Fear and Loaning in Athens
Shifting Perspectives of Space

Making the 'invisible' visible
a re-activation strategic project starting with the invisible groups and the spatial
formation of the area, using a neighborhood as the activator unit

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A re-activation strategic project starting with the invisible groups and the spatial formation of the area, using a neighborhood as the activator unit
MSc Thesis

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α **Introduction** / Εισαγωγή

As soon as the news of Alexandros Grigoropoulos's murder broke, a surprisingly well-coordinated crowd of people managed to bridge existing territorial and social distances to create fields and forms of resistance no one had previously dared to imagine. Vradis, A., & Dalakoglou, D. (Eds.). (2011)

Since the 1970s the world has been transformed dramatically under the guise of economic 'liberalization', political 'democratization', and socio---cultural 'globalization'. An entire generation has been shaped and defined by the precepts of the hegemonic neoliberal capitalist regime. The consequences are just becoming evident today as asymmetries in all fields prevail, while the economy continuously spirals in whirlwinds of small and large crises. Greece and especially Athens, as facing its 5th year of economic recession (Eurostat, 2012) constitutes an arena where the process of crisis is unfolding through several aspects of everyday life and that extends through multiple layers of the city (economical, political, education, commercial, etc.).

The economical crisis is a starting point of changes, since its effects have start 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 and it was motivated me into researching further the case of Athens.

Syntagma square
Metro entrance

Athens

β **Problem Statement /**
Προβληματική

The city of Athens the last 20 years, has focused its urban development in creating a multi-centered city as we can notice by the infrastructural and other big projects that have been planned and created in the periphery of the city. But from 2008 and the beginning of the economic recession, the focus has changed. The gravity point of the developments has now been shifted to the center of the city and to the fact that it has been neglected for many years. Big architectural projects and competitions for the center of the city are taking place, with an aim of creating a vision about Athens as a global city and destination. Most of the projects are still on paper and not realized, since the economic crisis started, and even though the conditions in the city have changed, the official vision for the city has not been redefined.

And that leads us to the question which is the shift in the conditions of Athens that require also a shift in the approach of a vision for the city? The city center of Athens has undergone many changes the last years, many of them are linked with the economic and social crisis, and that has affected the urban and social structure of the city, as we can notice from the historical (see conclusive maps of the timeline for the city of Athens) and urban analysis (maps of urban analysis) of the city. From the issues that strike me as more interesting are how the changes in the social structure of the city have created a notion of 'fear of the otherness' and on the same time have effected the public and private relation. The shifting of the social structure has created a notion of urban decay about the center of Athens, but the urban sense of decay is a nostalgic one, it reminds us of the way our lives used to be. The urban decay in Athens is reality now, the city has evolved and it just means that the way the city is experienced has transformed into something different. Moreover, these shifting conditions have a relational dimension to the city space, since they are in the dichotomized interdependent vision for the center, where individual and common values from different groups manifest creating between them the 'fear of the otherness'. As Néstor García Canclini (2004) mentioned, the differences that could be interpreted as cultural activities, are based in terms of a distance from the 'otherness' and at the same time demonstrates how an individual's identity and prestige is formed. To conclude, there is a dichotomy between the economic centered driving forces for the development of the center and the which is not correlated with them, so the city center needs a development project that will

The gravity point of interest has now been shifted to the center of Athens and to the fact that it has been neglected for many years, with an aim and a vision about Athens as a global city and destination.

The shifting of the social structure has created a notion of urban decay about the center of Athens, have a relational dimension to the city space where individual and common values from different groups manifest creating between them the 'fear of the otherness'.

dichotomy between:

dichotomy

economic centered driving forces for the development of the center

social reality

take into consideration the current condition of the city, the reality of the urban space.

The current condition, the reality of the city has been formed from the changes in the social urban structure, which are obvious in the public and private system. New actors are now involved in the formation and in the use of public space (see maps of immigration, homeless, drugs, action-reaction and tolerance). As we can see from the urban research, there are actors that are considered invisible from the formal plans and the vision for Athens. Immigrants, drug addicts and homeless individuals, even though they have an important part in the use of urban space, they are considered as invisible groups. The closed system that public space is considered to be, remains closed to them enhancing the notion of 'fear of the otherness' for the other groups and is an obstacle in their rehabilitation to the city life creating a vicious cycle of frictions in the city which is considered as a part of the urban decay and not as the reality of the city. One of the most problematic areas is the area around Omonoia square or the area of Metaxourgeio that my project will be tested on, where these 'invisible' groups are dominant in the public space and that creates frictions which in relation with the large amount of abandonment of public and private buildings in the area is translated as urban decay, while in fact is the reality of the city. It is understood by the urban analysis of the city that the shift of the social structure has a spatial expand and this is what we should tackle with.

Omonoia, photos by Francesco Anselmi
Source: www.lifo.gr

γ Hypothesis / Υπόθεση

The city of Athens the last 20 years, has focused its urban development in creating a multi-centered city as we can notice by the infrastructural and other big projects that have been planned and created in the periphery of the city. But from 2008 and the beginning of the economic recession, the focus has changed. The gravity point of the developments has now been shifted to the center of the city and to the fact that it has been neglected for many years. Big architectural projects and competitions for the center of the city are taking place, with an aim of creating a vision about Athens as a global city and destination. Most of the projects are still on paper and not realized, since the economic crisis started, and even though the conditions in the city have changed, the official vision for the city has not been redefined.

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The hypothesis is that by taking into account the above, we can create a new type of public space that attempts to tackle with the needs of all the actors and create space for co-existence for these groups by eliminating the conflicts. Margaret Crawford (2005) defined this new type of public space (that we can call common space) by the intersection between the individual or group and the rest of the city, a space where the city accumulates the multiple social and economic transactions. So, my hypothesis comes to tackle the question on how I can disorganize and, in a next step, re-organize an urban space that is already designed with a different aim. Based on that, in my hypothesis 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.

ANO KYPSELI

AMERIKI SQUARE

NEW KYSPELI

KYPSELI

ATTIKI SQUARE

GYZI

AGIOS KONSTANTINOS
/VATHI SQUARE/
AGIOS PAVLOS

MUSEUM/
EKSARXIA/
NEAPOLI

MONASTIRAKI/
PLAKA

KOLONAKI

KATO
PETRALONA

area of interest	official district boundaries	official neighborhood boundaries

official districts	official neighborhoods

OFFICIAL BOUNDARIES

This map shows the subdivision of the Municipality of Athens into districts and
neighborhoods in 1991.

SOURCE:
http://www.demography-lab.prd.uth.gr

17

δ

Vision and aims /
Όραμα και στόχοι

The question of what kind of city we want to have cannot be separated from that of what kind of relations to space, social links, lifestyles and aesthetic values we desire, which at the same time is connected with the ideas that urban spaces are prohibitory places that, with their physical isolation, foment the disintegration of the local forms of solidarity and community life (Bauman, 1999). As Marteen Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp point out: 'while urban designers try to correct the shapelessness of urban periphery by urbanizing it, in their attempts to regenerate the inner-city they adopt the organizational principles of the periphery […] its designs and principles of control are simply replicated in the city. Parts of the city are adapted to make them fit for the requirements of healthy house hunters and consumers who want a safe, controlled, and segregate environment' (Hajer et al., 2001).
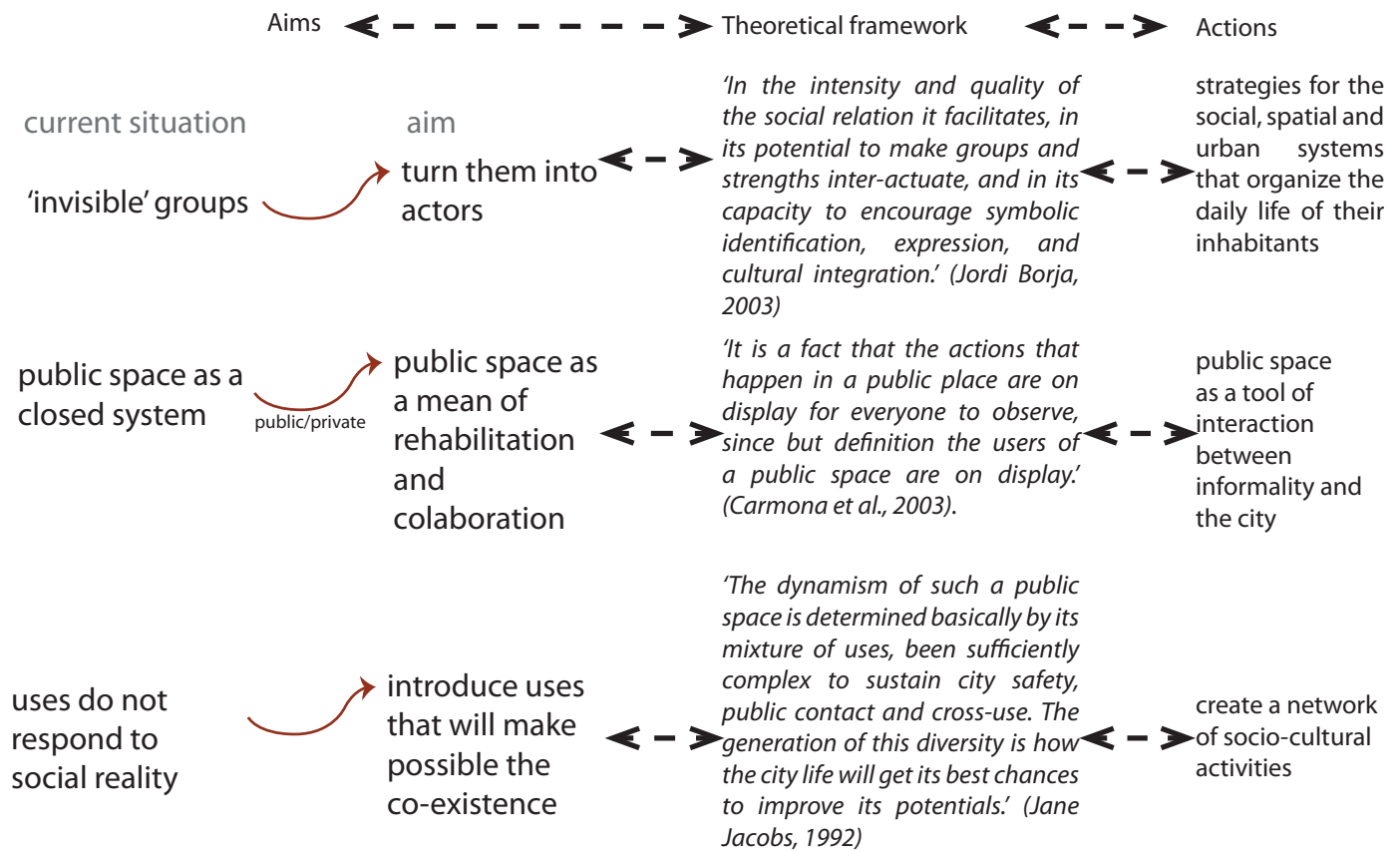
The vision of my individual project is to make visible the feared and the undesirable part of the city, from abandoned places to social groups. On the same time, it is difficult to believe that a city free from inner contradictions is either possible or desirable. It is part of the city life, and a characteristic of living in the city of Athens, to live in a realm of smudged and invisible boundaries, of friction and sometimes disorder but the aim of my project is to make these situations part of the city life by giving space for coexistence and actually tackle with the phenomena mentioned in the problem statement.

To start with, first **aim** is to recognize which exactly are the new groups of the changed social structure of the city, especially the ones that are considered 'invisible' like immigrants, homeless individuals and drug addicts, and make them actors that play an important part in the project since the vision is to give space for coexistence. As Jordi Borja (2003) points out, 'in the intensity and quality of the social relation it facilitates, in its potential to make groups and strengths inter-actuate, and in its capacity to encourage symbolic identification, expression, and cultural integration.'
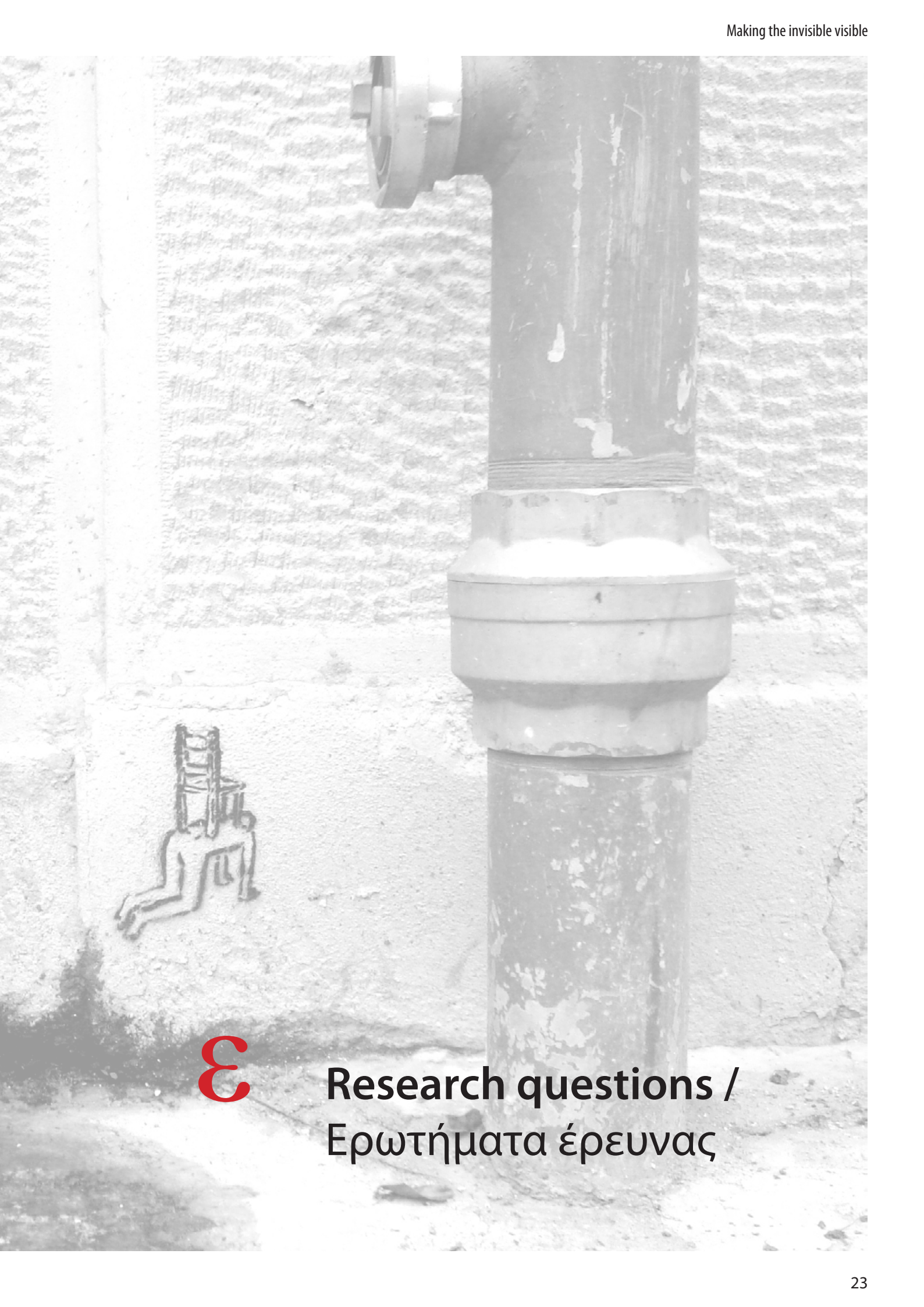
Then, another aim of my project would be to reconsider the relation of public and private spaces. Public space is a key factor in the permeability of the project, and public space in Athens until now is a closed system that does not work anymore with the changing urban and social phenomena. So, an important aim is to change the closed system of public space into an open one that will collaborate better with the private spaces and that will help with the rehabilitation of the new actors mentioned before.

But in order to do so, it is important to recognize which could be the uses that a public space like that should have in order to be the key factor in the rehabilitation and the visibility of these 'invisible' groups in order to create coexistence with the rest residents of the city. This takes us to another aim which will be to introduce uses that will make visible the possibility of coexistence of multiple groups without frictions. According to Jane Jacobs (1992), the dynamism of such a public space is determined basically by its mixture of uses, been 'sufficiently complex to sustain city safety, public contact and cross-use. The generation of this diversity is how the city life will get its best chances to improve its potentials.' Uses like that could be markets for immigrants, spaces where someone could practice religious tactics regardless their religion and other uses that focused on making the coexistence possible.

Aims ← – – – – – – → Theoretical framework ← – → Actions

current situation   aim

'invisible' groups   turn them into actors ← – →

'In the intensity and quality of the social relation it facilitates, in its potential to make groups and strengths inter-actuate, and in its capacity to encourage symbolic identification, expression, and cultural integration.' (Jordi Borja, 2003) ← – →

strategies for the social, spatial and urban systems that organize the daily life of their inhabitants

public space as a closed system   public/private   public space as a mean of rehabilitation and colaboration ← – →

'It is a fact that the actions that happen in a public place are on display for everyone to observe, since but definition the users of a public space are on display.' (Carmona et al., 2003). ← – →

public space as a tool of interaction between informality and the city

uses do not respond to social reality   introduce uses that will make possible the co-existence ← – →

'The dynamism of such a public space is determined basically by its mixture of uses, been sufficiently complex to sustain city safety, public contact and cross-use. The generation of this diversity is how the city life will get its best chances to improve its potentials.' (Jane Jacobs, 1992) ← – →

create a network of socio-cultural activities

ε Research questions /
Ερωτήματα έρευνας

In order to investigate how an urban design project, as mine will be, can be a carrier for co-existence and integration between different groups and actors and address the reality of the situation in the city center of Athens, the following research questions will be addressed.

How can a urban design project form a carrier for the integration and permeability of an area?

i. What strategy framework and planning instruments are needed to allow top-down urban proposals to work with local initiatives in informal and public spaces in order to improve the spatial conditions and integration of these areas into the city?

ii. What functional program and spatial configuration meets the different demands of the stakeholders and actors on the level of the municipality and the local population?

iii. What urban design recognizes local spatial qualities and potentials and uses these to activate the upgrading and integration of an area?

What are the needs, potentials, interests and conflicts at the local and the city level?

i. What functional and spatial program is able to meet most needs and demands of the different stakeholders and actors and create a common agreement between them?

How can the urban form and morphological characteristics of public space contribute to the co-existence of different groups and address the reality of the city?

What planning instruments can be applied that allow for local community initiatives to support a top-down urban proposal and the other way around?

Αχ, βρε
σύγχρονη
τέχνη

antifa X

... με ποιον
πας χέρι-χέρι ;

oh, you modern art
... with who are you going hand-in-hand?
on a wall in Metaxourgeio

WORST THINGS
OULD DO.

σт Relevance / Σχέση

_Societal relevance

The crisis of the economical system in Europe has resulted in an extended economic crisis in the so-called PIIGS countries (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain). Especially in Greece, the economic crisis has taken tremenderous aspects that make Greece to be in the center of interest for the whole Europe (as we can see in the international press). This economic crisis has leaded Athens in experiencing an anthropistic crisis. We can argue that a logical aftermath of the anthropistic crisis is the physical crisis of space and it is already happening. It is shown in the city of Athens especially in the way the users experience public space. Public space in Athens is a territory and an object of social conflicts. It was never owned by a particular group, and the use of public space is a way for different goals and multiple prospects of inhabitance to be established by different users who usually have conflicting interests. But now public space is re-invented by its users and we notice it in Athens, also though the interest that is taken by architects in re-inventing the public space of the city. This projects adresses these social needs by attempting to re-define public space and its uses.

Liberation, 11/2011
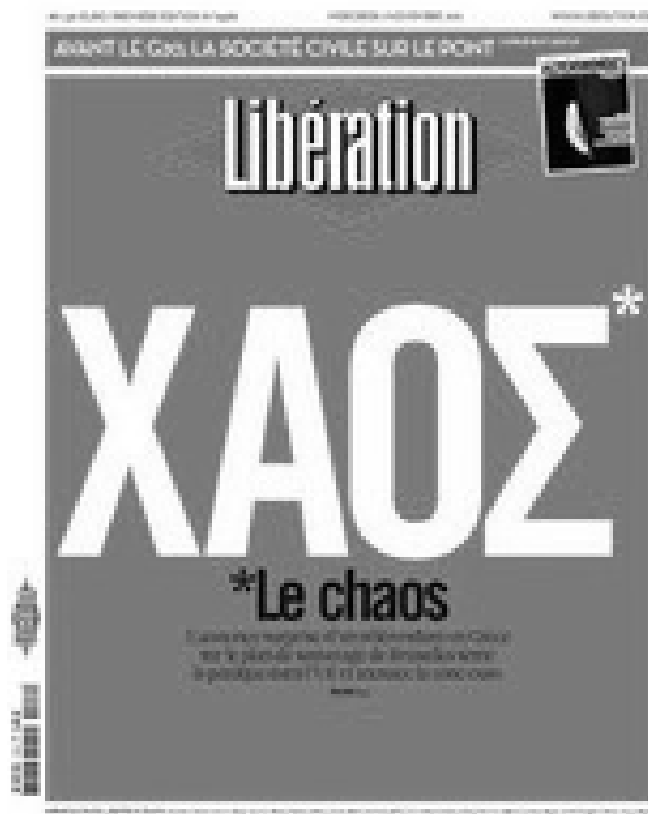
_Academic relevance

The results of the research and the design proposal aims contribute to the ammount of the discourses that concern public space, as an identity and as a place of uses and conflicts. In particular, it aims to give an understanding on how public space in a city is transmuting when the city is facing extreme conditions of economic, anthropistic and social crisis. The intetion of the project is to create strategies that will be based on policies (excisting or proposed) that will re-define the possition of public space in the urban tissue of a city in crisis.Moreover, the research aims to contribute into the academic field as far as identifying and categorizing public and common spaces in the city of Athens as well as in understanding the ways public space in Athens has transmuted through political,economical and social changes.

Theoretical framework /
Θεωρητικό πλαίσιο

1. Introduction

The city of Southern Europe in the last 20 years, has focused its urban development in creating a multi-centred city as we can notice by the infrastructural and other big projects that have been planned and created in the periphery of almost every city. But from 2008 and the beginning of the economic recession, the focus has changed. The gravity point of the developments has now been shifted to the centre of the cities and to the fact that it has been neglected for many years. Big architectural projects and competitions for the centre of the cities are taking place, with an aim of creating a vision of a global city and a global destination. Most of the projects are still on paper and not realized, since the economic crisis started, and even though the conditions of each city have changed, the official vision for the city has not been redefined.

And that leads us to the question which is the shift in the conditions of a city that require also a shift in the approach of a vision for it? The centre of a Southern European city has undergone many changes the last years, many of them are linked with the economic and social crisis, and that has affected the urban and social structure of the city, as we can notice from the historical and urban analysis of the city. From the issues that are distinguished as more interesting are how the changes in the social structure of the city have created a notion of 'fear of the otherness' and on the same time have affected the public and private relation and most significantly the public space. Moreover, the shifting of the social structure has created a notion of urban decay about the centre of the city, that is reflected in the public space realm by the actions that are taking place in it.

The current conditions, the reality of the city has been formed from the changes in the social urban structure, which are obvious in the public and private system. New actors are now involved in the formation and in the use of public space. As we can see from the urban research, there are actors that are considered invisible from the formal plans and the visions for a new city, as well as invisible are considered their actions on public space. Immigrants, drug addicts and homeless individuals, even though they have an important part in the use of urban space, they are considered as invisible groups. The closed system that public space is considered to be, remains closed to them enhancing the notion of 'fear of the otherness' for the other groups and is an obstacle in their rehabilitation to the city life creating a vicious cycle of frictions in the city which is considered as a part of the urban decay and not as the reality of the city. It is understood by the urban analysis of the cities that the shift of the social structure has a spatial expand and this is what we should tackle with.

The aim of the theoretical framework, is to focus on issues of public space through the actions that it incorporates, and also to clarify the effects of these acts in space. During the study of a specific space, there are several issues pertaining the actions that this space hosts. These actions can be embedded in the space program (formal actions) or occur, they can occur during the way the users inhabit this space (informal actions). Given the production of connections between space and actions, we could assume that there are potential effects of these connections related to space. They are also indications of the way we have experienced public space. By researching and understanding the meaning of public space and of the actions it incorporates, I can create the theoretical basis for my thesis proposal.

2. Definition of public space and the actions it hosts (the character of public space in Europe)

To start with, I am going to define the character of public space for the city of Europe. In the cultural background of Europe, we can understand public space as a system of social relations and interactions. As Néstor García Canclini (2004) mentioned, the differences that could be interpreted as cultural activities, are based in terms of a distance from the 'otherness' and at the same time demonstrates

how an individual's identity and prestige is formed within public space. Public space for the European city could be seen as a place-owner when objects or individuals are not present and as an index of a whole of multiple groups of objects and individuals that co-exist and their spatial connections (Shields, 1997).

Usually, there is a gap between public space as a product of design and planning and public space as a product of social actions. This notional distinction is not ideologically, and we have to understand that there is in the nature of urbanism. The result is that the only fruitful attempts to bridge this void between the designed-programmed actions and the actions that happen spontaneously in public space are those which present historical, political or social concepts. Extensive researches in France and Italy oppose to the notion of public space as an 'unadulterated form' to public space as a 'social product'(Tschumi, 1996).

Public space could not be considered as a product among other products, nor as an object among objects, but mostly includes objects and integrates their relations with co-existence and synchronization, their order or disorder (Lefebvre, 2004). It is the result of series of actions and it cannot be diminished to the level of a simplified object of design. Lefebvre (2004) refers to public space as social, saying that social space is the mean that allows new actions to happen, while on the same time promotes or prohibits others and in a general meaning social space implies a large spectrum of knowledge. The notion of public space can also be considered simultaneously as materialistic – through a system of other notions that unexpectedly attach to it – as well as a representation. By combining these two aspects, public space is not just a socially produced materiality but a socially produced – and strong – system of points (Wolfgang and Jones III, 1997). Public space implies, contains and obscures social relations.

Actions are an inseparable part of public space, and by the term actions I mean every human activity.

