

Reflections

The basic element of my proposal is that it is characterized as a research by design project. The final product of the design is strongly interconnected with the research that is conducted on the area in terms of spatial development and morphology, as well as in terms of an actor relational approach and the needs and demands of the different actors. In the whole process of the project, the research and the design were in a link affecting and effecting each others results. As it is shown in the strategy diagram (p.46-47), the results on the research on the governmental plan, the block typology and the actors' relation, are coming back to effect the vision, the actions and the final result of the design elements and process. The links between the research and the design make this local strategic plan, a research by design proposal on the potentialities of the urban morphology and actors of the area of Metaxourgeio with a strong focus on instrumental planning and collective processes.

The theme of the studio is focusing on the southern European countries, and especially in Greece and its capital city Athens, and in the effects on physical and social space that the economic recession that started in 2008, has. The economical crisis is a starting point of changes, since its effects have started to show in the physical space of the city center of Athens; demonstrations, inaccessibility of public space, squatting, violation against immigrants, etc. The social, political and economical context have influenced and still influencing the urban form and the people that live in the city today, have shaped the city and its use and influence the way asymmetries of the current system are shown through crisis. All these shifts in these domains are crucial, because they affect the urban space and the way in which people use it, in a capital like Athens. On this general context of the studio, I have chosen to focus my research and study on the area of Metaxourgeio, in the city center of Athens. The reason for choosing this area starts with the fact that the current vision of the municipality for the city of Athens does not comply with the current reality of the city center and the actors that are involved in the production of space which is one of the main reasons. This project wants to examine what happens if

we propose a strategy for the area of Metaxourgeio that takes into account the real conditions of the area and all the actors, visible and invisible, from the citizens to the minority groups (immigrants, drug-addicts, homeless). Based on that, in my project I recognize that there is no need for a production of something new in the urban space but a need for a redefinition of the already existing, recognizing and creating quality spaces that respond to the current conditions of the city center of Athens as these were explained and researched in the context of the studio theme. According to this context of the theme of the studio, the more specific location of the area of Metaxourgeio was chosen as an area in the city center of Athens that hosts all the conditions and asymmetries that were described in the general theme of the studio.

Previously, I introduced the general approach of this project in the studio context. The methodological approach of the studio starts from the phenomena mentioned above, the current and future trends of the shifts in social structure and the relation of public and private space as part of the asymmetries in the urban structure. These phenomena result in the problem statement of the project. After analysing a hypothesis for this research, the aim and research question are expressed. Following this, the methods are investigated and by investigating theoretical works and analytical methods a set of principles is developed. After following this line of methodology of the studio (explained in the diagram in p.20), I was led to a final output for my project, which will be the strategy and the urban design for my area of interest. The phenomena and the trends that were described in the problem statement are referring to the reality of the city of Athens as part of the context of the studio. Through this research, I elaborated my vision for my individual project, which has followed the same line of methodology with the studio, focusing at this point on the specific area of Metaxourgeio, analyzing the phenomena of this area leading to new problem statement (diagram in p. 22-23). Through out this whole project a strong line of methodology was followed, from

the studio context to the individual proposal. That methodology is based on the identification of the phenomena and the establishment of a problem statement and of a strong hypothesis that will lead to a final strategy and furthermore design proposal. It is important that there is a consistency between the methodological line of the studio's context and the individual proposal, and that is what the methodology of my strategic plan aims to accomplish.

As it was mentioned previously, there are asymmetries that form the social structure of the reality of the city of Athens in terms of different groups and actors. It is important to investigate the spatial structure of these groups. These are the groups that my project is aiming into turning them into actors, reacting to their needs and demands, understanding their contradictions and by doing that reinforcing the co-existence between multiple groups of actors. Another key-point that was mentioned in the problem statement was the 'fear of the otherness', which is strongly connected with the fact that there is no tolerance (see tolerance map, p.32) or co-existence or co-habitation between 'invisible' and the formal inhabitants of the central areas of Athens. This fact, combined with the aftermath of the economic and social crisis, creates a rejection of the authority and a situation of action and reactions that have a spatial impact (see map p.33 and p.34). This project is a way to evaluate the current trends and planning, as well as show the gap in the decision making that has led to the current situation, not only in terms of spatial formation but also in terms of social configuration. By recognizing the new actors, I can propose an urban regeneration project that will take into account the above and will analyze these potentialities into creating a better urban social structure for co-habitation.