA for the renovation and the extension of the Koepelgevangenis in Arnhem, the Netherlands (1979–1980).

(Koolhaas, 1980a).⁶ Among these first diagrams, it is important to mention the one which evidences the problem existing in terms of “congestion” within the premises of the prison, since it introduces a new extensive and complex programme of collective facilities. This way he proves why it is convenient to bury the volume of the new construction under *De Koepel*, as a sort of “podium of modernity”, opposing this to the other possibility, which implies it occupying the entire available space in the open air around *De Koepel*.⁷ The other diagram worth

highlighting shows the general strategy of the intervention. First, the “extent of public domain” within the new “podium” of *De Koepel*, where two new streets cross at the centre of it, in the former surveillance point, which —by then— had already become obsolete because of the implementation of new technologies.⁸ Furthermore, the “possibility of grouping” prisoners, by introducing two “satellites”, connected to the rings of the cells, proving that these groupings can be “extremely flexible” (Koolhaas, OMA, 1979–1988)⁹ (Fig. 6).

⁶ “In minder dan een eeuw zijn de twee hoofdprincipes waar op het bestaan van de Koepel gebaseerd leek —centrale observatie en eenzame opsluiting— door culturele veranderingen ontkracht of 180° omgedraaid”. Koolhaas, R., 1980. Vonnis, in: *Studie om in hoofdlijnen na te gaan of het bestaande Huis van Bewaring 'De Koepel' te Arnhem bruikbaar kan worden gemaakt voor een tijdsduur van circa 50 jaar, rekening houdend met huidige inzichten betreffende de huisvesting van gedetineerden. Vericht voor de Rijksgebouwendienst, Den Haag, door Rem Koolhaas, Architect. Londen. Maart 1980. Rijksvastgoedbedrijf RVB, Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, Den Haag, the Netherlands, pp. 6–7.*

⁷ “Total volume regarding new construction (A: as a separate building; B: as a podium)”. Koolhaas, R., OMA, 1980. Totaal volume nieuwbouw (A: als apart gebouw/B: als podium), in: *Voorlopig ontwerp (1979–1980)*. Office for Metropolitan Architecture Archive, Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut/OMAR/166; Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

⁸ “Diagram of the proposal of the study: extension of the ‘public domain’ with two streets that intersect, and implementation of the current surveillance system”. Koolhaas, R., OMA, 1980. Diagram studie voorstel: uitbreiding ‘publiek domein’ met twee elkaar kruisende. Straten en handhaving van het huidige surveillance system, in: *Voorlopig ontwerp (1979–1980)*. Office for Metropolitan Architecture Archive, Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut/OMAR/166; Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

⁹ “Diagrams showing the possible grouping (A: ring divided into two halves; B. Two groups selected from the total within a ring; C. Selected group from the total of the entire dome)”. These diagrams describe the possibilities in terms of creating groups. Koolhaas, R., OMA, 1980. Diagrammen mogelijke groepsformatie (A: ring onderverdeeld in twee helften; B. Twee groepen gerecruiteerd uit totale bevolking van een ring; C. Groep geselecteerd uit totale koepelbevolking), in: *Voorlopig ontwerp (1979–1980)*. Office for Metropolitan Architecture Archive, Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut/OMAR/166; Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

The explanation given in the first report for the *RGD* contrasts with that given in other texts also written by Koolhaas in 1980 with regard to this project, and which place it in line with his theoretical developments. The text “Our ‘New Sobriety’” is key. It was first published in the *Biennale di Venezia* “The Presence of the Past” (1980), and also, in other exhibitions such as the one in the *Stedelijk Museum*, in Amsterdam (1980), and the one at the *AA School*, in London (1981) (Koolhaas, OMA, 1980; Koolhaas, 1980e, 1981d). These exhibitions of his project convey valuable information in order to study them, and, as Van Gerrewey noted in “Outreach Extensions” (2019), these are “a forgotten part of his production” (Van Gerrewey, 2019b). In this case, the text was recovered by Jaques Lucan, who published the entire document in the volume he compiled in *Rem Koolhaas. OMA. Architecture 1970–1990* (1991), being the first of the selection of works (Koolhaas, 1991).¹⁰ A quote from Raymond Hood —“the most theoretical of New York’s architects”— writes the following heading: “The plan is of primary importance, because on the floor are performed all the activities of the human occupants ...”. In the words of Koolhaas, Hood’s functionalism “imagines and establishes on the ‘floor’ (= the surface of the earth) patterns of human activity in unprecedented juxtapositions and catalytic combinations” (Koolhaas, OMA, 1980, 1991). With this, he made an explicit allusion to his —then— recent interpretation of the skyscraper architecture in Manhattan, which he had disclosed in “Life in the Metropolis and the Culture of Congestion” (1977) and, not long after, in *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* (1978) (Koolhaas, 1977, 1978c).

3.2. New York/De Koepel: the project in light of “Delirious New York”

Koolhaas also reflected the relationship between his theoretical discourse and the project for the *Koepelgevangenis* on other occasions. It is worth mentioning his presentation “Een ontwerp voor de gevangenis te Arnhem” (A design for the prison in Arnhem), which he delivered in the postdoctoral seminar *Lessen in architectuur* (Lessons on architecture) at the *TU Delft*, and which was published in the *Syllabus van de leergang* (Course programme) of 1980 (Koolhaas, 1980b). Recently, many authors have underlined its importance since it passed unnoticed until the coordinator of the seminar, Joost Meuwissen, pointed out its existence in “Self Portrait of a Society” (Meuwissen, 2015). Since then, other authors have followed this trace and have placed value on it when analysing the initial period of the project (1979–1980), see

“Domesticity ‘Behind Bars’” (Martínez-Millana and Cánovas Alcaraz, 2020). This article includes the graphic documents Koolhaas used to illustrate the conception of the proposal, three drawings titled “De architectuur van het sociale” (The architecture of society): “The metropolis” shows the section and the plan view of the *Downtown Athletic Club* of New York; “The Panopticon” shows the implementation of the principle by Jeremy Bentham in several prisons in the nineteenth century; and the proposal, “Rem Koolhaas prison renovation in Arnhem (1980)” (Koolhaas, 1980c). Hence, Meuwissen’s statement in his article when he asserted that “the prison in Arnhem is such a skyscraper”, since, in fact, Koolhaas, at that moment then, based his theoretical discourse on his theory present in *Delirious New York* (Meuwissen, 2015). Therefore, it seems reasonable to ask oneself up to what extent he actually implements it in the project for the *Koepelgevangenis*.

At the beginning of the 1980’s decade, it was inevitable to establish a relationship between the projects by Koolhaas/OMA and the book that had made him famous, *Delirious New York* (1978). For instance, Patrice Goulet when presenting the proposals for the international competition for *Parc de La Villette* in the magazine *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* (1983), said that “we must reread the book”, “the theory on which he based his design for the project for *Amsterdam Noord* (1981–1988) and then for *Parc de La Villette* (1982)”. (Goulet, 1983a, 1983b).¹¹ Several years later, also in *AA* (1985), the interview where Goulet asked Koolhaas on the matter, was published. He replied that, when he finished *Delirious New York*, he decided not to become obsessed with it. In Koolhaas’ words, “to forget about it, trying not to devote my time to proving by means of my projects, the rightness of the theory that they defended” (Goulet, 1985).¹² In any case, this captured the attention of several authors who became interested in analysing it. For example, Jacques Lucan studied the consequences of *Delirious New York* in the first projects by Koolhaas/OMA in his article “The Architect of Modern Life” (1991). As Lucan himself said, this thesis is “a sufficiently seductive thesis to obliterate those that accompany it” (Lucan, 1991b). Koolhaas stated that “Manhattan’s architecture is a paradigm for the exploitation of congestion”, and by means of this example, asserted that “this book is a blueprint for a ‘Culture of Congestion’” (Koolhaas, 1978a). In essence, the main thesis of the book is based on the understanding that “The Culture of Congestion is the culture of the 20th century” and the paradigmatic example of it was developed in New York by the “theorists of skyscrapers” (Koolhaas, 1978b).

¹⁰ Lucan dated this text by Koolhaas incorrectly; it has been verified that he wrote it in 1980 and not in 1981. See the catalogues belonging to the two exhibitions referred to previously (Notes 32 and 33): (1) The catalogue of the *Biennale di Venezia* of 1980, p. 214; (2) The catalogue of the exhibition at the *AA School*, where this text is signed and dated by Koolhaas in 1980, p. 10. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that, despite it being the same text, in Lucan’s compilation, the title presents another change here as well. Instead of “Our ‘New Sobriety’”, the title reads “The New Sobriety”. Koolhaas, R., 1991. The New Sobriety. 1981, in: Lucan, J. (Ed.), *Rem Koolhaas. OMA. Architecture 1970–1990*. Princeton Architectural Press, New York, pp. 152–153.

¹¹ “Il faut relire le livre qui l’a fait connaître *Delirious New York*”(…) “Le Manhattan de la superposition onirique du conceptuel et du réel, ‘pierre de Rosette du XX siècle’, a sans aucun doute fondé ‘la théorie’ sur laquelle fut dessiné son projet d’Amsterdam Nord puis celui du Parc de La Villette.” Goulet, P., 1983. Concours International Pour Le Parc de La Villette. Chapitre II. *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*. 227, Juin, 90–91, p. 90.

¹² “Quand je l’ai achevé, j’ai décidé de ne pas en être obsédé, de l’oublier sans tenter, comme on l’attendait évidemment de moi, que je passe mon temps à prouver par mes projets, la justesse de la thèse qu’ils défendaient.” Goulet, P., 1985. La deuxième chance de l’architecture moderne, entretien avec Rem Koolhaas. *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* 238, April, 2–9, p. 4.