According to Jane Jacobs (1992), the dynamism of a public space is determined basically by its mixture of uses and actions, and the fact that is being sufficiently complex to sustain city safety, public contact and cross-use. The generation of this diversity is how the city life will get its best chances to improve its potentials. Public space is defined by the actions that happen in it, is constituted and composed by human actions, and at the same time these actions are the elements that permit this kind of structure.

3. Public space and its social relations

According to what has been mentioned until now, on how we define public space and determine the actions it hosts, we can understand public space as a field in which human actions and their relations are taking place. Urban public spaces are prohibitory places that, with their physical isolation, foment the disintegration of the local forms of solidarity and community life and actions (Bauman, 1999). As Henri Bergson (2008) supports, we can measure these actions, but for their quality consistency we need to resort to an understanding of time which is not spatial. Although, if we take into account that public space does not exist as a field of hosting actions but as an element of their creation and the development of the relations they form, then we understand that the social relations that they are form in public spaces are points in time and they occur due to the potentiality provided by public spaces.

The notion that public space is not a hosting field of actions but an element of their development, is not a usual one. Margaret Crawford (2005) defined public space by the intersection between the individual or a group and the rest of the city, a space where the city accumulates the multiple social actions and economic transactions. Mostly, public spaces are designed and created for a typical set of actions – what we call program or typical actions – and in this set are included the actions that users expect to find in public space. Though, in every public space there would be created another

set of actions that will respond to it mostly through social functions and will have developed strong links with social relations. Even a single action from this set of socially interrelated actions could set a start for development of other actions that could create social links with the public space their taking place. This type of spatial actions has the potentiality of creating and organizing the sections and the limits in which other social action will take place in public space. A social-spatial action could lead to exposition in plain view of the procedure, the outcome of which gives a character to public space and defines the social links that it will host (Wolfgang and Jones III, 1997).

Public space and the actions that are taking place into it are not always socially connected, which means that space does not always follows the actions but in several occasions the actions refer to other places, for example the reflection of actions that happen in private spaces (houses) on public spaces. Through time, this kind of actions become part of the identity of public space, while at the same time they do not personify space, and the intentions of these actions should be seeked behind their social relations. If these social relations lose their meaning in space, then the public space itself loses its meaning and its identity should be re-established. When public space has no meaning, none individual can exist in it, but from the moment that a user has established his identity in it, public space establishes the speciality of the character of its user (Strohmayer, 1997).

4. The relation of public space with the actions it hosts

From what it was mentioned in the chapter 'Public space and its social relations', we can come to the understanding that public space functions in a field of programmed actions. As Jordi Borja (2003) points out, public space constructs relations in the intensity and quality of the social relation it facilitates, in its potential to make groups and strengths inter-actuate, and in its capacity to encourage symbolic identification, expression, and cultural integration. This function of public space,

in many occasions, is trampled on by actions that have that exact character: to un-identify public space from the restrained form that it has acquired. These actions could include any type of informal and unprogrammed function of public space: they expose public space as a depended part of a system of spatial representations, they activate the blocked power of the social environment that gives the right to users to proceed to actions that re-establish the identity of space (Wolfgang and Jones III, 1997).

The actions and the effects they have on space, can be indicated in every public space. The type of actions happening though, have also an effect on space itself since the way a users interacts with other users in a public space – or even the way the user interacts with space – has an immediate connection with the actions that this public space hosts (Thrift, 1996). According to Pierre Bourdieu, actions are defined by the fact that their perishable substance is the element of their existence (Bourdieu, 2002). The significance of this reference is that actions only happen in relation with space, which means that space is a component according to which they evolve.

It is a fact that the actions that happen in a public place are on display for everyone to observe, since but definition the users of a public space are on display (Carmona et al., 2003). Moreover, the actions that are taking place in public spaces besides the fact that they are on display, they are also important to the users' sense of identity and belonging.

5. Conclusions

With my project I am going to add to the state of the art and the body of knowledge of public space and its socio-spatial relations. Urbanists are not designing the void; they are planning with the view that what is planned is not a void and will not be empty from actions and individuals. As Marteen Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp point out, while urban designers try to correct the shapelessness of urban periphery by urbanizing it, in their attempts to regenerate the inner-city they adopt

the organizational principles of the periphery […] its designs and principles of control are simply replicated in the city. Parts of the city are adapted to make them fit for the requirements of healthy house hunters and consumers who want a safe, controlled, and segregate environment (Hajer et al., 2001). As it was discussed in main body of this essay on the understanding of public space and the uses and actions it host, urbanism defines the field in which public space is evolving, designs the objects that contains and defines their positions. At the same time, plays an important role to the relations they form between them or with the users – in other cases it provokes them, in other it prohibits them but certainly it affects the way that objects and individuals interact. This notions of public space can be used as a mean to answer the problem that was stated in the introduction, and we can see how a new type of public space responds to the reality of the city centre of the Southern European city.

Previously, I introduced the idea of the necessity of understanding public space and the relations it can creates with the actions that occur within it. As it was analyzed in section 3, public space finally is established by the complication of the relations of its users. The substance of public space is not its material part, but the fact that in this materiality one can recognize the meaning of creating social relations. It is important also to understand that the relations and links between actions and public space are not unchangeable and not created in one time moment, but they are created through time and through events that happen in time which means that public space has the ability of adaptation.

The research of the topics mentioned in this essay, have lead to interesting conclusions regarding public spaces, the actions they include and their relations. Every public space – especially since it could be considered as social space – is experienced by individuals and concentrates social and other functions and is the type of space that could represent a solution for the needs of a new centre for the city of the Southern Europe.
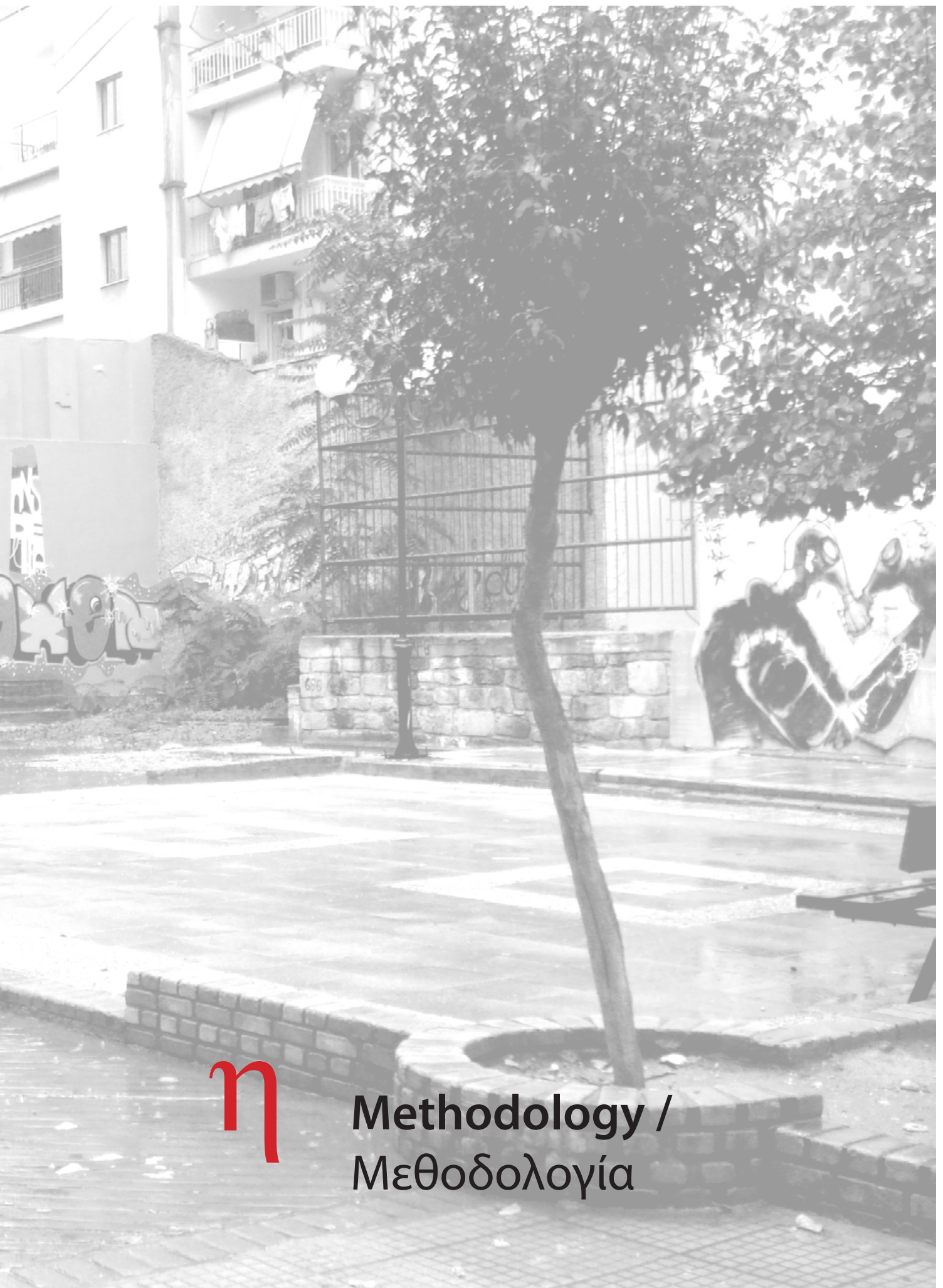
η Methodology /
Μεθοδολογία

In the previous chapters I introduced the general approach of this project. The scheme on the following page shows the methodological approach of this project. In the introduction of this thesis plan the current and future trends of the shifts in social structure and the relation of public and private space as well as the 'fear of the otherness' responses to the phenomena as they are illustrated. 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 instigated. By investigating theoretical works and analytical methods a set of principles is developed. Al these lead to a final output for my project, which will be the strategy and the urban design for my area of interest. In order to demonstrate how this proposed strategy together with the proposed system of principles can be used, a translation is made in the form of an urban design project. This output is then evaluated by reviewing the aim and research questions.

VISION/APPROACH

make visible the feared and the undesirable part of the city, from abandoned places to social groups

PHENOMENA

gravity point of the developments has been shifted to the city center

changes in the social structure

'fear of the otherness'

shifting in public and private relation

PROBLEM STATEMENT

a dichotomy between the economic centered driving forces for the development of the center and the social reality of the city

HYPOTHESIS

what happens if we propose a strategy that takes into account the real conditions of the area and all the actors, visible and invisible?

AIMS

recognize the new groups

reconsider the relation of public and private spaces

introduce uses that will make visible the possibility of coexistence of multiple groups

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
public space
actions and everyday practices
levels of social and spatial relations

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK
historical analysis
urban and spatial analysis
facts and figures
stakeholder map

PRINCIPLES
reconsideration of the closed system of the public space and its transformation into an open system

different set of rules that would make public space more flexible

creation of open common spaces, that will host the conditions for more and better communication and co-existence between multiple groups

give room to every inhabitant

OUTPUT

urban revitalization strategic guidelines   urban design

tested by

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How can a urban design project form a carrier for the integration and permeability of an area?

What are the needs, potentials, interests and conflicts at the local and the city level?

How can the urban form and morphological characteristics of public space contribute to the co-existence of different groups and address the reality of the city?

What planning instruments can be applied that allow for local community initiatives to support a top-down urban proposal and the other way around?

θ **Output** / Αποτέλεσμα

_Methodology

The task of making visible the feared and the undesirable is strongly connected with the public and private division of space, as it was mentioned previously. That leads us to the hypothesis mentioned above that, since we understand the phenomena described before and the need of a reconsideration of the closed system of the public space and its transformation into an open system, we need a new type of space to tackle the phenomena – a semi-public space or a collective or common space. The hypothesis is based on the fact that this new type of space could embody characteristics of both private and public space and could function under a different set of rules that would make it more flexible to the needs of different groups so as to eliminate frictions.

Methodgy

The phenomena and the trends that were described in the problem statement are referring to the reality of the city of Athens. The historical and urban analysis for the city was conducted by a collective work we did under the studio 'Fear and loaning in Athens'. Through this research, I elaborated my vision for my individual project. In the following diagram, I show the structure of the methodology that was followed in order to formulate the output and reach a final output.
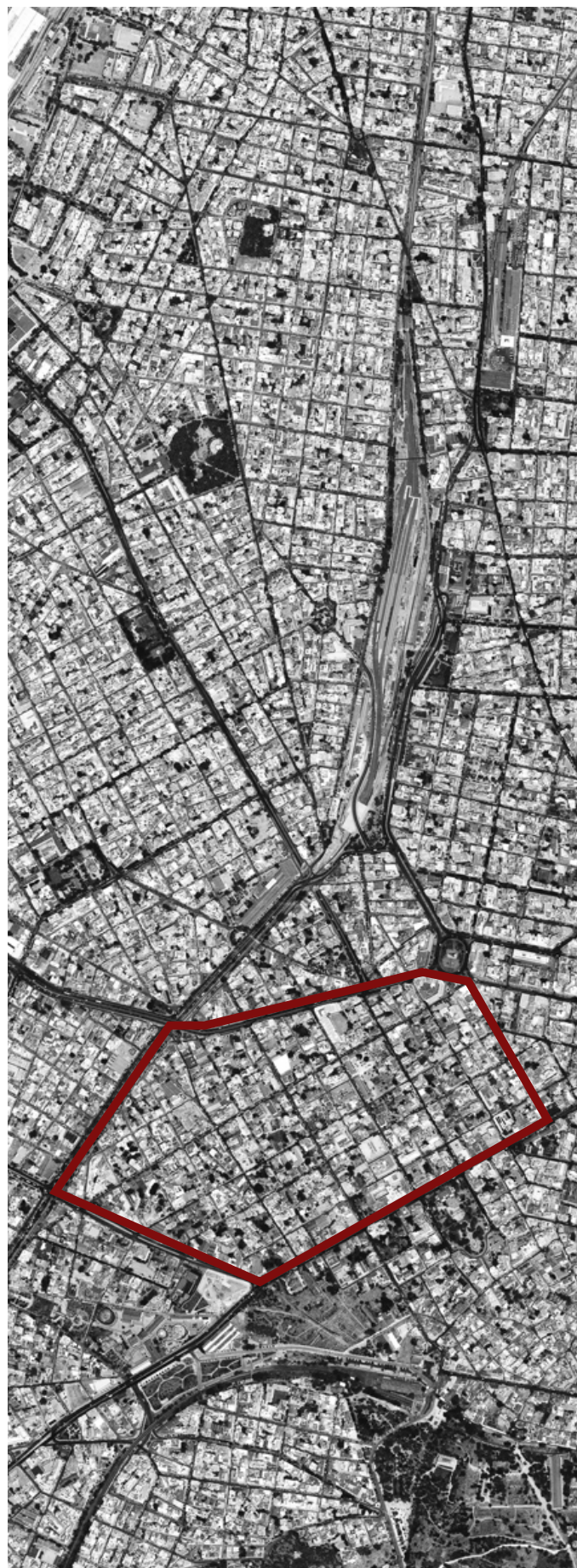
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
strategies for the social, spatial and urban systems and
networks that organize the daily life of their inhabitants
(Jordi Borja, Mathew Carmona, Jane Jacobs)
fragmentation (Daniel Kozak)

APPROACH

MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE :
by identifying the socially disadvantaged
groups & progressivelly and activelly
intergrate them into a neighborhood
structure

OBSERVATION
the current fragmentation between the urban form and its functional connections
and disconnections are clearly expressed in the city center, which is what is
considered as a process of decay in the curent functional meaning of the center

**considering
regulation policies** → **dichotomy** ← **considering the
morphology of the
area and of the
block type**
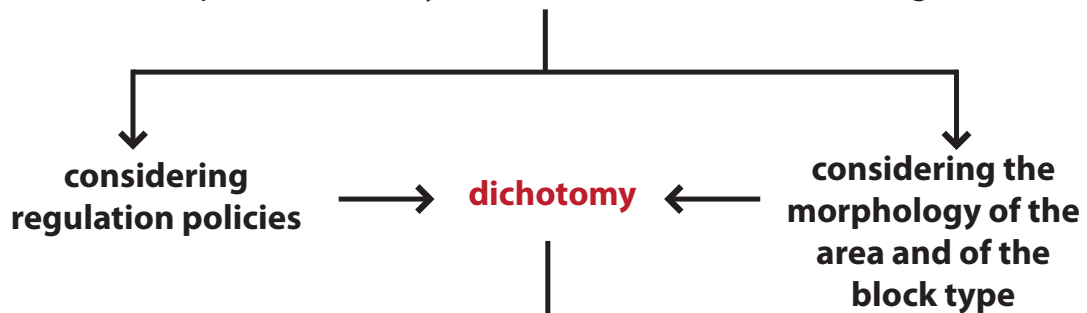
the current structure or the governmental plans are not viable anymore
since they are not updated according to the existing actors and functions
of the area

the reality of the condition of the city center is considered as functional
decay on the role of the center of the city (less functions/more
abandonment) on its links to other urban and regional nodes, combined
with the informality of the use of space and its functions contribute to the
center's stagnation and decay

1.

2.
p

3.

4.

HYPOTHESIS

the current situation and the governmental plans are not responding to the reality or the demands of the area and its actors. **However,** by taking into consideration the morphology of the area and its spatial demands a new active space can be formalized, consisted of a neighborhood as a basic activator (socio-spatially) with a new type of block that could respond to the current demands and could be connected with the rest of the city.

how?

regulate & activate the invisible groups through progressivelly evolving actions & functions

identifying, using & expanding the spatial potentialities of the built environment

re-activation of blocks through space and functions

abandonment

empty plots

a re-activation strategic project starting with the invisible groups and the spatial formation of the area, using a neighborhood as the activator unit

actions

. define & map the invisible & visible groups

. define & analyze the spatial & functional potentialities of the block

. define & map the key-challenge & conflicts

. recognize & define the flows and functions

urban and social analysis

design project

strategic goal

key-factor of the project is to reset the identity of the block

45

_Case studies

In order to formulate a spatial strategy and an urban design project, I have studied a number of projects. In the following pages, I describe two projects that have influenced more my strategy.

1. Prinzessinengarten in Berlin

A reference of a similar plan, is the Prinzessinengarten in Berlin. This garden is a temporary garden in the centre of Berlin. The land of 6,000 square meters, rented from the organization "Liegenschaftsfond Berlin" which owns and manages a high number of empty buildings and lands in Berlin, is transformed into an urban garden and plantation. There is no certainty about the future development perspectives on the long term, therefore the garden is developed in a certain way so it can move quite easily. The buildings exist of containers and the plants grow in boxes, bags and recycled packaging. This allows for the garden to be mobile and flexible to move to other areas if needed, moreover even moving to a paved surface would be possible.

The initiator of the plan, the organization "Nomadic Grün", wanted to revitalize the empty area and to provide more green in a part of the city that is characterized by a high density, little green and social problems. The organization involves a wide group of residents and others interested in her activities - including organic cultivation of vegetables and herbs. The income from a cafe and restaurant in the garden contribute to the expenses.

This reference is interesting for two reasons. First, it provides a scenario where there is no large investor, like a project developer, for the development of this empty piece of land and the regeneration of the whole area. Second, it illustrates that also with small means a (temporary) transformation and flexible program in an area is possible.

2. Villa Tranquila in Buenos Aires (Janches,2011)

Villa Tranquila is situated in the Municipality of Avellaneda, in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires. The Municipality of Avellaneda has a project for the building of new housing and for infrastructural improvement in the villa. Also the critical evaluation of this project, and its comparison and integration with the proposed projects, make Villa Tranquila a settlement of special interest to undertake an urban improvement initiative.

The project can be summarized in four basic key-points:
1. The strategies of urban projects in informal settlements take, as a starting point, an understanding of the social, spatial and urban systems that organize the daily life of their inhabitants.
2. The project strategies try to formulate not only a permanent and unchanging model of spatial production, but also a network of socio-cultural activities that, through its evolution, adaptation, and interaction will produce the process of recovery of the settlements' context.
3. The tool, and at the same time the main purpose of the project, is public space, since it is through this that a new form of interaction between slum and city can be generated.
4. Rather than establish a definite design, the project aims to generate a process for a viable future evolution; for that, it must be flexible, that is, adaptable to the modifications and limitations that could come up through its development, and also to the use of the urban environment by the inhabitants, as well as to possible budget constraints.

This case study provides insight on how to use different tools in order to come to terms with the informality of an area as well as keeping that character as an identity while at the same time takes a deep consideration on the social, spatial and urban systems of an area.

_The evolution of the building block and the inner courtyard

In order to spatially formulate the hypothesis I have to identify an urban space that could be transformed into the new type of common space. One of the most undesirable and unused space in Athens in the inside of a city block, a private space that is totally neglected. With my project, I intend in using these spaces by transforming them into a common space of multiple uses (uses that will respond to the needs of different and multiple social groups as I mentioned before), unify them in a network of common spaces hidden in the center of a building block and connecting them with the formal public space of the city through abandoned open spaces or through the ground floor of a 'polykatoikia' (the typical greek apartment building). The relation of private and public will be re-established by creating a common space in the middle of a private space and by doing that in the middle of a building block it will be possible not only to re-establish the connection of public and private but also through this connection to re-establish the social links between groups. Since the output is intended to be a network, I am planning of focusing in different parts of an area in order to make visible the different character that this network of common spaces will have in every area according to its needs but also according to the needs of the different actors.

In order to understand the significance of the inner courtyard for the Greek building block we should take into account the evolution of the building block through time. In that we can see how the inner courtyard was formed through the years. But even though it is a typical characteristic of the Greek urban tissue, it is also one of the most unused and undesirable part of the block. This happens due to the fact that there are multiple ownerships playing a role in the inner courtyard and the current policies do not facilitate any project that could change that. That means that there is a need for a change in policies that would make an intervention possible.

An inner courtyard in Metaxourgeio

- 1830
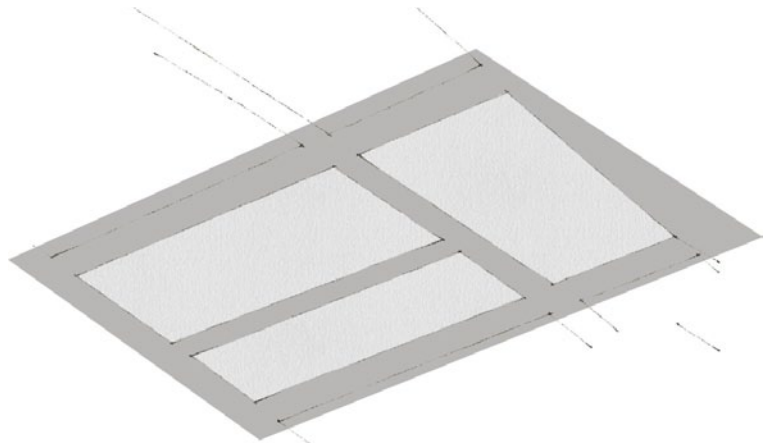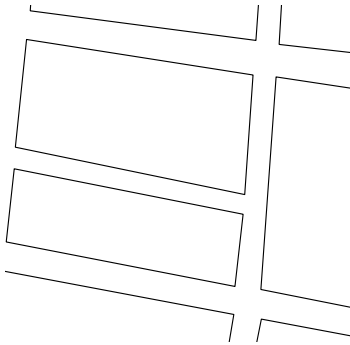
1830 - 1910
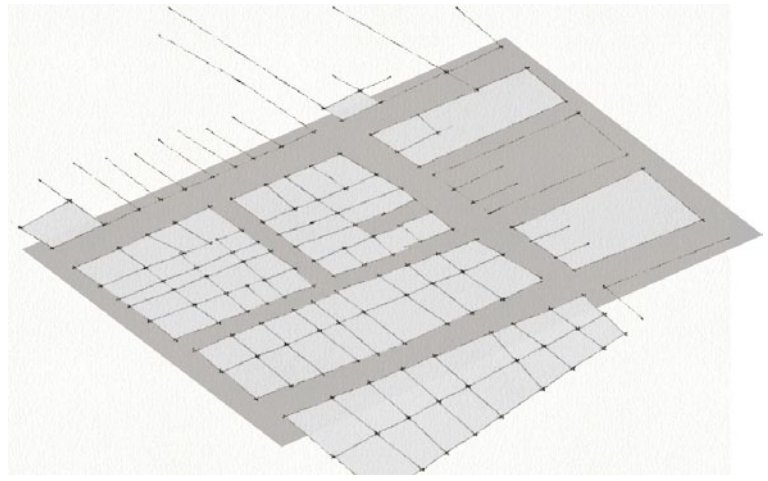
1910 - 1930
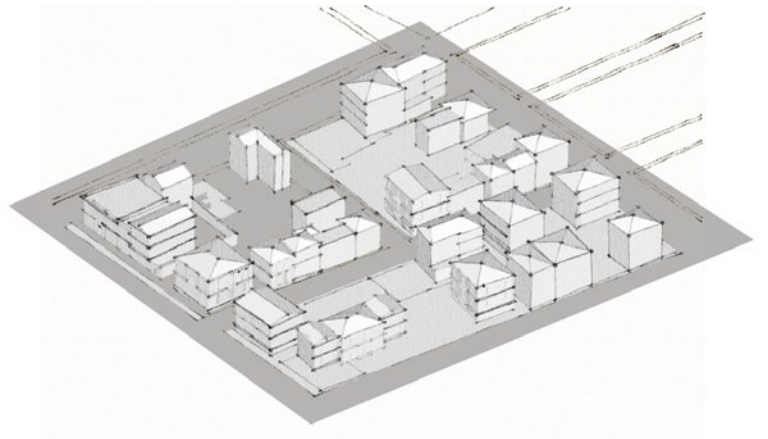
1930 - 1950
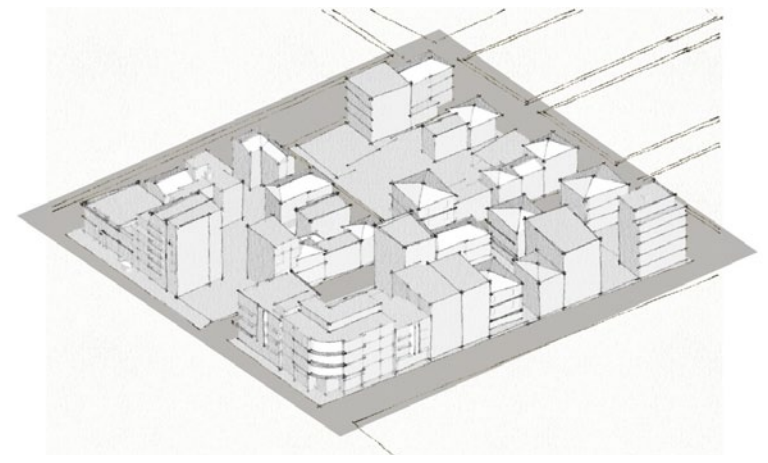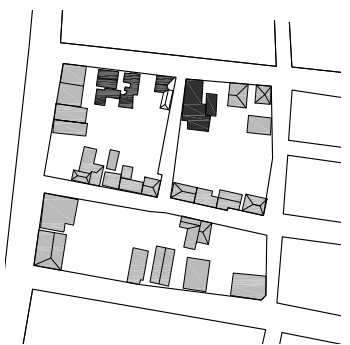
1950 - 1970
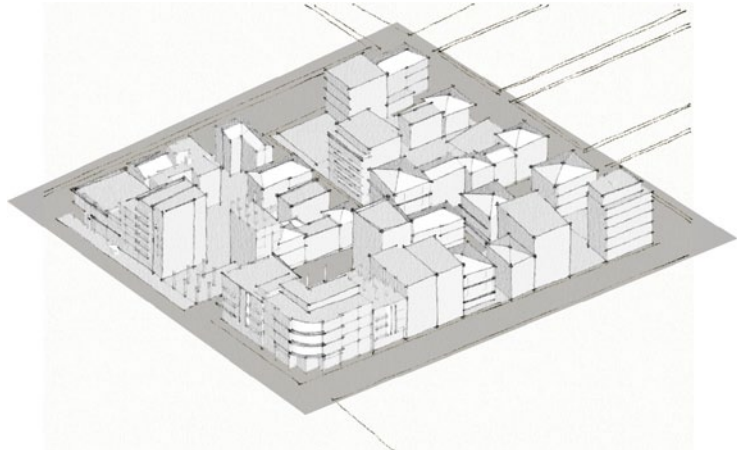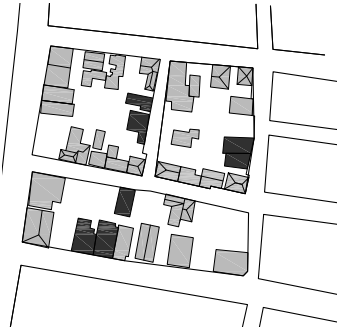
1970 - 1990
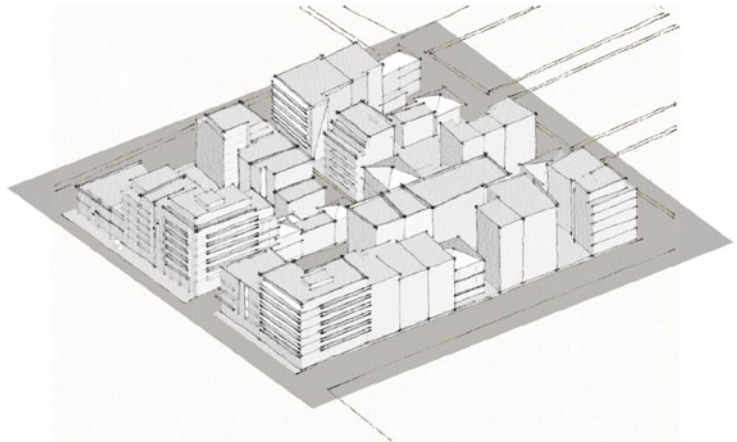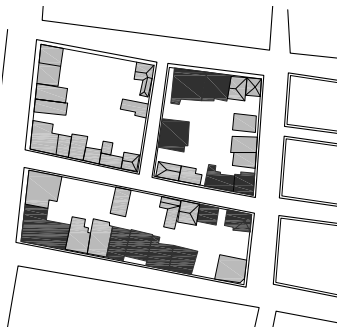
1990 - 2012
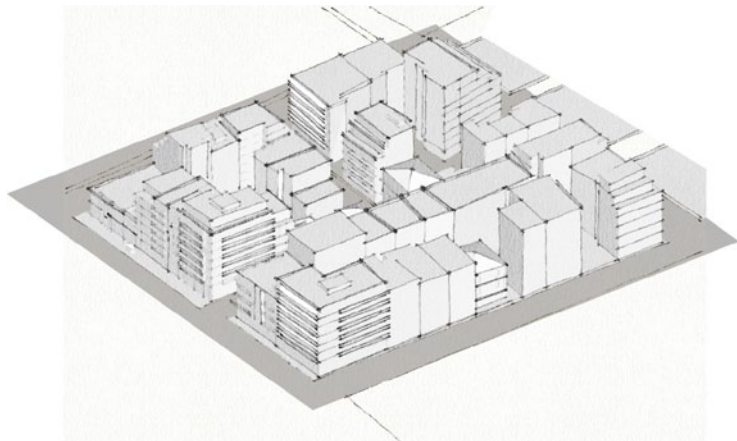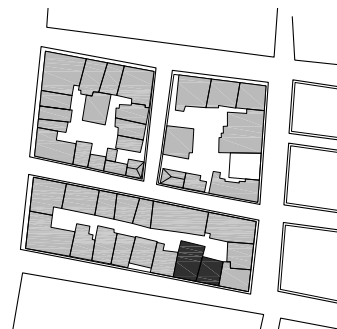
2012 -
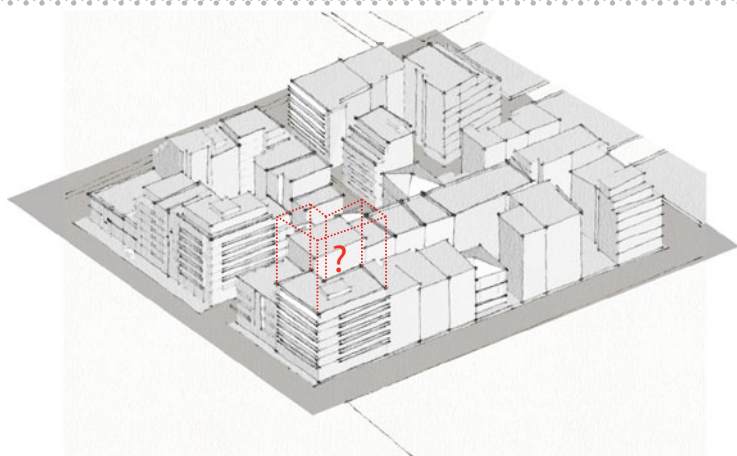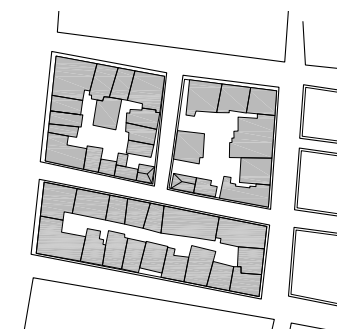
_'Invisible' groups and the 'fear of the otherness'

Previously, I have mentioned the 'invisible' groups that form the social structure of the reality of the city of Athens. It is important to investigate the spatial structure of these groups, which are mentioned in the next diagram. 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, p32) 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.58 and p.59).

This project is a way to evaluate the current trends and planning, as well as show the gap in the decision making that has lead to the current situation. 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 structure for co-habitation.

500m

0m   250m   1000m

N
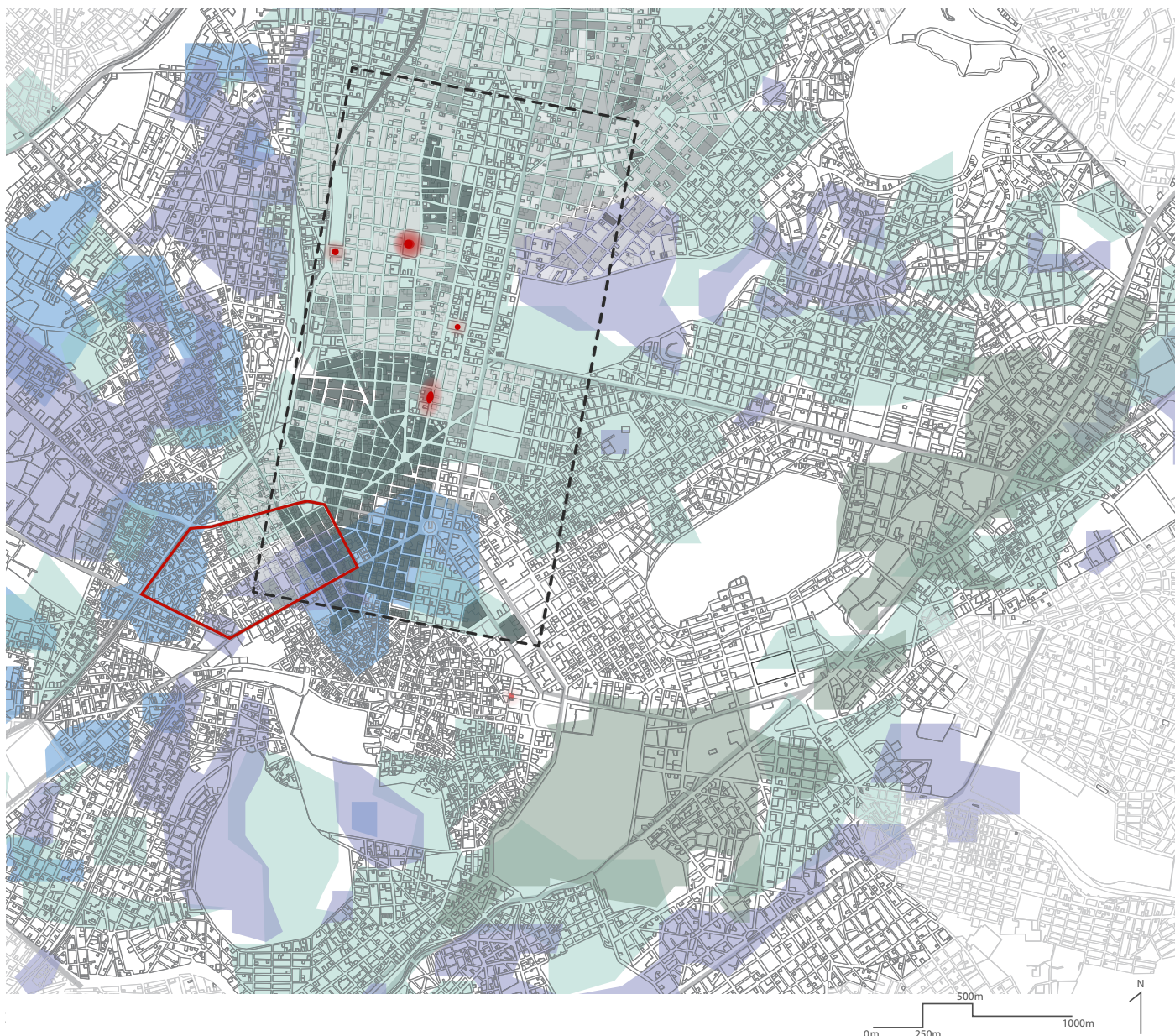
area of conflict between

● ●

area of interest   Metaxourgeio

Spatial Clusters

| 19,7% immigrants of which 57,4% from **group 2**, 14,4% from group 1 and 11,5% from group 3. | 14,3% immigrants of total population, of which 83,8% from **group 2**. | 14,5% immigrants of which 54,4% of **group 2** and 29,9% of **group 5** | 17,4% immigrants, of which 41,1% from **group 2** and 33,0% from **group 4** |

Migrant Conctrations, 2001

| >-40% | 30-39,9% | 20-29,9% | 10-19,9% | 0-9,9% |

Migrant Settlements, 2005

| >-2,5 | 2-2,5 | 1,5-2 |

IMMIGRATION

This map shows the differences between groups of immigrants and there presence in relation to the total population. The Albanian immigrants that reside in the north part of our sample are living there for 20 years now. Conflicts are taking place between Greeks and recent immigrants from Afganistan and North Africa.

SOURCES:
2012. Hate on the Streets - Xenophobic Violence in Greece. Human Rights Watch.
2001 population census, EKKE-ESYE (2005) from KANDYLIS, G., MALOUTAS, T. & SAYAS, J. 2012. Immigration, inequality and diversity: socio-ethnic hierarchy and spatial organization in Athens, Greece. Eruopean Urban and Regional Studies.
ANARCHY, U. 2010. Athens Unfortified City - Spatial Analysis of the Uprising of December 2008, Thessaloniki, Urban Anarchy.
BAIOU, D. 2007. Migrant concentrations in the total population per bloc, 2001.

population of Athens Municipality:
467108 (2011 Population Census)
immigrants 30% (2008)

Group 1: Romanian – Russian – Kazakh – Polish – Armenian

Group 2: Albanian;

Group 3: Bulgarian – Georgian – Moldavian – Ukrainian;

Group 4: Sri Lankan – Filipino – Ethiopian;

Group 5: Bangladeshi – Indian – Pakistani – Iraqi (95% men)

social services about drugs   trafficking   use

area of interest   Metaxourgeio

presence   detoxification programs   methadone programs   direct help   reintergration-support   prevention
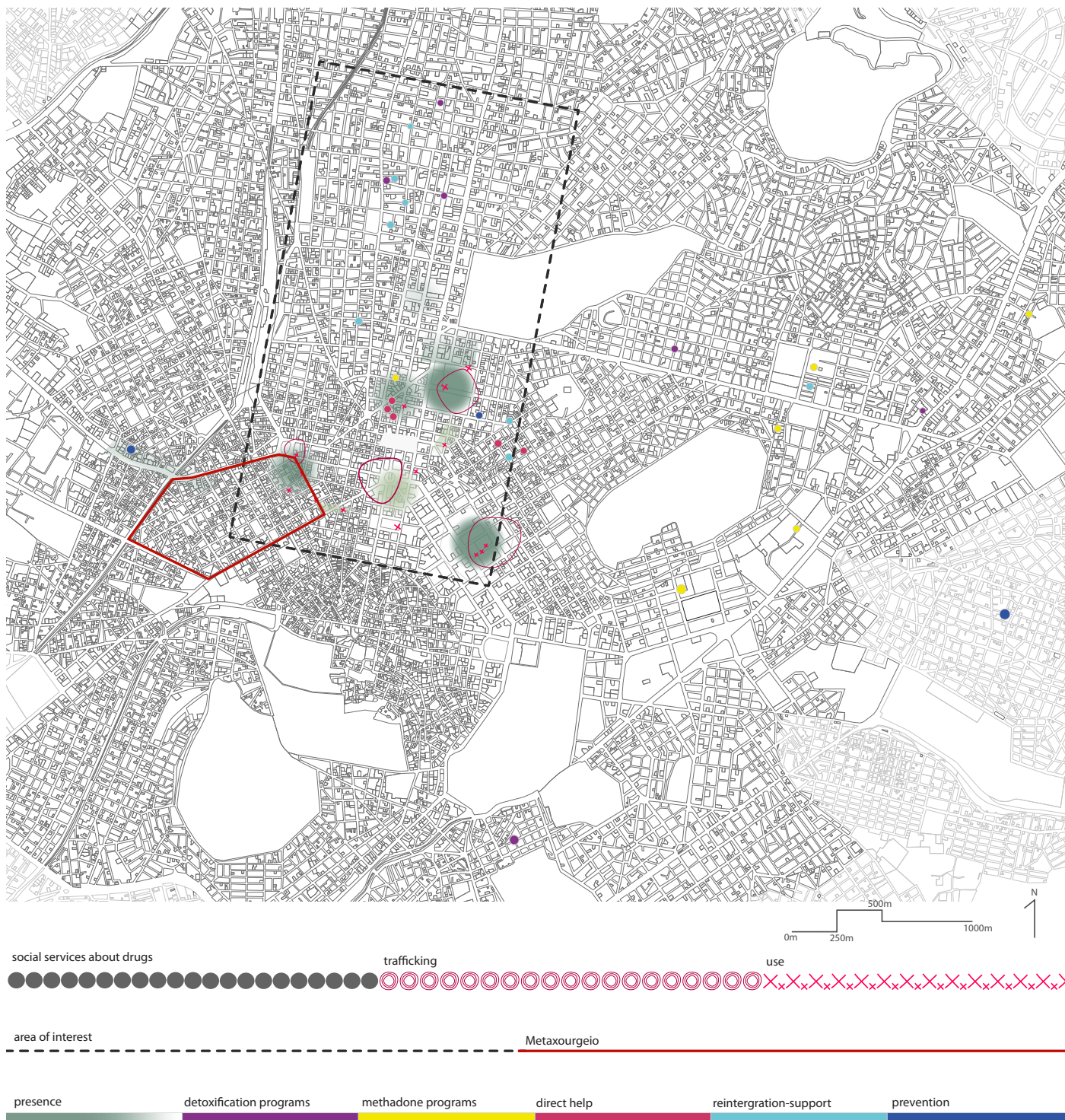
DRUGS

According to the Greek penal code, the use of drugs and drug possession (certain grams) are no longer a crime. However, drug trafficking is considered as a felony, punishable by imprisonment and a fine aggregate.

Drug trafficing and drug use in public space, are activities concentrated mainly around areas of the center, with high density and an important percentage of old and/or abandoned buildings. Concerning the land use, these areas are either commercial (around Omonoia), or low-income mixed-residencial (Metaxourgio). According to representatives of KETHEA, some of the points of concentration are concided to be "needle-areas" since the last decade (Omonoia sq.) and some others are emerged the last years or months, according to tendencies concerning drug policies, police missions, socio-ethnical characteristics of dealers and addicted users.

SOURCE:
http://www.ektepn.gr/Documents/PDF/ETHSIA_EKUESH_2011.pdf
www.kethea.gr, www.okana.gr, www.indymedia.gr

Analyzing the statistics, it can be said that from 2006 the number of addicted users is fluctuates around 20.000 p. However their presence in public space (during daytime as well) has been intensified because of the increase of unemployement, poverty and homeless people.

Problem drug use

Estimations about drug addicted people - General population
general tendencies: 628 more addicted users/year

drug addicts_ main use: heroine
drug addicts_ use during the last month

common meals

level of concetration of homeless individuals

area of interest

Metaxourgeio

common meals by church   common meals by the municipality   areas with concetration of homeless individuals

HOMELESS CONCETRATION

This map shows the concetration of homeless in relation with spaces where common meals are organized.

The definition of homeless can be seperated in 4 different categories: people who live in the streets, people without houses that live in shelters, people who squat and people that live in unfitted places like conteiners and slums. The homeless in the center of Athens are increasing constantly and even though until now it looked like the 'greek city' could respond to the demands of housing (usually not by social housing but through policies like granting and legalization of encrouchment), the situation now has changed mostly due to the increasing number of people that are under the danger of poverty.

SOURCE:
TOURNIKIOTIS, P., MORAITIS, K. & CHANIOTOU, E. 2011. Shifting Characters and Policies in the Centers of Athens and Pireus - Fase 1. Athens: National Technical University of Athens - School of Architecture and Engineering.
http://www.iaath.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=501&Itemid=499 [Accessed 27/11/2011].
onsite research

Source: ELSTAT

studios ●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●● house of prostitution ○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○ hotel ✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕✕

area of interest – – – – – – – – – – – – – – Metaxourgeio ———————————

street prostitution (night)   Eastern Europe * youth   Africa   Greece * older   drugs   male prostitution
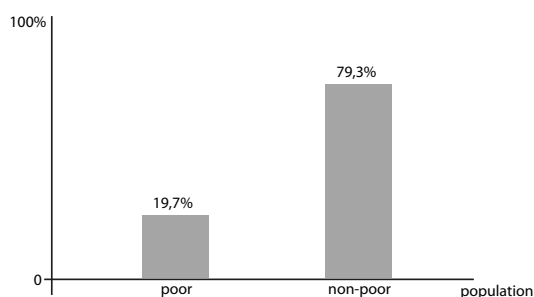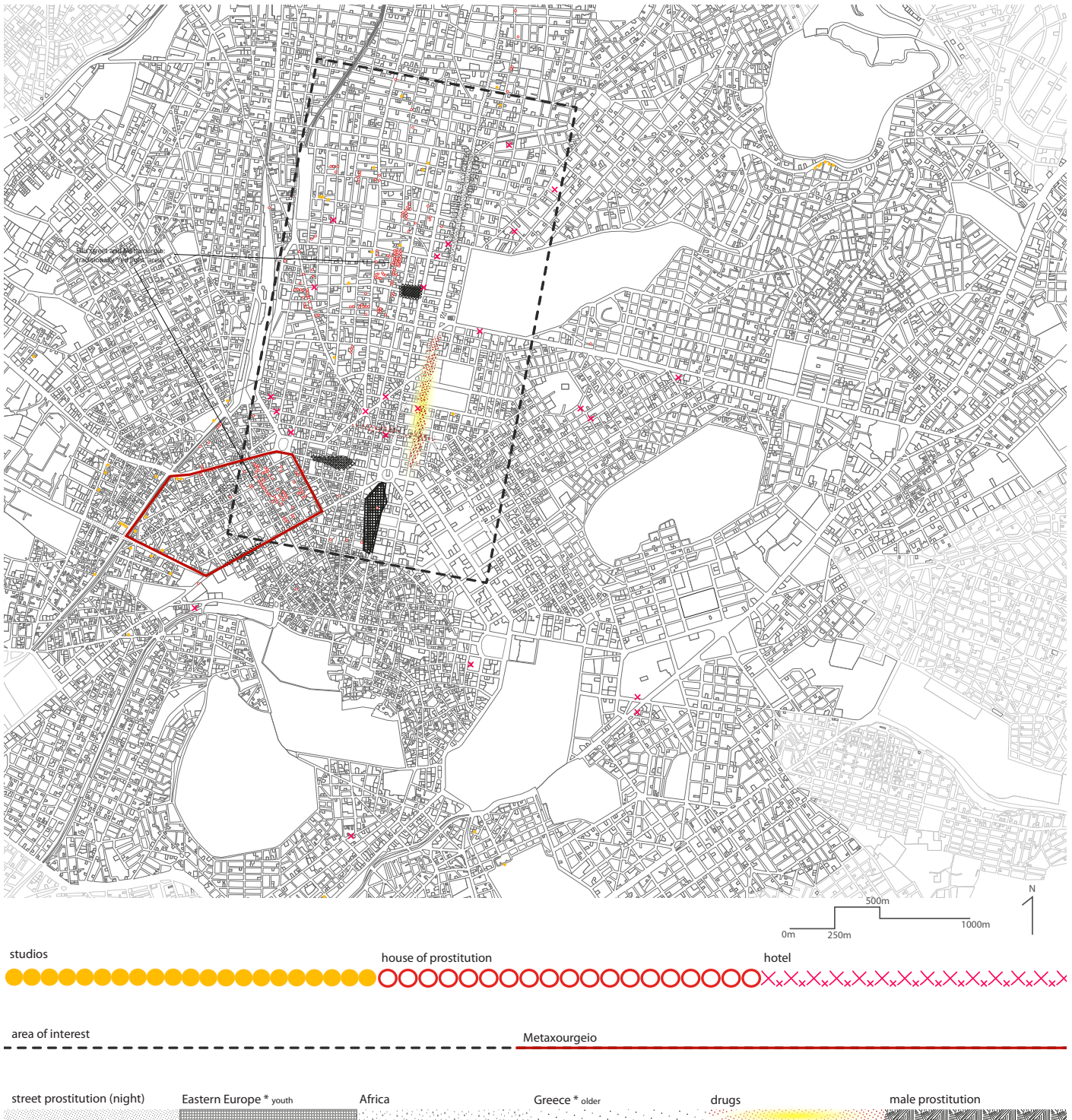
PROSTITUTION

According to the Greek law, prostitution is legal and regulated (certain permission). Male prostitution and procurment are illegal. According to a reaserch of Panteio University and National Center Social Research, the 1st semester of 2012, prostitution activities has increased by 1500%
Prostitution activities are mainly concentrated on the western part of the center (Patission boundary). They are developed radially around Metaxourgio and Filis, along with main axes and spreaded in minor streets around.

prostitution   less than 1,5% legal

■ legal
■ illigal

Otherness

political squat/social center night immigrants' school unofficial religious place praying in public space official religious places (church)

area of interest

Metaxourgeio

Violence against the Other

violence against immigrants

police violence

Education level- High education in %

low

high

0-4,26%	4,26-6,43%	6,43-8,84%	8,84-11,59%	11,59-15,18%	5,18-20,59%	20,59-40%
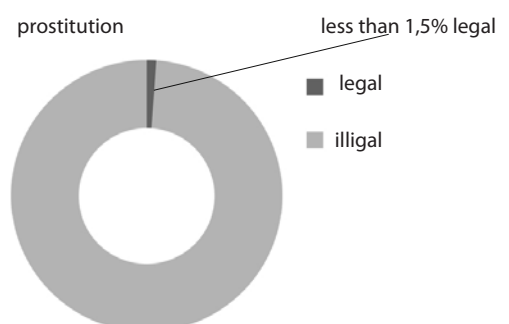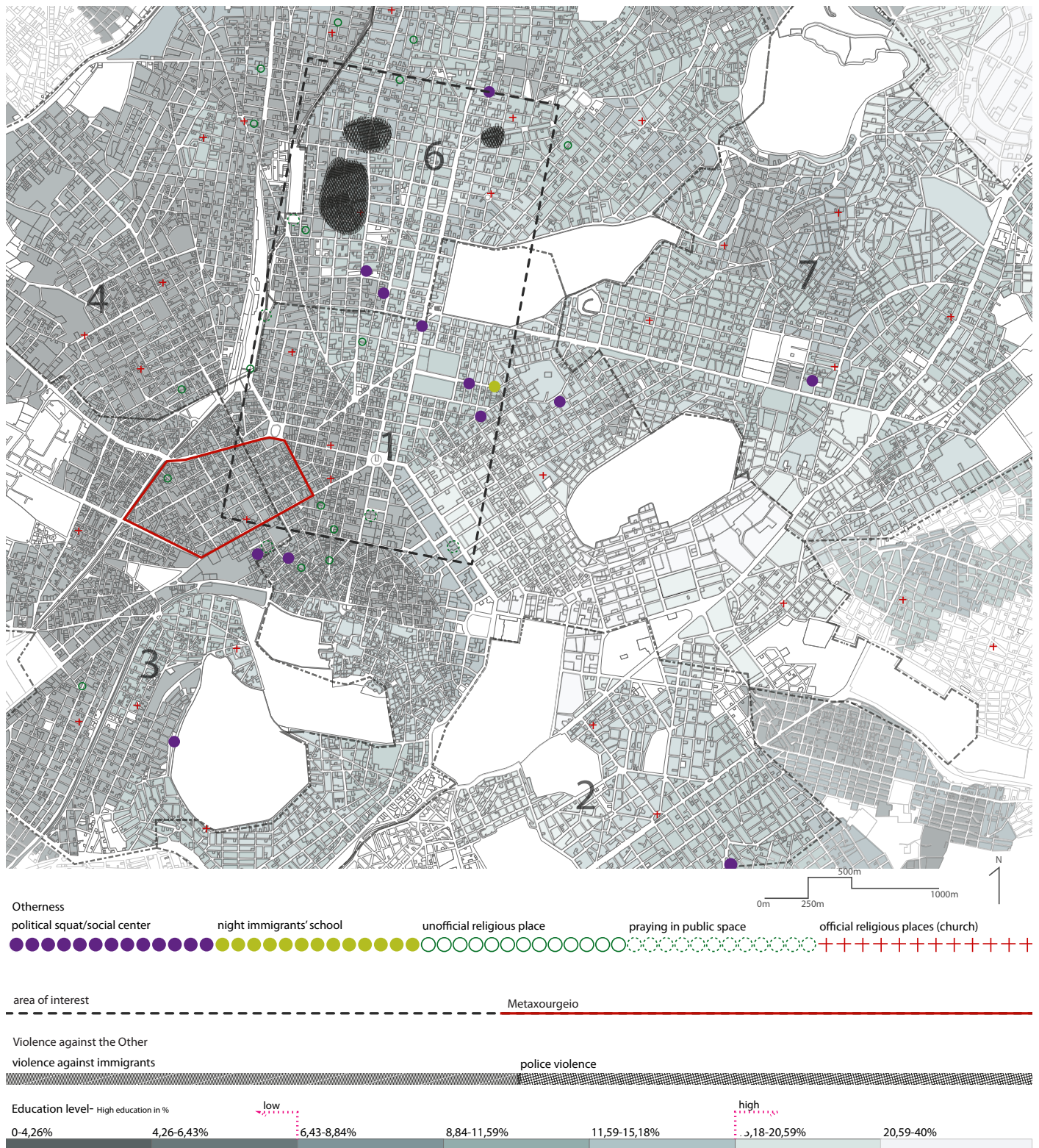
TOLERANCE

The city in general, and Athens in particular, is an area of conflict and invisible boundaries, Especially, the city center concetrates most of the friction between the new(immigrants, homeless, drug-addicts and other minorities) and the old inhabitants. Although, there are still areas of the center where co-existance is succeded between the old and the new inhabitants.