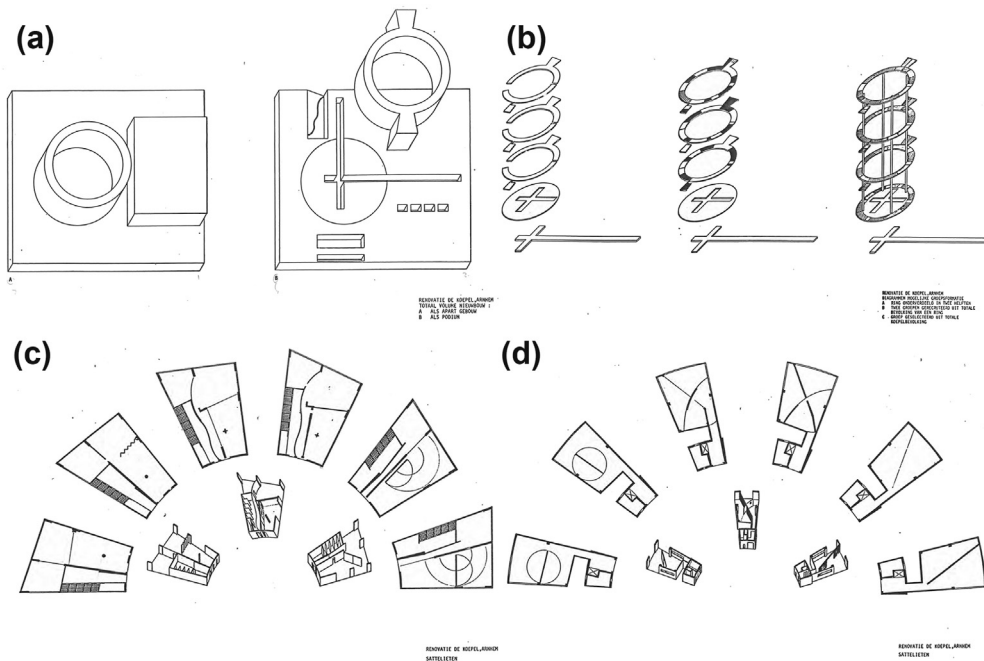


Fig. 6 Diagrams of the study for the extension and renovation of the *Koepelgevangenis* by Rem Koolhaas/OMA, 1979–1980 (known vs. unknown): (a) Total volume of the new construction (A: as a separate building/B: as a podium); (b) Diagrams showing the possible grouping of cells; (A: ring divided into two halves/B: Two groups selected from the total population within a ring/C: Group selected from the total of the entire dome); (c) South satellite; (d) North satellite. Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut/OMAR/166.

4. The continuity of the study (1981–1985)

To be able to analyse the documents of the later development of the study (1981–1985), those regarding the initial report are crucial, especially the 44-page booklet containing the graphic documentation “Voorlopig ontwerp (1979–1980)” (Provisional project) (Koolhaas, OMA, 1979–1988).¹³ In broad strokes, the documents belonging to the first period can be grouped into those documents which show the global strategy and its more specific parts, and those which represent the specific design of the project. However, it is also worth noting that some of them remain outside this distinction and are a hybrid between diagrams and plans or perspectives. The documents belonging to the second period can also be analysed in two phases according to this differentiation, since the reports of the first phase consist of diagrams, while those of the second phase, are studies on the different variants, that is, the possible alternatives to the original project. Therefore, in this section, the attention is focussed on studying how these reports deepen in the understanding of the proposal, based on the initial one, and they show part of the process towards a new project which responds, in a more adequate way, to the requirements of the RGD. The relevant question here seems to be what those later reports of the study about the strategy and the design methods of the project

unveil. To address this matter, it is necessary to introduce some references on the development and the key role of diagrams in the work by Koolhaas/OMA, since this project is a part of that process, especially at the beginning of this period (1981–1985).

The diagram had a relatively great presence within the architectural discussions throughout the 1990’s decade, which were the result of the reception of those ideas put forward by Michel Foucault, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, as Pauline Lefebvre would note (Foucault, 1975; Deleuze and Guattari, 1980; Lefebvre 2017). That is the reason why, at the end of that decade, many were the publications where diagrams became the main theme, entire issues of magazines were dedicated to this topic, including magazines such as *ANY*, *OASE*, y *DAIDALOS*, and also monographs like *Diagram Diaries* by Peter Eisenman (Bos and Van Berkel, 1998, 1999; Bijlsma et al., 1998; Confurius, 2000; Eisenman, 1999; Allen, 1999). With regard to Koolhaas/OMA’s work, Jennifer Sigler explained that, for them, a diagram was the “minimal drawing used to express a concept” (Sigler, 1995). Wouter Deen and Udo Garritzmman would then add that its significance did not end there, “more than being just a handy visual formula that encapsulates the concept of a design, diagrams are used from the outset to generate concepts”. That meaning, that a diagram is “an instrument in the design process”: the studies of the programme, the volume, the densities and the typologies are presented in an abstract way in “variants and models”, without them directly resulting in a specific design, and, therefore, in that sense, have a “diagrammatic character” (Deen and Garritzmman, 1998). More specifically, Robert E. Somol explicitly alluded to the project for

¹³ “Preliminary design (1979–1980). 44 pages”. Koolhaas, R.; OMA, 1980. *Voorlopig ontwerp (1979–1980). 44 bladen*. Office for Metropolitan Architecture Archive, Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut/OMAR/166; Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

the *Koepelgevangenis* in the prologue of *Diagram Diaries* (1999); since, as this prison had been built originally in line with the principles set out by Jeremy Bentham in 1787, they had had the chance of directly to engage the panopticon diagram in the study, “not since Piranesi have prisons provided such an opportunity for extreme architectural speculation” (Somol, 1999). Short after, along with Sarah Whiting, he alluded once again to Koolhaas/OMA’s diagrammatic work and referred to it as “projective”, this time, with the example of the section of the *Downtown Athletic Club* (Somol and Whiting, 2002).

4.1. Additional studies on the Koepelgevangenis (1981–1982)

The report “Inventarisatie Architectonische Kwaliteit” (Inventory on architectural quality) picks up the continuation of the study about the *Koepelgevangenis* in 1981. In this report, Koolhaas/OMA aims to provide a deeper analysis of all the buildings, reason why he examines the programme and the architectural quality of all of them one by one. To that aim, the existing premises are divided into parts; their “functional” qualities are evaluated —ensuring they “work well and meet the needs their users”— and so are their architectural ones —in a way that “they are of such architectural and/or historical value that their demolition would lead to a clear cultural impoverishment” (Koolhaas, OMA, 1979–1988).¹⁴ This way, he justifies why he decides to preserve certain buildings belonging to the original complex dating 1886, and to demolish others “improved in an emergency and chaotic extensions”, without, however, modifying what had been suggested in the report from 1980 (Koolhaas, 1980a). The continuation of this analysis can be followed up with another report dating 1982, “Programma van eisen voor een Huis van Bewaring” (Programme bearing the requirements for a detention centre). Among the different documents that it contains there is one that stands out from the rest, since it synthesizes, by means of a diagram, the thesis that they had defended from the very beginning of the study: the problem of “congestion” within the prison (Koolhaas, OMA, 1979–1988).¹⁵ This diagram represents, within the perimeter, which is literally the enclosure created by the walls of the prison, the programme organized in horizontal bands. Just like if it were a “horizontal skyscraper”, where the seventeen programmatic bands become the floor plans of the section of the *Downtown Athletic Club* (Fig. 7).

It is also worth mentioning another report dating from 1982, focussed on how to carry out an intervention in the

rings containing the cells of the building of the *De Koepel*, “Analyse ‘ringen’” (Analysis of the rings) (Koolhaas, OMA, 1979–1988).¹⁶ In line with the initial report, this one presents a series of diagrams on the “solitary confinement” taking place in the dome, one of the two principles the prison’s entire existence was based on in 1886. In the words of Koolhaas/OMA, “even if the *De Koepel* was able to resist the abolition of the Panopticon principle, and in some way, it even promoted it by means of its configuration; the abolition of solitary confinement is much more problematic” (Koolhaas, 1980a).¹⁷ Among these diagrams, some show the possible extension of the surface area of the rings of the dome; for example, by means of introducing new ones in the inside or the outside, or even connecting a series of interior or exterior satellites. Other diagrams develop the possibilities of grouping the cells in relation to this extension. *De Koepel* has a total of slightly trapezoidal cells with a surface area of 10.40 square metres, 52 on each of its four floors. It is organized in three different levels, named —in typically penitentiary terms— departments, pavilions and sections. A department consists of the grouping of 12 cells with a 60.00 square metre satellite; a pavilion is shaped by two departments and an extension of 85.00 square metres; and a section consists of two pavilions and an extension of 270.00 square metres. Ultimately, these diagrams show the method of intervention for the original building of *De Koepel*, how its subdivision and grouping takes place, putting the emphasis on the two principles on which it was based, the vertical one and the horizontal one.

With regard to the general strategy, two other reports from 1982 develop it again, in “Structuurplan” (Organizational plan). The uniqueness of them lies in the fact that they

¹⁶ “Analysis of rings”. Koolhaas, R., OMA, 1982. Analyse ‘ringen’ (d.d. 7 sept. 1982), in: *Renovatie ‘De Koepel’*, Arnhem. Office for Metropolitan Architecture Archive, Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut/OMAR/3399; Rotterdam, the Netherlands. pp. 17–25.