With this map, we spatialize the elements that we consider play an important role in order to create tolerance between different groups.

SOURCE:
TOURNIKIOTIS, P., MORAITIS, K. & CHANIOTOU, E. 2011. Shifting Characters and Policies in the Centers of Athens and Pireus - Fase 1. Athens: National Technical University of Athens - School of Architecture and Engineering.
onsite research

Voters of extreme right in %, 2010

percentages per district
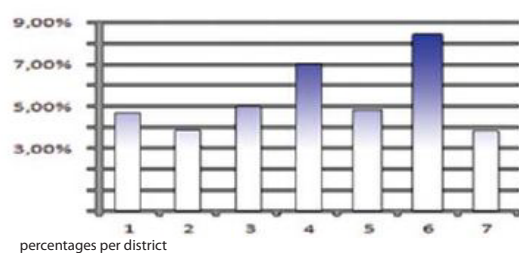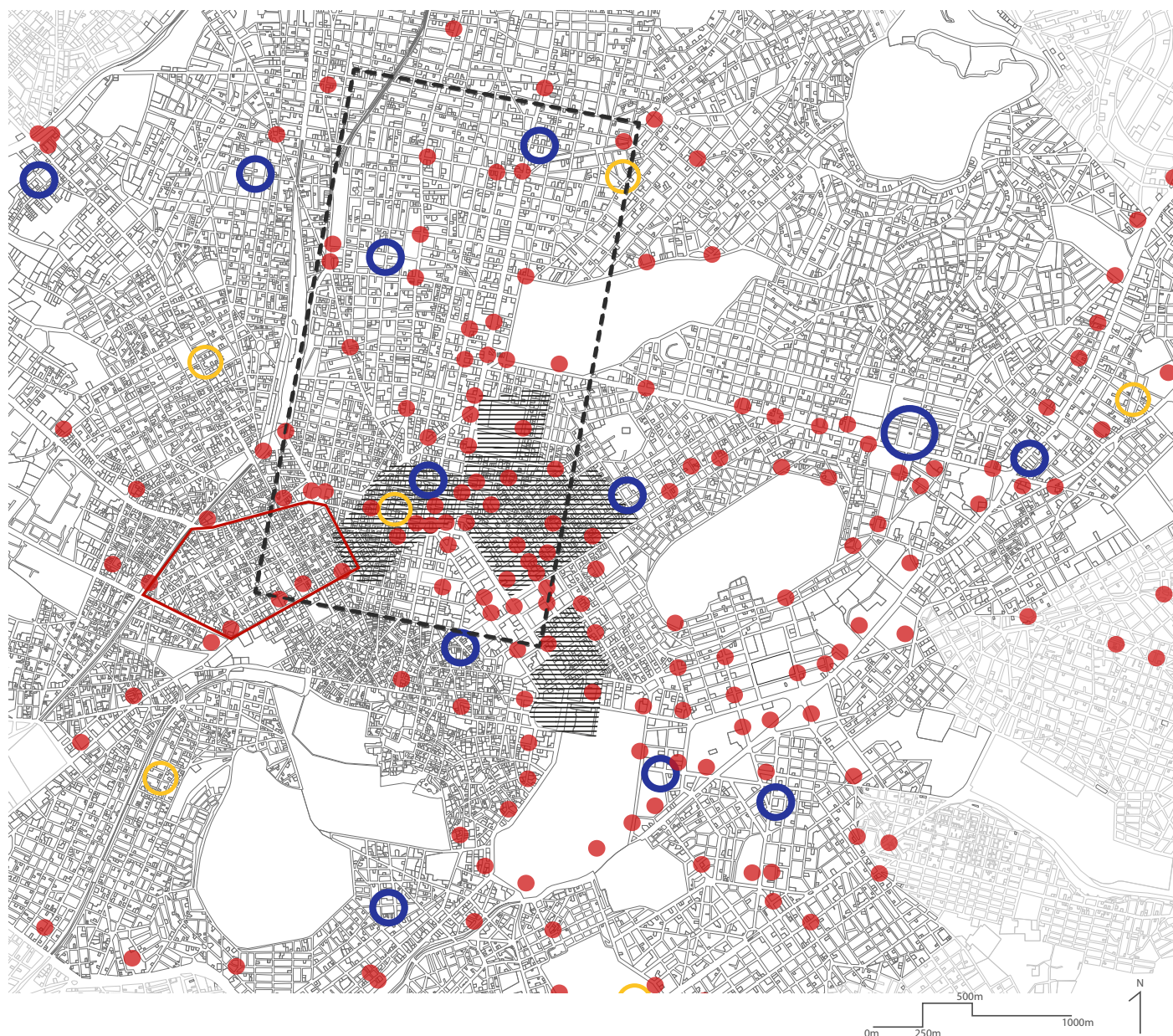
level of importance of police station

area of interest — — — — — — — — — — — — — — Metaxourgeio

| police station | municipal police station | traffic cameras | areas of constant police presence |

POLICE SURVEILLANCE

This map shows police presence according to police stations, areas of constant police controls and cameras.

In this map we identify police presence as a instrument of control. Besides the different police stations, there are areas where there is contast police presence like the area around the university (Exarchia) and the area around the square of Omonoia (high concetration of immigrants). The last years, there have been many reports for police violence during demonstrations as well as towards immigrants and other minorities. Due to the extension of these incidents, as well

as their increasing number, Amnesty International has conducted an investegation on police violence in Greece and has written a report reffering to several incidents and asking the greek government to take measures in order to eliminate them.

SOURCE:
TOURNIKIOTIS, P., MORAITIS, K. & CHANIOTOU, E. 2011. Shifting Characters and Policies in the Centers of Athens and Pireus - Fase 1. Athens: National Technical University of Athens - School of Architecture and Engineering.
http://www.cityofathens.gr/AthensMaps [Online]. [Accessed 27/11/2011].
http://www.hellenicpolice.gr/newsite.php?&lang= [Online]. [Accessed 25/11/2011].
http://kameres.wordpress.com/xartis/ [Online]. [Accessed 25/11/2011].
onsite research

_The area of Metaxourgeio

The evolution of the area of Metaxourgeio has a dialectic interrelation with an important building – landmark, since it has affected the structural trends of the development of the area. In the case of Metaxourgeio the building I am talking about is the factory "Silk Mill of Greece Athanasios Douroutis & Bro", that also gave the name of the area (Metaxourgeio: silk mill).

This area was outside the historical city of Athens, in immediate vicinity with the city though, an agricultural area, and it had two important characteristics. On its south there was an important crossroad, where the roads from Eleusina, Peireus and Sepolia were converging and a central street was starting leading to the Porta of Moria and the Wall of Chaseki. The second characteristic was that at the area Porta of Moria (also in vicinity with Metaxourgeio) were a lot of gypsy smiths living and working. That means that the transportation functions as well as the production were present in the area, long before Athens becomes the capital of the Greek state.

Since Athens was established as the capital of the Greek state and Metaxourgeio was included in the urban plans for the new capital, the perspectives for the urbanization of the area were a lot. The event that characterized the first trends was the proposal by Shaubert and Klentse of building the palace at the nearby area of Omonoia. The prescribed development of the area as a zone of central urban functions, had attracted multiple wealthy land buyers planning to build houses and among them prince Georgio Katakouzino, who bought a large building planning to turn it into a shopping mall.

At 1836 though, there was decided that the palace was going to be build at the other side of the city. This decision that changed the balance in the urban value of the area and its development was frozen. Although the shopping mall was unfinished, most of the wealthy housing was finished (even though at the end was not inhabited by their owners) keeping open the perspectives for the area to become a housing zone starting from Milerou street which

Metaxourgeio, 1869

was better connected with the old street axis. This phase has lasted 20 years.

So, when the Vrabe Company decided to buy the unfinished building of the shopping mall and turn it into a silk mill, the area was not implemented yet in the urban tissue of the rest of the city. The choice for the specific building was due to the fact that at that period in Athens there were not many buildings that had the possibility of hosting this kind of functions. Also, the intended new function was coming in terms with the – still – unformed character of the area, an area with probably degraded perspectives at the edge of the city. This second development would have long-term effects in the future of Metaxourgeio, with a much larger time span that the actual period when the silk mill was functioning, and that was due to the fact that it was keeping up with other trends that were affecting the structure of the city. These trends were reinforced by the establishment of the silk mill, and these trends were: the incorporation of the area to the industrial zone of the city and the establishment of the know – and present until today – dichotomy of the city between the areas of housing for the privileged and higher income classes on the east and the low and working class housing areas of the west. This development happened, naturally, with slow rhythm that was accelerated with the general urbanization of the city during the last quarter of the 19th century. In a first phase the silk mill factory, which actually was working as a factory complex of multiple functions, was a barrier for the expanding of the housing zones to the west and at the begging of the 1860 decade the area was still outside of the city of Athens. Even at 1875, when the area of Metaxourgeio was embodied in the urban tissue of Athens the complex of the silk mill factory was still forming a barrier to the west side.

Between 1854 and 1862, two more events have played a role to the formation of the character of the area. The first was the establishment of the Orphanage Chatzikosta in the area, which in the context of a strategy of 'philanthropy' and of 'social inclusion for poor children' created craft-shops for the professional training of its inmates: initially craft-shops for tailoring and shoemaking, and later a forge. The later had evolved into a private factory which was employing 50 workers. The second event was the establishment of the Gas Factory (1859-1861) at the south side of the street complex that was mentioned before. This factory was the starting point that turned the road Athens-Peireus into an axis of high disturbance functions, a character that this axis keeps more or less until today.

This complex of factories had been the first point of attraction for the industrial and productive functions to move to the west, through a process of relocations that characterizes the adaptability of functions in the city of Athens. These functions were limited in their historical center, which was for centuries in the same place since the Market of the Ottoman period was created on the Roman Market (even during the Ottoman period the disturbing functions of the city occupied the west part). With the opening of the roads Athinas, Aiolou and Ermou the productive and industrial zone was reformed on these new axes. But the moving of this zone to the north and east was always finding the barrier of the 'good' neighborhood of Omonoia and Syntagma, which means that the west side of the city was the only place that the productive and industrial zone could develop. As it was mentioned earlier, the area of Metaxourgeio was hosting important factories and craft-shops and it was also enriched with another productive function, that of a transportation hub. That happened due to the fact that the area was in vicinity of the important axis that was connecting the industrial areas of the city with the port of Peireus, but also due to the fact that in 1869 a train station was created in the area. That led to the creation of multiple functions to serve the transportation needs: from moving services to the first garage services, which had actually been the mean to expand the industrial zone to the west.

With the expansion of the garage services and the fact that the factory complex of the silk mill

had closed down, area was found once again in a cross-road of development. But now the demands for housing were massive and pressing. The capital was quickly expanding and its population was sky-rising: from 44.250 inhabitants on 1870, it reached 63.379 on 1879 (42% increase)   and 107.271 on 1889 (69% increase). As a result, the whole area was inhabited and become a part of the city between the years of 1875-1885. The already degrading identity of the area as well as the character of demand for new housing (large amount of emigrants, for the first time in such numbers, came to Athens looking for housing) contributed so that the area was developed as a low income area, inhabited by workers and emigrants. Besides the massive invasion of housing in the area, the development of industrial functions did not stop - on the contrary, the character of the new inhabitants helped on that and the industrial functions were keeping expanding in the area of Metaxourgeio. Summarizing, already from the end of the 19th century, Metaxourgeio had already formed its identity and its evolution was always towards that identity; a low income are with mixed functions (housing, industrial uses and commerce) diffused in its urban tissue. The process of the evolution of the area of Metaxourgeio though has not been linear. The identity of the area was produces by the combination of opposite trends that were dominating temporarily over the area and the combination of isolated events with the structural expansion of the city.

The character and the identity of the area had remained unchanged and untouched almost until the present period. But in 2004, as part of the policies that were implemented in order to make Athens a global capital for the Olympic Games of 2004, a large amount of the population of Metaxourgeio (the gipsy population) was forced to move for ownership reasons, leaving behind a large amount of abandoned buildings. From that point on a new era started for the area. A new type of people started to inhabit the area, mostly artist and young people. Developers took notice to the potentiality of Metaxourgeio (the abandoned building, the low land prices and the vicinity of the area to the center) and a gentrification process started. Architec-

tural competitions were conducted for different parts of the area and the first new housing buildings for higher income levels were constructed. But after 2008 and the beginning of the economic recession for Greece, the whole gentrification process stopped leaving the area with a very interesting mixture of social and urban structure. There is still a large amount of abandoned buildings that homeless and drug-addicts find shelter (there is also a number of NGOs focusing on these matters, acting on the area), the inhabitants vary from low to high income, from workers to artist and the mixture of uses is more interesting since it includes from industrial uses to immigrant commerce and art galleries. These characteristics, plus the vicinity of the area to center of Athens and the issues it faces, makes it an interesting area to focus my project on.
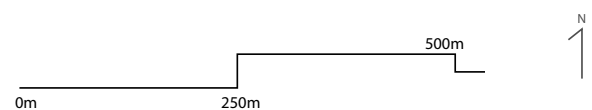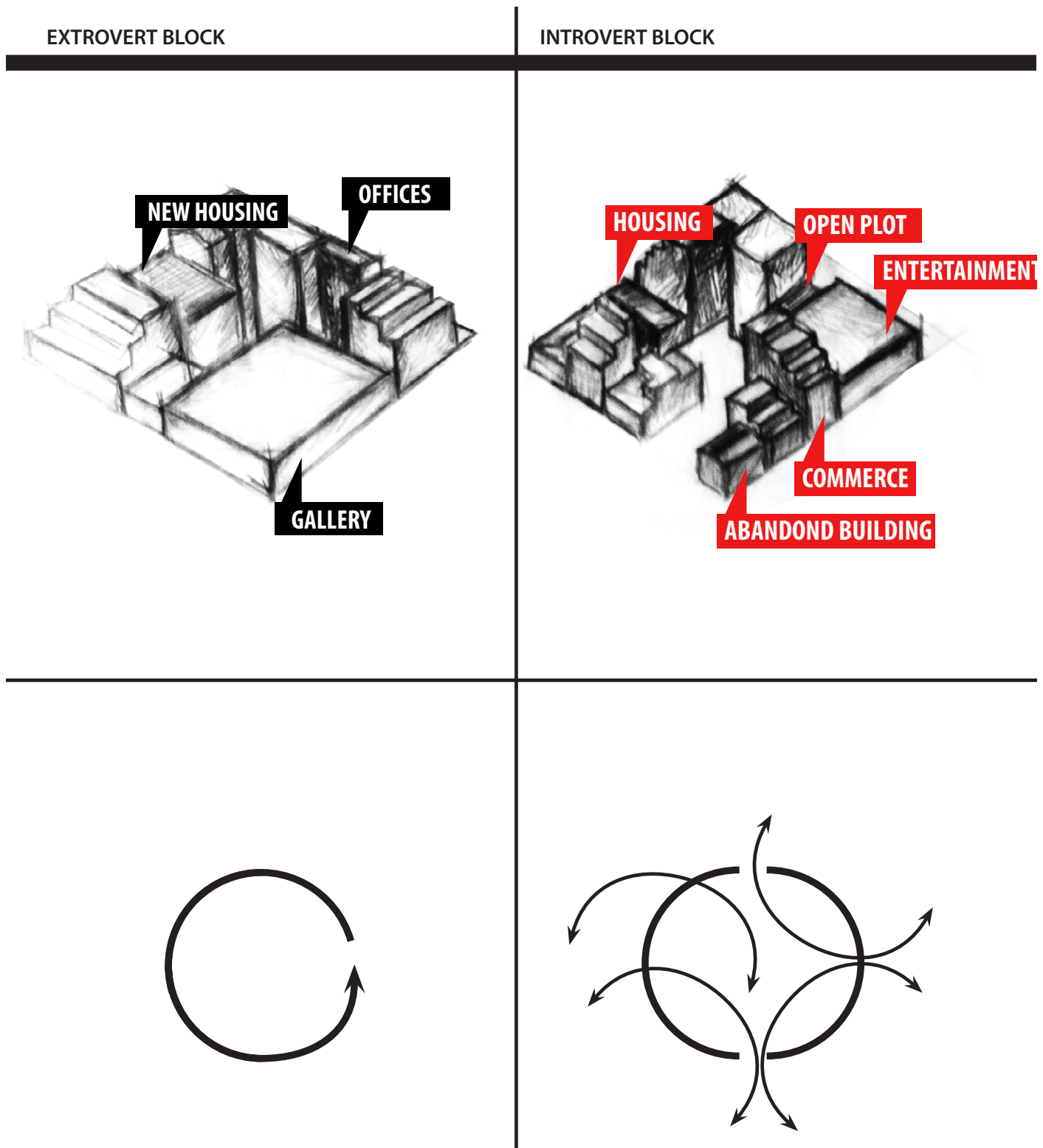
the urban form

gentrification process

public space

abandonment

_Official plan

As it was mentioned before, the area of Metaxourgeio has a distinctive character within the area of the center of Athens. But still, this character varies within the limits of the area. For my intervention, I will focus on the part of Metaxourgeio that is shown in the diagram bellow, since in this area the everyday tactics are more obvious and vivid and it is not effected from the functions and the pressure of the Omonoia and Karaiskaki squares.

In order to formulate my proposal and strategy, I have started analyzing the official governmental plan for the area.

the current urban morphology of Metaxourgeio

landmarks | culture | public lights network (LED) | pedestrian streets | regeneration of public space | JESSICA project
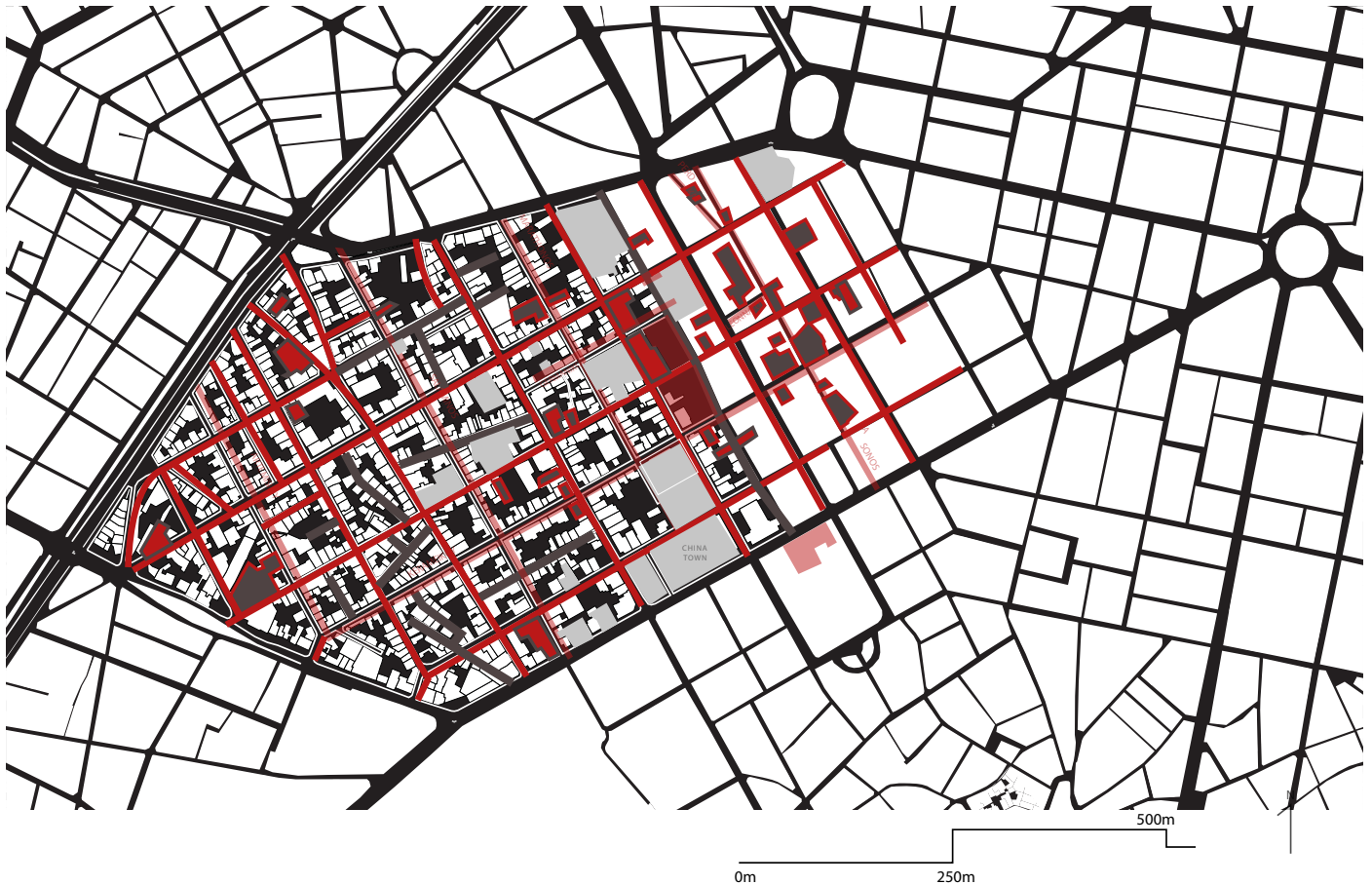
OFFICIAL PLAN

The bottlenecks of the governmental plan can be summerized in the two following issues:

1. The proposed grid of the official plan does not agree with the morphology nor with the spatial demands of the area of Metaxourgeio.

2. The new uses that are proposed (mainly offices) do not cover the demands of the inhabitants

My strategy and proposal aims to tackle these issues and propose a new strategic plan that will combine the scenario of the official plan with my vision for the area.

_Strategy

strategic vision

VISION
intergrate spatially the invisible groups by activating them within a
neighborhood structure and link that to the more formal activities
so as to define more cohesive spaces for all the users

Socially disadvantage classes and groups/
Social inequality as a result of the uneven
development inherent to neoliberal
urbanization and top-down planning

MAKING   THE   INVISIBLE   VISIBLE :

by identifying the socially disadvantaged
groups & progressivelly and actively
intergrate them into a neighborhood
structure

STRATEGY
a review on the neighbourhod morphology and the functions that
happen - progressively revise this basic level to higher scales and
other 'more efficient' structures, taking into account the actors

REDEFINE THE BLOCK
spatial and socio-economic reorganization
of the neighborhood

ACTIVATE FLOWS WITH FUNCTIONS
use of the morphology and the spatial
demands

INVOLVMENT AND INFORMERTION OF AND BY THE INHABITANTS
the project will be set-up/maintained/expanded according to the
inhabitants

PRINCIPLES

evaluation process

the new block will be consisted by the
unification/seperation of blocks and the
inclusion of empty plots, abandond
buildings and inner courtyards

redefine the ownership of the plots and
land (collective instead of private)

redefine the land-uses (mainly housing)
according to the spatial demands so as to
activate new flows within the new blocks

establish collective programs and actions
that would work for the maintance of the
open spaces of the block

create a collective approach of the
inhabitants of the block towards its
expansion through participatory functions

apply through

apply through

the morphology of the area and new
policies applied in different scales
(neighborhood scale, city scale)

new program ans extended land uses

programatic policies aiming in participation
and collective involvment

final approach

revise the strategic goals

STRATEGY

DESIGN METHOD

3 diverse levels of approach in 3
scales: city, area of intervantion,
neighborhood

TESTING BY DESIGN → by unfolding the existing flows of the area to introduce a
re-organization of the area's block and new functions

which are the capacities that the tools allow to fluorish   what is the framework of the reality of the intervantion

strategic actions-based on the
proposal's operability and
capacities

APPLY STRATEGY

cross-testing within

REVIEW WITHIN THE GOVERNMENTAL PLANS

agree with

need for redefinition of public space

add new uses and functions

disagree with

the actors involved
the proposed uses and functions
the use of open spaces as a gentrification tool
the design proposal that does not take into consideration the morphology of the area

→ **SCENARIO 1**
Governmental plan

evaluate the planning framework to show the **GAPS** to reach the recomendations and guidelines of the proposal

FEASIBILITY

the bottlenecks of the planning framework

insufficient policies on abandondment

exclusion of sensitive groups as actors

not enough policies concerning the morphology of the area

orriented towards gentrification

→ **SCENARIO 2**
Vision

+

the role of the new block

ACTIONS

new policies on ownership
ew policies on abandonment

participation of the inhabitants in the desission making

creation of new functions according to spatial demands/ diverse stakeholders

creation of new flows within the area to allow reorganization

new rules according to the vision, answering to the gaps of the governmntal plan

APROACH

PLANNING TOOLS

flexible tenure

intergration of the whole neighborhood in the design process

spatial programing within the spatial design

spatial design of reorganization of the area through land uses

→ **PLANNING & DESIGN TOOLS**

GUIDELINES

evelop coorporations of public interest

spatial phasing approach

incorporate of the local demands within the design vision

flexible land use

This network of common and public spaces that my project will be, aims to be the mean that will make the hypothesis be realized and the way that the phenomena that were mentioned before could be tackled. On the same time it will be a project that will take into account the reality of the city of Athens and a way to make possible a different vision for Athens, a vision for a city that will give room to every resident it has and that will not have invisible and undesirable areas nor groups.