¹⁷ “Ook eenzame opsluiting wordt nu algemeen als onmenselijk gezien: vereenzamend, vervreemdend, de gedetineerde ongeschied makend voor toekomstige deelname aan het maatschappelijk verkeer. Dit tweede principe is eveneens afgeschaft: een aantal collectieve voorzieningen — voor werk, sport, bezoek etcetera — is aan de instelling toegevoegd. Maar terwijl de *Koepel* de afschaffing van het Panopticon-principe kon doorstaan, en in zekere zin zelfs door zijn configuratie bevorderde, is de afschaffing van de eenzame opsluiting veel problematischer.” = “Solitary confinement is now generally considered inhumane: to isolate, to alienate, to make the detainee become non-suitable to take part in social interaction in the future. This second principle has also been abolished: a series of collective facilities had been added to the institution (for work purposes, sports, visits, etc). Even if the *Dome* was able to resist the abolition of the Panopticon principle, and in some way, it even promoted it by means of its configuration; the abolition of solitary confinement is much more problematic”. Koolhaas, R., 1980. Enkele Constateringen, in: *Studie om in hoofdlijnen na te gaan of het bestaande Huis van Bewaring ‘De Koepel’ te Arnhem bruikbaar kan worden gemaakt voor een tijdsduur van circa 50 jaar, rekening houdend met huidige inzichten betreffende de huisvesting van gedetineerden. Vericht voor de Rijksgebouwendienst, Den Haag, door Rem Koolhaas, Architect. Londen. Maart 1980. Rijksvastgoedbedrijf RVB, Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, Den Haag, the Netherlands, pp. 5–11, p. 6.*

¹⁴ “Inventory on architectural quality”. Koolhaas, R., OMA, 1981. Inventarisatie Architectonische Kwaliteit (d.d. 15 juli 1981), in: *Renovatie ‘De Koepel’*, Arnhem. Office for Metropolitan Architecture Archive, Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut/OMAR/3400; Rotterdam, the Netherlands, pp. 1–4, p. 2.

¹⁵ “Programme of requirements for a House of Detention”. Koolhaas, R., OMA, 1982. Projectie ‘Programma van eisen voor een Huis van Bewaring’ op ‘De Koepel’ Arnhem (d.d. 24 juni 1982), in: *Renovatie ‘De Koepel’*, Arnhem. Office for Metropolitan Architecture Archive, Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut/OMAR/3400; Rotterdam, the Netherlands, pp. 5–16.

synthesise the entire discourse of the study with a selection of the most relevant diagrams, also including other very relevant ones. As prior reports of this period suggest, in these specific ones, the emphasis is set on the main statement, according to which, in the words of Koolhaas/OMA, “there is a clear congestion at ground level (...) if the programme requirements are met in the simplest possible way, it runs the risk of becoming built entirely” (Koolhaas, OMA, 1979–1988).¹⁸ It is worth noting the similarity—they were almost entirely the same—between this introduction and the one he later presented in the competition for *Parc de La*

A good sample of the study of the variants can be found in the report dating 1984 “Laatste Voorstel” (“Last proposal”), counting with five of them: C, D, E, F, G.²¹ In accordance with the latest requirements by the RGD, these should respond to a much more reduced programme, which implied a large set of changes to the project. Like the previously analysed diagrams show, the program was structured based on a grid shaped by three longitudinal bands —a/b/c— and four transversal ones —A/B/C/D. The podium that goes right through the entire enclosure of the prison is crossed by the two perpendicular streets that are located along longitudinal band b and transversal band B. By means of the layout of these two streets, the programmatic bands of the podium are connected between them, which is where the collective facilities are located, and also *De Koepel*, b-B, where they intersect. Group D, E, F preserves —almost entirely— the strategy of the proposal; the main change —common to all of them— is that one of the wings of the transversal street which crossed b-B and c-B is eliminated. The programme that was located in those areas of the podium is relocated in accordance to the new requirements in other areas which are preserved and which still stay very much the same as they were in the initial project dating 1980. The other change that is worth

²¹ "Renovation of 'De Koepel', Arnhem. Last Proposal". Koolhaas, R., OMA, 1984. *Renovatie 'De Koepel', Arnhem Laatste Voorstel (28 november 1984)*. Office for Metropolitan Architecture Archive, Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut/OMAR/3405; Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

mentioning—and which is also common to this group of variations—is the elimination of the satellite of *De Koepel* since it had been projected on top of the eliminated street, located in c-B.

Variations C and G of this sample deserve to be mentioned separately. As it has been mentioned in the previous ones, these base their organization on a programmatic grid, however, the strategy with regard to the actual proposal is presented in a far less categorical way. For instance, variation C changes it significantly. On the one hand, the reduced podium has been moved to longitudinal strip c, in a way that it becomes tangent to *De Koepel*, and, one only transversal street connects them. On the other hand, the satellites are reduced to only one, linked to another podium placed also tangent to *De Koepel*, in the transversal, access strip, A. In terms of variation G, the main interest of this proposal is that it anticipated in certain aspects the ones that will be developed in later reports, group A, B. It is worth mentioning that this variation is halfway between variation C and group D, E, F. This can easily be seen if one takes a look at the most representative aspect of the proposal: the streets which cross the programmatic grid. The partial elimination of these streets, as the study of the variants evolves, resulted in the initial X cross, turning into different layouts, such as a T (D, E, F) or an L (G), depending on the “wing” which was eliminated, and lastly, into one only street, I (A, B). This last group of variations, A,B, is significantly different despite it being based on the same strategy and the same method is used. The sole complete elimination of the transversal street already reflects it (Fig. 9).

5. The final result of the study: the final project (1985–1988)

In 1985, the RGD showed interest once again in the project that Koolhaas/OMA had developed for the *Koepelgevangenis*, this was because they were in need of more cells and there, there were many that were empty. According to what Koolhaas explained, the bad reception of the 1980's project by the RGD was due to the fact that they found “pride” in the success of the construction of “new prisons”, and the idea of spending money on restoring this “terrible building” seemed heinous to them. Therefore, if in 1980 it seemed “too soon”, in 1985 those responsible were different to the ones back then and the times had changed, so that is why they “found it all very logical and beautiful” (Goulet, 1985).²² The development of the project continued and everything suggested that they would be able to carry it out; during this period he had Michael Guyer as a collaborator (1985–1988) in OMA, instead of

Stefano de Martino (1979–1980). Due to this renewed interest of the RGD in the project, in an interview in 1985, Koolhaas explained in greater depth details regarding the beginning of the commission for the *Koepelgevangenis*; this new start gave sense to it. As Koolhaas explained, before he was informed, he already knew by the press, that the person responsible at the time wanted the architect who was commissioned the project “to fail miserably” (Goulet, 1985).²³ That looking back was not casual; this commission arrived at a crucial moment in time. In 1980, soon after receiving that commission, Koolhaas opened the office of OMA in Rotterdam, and received other commissions such as, for example, the *Boompjes* dwellings in Rotterdam and the *IJ-Plein* in Amsterdam.

In this later period of the project, Koolhaas once again reminisced the impression that 1979 commission had caused him, and how it rapidly caught his interest once he visited *De Koepel*. Just by taking a look at the description he did of that experience, is enough to understand the initial hypothesis of the project he was proposing. Koolhaas stated, “It is 100 years old and its ‘formula’ has already been inverted, the surveillance post had been transformed into a cafeteria for the guards who had to protect themselves—by using curtains—from the eyes of the prisoners who could move almost freely around the walkways!” (Goulet, 1985).²⁴ The project they put forward in 1985 and that can be found in the report “Voorlopige ontwerp: Verdere ontwikkellin van het variant A” (Preliminary design: Later development of variant A),²⁵ was

²³ “Trois mois après le jugement du concours de La Haye, le président du jury m’avait appelé pour m’informer qu’il aimerait que je m’occupe de la transformation de celle prison. Ayant lu le même jour une interview où il disait: ‘J’aimerais bien que l’architecte qui en sera chargé s’y casse les dents’, j’avais compris ce que l’on me préparait. Après avoir entendu sa proposition, j’ai été malade pendant deux semaines. J’avais 35 ans et cela me paraissait terriblement cruel d’être ainsi récompensé de tout le travail que j’avais fourni mais ma douleur a disparu immédiatement dès que j’ai visité les lieux.” = “Three months after the verdict of the competition of The Hague, the president of the jury called me to say that he wanted me to be in charge of the transformation of the prison. After reading an interview that same day, where he said that: ‘I want the architect who is commissioned the project to fail miserably’, I understood what was coming my way. After listening to what he proposed, I was ill for two weeks. I was 35 and I thought it was incredibly cruel that they rewarded me that way after all the hard work I had carried out. However, all my suffering disappeared instantly when I visited the place”. Goulet, P., 1985. La deuxième chance de l’architecture moderne, entretien avec Rem Koolhaas, Interview with Patrice Goulet. *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*. 238, April, 2–9, p. 6.

²⁴ Goulet, P., 1985. La deuxième chance de l’architecture moderne, entretien avec Rem Koolhaas, Interview with Patrice Goulet. *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*. 238, April, 2–9, p. 6. “Elle avait 100 ans et déjà sa ‘formule’ avait été invertie puisque son centre, le lieu de surveillance, avait été transformé en cafétéria pour les gardiens ce qui avait rendu nécessaire qu’on le protège par des rideaux du regard des prisonniers qui pouvaient circuler presque librement sur les coursives !”