Moreover, this projects aims to the creation of open common spaces, which will host the conditions for more and better communication and co-existence between multiple groups. In this way, the importance of open public and common spaces is revived, as spaces that everyday practices can be performed and create the atmosphere for more and better human connections and communication and could have as a result the increasing feeling of being part of a community and a neighborhood.

Besides, the area already has the preconditions for this kind of relations since despite the fear that seems to be present and is mostly cultivated, there is an immediate relation of the people with the free spaces and there are many times when events, spontaneous or not, happen while there is no doubt that is the mean, the 'canvas' for the inhabitants to express their views, their doubts and their objections to multiple issues that have to do with space or not.

_Specific phenomena (i)

One of the most dominent phenomena of the area is the **abandonment**. The phenomenon of the abandonment was present in the area from 2004 (before the beggining of the economic ressesion in 2008) due to the start of the gentrification process. Although, the economic crisis has affected the level of abandonment in Metaxourgeio, moving it into new high levels. The present situation is that **46%** of the privately owned land is either abandond or open and vacant.

The result of this phenomenon is that the abandonment of buildings and plots cause a discontinuation of the urban fabric that is embed in the morphology of the area.

500m

0m   250m

abandond buildings   open plots

ABANDONMENT

500m

0m   250m

public space and pedestrian areas   streets   inner courtyards

OPEN SPACES

In the map displayed above, I map the open spaces of the area from public spaces to pedestrian streets. However, the important element of this map is the documentation of the inner cortyards and the importance they play to the morphology of the area as well as the connection they have with the public spaces and the streets.

_Specific phenomena (ii)

The governmental process of **gentrification** that started in the area in 2004 by effecting the morphology of the dominent **block** of Metaxourgeio. The traditional block of the area is an extroverted block with connections with the public space, while the gentrified block is working in a introvert level by turning its back to the public.

This conclusion is a result of combining the gentrification process with the character of the block (p. 59). The governmental process of gentrification in the area of Metaxourgeio affects the morphology of the urban fabric of the area and the typology of the block.

a gentrified block in Metaxourgeio

landmarks   pedestrian streets   old neighborhoods   gentrified areas   future gentrified areas

GENTRIFICATION PROCESS

landmarks   gentrified/introverted blocks   extroverted block

BLOCKS

500m

0m   250m

N

EXTROVERT BLOCK | INTROVERT BLOCK

NEW HOUSING **OFFICES** **GALLERY**

HOUSING **OPEN PLOT** **ENTERTAINMENT** **COMMERCE** **ABANDOND BUILDING**
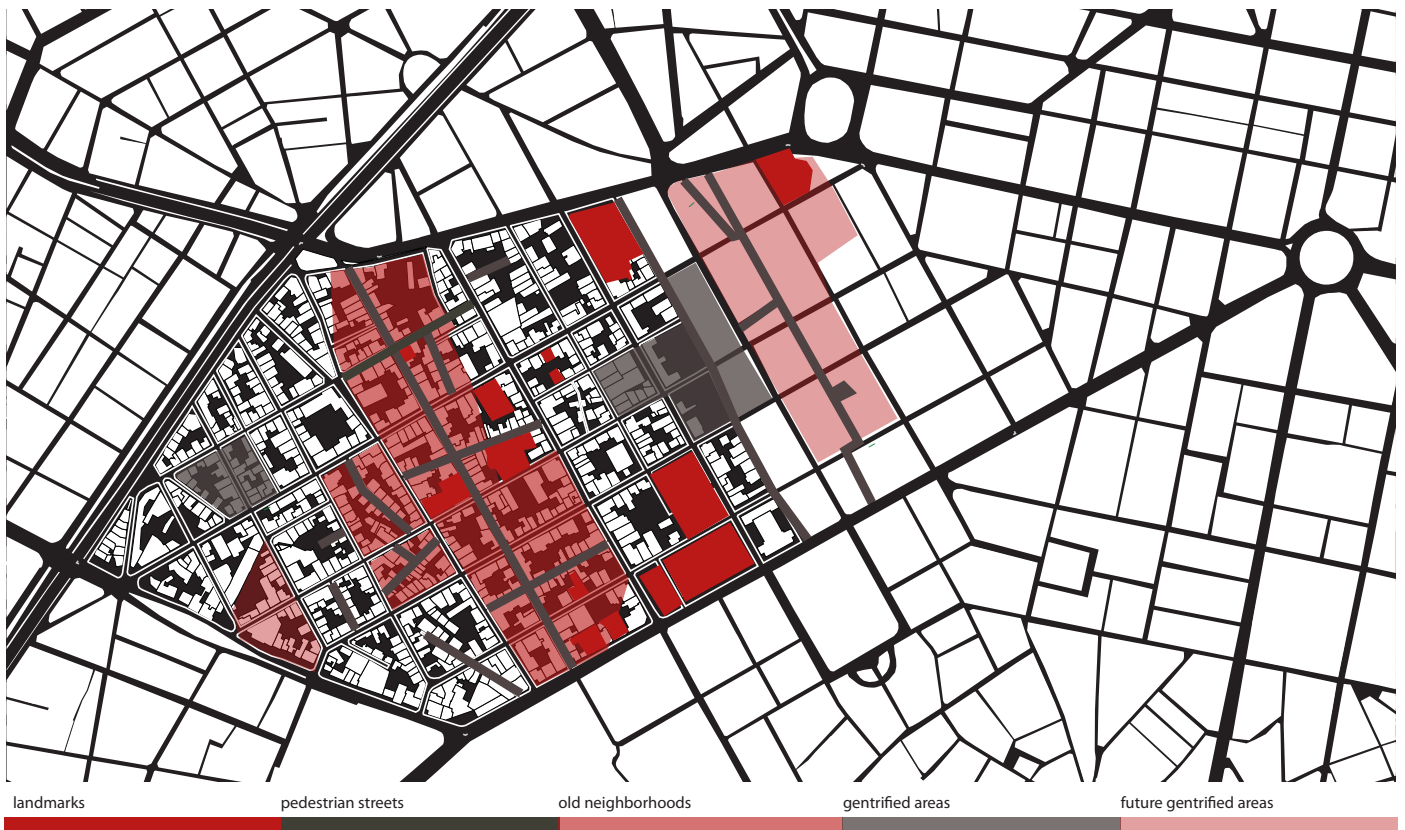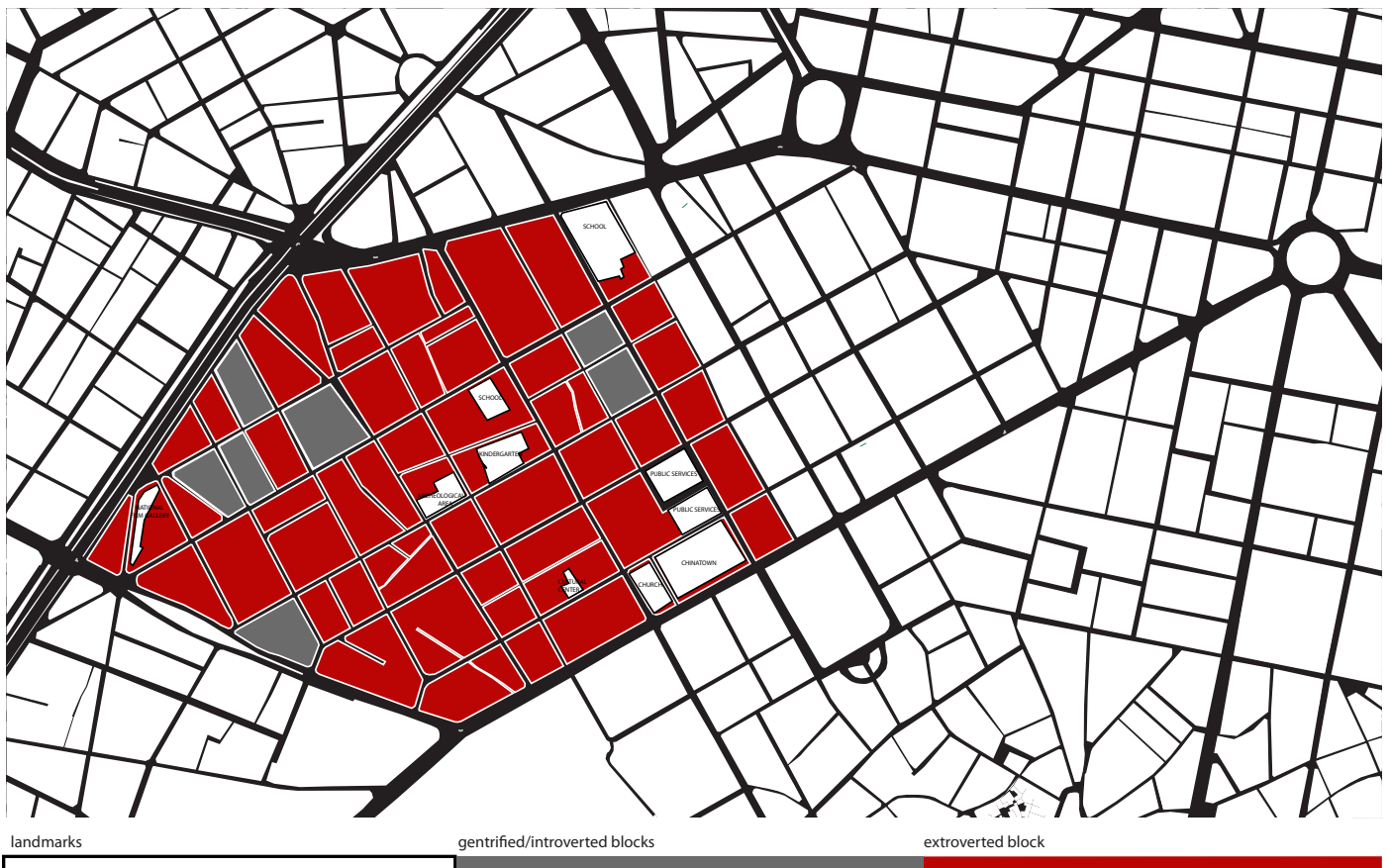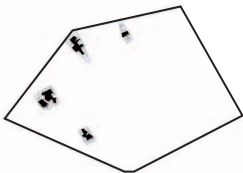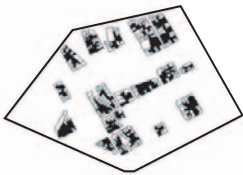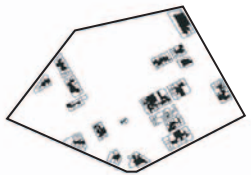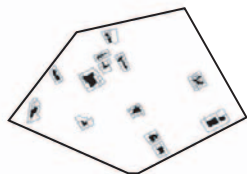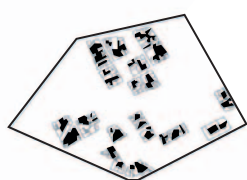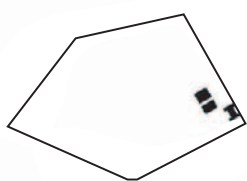
The typology of the blocks of Metaksourgeio can be seperated in two main categories, the introverted and the extroverted block, with different functions each and different connections to each surroundings. More specifically, The gentrified or the semi-gentrified block is working in an introvert level, in terms of spatial morphology as well as in terms of functions and uses. On the other hand, the traditional block of the area is working as an extrovert block, oppening to the street and to the

public and is hosting a variety of functions and uses.

The complexity of the morhology is better represented in the following matrix (p. 61). The categorization of the introverted and extroverted blocks was now made according to their relation with the urban surroundings,

TYPOLOGY	PLAN / SCALE 1:2000	DENSITY/ SCALE 1:20000

block with transversal inside movement

block with a perforated urban facade

block with a dead-end in the inner courtyard

block with an introvert inner courtyard

block with a fragmented inner courtyard

solid block with no or small inner courtyard

block as one building

_Specific phenomena (iii)

DRUG-ADDICTS
PROSTITUTES
"CREATIVE" CLASS
IMMIGRANTS
MUNICIPALITY
NGOs
WORKING CLASS
DEVELOPERS
HOMELESS
MIDDLE CLASS

500m
0m
250m

N
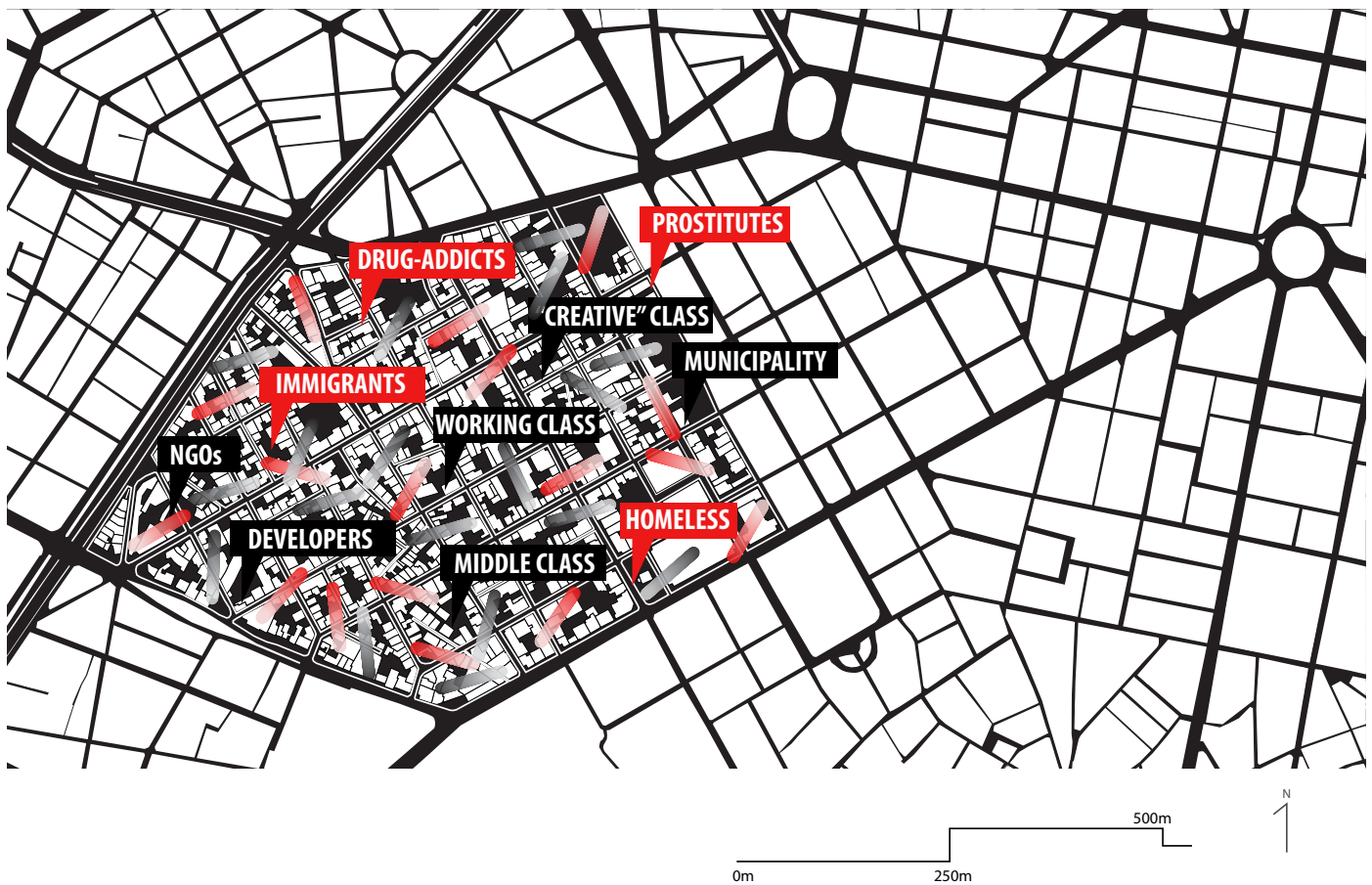
ACTORS

The gentrification process was attempting to change the identity of the area and bring new inhabitants. But the economical crisis put this process to a stop leaving the area with an interesting **mixture of social groups.** Although the are still groups that are not taken into consideration from the official plans or the planning framework, the groups that were characterized before as invisible. One of the main aims of this project is to make these invisible groups into actors.

POWER   LEGITIMACY

DEVELOPERS

MUNICIPALITY

"CREATIVE" CLASS

MIDDLE CLASS

WORKING CLASS

NGOs

HOMELESS   DRUG-ADDICTS

PROSTITUTES   IMMIGRANTS

URGENCY
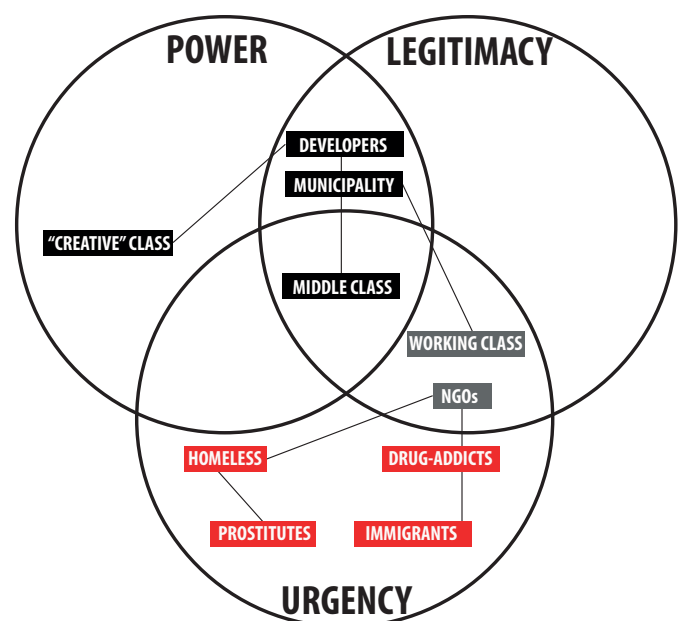
ACTORS		SPATIAL DEMANDS	SPATIAL CAPACITIES	SPATIAL NETWORK DEMANDS
PROSTITUTES	- - - - - ->	health clinics kindergartens/day-schools		
DRUG-ADDICTS	- - - - - ->	health clinics		
IMMIGRANTS	- - - - - ->	religious spaces commercial market common housing		
HOMELESS	- - - - - ->	health clinics common housing		
WORKING CLASS	- - - - - ->	kindergartens/day-schools housing		
NGOs	- - - - - ->	affordable space		
MIDDLE CLASS	- - - - - ->	cultural space entertainment		
"CREATIVE" CLASS	- - - - - ->	cultural space entertainment		
DEVELOPERS	- - - - - ->	public space		
MUNICIPALITY	- - - - - ->	public space		

The different groups that exist in the area of Metaxourgeio, have different demands in terms of uses and functions. By identifying the demamds and needs of every groups, I can create a program that in contradictions to the program of the official plan, responds to the needs of the area.

drug-addicts presence   homeless   prostitute houses   street prostitution
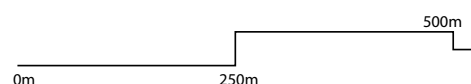
INVISIBLE GROUPS

The above map shows the spatial configuration of the most vulnurable from the groups that inhabit the area, the invisible groups.

_Aims

In order to address these phenomena, I will propose a local strategic plan and vision that:

•	will create the conditions for the different groups of inhabitants to be participant

•	will use the morphological and functional potentialities of the area as part of the design

•	will be a morphological development for the area

That means that I will use an open system of planning using the permeability of the area, in order to activate the local parameters. In order to accompish that, and by taking into account the

morhology of the blocks in the area, I will use a new typology of a block - the new urban block - as an activator unit for the re-activation of Metaxourgeio.

An important parameter in order to formulate my design in terms of uses and movements, is to recognize the daily system and the flows that are created by that from all the groups that use the area.

THE NEW BLOCKS OF METAXOURGEIO

500m

0m   250m

N

drug-addicts
presence   homeless   prostitute houses   immigrant's commerce   commerce   offices   culture

public space   public services
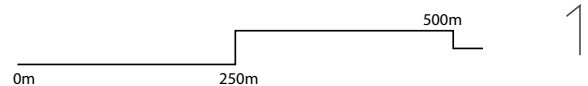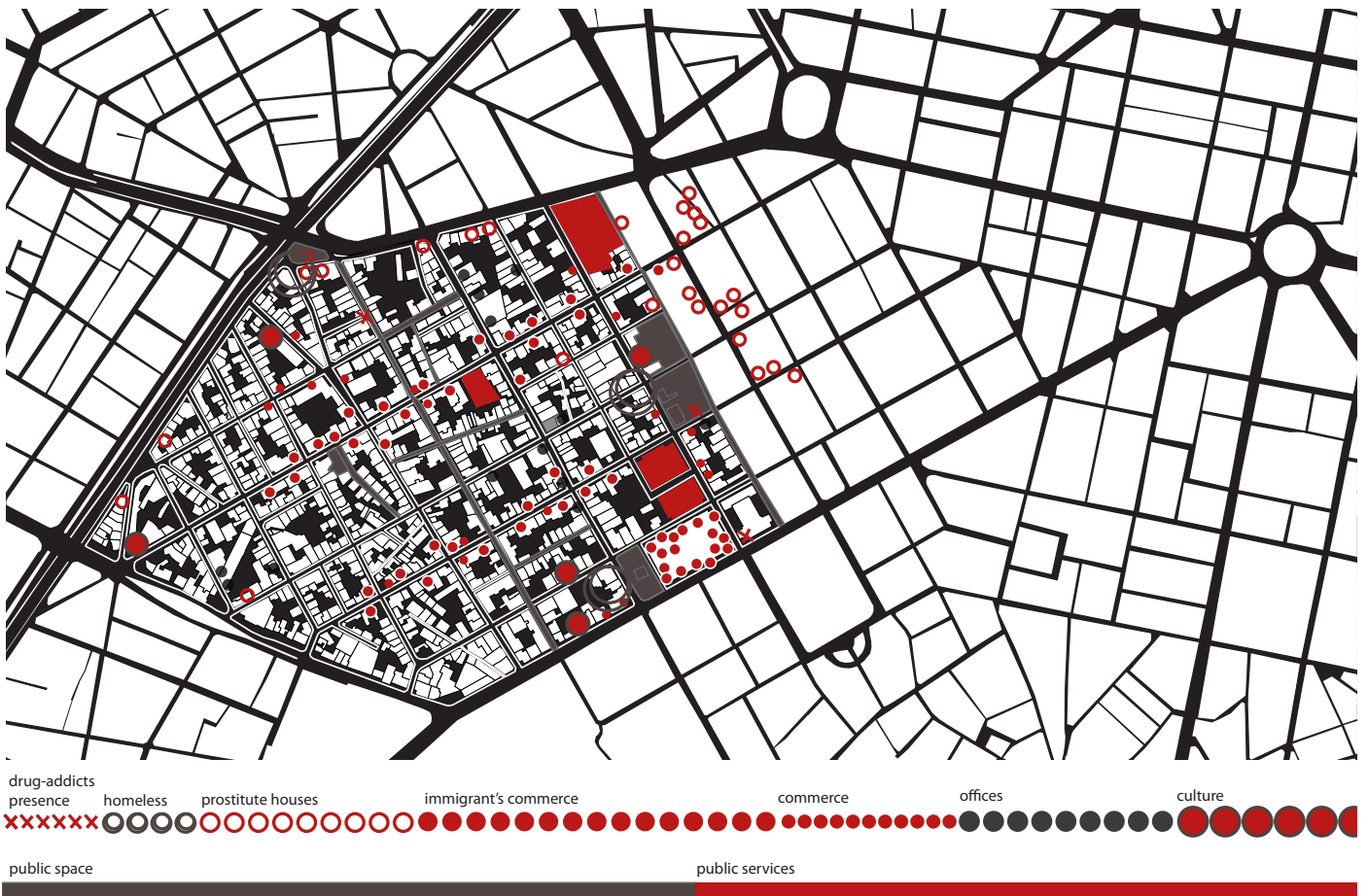
DAILY SYSTEM_MORNING