²⁵ “Preliminary design: Further development of variant A on ‘De Koepel’, Arnhem”. Koolhaas, OMA, 1985. Voorlopige ontwerp: Verdere ontwikkellin van het variant A (6 mar. 1985), in: *Renovatie ‘De Koepel’, Arnhem*. Office for Metropolitan Architecture Archive, Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut/OMAR/3404; Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

²² “L’idée de dépenser de l’argent pour rétablir ce terrible bâtiment était odieuse pour les responsables du ministère de la Justice dont la fierté compréhensible était de réussir à construire les nouvelles prisons. Parce qu’aujourd’hui, il manque des cellules et que là, il y en a des vides, on m’a consulté de nouveau. J’ai refait le même projet et parce qu’il s’agissait de gens différents et que les temps ont changé, ils ont trouvé qu’il était très beau et très logique.” Goulet, P., 1985. La deuxième chance de l’architecture moderne, entretien avec Rem Koolhaas, Interview with Patrice Goulet. *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*. 238, April, 2–9, p. 6.

based on that same experience (Koolhaas, OMA, 1979–1988). Moreover, the strategy and the method that had been developed made it possible for the project to introduce the changes with regard to the programme which had been required by the RGD without it altering its general concept. Between the initial project (1980) and variant A (1985) there is a significant change which is introduced as it has formerly been mentioned; it can be synthesized by the change from there being two streets to there being only one. The grid for Koolhaas was a “manifesto”, “because of its semantic and technical character with regard to its design”, as Hans Van Dijk explain just after *Delirious New York* was published (Van Dijk, 1978).²⁶ Koolhaas had reasons to fear that “ambitious projects” like the one for *De Koepel* were left on “paper”, and that only those which had “simpler programmes”, would be the ones that were actually developed, in such a way, that these would be “the only visible thing by OMA” (Goulet, 1985; Van Gerrewey, 2017).²⁷

5.1. The final project for the Koepelgevangenis (1985–1988)

Coinciding with the centenary of the inauguration of the *Koepelgevangenis* (1886–1986) the final project was published in the magazine *De Architect* together with an article by Koos Bosma, titled “Van individuele dressuur

naar collectief tijdverdrijf: renovatie van de Koepel in Arnhem” (From individual tame to collective leisure: renovation of *De Koepel* in Arnhem). This was the only analysis on this version of the project, and it is worth noting that it is carried out without taking into account the development of the study by Koolhaas and the relationship with its theoretical and practical elaboration. According to Bosma, the RGD had “buried” Koolhaas’ project “for cost-related reasons”, and in 1985, it retrieved its validity because it contained a “metaphor” which served as a “model” for the renovation of almost all the existing prisons. In the words of Bosma, the “metaphor which did not become explicit” consisted of the “construction of *De Koepel* as an overheated Vesuvius which undoes all the redundancies”: all the “functions” except for the cellular one, were “thrown” there, comparing the new buried podium to the city of Pompeii (Bosma, 1986).²⁸ It is worth noting that the metaphor that Koolhaas did present explicitly, as it has been proven, both in the documents for the RGD and those for general dissemination, is very different to that interpretation of it. In any case, in this article, Bosma gave a very positive feedback on the “final” project, and critical on the “initial” one. For Bosma, substituting the “cross-shaped axial system” of the axes of the initial project by a “rotary system” enabled “greater flexibility”, since “in 50 years maximum, there will be a new eruption” (Bosma, 1986)²⁹ (Fig. 10).

Moreover, during this period, Koolhaas/OMA drafted a proposal for a “standard cell” for the three *Koepelgevangenis*, in Arnhem, Breda, Haarlem, and other existing prisons in Amsterdam, Utrecht and Den Bosch. On this occasion, it was not an exclusive commission any more, but a closed competition to which he had been invited by the RGD along with other architects who were already involved in the renovations of these prisons, and who, therefore, were already familiar with the complicated penitentiary system. The RGD gave great importance to the increase in efficiency and the decrease in the personnel needed for these existing prisons, and that is why the suggestion for the new design included the incorporation of sanitary facilities within the cells. As Janny Rodermond would point out in her article on the five proposals presented on the occasion of the competition, these “had a minimal budget to respond to the contradictory requirements”. On the one hand, “the right of the prisoner to privacy in his cell”, and, on the other hand, “the requirements with regard to control and visibility” (Rodermond, 1986). Within the cell, a series of activities had to be able to be carried out, they had to be able to: eat, take care of their bodies, sleep, study, rest, talk to prison personnel, work, clean and do some maintenance. Koolhaas/OMA’s proposal left the small space of the prison

²⁶ “Door zijn zowel semantische als ontwerptechnische aard wordt het grid tot een manifest, waarvan het programma uitgaat boven een verafgoeding van New Yorks stratenplan of Leonidovs plattegronden.” Van Dijk, H., 1978. Rem Koolhaas: de reïncarnatie van de moderne architectuur. *Wonen TA BK*. 11, 7–16. pp. 14–15.

²⁷ “Je suis sûr maintenant de le construire et cela me rend très heureux parce que j’avais peur que tous nos projets ambitieux demeurent à l’état de projets et que nous ne parvenions à réaliser que les programmes les plus simples, qui risquaient alors de devenir le seul ‘visible’ de l’OMA.” Goulet, P., 1985. La deuxième chance de l’architecture moderne, entretien avec Rem Koolhaas, Interview with Patrice Goulet. *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*. 238, April, 2–9, p. 6.

²⁸ Bosma, K., 1986. Van individuele dressuur naar collectief tijdverdrijf: renovatie van de Koepel in Arnhem, Netherlands. *De Architect*. 5, Mei, 85–90. p. 90. “Toen in 1985 het creëren van cellencapaciteit prioriteit kreeg en de renovatiegedachte gemeengoed was geworden, herwon het plan Koolhaas, dat aanvankelijk uit kostenoverwegingen was begraven, zijn levenskracht. Juist omdat in het plan nog een metafoor opgeslagen lag die model staat voor de renovatieronde van vrijwel alle bestaande gevangenissen. Die niet expliciet gemaakte metafoor is het koepelgebouw als een oververhitte Vesuvius die alle overtolligheden naar buiten werpt. De cel functie resteert. De diverse functies zijn ongeordend uitgespuwd, maar dank zij hun verschil in gewicht geordend neergeploft. Achter de koepel ligt, verzonken, Pompeii met de arbeid, sport en recreatie. Aan de voorzijde ligt de staffunctie en de kantine; de entree is verplaatst.” = (...) “The different functions were thrown there in a disorganised way, but thanks to their different weights, they have been deposited in an orderly way. Behind the dome, buried, Pompeii, with the work, sports and recreational facilities. At the front, the functions relating to the personnel and the canteen; the entrance has been moved to a different place”.

²⁹ “De eruptie heeft de al te nadrukkelijke opzet van het eerste plan door elkaar geschud. Het strenge kruisvormige axiale stelsel is vervangen door een roterend systeem van in aanzet aanwezige assen, dat meer mogelijkheden tot flexibiliteit inbouwt. Want uiterlijk over 50 jaar komt er een nieuwe uitbarsting”. Bosma, K., 1986. Van individuele dressuur naar collectief tijdverdrijf: renovatie van de Koepel in Arnhem, Netherlands. *De Architect*. 5, Mei, 85–90. p. 90.

intact, giving the prisoner a greater range of possibilities use-wise. Two elements are worth mentioning: the design of the sanitary installations as a piece of “furniture” —so that no partitions had to be introduced— and the triangular-shaped wardrobe —which eliminated the formation of a blind spot within the cell. The selected proposal was a hybrid between the one by Du Pon and the one by Koolhaas/OMA (Fig. 11).

5.2. De Koepel/La Villette: towards a “new definition of the culture of congestion”

The theoretical discourse in *Delirious New York* (1978) had an effect on the study and the project for the *Koepelgevangenis*. However, it ended up being far less well-known than other projects also belonging to those first ones by Koolhaas/OMA. Once having outlined its development, it is worth making a special mention to another proposal of that period, to which an allusion has been made in some of the previous sections, that is the one for *Parc de La Villette* in Paris (1982). The analysis of the project for the prison of *De Koepel* clearly shows that, even with such different conditioning elements to the project, this one anticipated issues which would arise in the conception of the project of *La Villette* with a greater repercussion. As it was presented in 1982, the project for *La Villette* was conceived “more as a strategy than as a design”. The proposal consisted of “a ‘method’ that combines architectural specificity with programmatic indeterminacy”, in such a way that it made possible that “any shift, modification, replacement, or substitution” was “to occur without damaging the initial hypothesis” (Koolhaas, OMA, 1983, 1991c; 1995c).^{30,31,32} The relationship between *La Villette* and *Delirious New York* was explained by Koolhaas some years later in “Éloge du terrain vague” (1985). In this text, he established a formal analogy between the plans of the section for the *Downtown Athletic Club*, “the essence of *Delirious New York*” —“a turbulent stacking of metropolitan life in ever-

changing configurations” — and the parallel strip of the plan for *La Villette* —“in this analogy, the bands across the site were like the floors of the tower, each program different and autonomous, but modified and ‘polluted’ by the proximity of the others” (Koolhaas, OMA, 1985; 1991c; 1995b),^{33,34} (Fig. 12).

Nonetheless, the implementation of the thesis of *Delirious New York* would follow a different path and would lead to a different result in the project for *La Villette*. According to Koolhaas, “where he has been able to truly embody a new definition for the culture of congestion” (Goulet, 1985).³⁵ That is why Jacques Lucan, in “The Architect of Modern Life” (1991), established it as a “landmark” in the development of his works as a whole, “the proper moment to manifest its ideas with force.” (Lucan, 1991b). The project for *Parc de La Villette*, as Koolhaas explained in “Éloge du terrain vague” (1985), could be, potentially, more radical than the section for the *Downtown Athletic Club*, where one could find “the essence” of *Delirious New York*. This was due to the fact that in *La Villette*, “the three-dimensional aspect” had been reduced almost entirely, proposing instead “a pure program, unfettered by any constraints” (Koolhaas, OMA, 1985; 1991; 1995b).³⁶ According to Koolhaas, just as how he described the *Downtown Athletic Club* for the first time in “‘Life in the Metropolis’ or ‘The Culture of Congestion’” (1977), “All the latent potential of the skyscraper as a type is exploited in a masterpiece of the Culture of Congestion, a Constructivist Social Condenser materialised in Manhattan” (...) “conquered, floor by floor, by higher forms of social intercourse” (Koolhaas, 1977). In this sense, the

³⁰ “Il s’agit moins de penser en termes de ‘design’ que de proposer une méthode combinant à la fois la spécificité architecturale et l’indétermination programmatique. En autres termes, nous concevons cette proposition plutôt comme une stratégie que comme un ‘design’” (...) “A la base du concept formel, le principe d’indétermination programmatique autorise toute forme de *mutation*, de *modification* ou de *substitution*, sans nuire pour autant à l’hypothèse de départ.” Koolhaas, OMA, 1983. Concours International Pour Le Parc de La Villette, Paris Décembre 1982. *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* 225, Février. pp. 73–75, p. 73. Concours, Project 327.

³¹ Lucan included a version in English of the descriptive text of the proposal by Koolhaas/OMA for *La Villette*. Koolhaas, R., OMA, 1991. *Parc de La Villette*. Paris. 1982–1983, in: Lucan, J. (Ed.), *Rem Koolhaas. OMA. Architecture 1970–1990*. Princeton Architectural Press, New York, pp. 86–95. p. 86.

³² Another version of the text translated to English arrived after Lucan’s, previously referenced. It is worth underlining an important change in the title. On this occasion, “Congestion Without Matter” was added, emphasizing on a “new definition of the culture of congestion”. Koolhaas, R., OMA, 1995. *Congestion Without Matter*. Parc de La Villette Competition. Paris, France, 1982, in: Sigler, J. (Ed.), *Small, Medium, Large, Extra-Large: Office for Metropolitan Architecture*. 010, Rotterdam, pp. 894–939, p. 921.

³³ “Si l’essence de New York en Délire se trouvait dans la coupe du Down Town Athletic Club—la superposition turbulent de la vie métropolitaine selon des configurations sans cesse changeantes—une machine offrant la rédemption par un excès d’hédonisme, un gratte-ciel conventionnel, à la rigueur banal, et le programme le plus extravagant imaginé au 20 siècle (...) Ainsi, les bandes qui traversent le site sont comparables aux étages de la Tour, chaque programme différent et autonome, mais modifié et ‘pollué’ par la proximité des autres”. Koolhaas, R., OMA., 1985. *Parc de La Villette*. *Eloge du terrain vague*. *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*. 238, April, 15–16. p. 15.

³⁴ The original title of this text is not “New York/La Villette”, as it appears to be so in this translation to English included on Lucan’s book (1991), but “Eloge du Terrain Vague”. In *S,M,L,XL* (1995) it does, however, appear with the translation from the original language, reading “Elegy for the Vacant Lot (1985)”.

³⁵ “J’ai découvert ensuite que, dans la pratique, on ne peut jamais réaliser qu’un nombre relativement réduit de ses ambitions; chaque projet répondant à certaines, jamais à toutes. Les seules exceptions, pour moi, furent les projets exceptionnels de La Villette ou l’Expo 89, où a pu vraiment s’incarner une nouvelle définition d’une culture de la congestion”. Goulet, P., 1985. La deuxième chance de l’architecture moderne, entretien avec Rem Koolhaas, Interview with Patrice Goulet. *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*. 238, April, 2–9, p. 4.

³⁶ “La Villette pourrait être encore plus radicale en supprimant presque entièrement l’effet à trois dimensions et en le remplaçant par un champ programmatique de pure forme, libéré de toute entrave”. Koolhaas, R., OMA, 1985. *Parc de La Villette*. *Eloge du terrain vague*. *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*. 238, April, 15–16. p. 15.

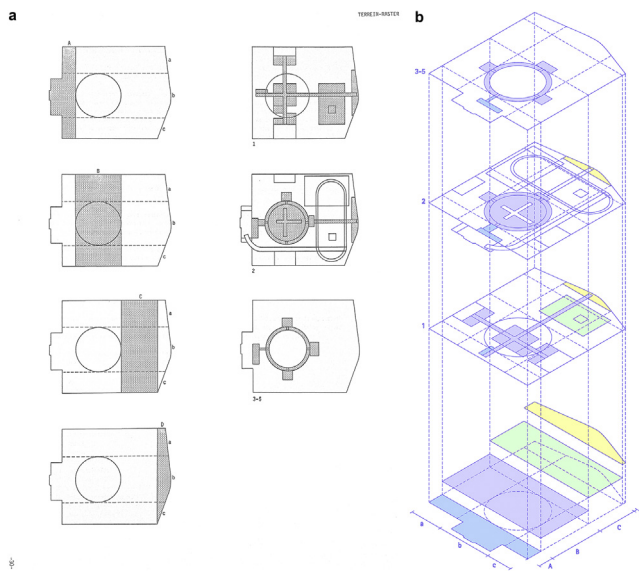


Fig. 8 “Terrein-raster” (Ground grid), (a) diagram of the study for the renovation and extension of the *Koepelgevangenis* by Rem Koolhaas/OMA, 1981–1985; (b) axonometric diagram, redrawn from those by Koolhaas/OMA. “Renovatie ‘De Koepel’, Arnhem. Structuurplan, eerste versie (d.d. 27 oct. 1982)”. Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut/OMAR/3401.

initial hypothesis of the project for *Parc de La Villette* was, from the very beginning, “how to design a Social Condenser, based on horizontal congestion, that is the size of a park” (Koolhaas, OMA, 1983; 1991c).³⁷ Finally, as Lucan would explain in his analysis, the proposal for *La Villette* provided “a method that advocates for the diagram as an instrument to conceptualise unstable programmatic data” (Lucan, 2015).³⁸

6. De Koepel prison as a “social condenser”

As it has been proven, Koolhaas had already introduced the relationship between the theoretical discourse present in *Delirious New York* and the project for *De Koepel* before *La Villette* and “Eloge tu terrain vague” (1985), a first proof of

this was in “Our ‘New Sobriety’” (1980). Here, Koolhaas presented two projects which developed an extension for historic buildings, the one for *De Koepel*, in Arnhem, and the *Dutch Parliament*, in Deen Haag (1978), both very different to the “terrain vague”—that is, a “wave, vacant, vague” ground—³⁹ of *La Villette*, in Paris (Koolhaas, OMA, 1980; Solá-Morales, 1995). Recently, Jacques Lucan, has underlined the importance of this text in “Système du diagramme (Rem Koolhaas)” (2015), arguing that it was, in fact, “a programme for the coming years”, where Koolhaas specified what “programmatic imagination”⁴⁰ actually was. Koolhaas described here OMA’s line of action as a “preservation and revision” of the tradition of functionalism, the one exemplified by Leonidov, Mélnikov and Hood, among others, and in his words, “that was a campaign of territorial conquest for the programmatic imagination so that architecture could intervene directly in the formulation of the contents of a culture based on the givens of density, technology and definitive social instability” (Koolhaas, OMA, 1980; Koolhaas 1991). According to Koolhaas, “culture” will be at the mercy of a cruel Procrustean arsenal—Procrustes was a robber and an innkeeper who made his victims fit his bed by stretching or lopping them. In the “new” historicist and typological architectures “will censure certain ‘modern’ activities with the excuse that there is no room for them, while other programs will be revived artificially simply because they fit the forms and types that have been resurrected” (Koolhaas, OMA, 1980).

In the project for *De Koepel*, Koolhaas did not suggest creating a current and soon-to-be-obsolete vision of penitentiary architecture. As Robert E. Somol would point out in “Dummy Text, or The Diagrammatic Basis of Contemporary Architecture” (1999), what he suggested was “to stage various diagrams of power”. Thus, it was not only a question of the appropriation of the diagram of the Panopticon as a “new organizational system” but generally “to understand (and configure) society as a plastic entity, susceptible to multiple (virtual) diagrams and possibilities for arrangement” (Somol, 1999). In this sense, as Robert E. Somol would note along with Sarah Whiting in “Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism” (2002), Koolhaas’ reference to the section of the *Downtown Athletic Club* or the “cartoon-theorem” from *Life* magazine, “alternatively enlists a vision of architecture as contributing to the production and projection of new forms

³⁷ “Ce concours revient essentiellement à orchestrer sur ce terrain métropolitain la coexistence dynamique d’activités x, y et z et à provoquer une réaction en chaîne d’événements sans précédent, en faisant interagir ces activités. Autrement dit, la question est de savoir comment, à partir d’une congestion horizontale, concevoir un Condensateur Social, à l’échelle d’un parc”. Koolhaas, OMA, 1983. Concours International Pour Le Parc de La Villette, Paris Décembre 1982. *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*. 225, Février. pp. 73–75. p. 73. Concours, Project 327.