FLOWS_MORNING

500m

0m   250m

N

drug-addicts presence   homeless   prostitute houses   street prostitution   entertainment   culture

xxxxxxxxxxxx   ○○   ○○○○○○○○   ●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●   ●●●●●●●●●●●●●   ●●●●●●●●●●

public space
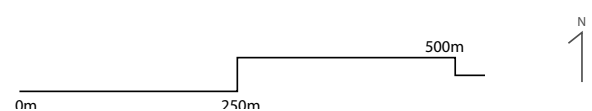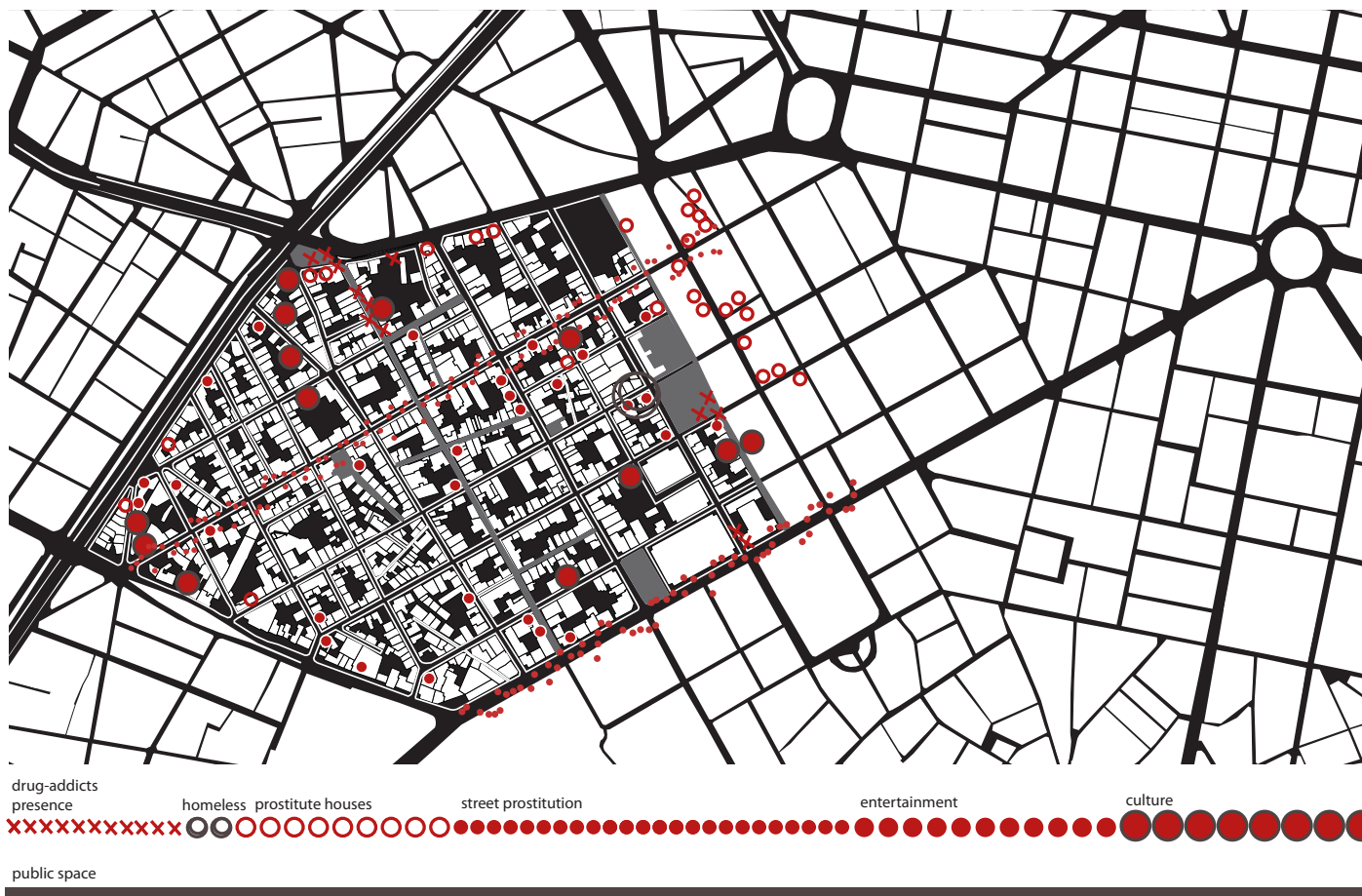
DAILY SYSTEM_NIGHT

FLOWS_NIGHT

500m

0m   250m

N
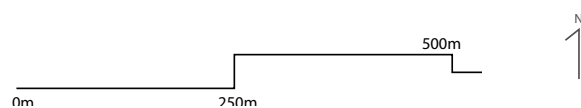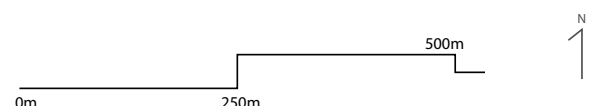
CURRENT FLOWS

PROPOSED FLOWS

500m

0m   250m

N

The existing flows of functions and people, following the morphology of the area, have the tedency to re-define the block and expand its permeability. The proposal, according to this tedency, is re-discovering the identity of the block by creating a new system of flows, which is based on the existing but it is using the character of the extroverted block in order to create a new hierarchy of connections between the neighborhood with the rest of the city.

The existing flows of functions and people, following the morphology of the area, have the tedency to re-define the block and expand its permeability. The proposal, according to this tedency, is re-discovering the identity of the block by creating a new system of flows, which is based on the existing but it is using the character of the extroverted block in order to create a new hierarchy of connections between the neighborhood with the rest of the city.

_Final product

To conclude, the final product is a research by design proposal that will focus on the following key-points

• the requirements for transformation

• the intrergration of the abandonment in an urban accupuncture level by creating the conditions to use it

• the demands in terms of the local level though collective planning by recognizing the potentialities of each group

This strategic plan will have as a key-core element/ vision the creatio of a central open market and a network of common interconnected spaces.

In order to accomplish that, matters of programmatic and street connectivity were researched, as well as the existing functions and their radius of influence with the flows they create. Based on these results, the new urban permiable blocks are organized, with their functions and the public space and common space network for their support.

| public space | pedestrian connections | transportation hubs | street connections | programatic connections |

CONNECTIVITY

500m

0m   250m

N

INFLUENCE RADIUS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

INFLUENCE RADIUS OF MUSEUM

500m

0m   250m

N

INFLUENCE RADIUS OF A SCHOOL
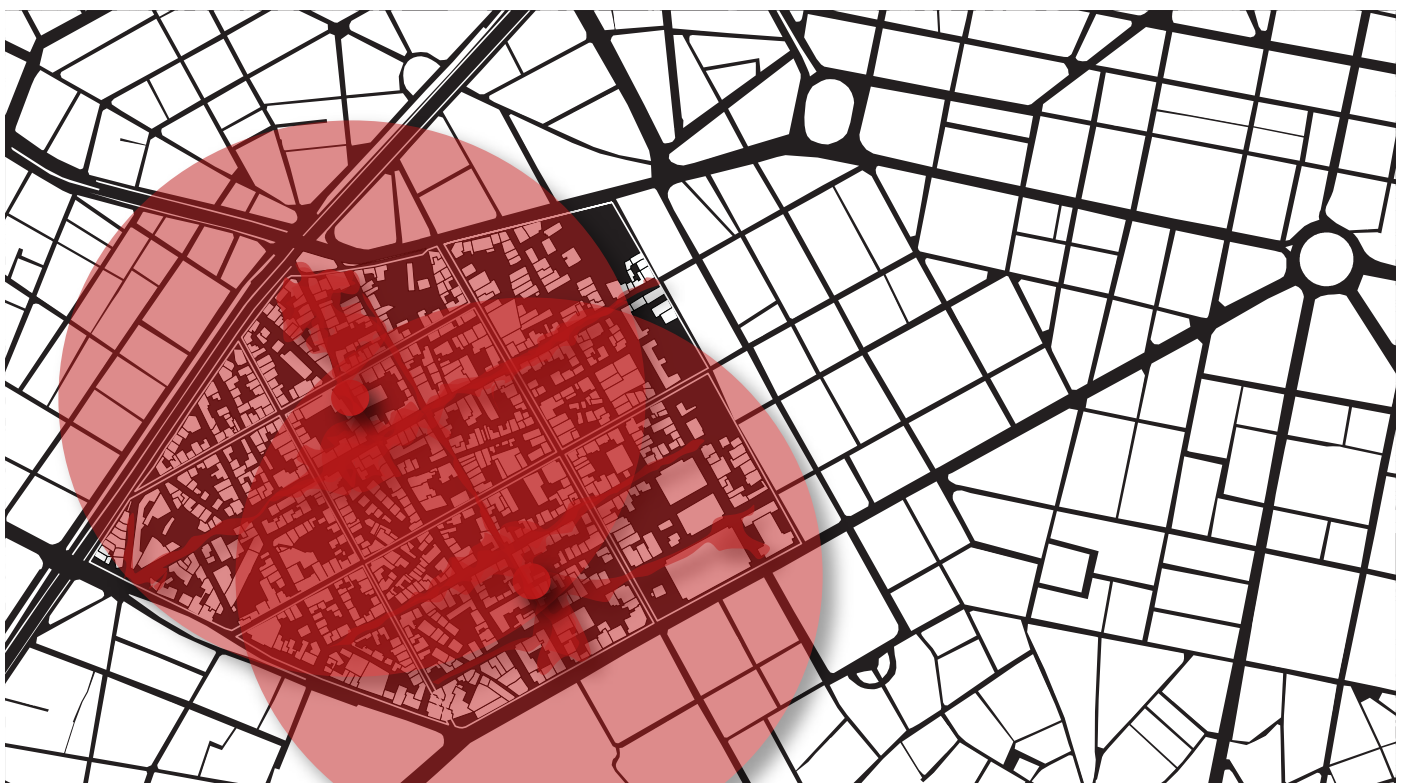
INFLUENCE RADIUS OF COMMON SERVICES

500m

0m   250m

N
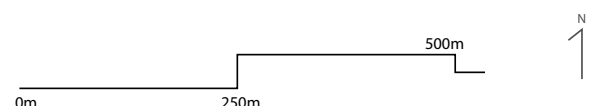
INFLUENCE RADIUS OF PRIVATE SERVICES

PUBLIC AND COMMON SPACE NETWORK AND THE OPEN MARKET

N

N

500m

0m   250m

500m

0m   250m

N
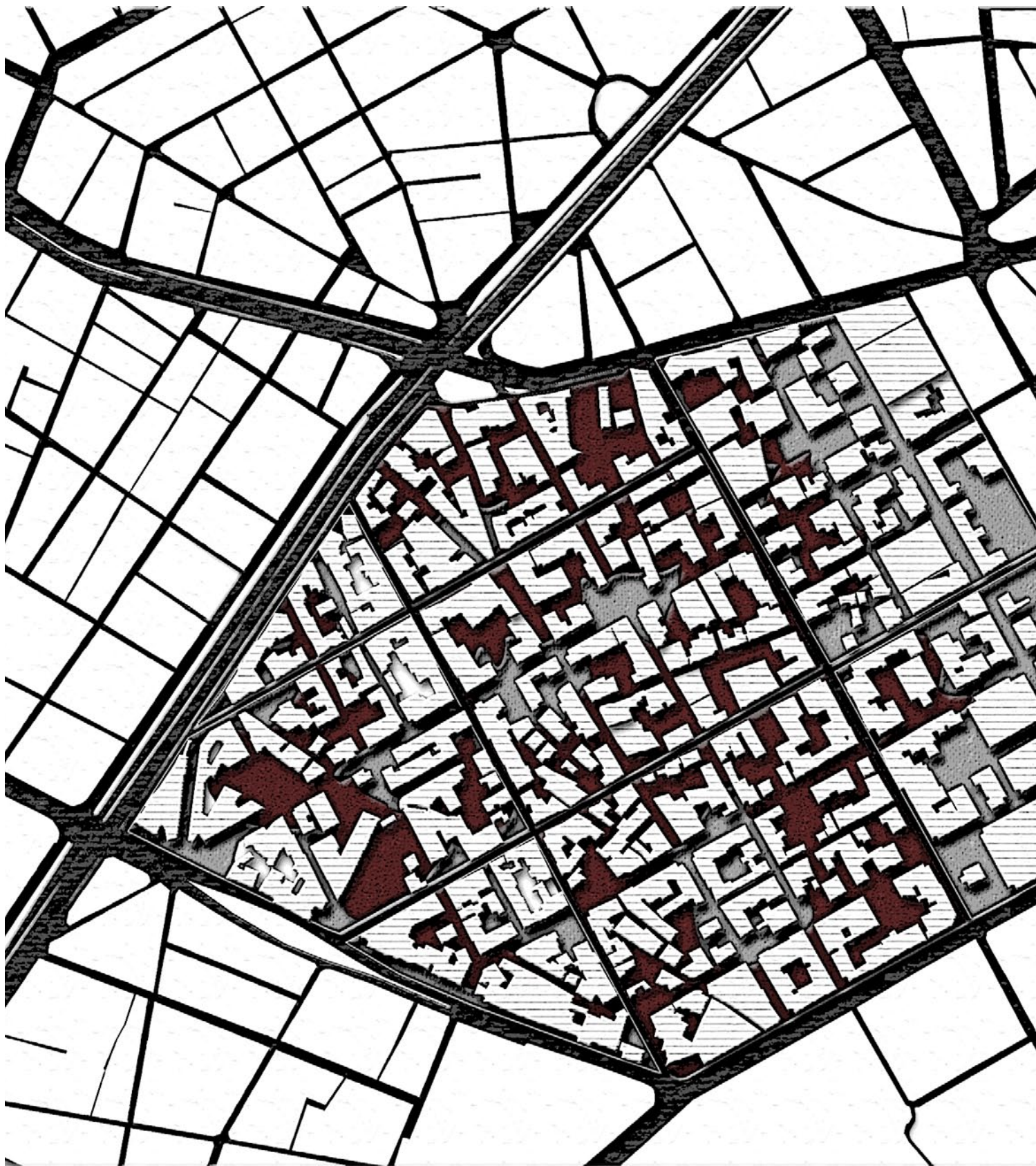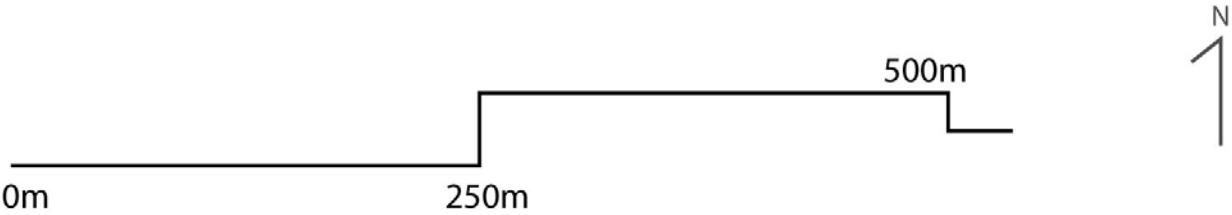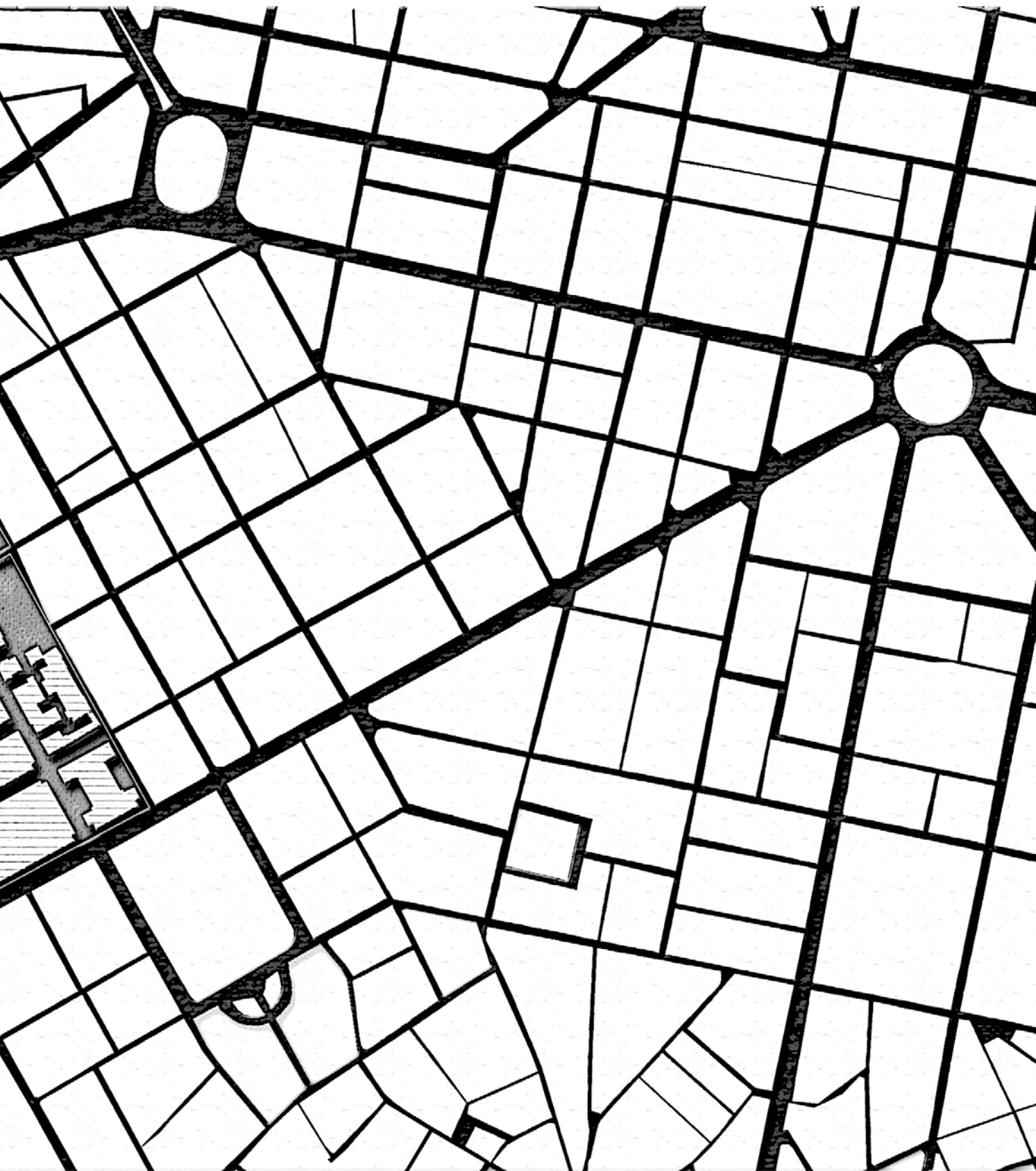
_The new permiable urban block

        This potential framework can start from the creation of one new permiable urban block. Until now the unit that effected the urban morphology of the city of Athens is polykatoikia. But, in the area of Metaxourgeio we can identify the block as a unit that can be the activator unit for the regeneration of the area due to its unique mixture of typologies.

This urban block is choosen because it is consisted by a unique mixture of different block typologies that is followed by a mixture of groups, visible and invisible, as well as its pottentialities in terms of programatic and trasportational connectivity.

The character and the identity of this new urban block is analyzed in the following pages.

500m

0m   250m

N

URBAN FACADES

Paramuthias street

Mukalis street

Leonidou street
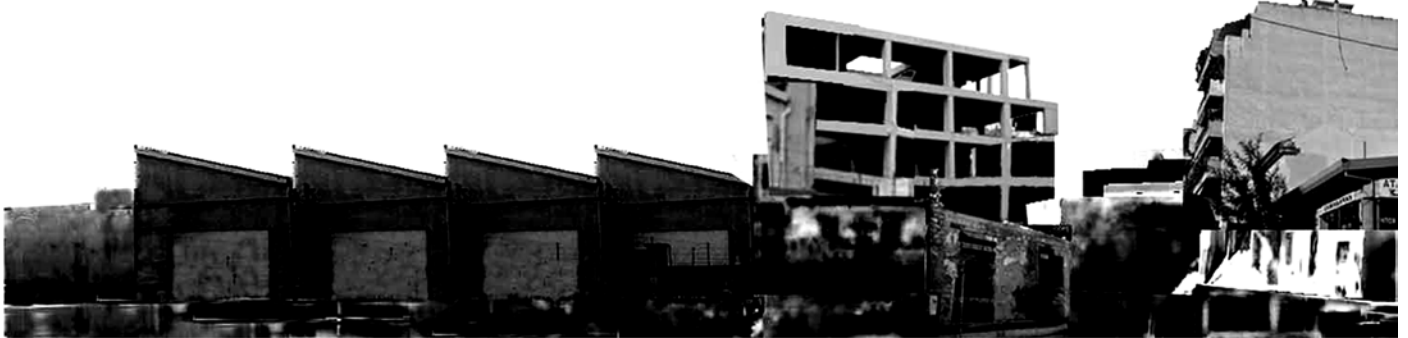
Thermopilon street

NEW PERMEABLE BLOCK
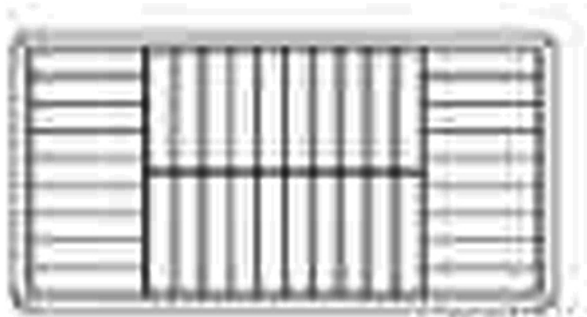
1 PREVIOUS CONDITION

the current urban morphology of the area is following a grid pattern, even though the daily systems of the inhabitants do not agree with that grid
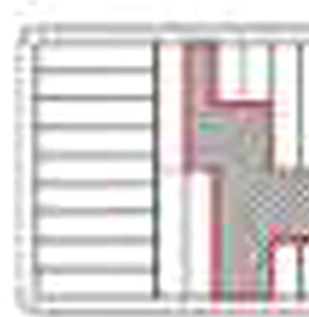
2 CURRENT CON

the new permiable
of neighborhood n
neighborhood pot
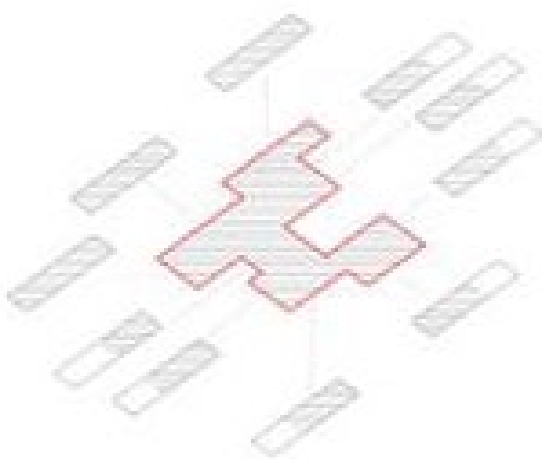
3 INTENTION

the new block will be the mean for a transformation based on a public and common spaces network, so as to re-propose the urban structure
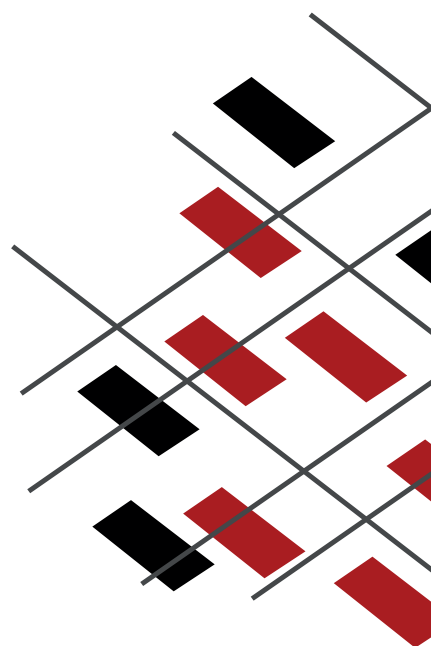
RE-THINKING THE BLOCK

The concept of the new permiable block derives from the idea that by re-forming the urban structure of the area, according to the potentialities it provides, it enables new conditions for a collective approach and an integral use of the space.

The new block provides a mixture and an activation of diverse actors by creating new neighborhoods based on the existing, and uses the dialy systems of the inhabitants as well as the morphology of the area so as to respond to the demands of the inhabitants and the actors.

IDITION

e block proposes a new structure
meeting the local and the
tentialities and demands

COMMON

PUBLIC
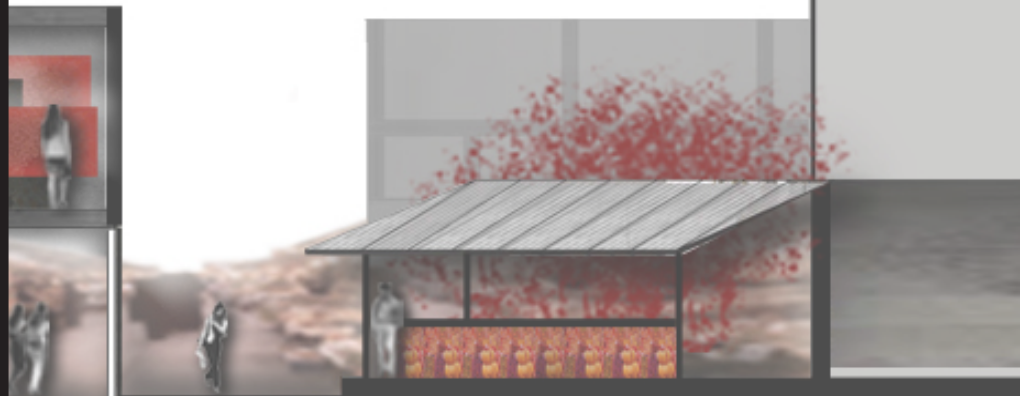
_Spatial guidelines and policies

One important aspect of the proposal is that it should work on a base of collective process in order to make possible the invlolvement of the inhabitants. In the following diagrams, it is explained the process that is followed in order to turn this local strategic plan into an instrumental plan that different groups can use as a collective process.