³⁸ “Si j’ai choisi de commencer par le projet pour le parc de la Villette, c’est parce qu’il établit une connexion explicite avec les propos de New York Délire, donnant ainsi une dimension historique et théorique au développement diagrammatique, et parce qu’il avance une méthode qui préconise le diagramme comme moyen de conceptualisation de données programmatiques instables”. Lucan, J., 2015. Diagrammes Comme Structures, in: *Précisions Sur Un État Présent de l’architecture*. EPFL Press, Lausanne, pp. 17–40. p. 23.

³⁹ The text “Terrain Vague” was presented at the conference “Anyplace”, which took place in Montreal, Canada, in 1994. This was the fourth of the eleven annual conferences “ANY” by the *Anyone Corporation* which took place between the years 1991 and 2001. Solá-Morales, I. de, 1995. Terrain Vague, in: Davidson, C. (Ed.) *Anyplace*. Anyone Corporation/The MIT Press, New York/Cambridge, Mass., pp.118–123.

⁴⁰ “De plus, Koolhaas écrit le texte ‘Notre nouvelle sobriété’, qui est comme un programme pour les années à venir et dans lequel il précise ce qu’il en est de l’imagination programmatique.” “Dès ses premiers projets et ses premières prises de position, Rem Koolhaas affirme la nécessité de ce qu’il nomme ‘l’imagination programmatique’.” Lucan, J., 2015. Diagrammes Comme Structures, in: *Précisions Sur Un État Présent de l’architecture*. EPFL Press, Lausanne, pp. 17–40. p. 23.

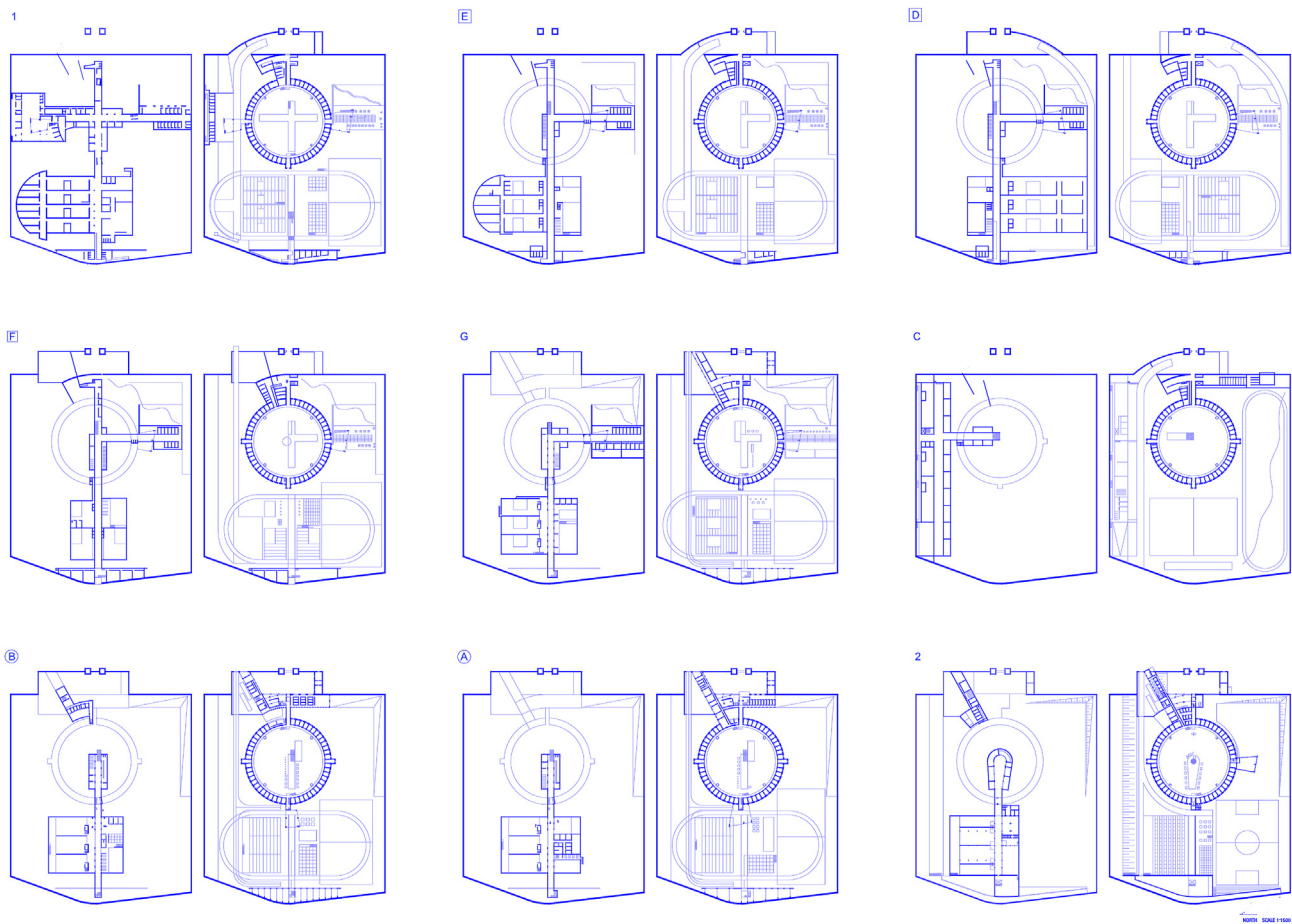


Fig. 9 Redrawn plans of the different variants, and also of the first and last versions of the project (1,2) for the *Koepelgevangenis* by Rem Koolhaas/OMA. C, D, E, F, G: “Renovatie ‘De Koepel’, Arnhem Laatste Voorstel (28 november 1984)”. Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut/OMAR/3405. A, B: “Renovatie ‘De Koepel’, Arnhem. Voorlopige ontwerp: Verdere ontwikkelling van het variant A (6 mar. 1985)”. Collection Het Nieuwe Instituut/OMAR/3404.

of collectivity” (Somol and Whiting, 2002). Moreover, as Somol and Whiting argued, the “skyscraper-machine” allows to “project” —infinitely upwards— “virtual worlds within the world”, and in this way, is an extension of the reflections by Michel Foucault on heterotopias and prisons. Deleuze asserts, in his analysis on the book by Foucault, *Surveiller et Punir. Naissance de la Prison*, that “the abstract formula of Panopticism is no longer ‘to be able to see

without being seen’ but to impose a particular form of conduct on a particular multiplicity” (Deleuze, 1986).⁴¹ This is why Somol and Whiting argue that Koolhaas’ investigation is diagrammatic in the same way that Foucault’s is, since he understands “Bentham’s Panopticon not simply as a machine for surveillance, but more broadly and productively as a diagram” (Somol and Whiting, 2002).⁴²

Due to all this, the conception of the project for *De Koepel* as a “social condenser” provides a different perspective on the “definition” —that would later remain as final forever— as a “Universal Modernization Patent” in *Content: Triumph of Realization* (2004). This concept was defined as “Programmatic layering upon vacant terrain to encourage dynamic coexistence of activities and to generate through their interference, unprecedented events”, and its initial implementation, *Parc de la Villette*.

⁴¹ “Quand Foucault définit le Panoptisme, tantôt il le détermine concrètement comme un agencement optique ou lumineux qui caractérise la prison, tantôt il le détermine abstraitement comme une machine qui non seulement s’applique à une matière visible en général (atelier, caserne, école, hôpital autant que prison), mais aussi traverse en général toutes les fonctions énonçables. La formule abstraite du Panoptisme n’est donc plus ‘voir sans être vu’, mais imposer une conduite quelconque à une multiplicité humaine quelconque.” Deleuze, G., 1986. De l’archive au diagramme: Un nouveau cartographe (*Surveiller et punir*), in: *Foucault*. Minuit, Paris, pp. 31–51. Gilles Deleuze’s analysis of Michel Foucault’s book *Surveiller et Punir: Naissance de la prison* (1975) (*Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*). p. 41.

⁴² “These New York frames exist as instruments of metropolitan plasticity and are not primarily architecture for paying attention to; they are not for reading, but for seducing, becoming, instigating new events and behaviors.” Somol, R. E., Whiting, S., 2002. Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism. *Perispecta*. 33, 72–77. p. 75.

THE MODIFIED PROJECT FOR THE RENOVATION OF THE PRISON (1985–1988)
BY REM KOOLHAAS (OMA)