Moreover, in order to for the design process of the proposal to start there is the need to establish a set of recomendations. This set of spatial guidelines, is a combination of policies on the ownership and the abandonment and a set of guidelines on how to formulate the urban block.
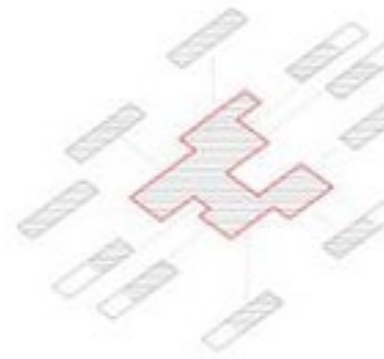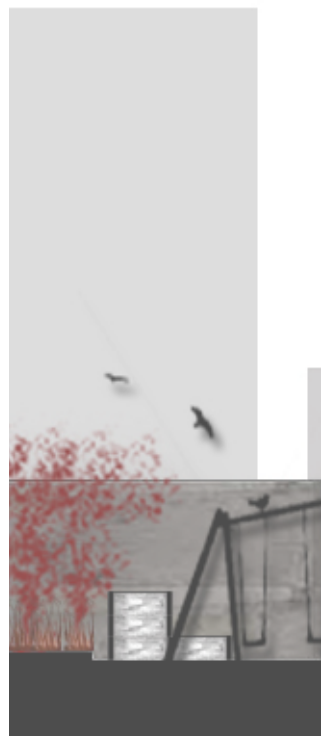
(1) AMALGAMATED

the urban block is consiste
at least 4 blocks
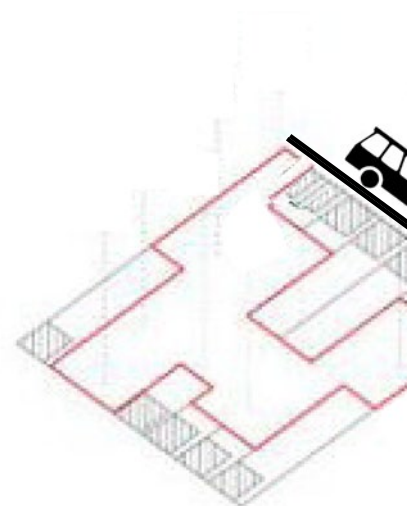
(3) CONNECTIVITY I

the urban block is connect
one of the main street axis

SPATIAL GUIDELINES

ed from
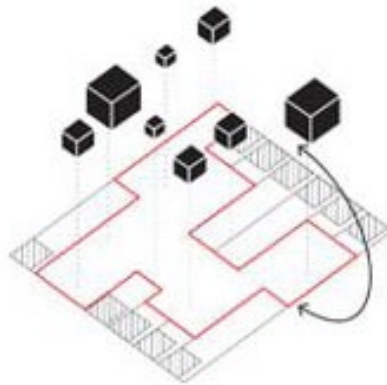
(2) LAND TRUST

the abanond buildings and plots within
the urban block will host new
functions
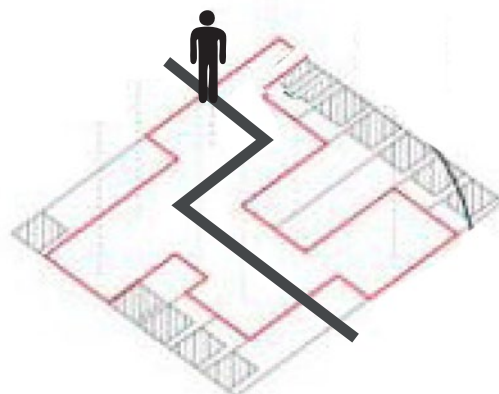
ted with
s

(3) CONNECTIVITY II

the urban block is connected with
one of the pedestrian axis

ORGANIZATION

NEW FUNCTIONS

5

CONSTRUCTION

NGOs

1 BOARD

INHABITANTS MUNICIPALITY

+

FUNDING 2

PARTICIPATORY

4

MUNICIPALITY DEVELOPERS

3
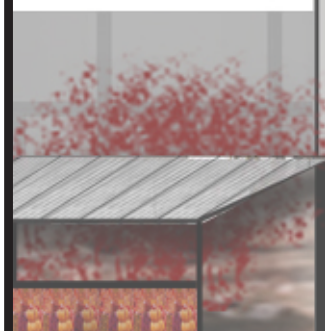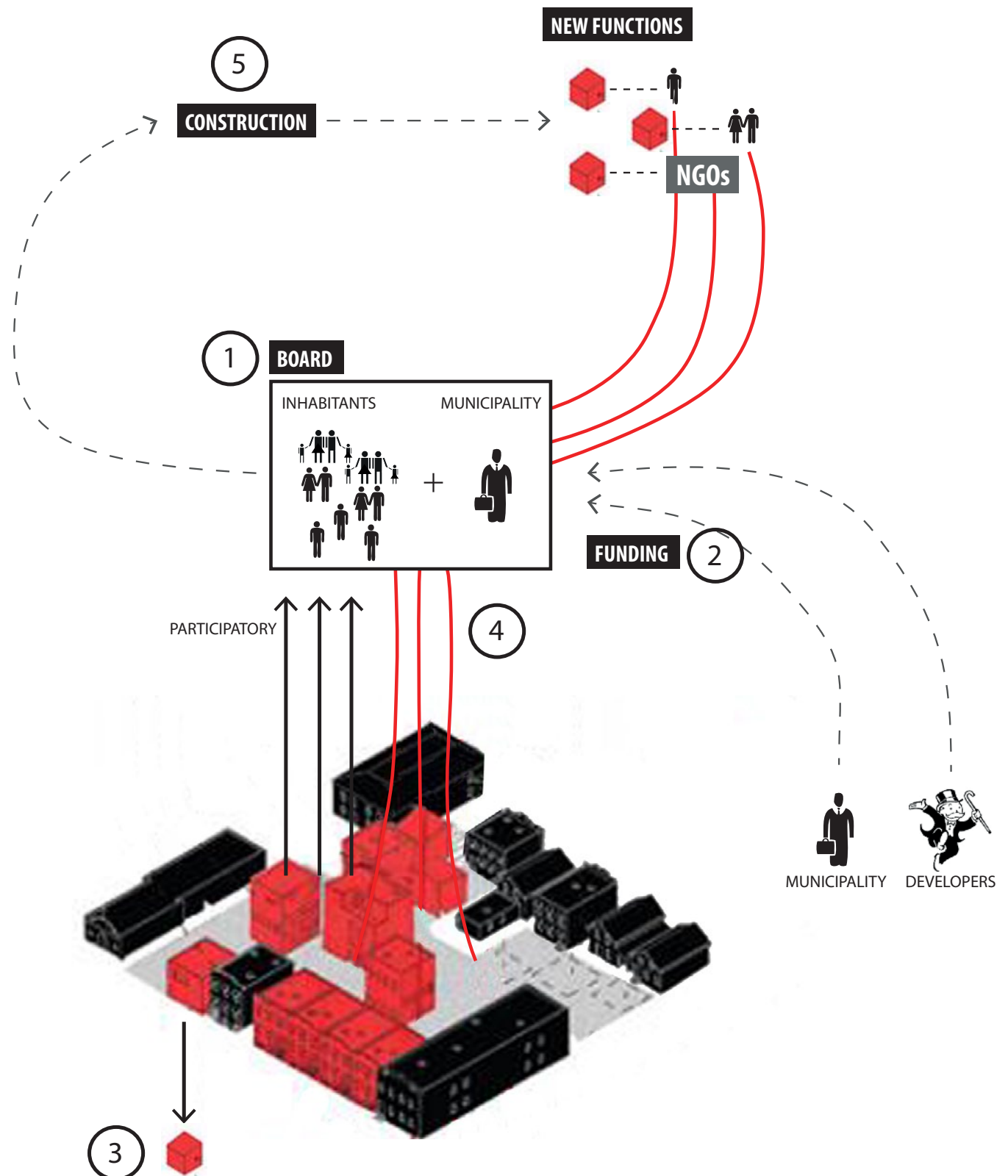
POLICIES

1 BOARD

= the homeowners + the munipal officials

- collectivelly owns the land
- manages the funding
- plans the reconstruction of the abandond buildings
- regulates the construction of new buildings

2 FUNDING

- funds for reconstruction of public space
- funds for reconstruction of abandond buildings
- revenues from the re-use of abandonment

3 ABANDONMENT

- hosts new uses
- demolition of buildings in bad conditions
- characterization of abandonment within 10 years

4 OWNERSHIP

- the ownership of the land is collective while of the buildings is individual
- land will be taken away from the real estate market for long-term affordability
- land acquisition: empty plots/abandond building/inner courtyards

5 CONSTRUCTION

- constructed by local constructor
- choice of typology and functions made from the board

_Flexibility of the proposal

The flexibility of the proposal is based in the combination of different elements. The importance of the common spaces is stressed out, as well as their relation with the public and in-between spaces. This relation is explored in different levels, from plan to section, giving multiple ways to address the spatial demands of common and public spaces.

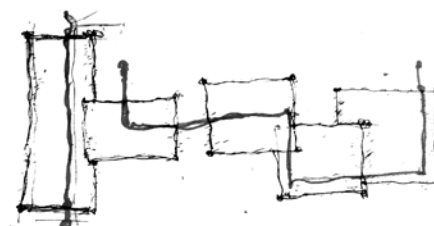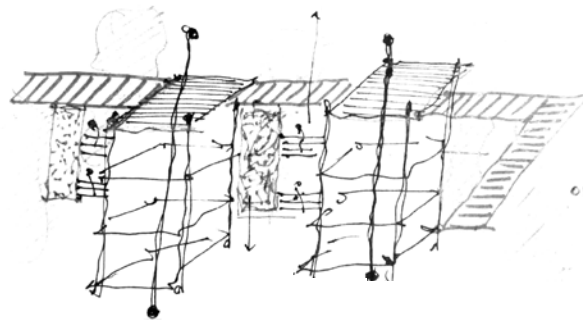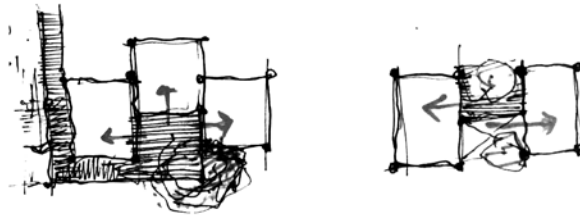## vicinity _ importance of common spaces
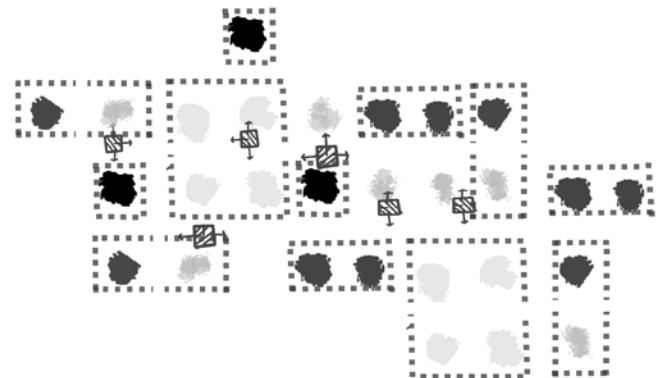
relation of public and common
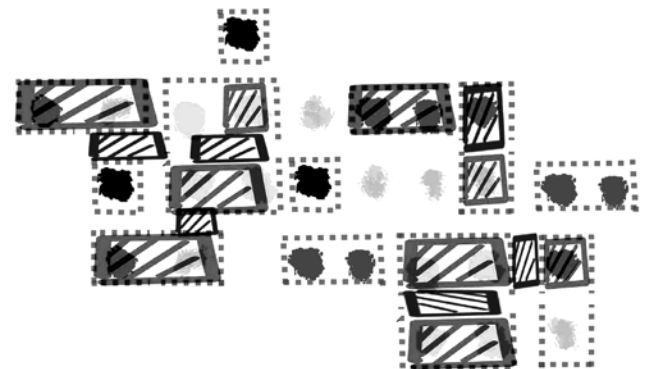
relation of public and in-between spaces
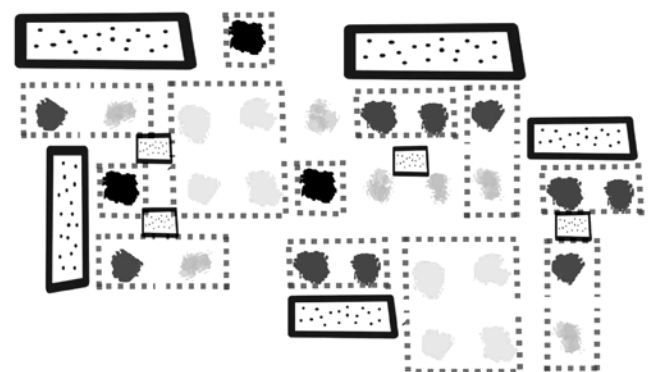
network of routes
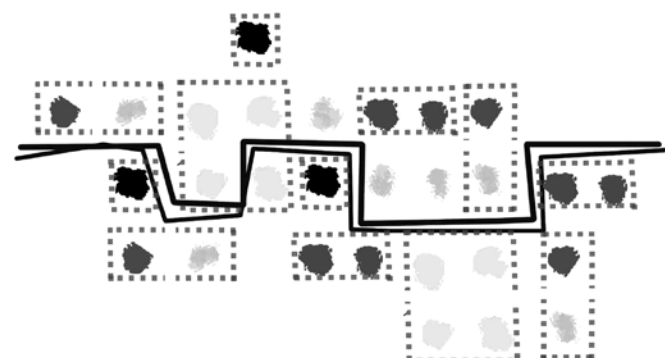
_The process

In this new urban block, the permeability of the block to the city is increased by introducing pedestrian streets that pass through the block, creating multiple connection with its urban surroundings.

The abandonment is also taken into consideration, since there are 39 abandond buildings within this megablock that can host the new functions. This proposal recognizes the pottentialities of the abandonment, embeding them in an urban accupuncture proposal.
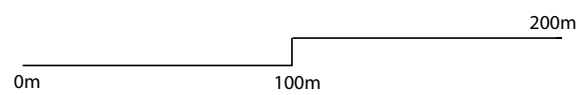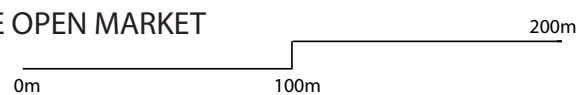
THE URBAN BLOCK

0m   100m   200m

ABANDONMENT

0m   100m   200m   N

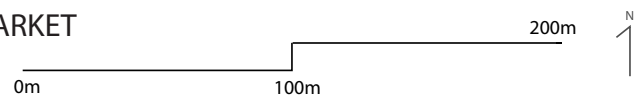PUBLIC AND COMMON SPACE NETWORK AND THE OPEN MARKET

0m   100m   200m   N

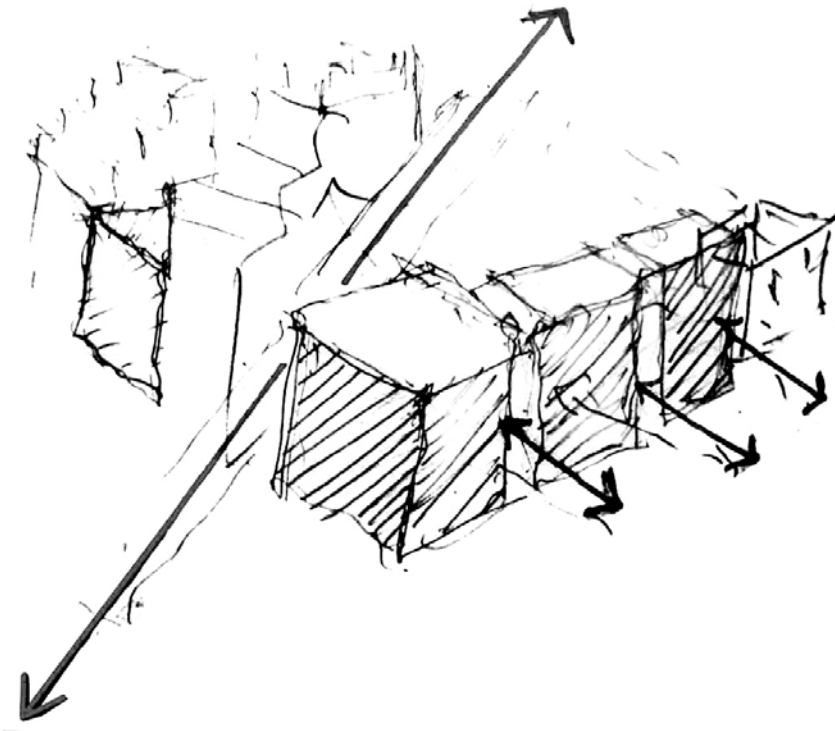PROGRAM

0m 100m 200m N
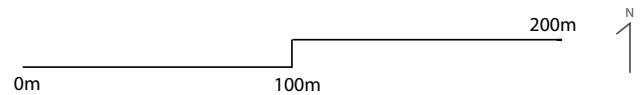
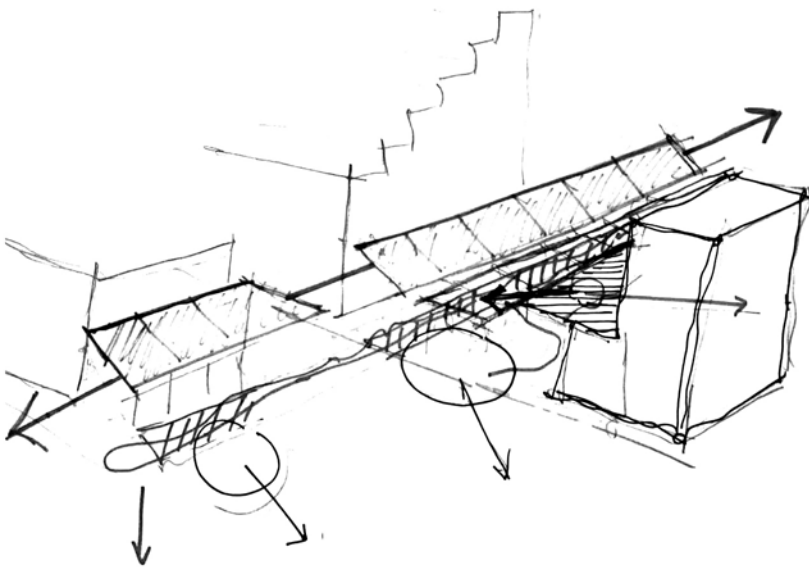PUBLIC AND COMMON SPACES AND THE OPEN MARKET

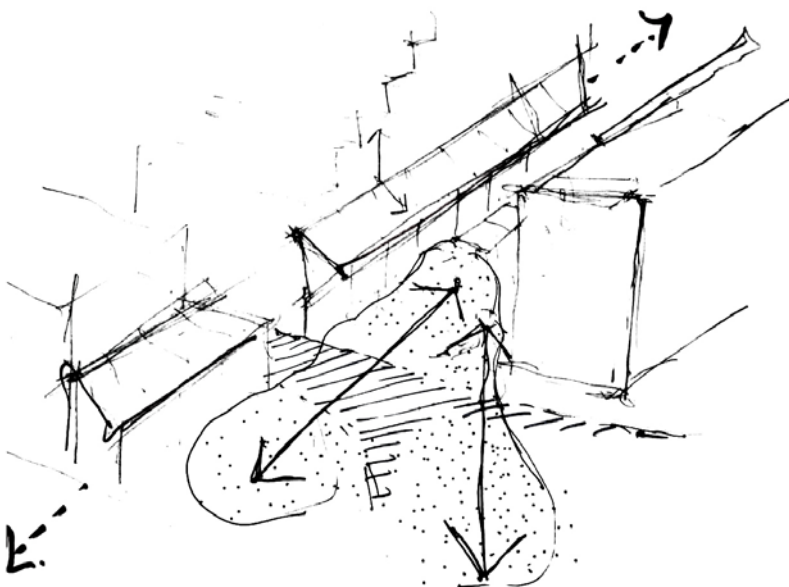0m 100m 200m N

SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS
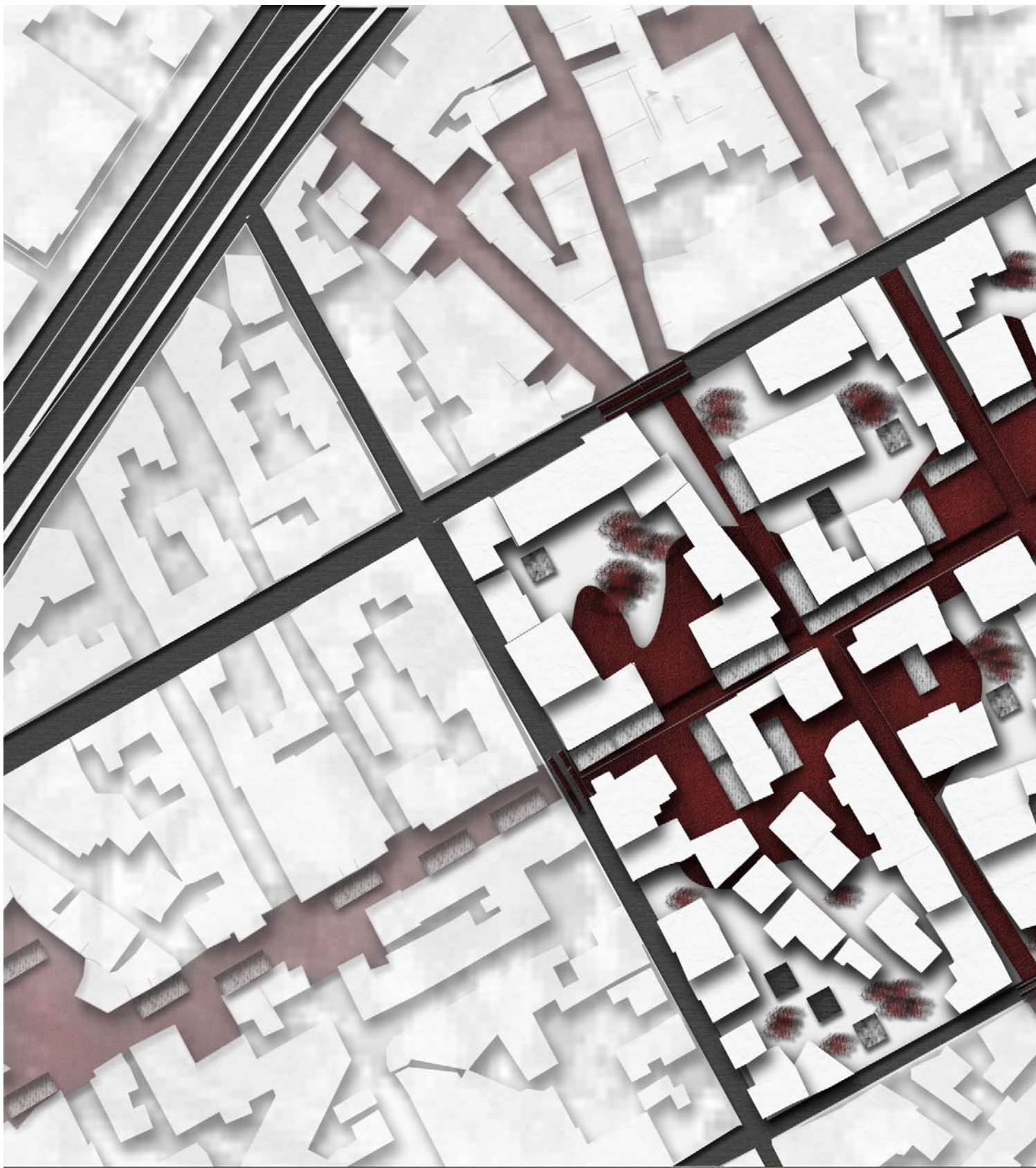
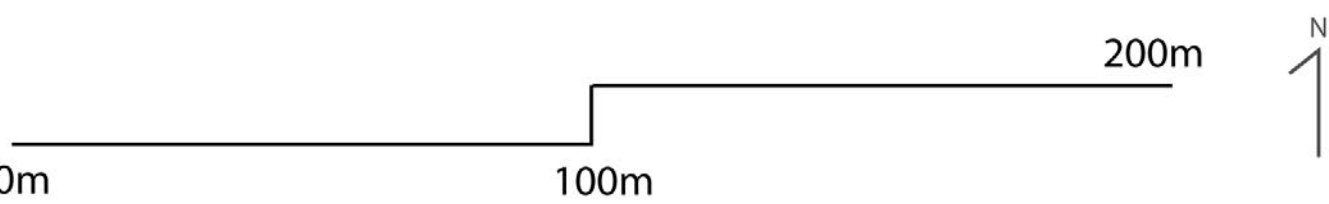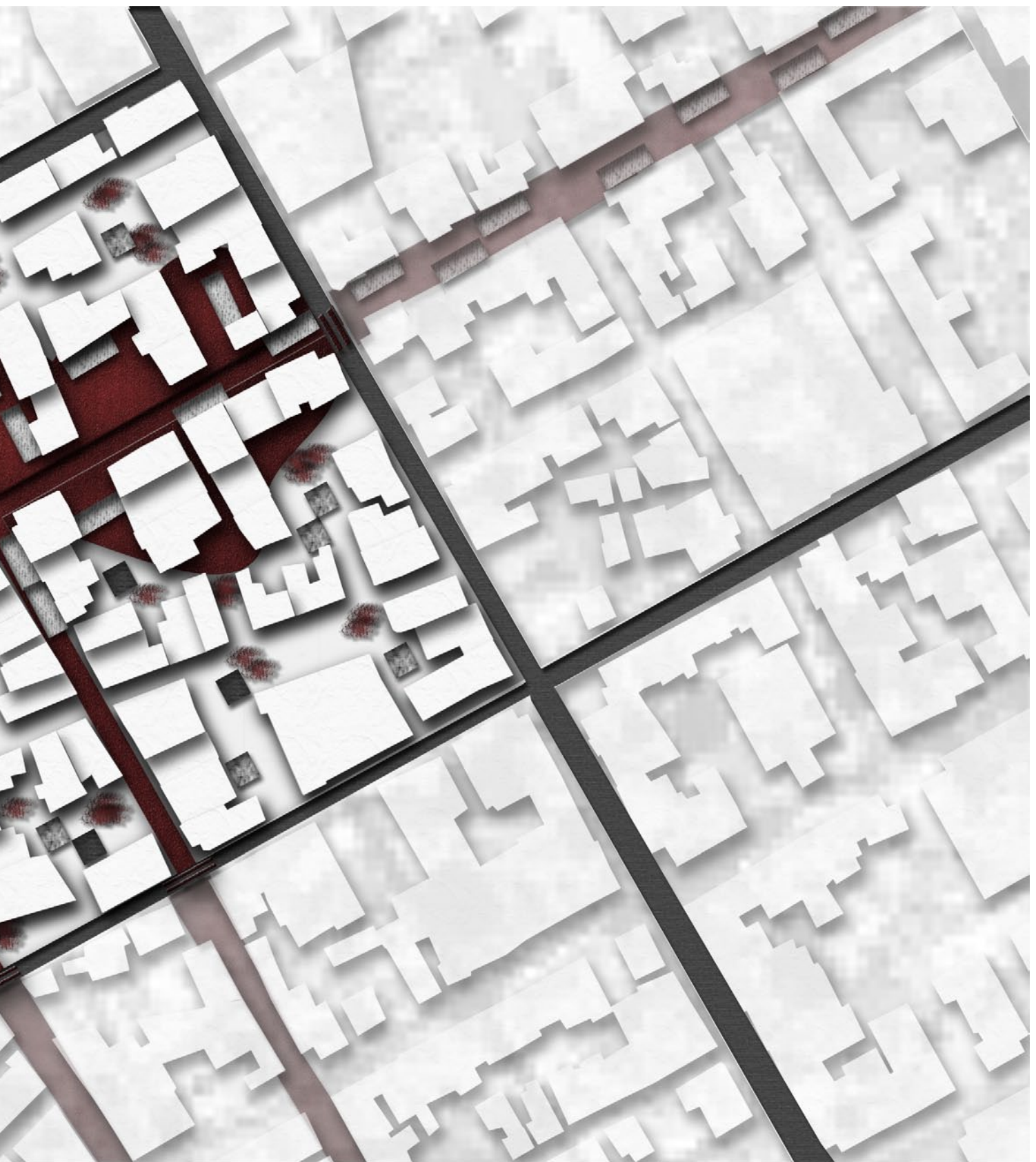creation of pedestrian routes