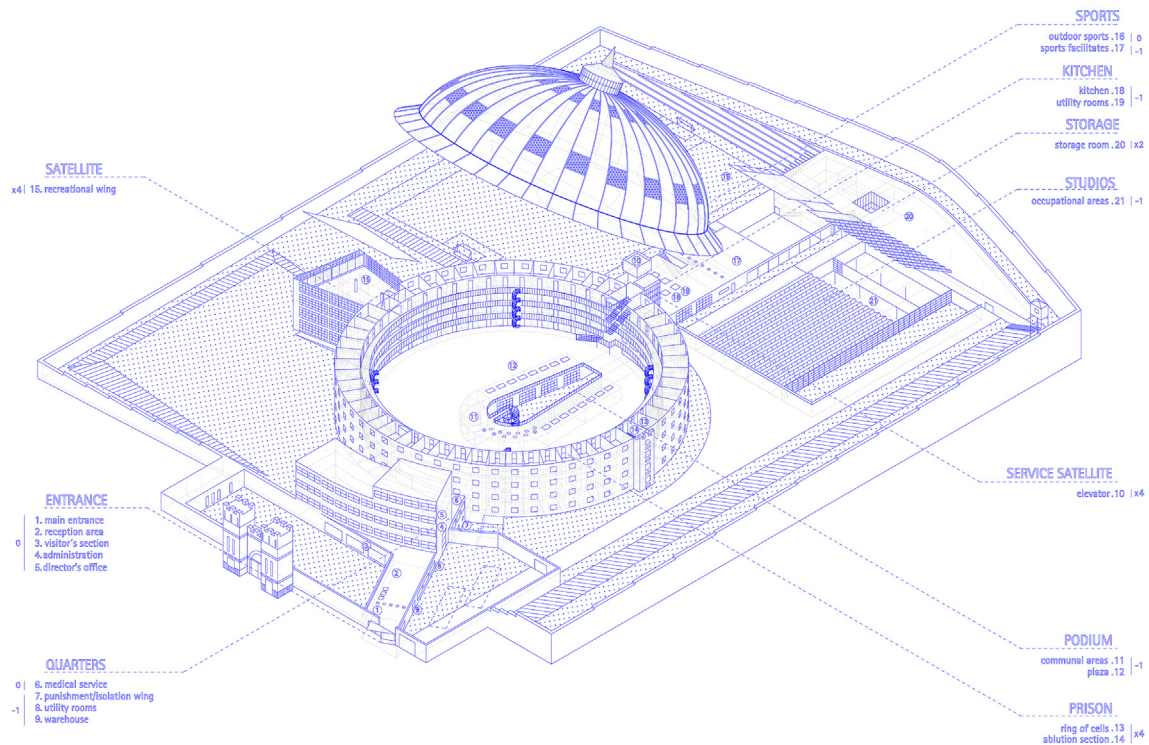


Fig. 10 Drawing carried out for this analysis of the project by Koolhaas/OMA for the renovation and the extension of the *Koepelevangenis* in Arnhem, the Netherlands (1985–1988).

By means of that “definition”, Koolhaas/OMA not only dissociated it from the Soviet Avant-garde, but he proclaimed himself his “creator” together with Zenghelis, and not due to lack of knowledge, Koolhaas had shown special interest on the subject for over three decades (Koolhaas, OMA-AMO, 2004).⁴³ For instance, the investigation he carried out along with Gerrit Oorthuis of the *TU Delft*, from which the article, “Ivan Leonidov’s Dom Narkomtjazzprom, Moscow” (Koolhaas, Oorthuis, 1974), transcended, is not negligible. As is not either, the trip they made prior to that to Moscow (1968), where, among other buildings, he visited the “dom-kommuna” (communal house) Narkomfin de Moisei Ginzburg, which he understood as a “diagram of emancipation” (Koolhaas, 2004).⁴⁴ It is worth noting that this “new definition” has received a lot of criticism among specialized authors on the subject, such as, for example,

Michał Murawski, who recently considered it an “appropriation” (Murawski, 2017). Even if this work is included within an investigation whose aim is “formulating a re-definition of the ‘social condenser’, deployable in the twenty-first century (...) to the design and use of the built environment itself” (Murawski and Rendell, 2017). With the “new definition”, in the case of *La Villette*, Koolhaas/OMA proved that a “park” is not a “programmatic non-entity”, and that it could sustain a programme with superior ease than the “city” (Koolhaas, OMA-AMO, 2004).⁴⁵

Thus, it is possible to infer what were the arguments Joost Meuwissen had in order to be able to outline his non-developed hypothesis of the project *De Koepele*, which was introduced at the beginning when explaining the hypothesis of this investigation. According to Meuwissen, “had the programme been uncomplicated, the design could have brought about the paradigm shift in architecture that was established a few years later by the ‘horizontal skyscraper’ for Parc de la Villette in Paris”. As he explained, “a pro-

⁴³ “Inventor(s): Rem Koolhaas, Ella Zenghelis. Initial Application of Concept: Parc de la Villette Paris France. Filed: 1982.” Koolhaas, R., OMA-AMO, 2004. Universal Modernization Patent. ‘Social Confurius (2000), in: *Content: Triumph of Realization*. Taschen, Cologne, pp. 73–83 and 510–512, p. 73.

⁴⁴ Koolhaas was able to visit the communal house of Narkomfin de Moisei Ginzburg, apart from other buildings. “Ginzburg’s Narkomfin, a slab of identical rooms, an extra-wide ‘communal’ corridor, and a separate cube of canteen and laundry: a diagram of emancipation”. Koolhaas, R., 2004. *Utopia Station* (2002), in: *Content: Triumph of Realization*. Taschen, Cologne, pp. 393–395. p. 393.

⁴⁵ “Abstract: Take the section of the typical skyscraper and put it on its side; now declare each floor a different program; distribute recurrent obligations mathematically across the site in intervals dictated by need; design one (or more) symbolic elements (1,2,3) to acknowledge “eternal” human values”. Koolhaas, Rem; AMOMA et al. “Universal Modernization Patent. ‘Social Confurius (2000)”. *Content: Triumph of Realization*. Cologne: Taschen, 2004. pp. 73–83 and 510–512; p. 73.

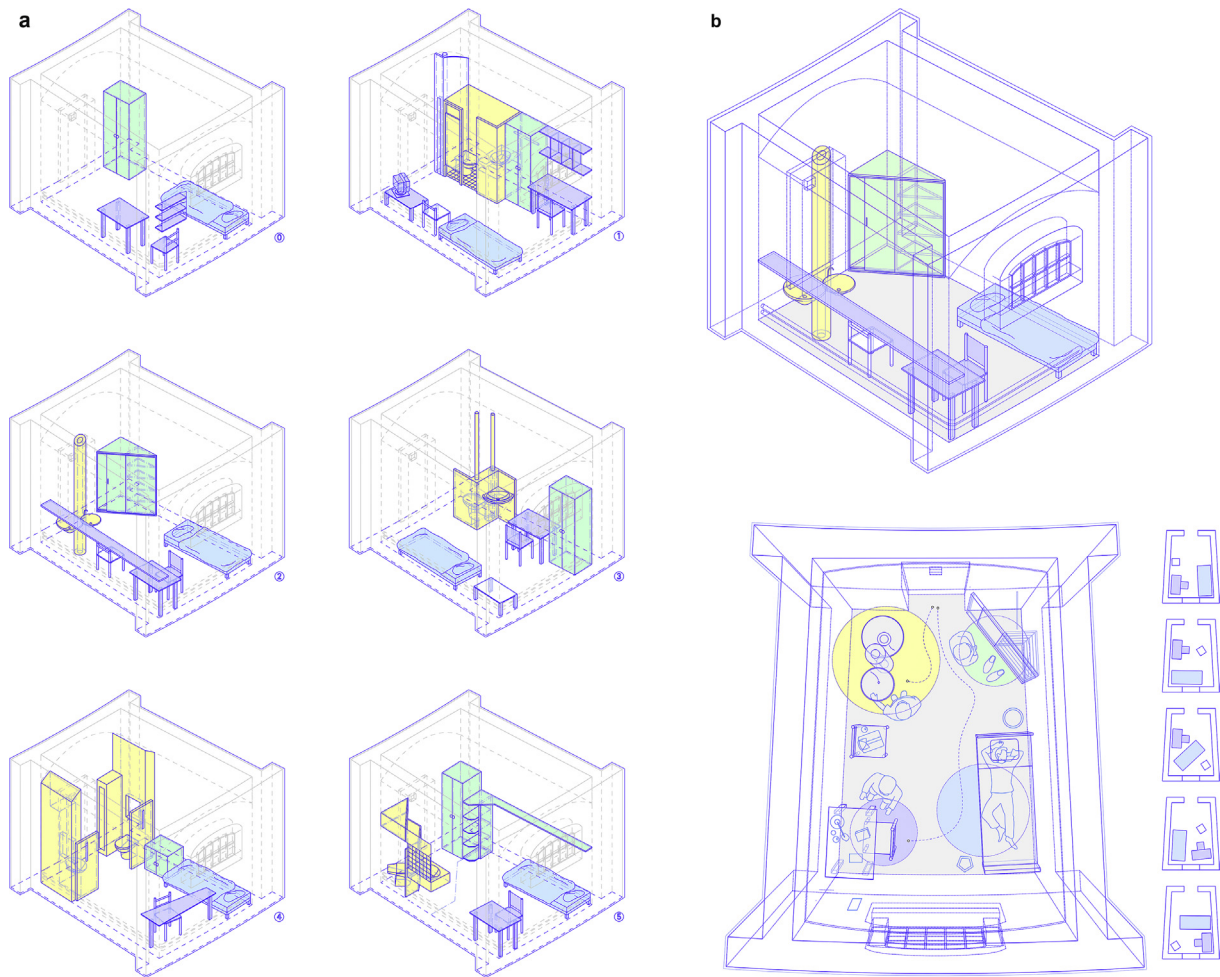


Fig. 11 (a) Different proposals for the design of a standard cell of the *Koepelgevangenis* in Arnhem, Breda and Haarlem, the Netherlands; (b) Proposal by Koolhaas/OMA for the renovation of a standard cell. Drawings carried out for this analysis of the project by Koolhaas/OMA for the renovation and the extension of the *Koepelgevangenis* in Arnhem, the Netherlands.

gramme of requirements is always too much for the available space". Therefore, in any of the projects, *De Koepel* or *La Villette*, "leave the space out, as a category, and the programme can be realised" (Meuwissen, 2015). In the analysis that has here been carried out on the project for *De Koepel*, it has been possible to prove that, in this project, Koolhaas developed his interpretation of the concept of "social condenser", and that it anticipated, from its own uniqueness, that "new definition". For Koolhaas, the building of *De Koepel* had the transformation capacity of a "social condenser", and it can be said, beyond the "Club" version he described in the *Downtown Athletic Club* (Koolhaas, 1978c; Fernández, 2014). In this case, since it was a prison, and a heterotopia —according to Foucault— it could be said that in this version of the "dom-kommuna" (communal house), these residents were an enclosed community of prisoners (Foucault, 1984). As he described in *Delirious New York*, "the Grid" —"or any other subdivision of the metropolitan territory into maximum increments of control"— describes an archipelago of 'Cities within Cities.' The project for *De Koepel* can be understood as one of those cities, "a skyscraper", and, as he said in "The City of the Captive Globe" (1972), "the

more each 'island' celebrates different values, the more the unity of the archipelago as system is reinforced"⁴⁶ (Fig. 13).

7. Conclusions

The project for the renovation and the extension of *De Koepel* prison is a very well-known project. However, it has been barely studied or discussed and, to those who have

⁴⁶ In *Delirious New York*, Koolhaas refers on more occasions to "Cities within Cities" or "City within a City", than to "Social Condenser". For instance, in the chapter: "The Double Life of utopia: The Skyscraper", in "Triumph", pp. 87–88: "That is a prophetic claim that unleashes one of Manhattanism's most insistent themes: from now on each new building of the mutant kind strives to be a 'City within a City.' This truculent ambition makes the Metropolis a collection of architectural city states, all potentially at war with each other." It also appears in "Appendix: A fictional Conclusion", where he used it by means of two projects: (1) "The City of the Captive Globe (1972)" p. 296; (2) "Welfare Palace Hotel (1976)" p. 304.

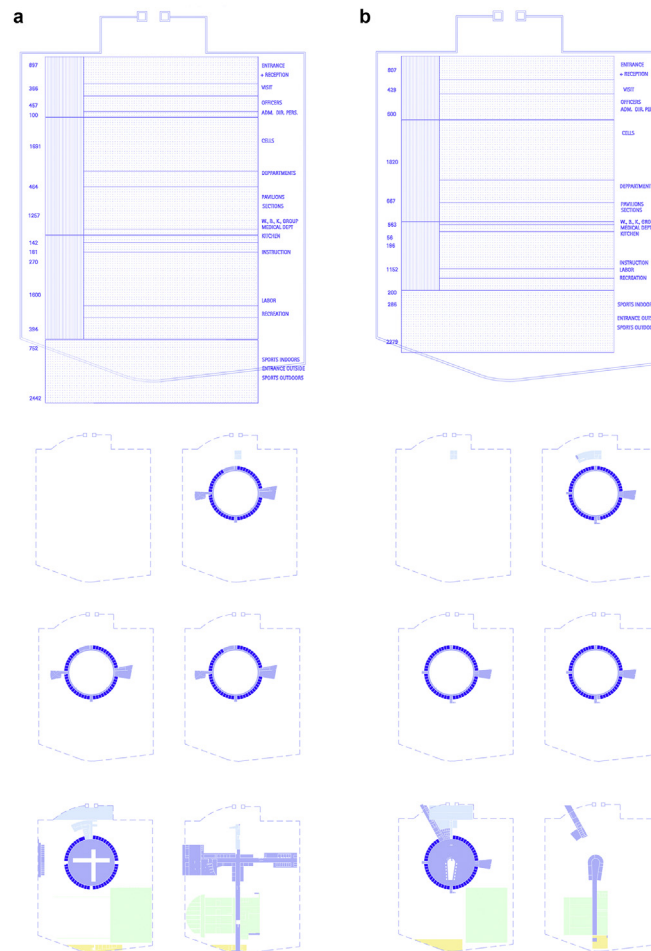


Fig. 12 Comparative analysis of the programme elaborated by the authors. (a) Project for *De Koepel* prison, by Koolhaas/OMA, 1980 (b) Last version of the project, 1986.

analysed it previously, it has gone undetected that it was only partially disclosed. This research stems from a series of inconsistencies and signs which seemed to indicate that what was really disseminated was only the initial phase of the project. Therefore, this investigation has aimed to broaden the knowledge on this project. By means of archival

research, it has been possible to prove that the project was carried out by Koolhaas/OMA throughout a decade (1979–1988). Thus, the focus of this analysis has been set on the full development of this project. The hypothesis that has been developed, was put forward bearing in mind that it is one of the first projects of what is considered as Koolhaas'

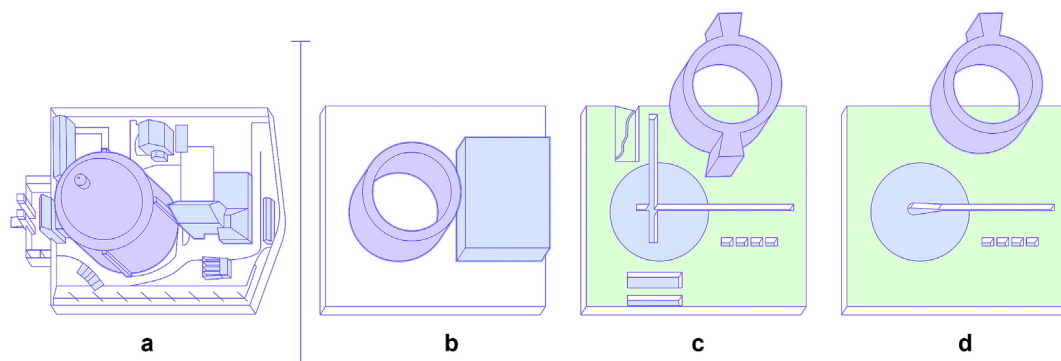


Fig. 13 Redrawn diagrams for this analysis of the project by Koolhaas/OMA for the renovation and the extension of the *Koepelgevangenis* in Arnhem, the Netherlands (1979–1988): (a) the existing complex in 1979; (b) the programme in volumes, *De Koepel* + the extension; (c) the initial proposal (1980); (d) the final proposal (1985).

"first decade as an architect" (1978–1989), and that it was the first one he developed during this period, without his OMA associate, Elia Zenghelis. That is the reason why what has been examined is up to what extent he applied his —then— recent thesis regarding "life in the Metropolis" and the "culture of Congestion", present in *Delirious New York* (1978) to this project.

Firstly, it has been the initial stages of the development of the study (1979–1980) which have been analysed. This has enabled to prove two key aspects. On the one hand, the conception of the project beyond the already-published documentation, which operates on the basis of the "two principles" on which *De Koepel* is based on: central surveillance and solitary confinement. On the other hand, the connection that Koolhaas explicitly made between this project and his own theoretical basis, more specifically, with his "new definition" of the concept of a "social condenser", exemplified in the *Downtown Athletic Club*. For example, one of the key points regarding the conception of the project is that, just like Hood "imagines and establishes on the 'floor' (=the surface of the earth) patterns of human activity in unprecedented juxtapositions and catalytic combinations", in *De Koepel*, as Koolhaas would underline, with no intervention whatsoever, prisoners could move around "almost freely" and the surveillance point had been turned into a cafeteria. Thus, it could be said that *De Koepel* had also been conquered "floor by floor", just as the *Downtown Athletic Club*, "by higher forms of social intercourse".

Secondly, by means of the analysis of the period right after the study (1981–1985), it has been possible to prove how the successive reports, delve into the development of the initial proposal, as well as into the development of the variants of the projects which were able to include the changes required by the RGD without them altering the transformation of the general concept of the building. In this part of the analysis of the development of the project has underlines relevant issues such as the importance of the diagram in the entire process. At the beginning of the study, it was mainly used as a drawing to explain the concept of the proposal. However, immediately after, diagrams became instruments throughout the entire design process of the project. The simpler initial diagrams, such as those relating to the studies of the different volumes, led to other more complex ones like those programmatic ones, density-related ones, etc. Later, in the end, these were used to carry out the development of a series of variants, from which, later, with some new —unforeseen— variation, the final project arose.

Thirdly, it has been possible to analyse the final proposal belonging to the last period, as well as the proposal that he carried out, specifically, for the renovation of the cells (1985–1988). The final project responded more accurately to the requirements by the RGD, since it grouped and considerably reduced the initial programme, however, in such a way, that the concept of the proposal was seriously diminished. Thus, it can be understood, largely, why for Koolhaas/OMA, the version of the initial project was the one that would forever define it. Throughout this investigation, it has been possible to prove that his theoretical discourse did have its effect on this project, and that the conception and the design of it as a "social condenser" happened before Koolhaas/OMA implemented it on other of

their first projects, much more well-known for this, such as *Parc de La Villette* (1982). Despite the fact that the project for *De Koepel* remained forever "on paper", its uniqueness and the reason why it is so interesting lies, precisely, in how he translated the thesis he had elaborated into a different specific architectural reality.

To conclude, it is worth outlining the limitations and possible future lines of research linked to this investigation. Koolhaas proved that the domesticity of *De Koepel* prison or the Panopticon prison, the emblem of Foucault's "disciplinary society", had already undergone a transformation without an intervention actually taking place due to a new way of inhabiting it. The proposal he put forward gave continuity to that change and transformed it into a "social condenser", making the Panopticon prison more inhabitable. Today, due to the pandemic, the fact that we have had to remain trapped in our homes has made us inhabit them in a different way, they have been both a haven and a prison. Among other things, this has been determined by the characteristics of the house itself: the dimensions, the heights, if it has a balcony or a terrace, if it opens towards a street or if it entirely opens inwards, if it has a large inner patio or a tiny one which barely lets any daylight in. Hence, it would be interesting to continue this research broadening its limits, establishing this very unique case study with other projects, such as others developed by Koolhaas during this period and which are not prisons, comparing their theses and designs when addressing the subject of the "social condenser".

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