perforation of internal limits

diffusion of the market in the
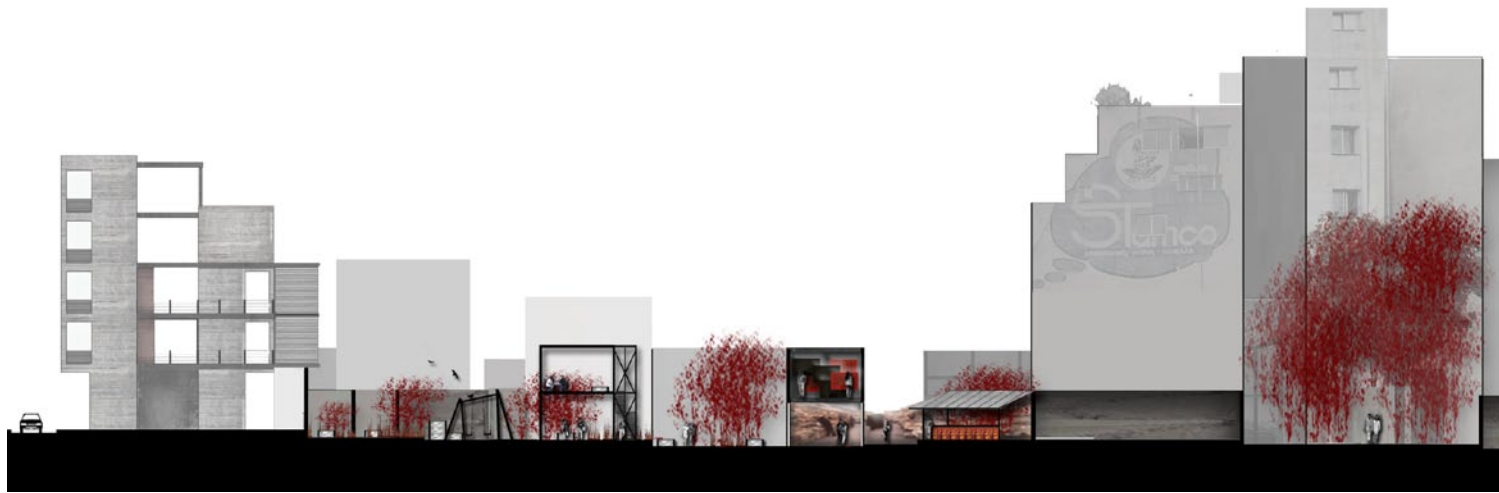inner courtyards

connections through the market
and the common spaces

200m

100m

0m

N

Section 1

PUB PRIVATE PRIV COMMON COMMON COMMON COMM PUBLIC PU PRIVATE PRIVATE PRIVATE PRIVA

Section 2

PUB PRIVATE PRIVATE PRIVATE PRIVATE PRIVATE PRIVATE PRIVATE PUBLIC PRIVATE PRIVATE PRIVATE

ATE**PRIVATE**PRIVATE**P**PUB**PRIVATE**PRIVATE**P**PU**COMMON**COMMON**COMMON**COM** **PRIVAT** **PUBLI**

EPRI**COMMON**COMMON**COMMON**COMMON**C**PUBLI**COMMON**COMMON**COMMON** **PRIVATE** **PUBLI**

_Existing and new conditions

Before
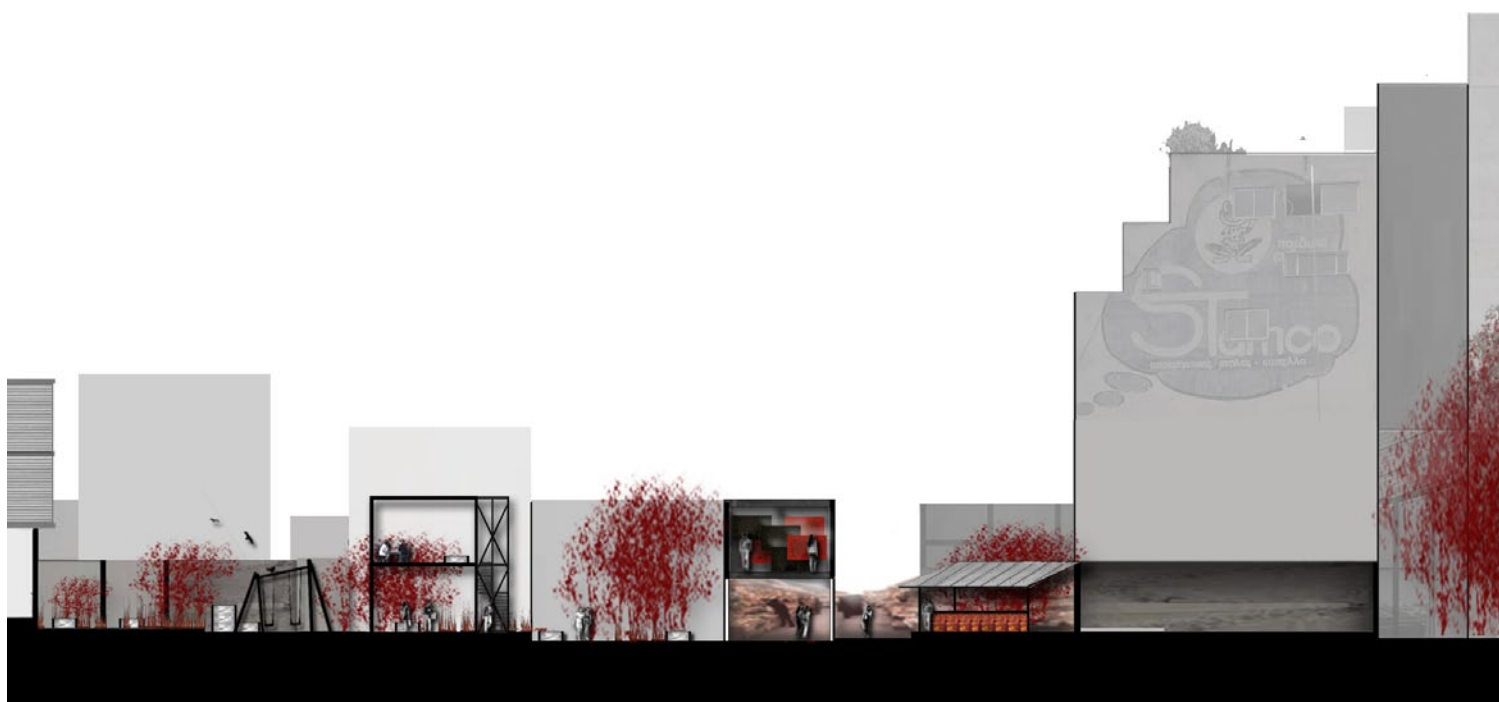
After

Before

After

In the following diagram, it is shown how the abandond buildings are hosting different types of functions and program and the importance of this transformation. The open street market works as a stich between the different uses, from more profitable orriented to the more social driven. It is shown how this local strategic plan and this proposal for the intergration of the area, can respond to the demads of all the inhabitants and at the same time consider and give room for new developments.
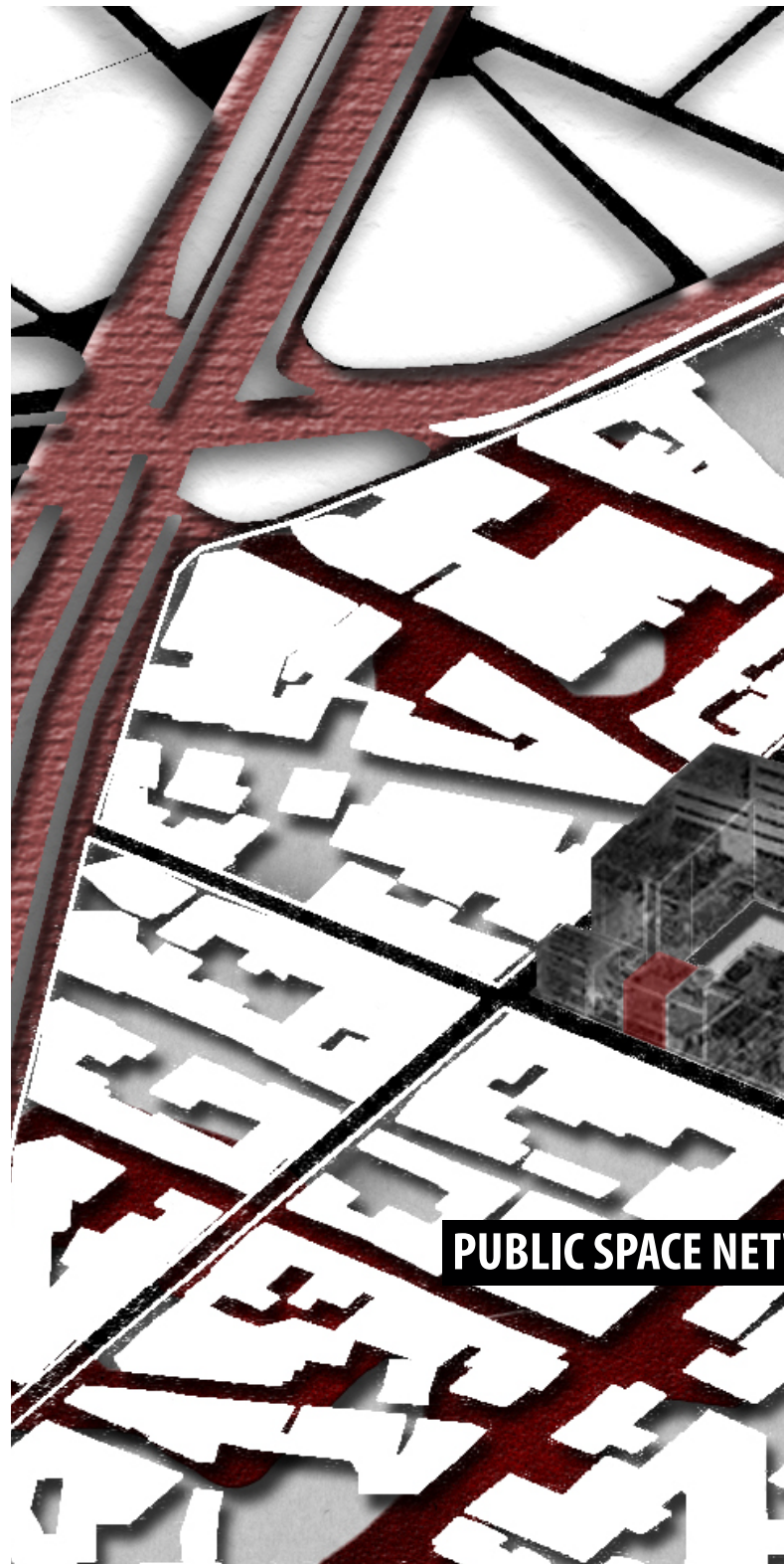
This local re-activation plan provides a new concept that will re-form the public and common space relations. Since the social changes are recognized, the meaining of space is understood through this proposal. It is a common ground that responds to the conflicts of the actors of Metaxourgeio, which are visible through space (public and private), and establishes a more flexible way for the expansion of the spatial possibilities of the area and the creation of a collective approach towards a neighborhood. The needs of the neighborhood are re-evaluated after the official plan and this proposal qualifies the potentialities for transformation in order to re-propose the urban morphology by elaborating on the social infrastructure that meats the local and the neighborhood demands with a mixture and activations of diverse actors.

PRIVATE SPACE

RESTAURANT

HOUSING

HOUSING

COMMON SPACE

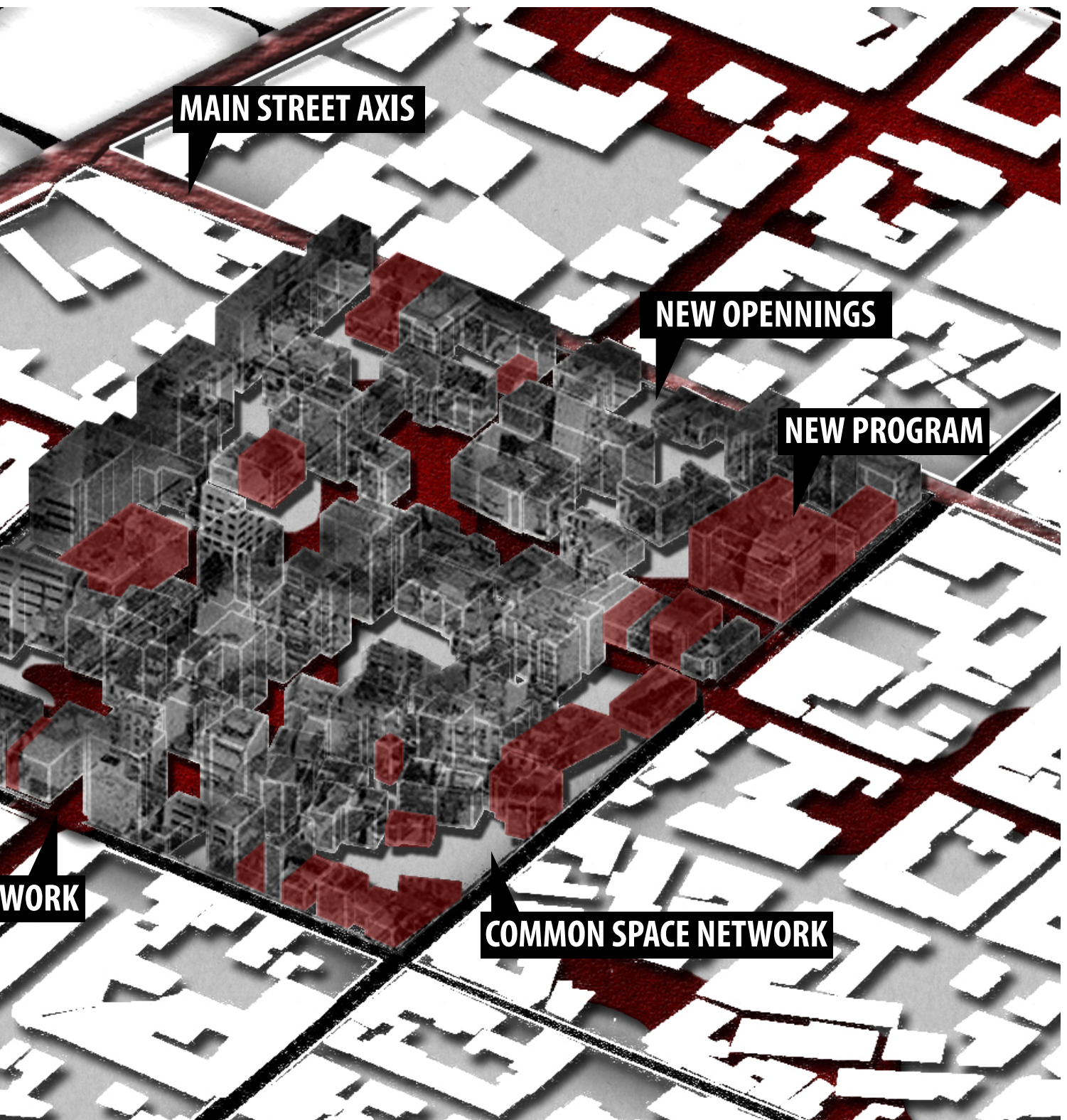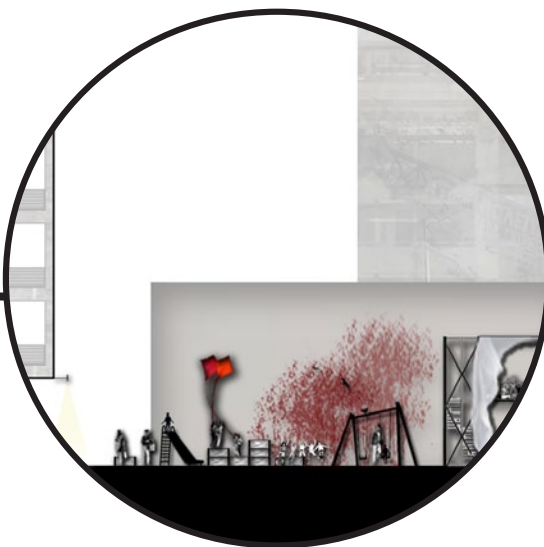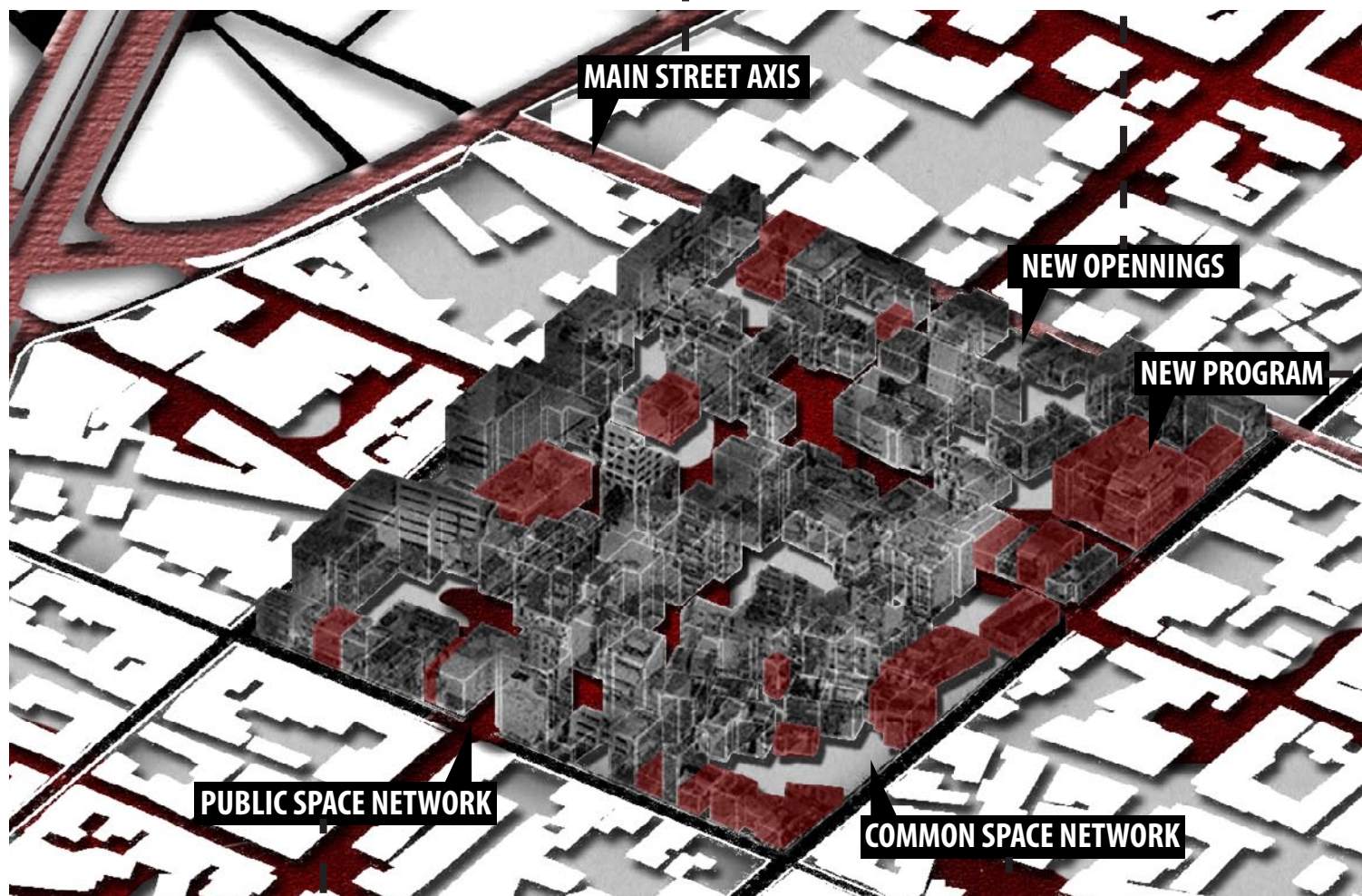**STREET MARKET**

IMMIGRANT'S SHOP
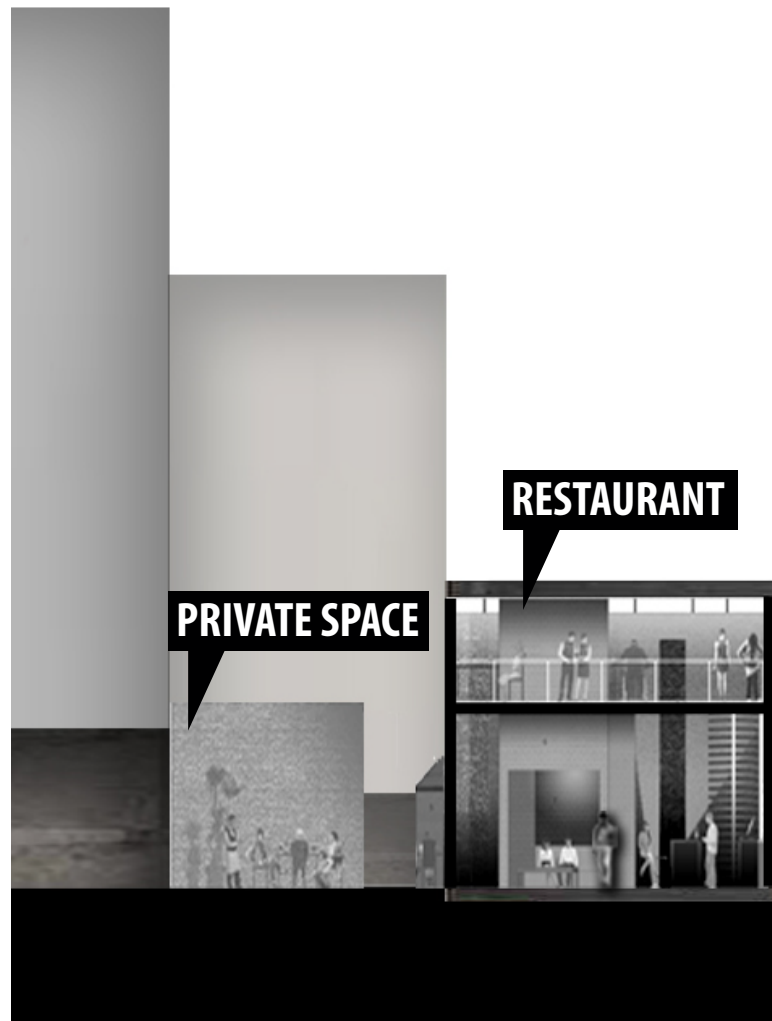
The design process follows the steps that were mentioned in the maps(p. 106-108) in order to establish which are the key-actions that need to be taken in order the design to be finalized. This local strategic plan works as a system of urban accupuncture interventions, aiming to implement the needs of multiple and different actors and to create the conditions for cooperation between the inhabitants.

In the masterplan of the new urban block (p. 110-111) as well as in the following drawing, we see the points in which the accupunctural interventions have been realized. It is the example on how the new urban megablock can be the activator of the area, that will enable the inhabitants into co-habitation by expanding the public space into the block and creating common spaces for interaction. The urban block works in a extrovert level, like the traditional block of the area, with multiple entries, a core-market that passes through the middle of it bringing the public life into its core and perforrated urban facades that are open to the city life. The multiple common spaces that are created are connected with each other by a network of pedestrian public network, are keeping a character that varies between different levels of private and public that replies to the multiple needsof the mixture of the inhabitants. The urban block as a whole 'plays' with the different levels of public, private and common and makes this variety a central key-point of intervantion and an important element in order for the megablock to function in an extrovert level. The mixture of public, common and private spaces and the connections between them are an element of the intervention that plays an important role to the activation of the area (sections p. 114-117). The transformation comes through the intensification of open spaces, where common and public spaces are more clear. In that way the neighborhood becomes the activator unit fot the transformation of Metaxourgeio.

PUBLIC SPACE NET

MAIN STREET AXIS

NEW OPENNINGS

NEW PROGRAM

WORK

COMMON SPACE NETWORK

Points of intervention

MAIN STREET AXIS

NEW OPENNINGS

NEW PROGRAM

PUBLIC SPACE NETWORK

COMMON SPACE NETWORK

_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 especailly in Greece and its capital city Athens, and in the effects on physical and social space that the economic ressesion that started in 2008, has. The economical crisis is a starting point of changes, since its effects have start 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 chosing 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 re 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 projectI 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 derscibed 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 form 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 lead 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 consistancy 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.
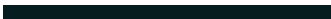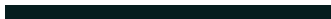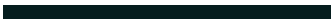
As it was mentioned previously, there are asymmetries that form the social structure of the reality of the city of Athens in terms of different groups and actors. It is important to investigate the spatial structure of these groups. These are the groups that my project is aiming into turning them into 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 lead 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.
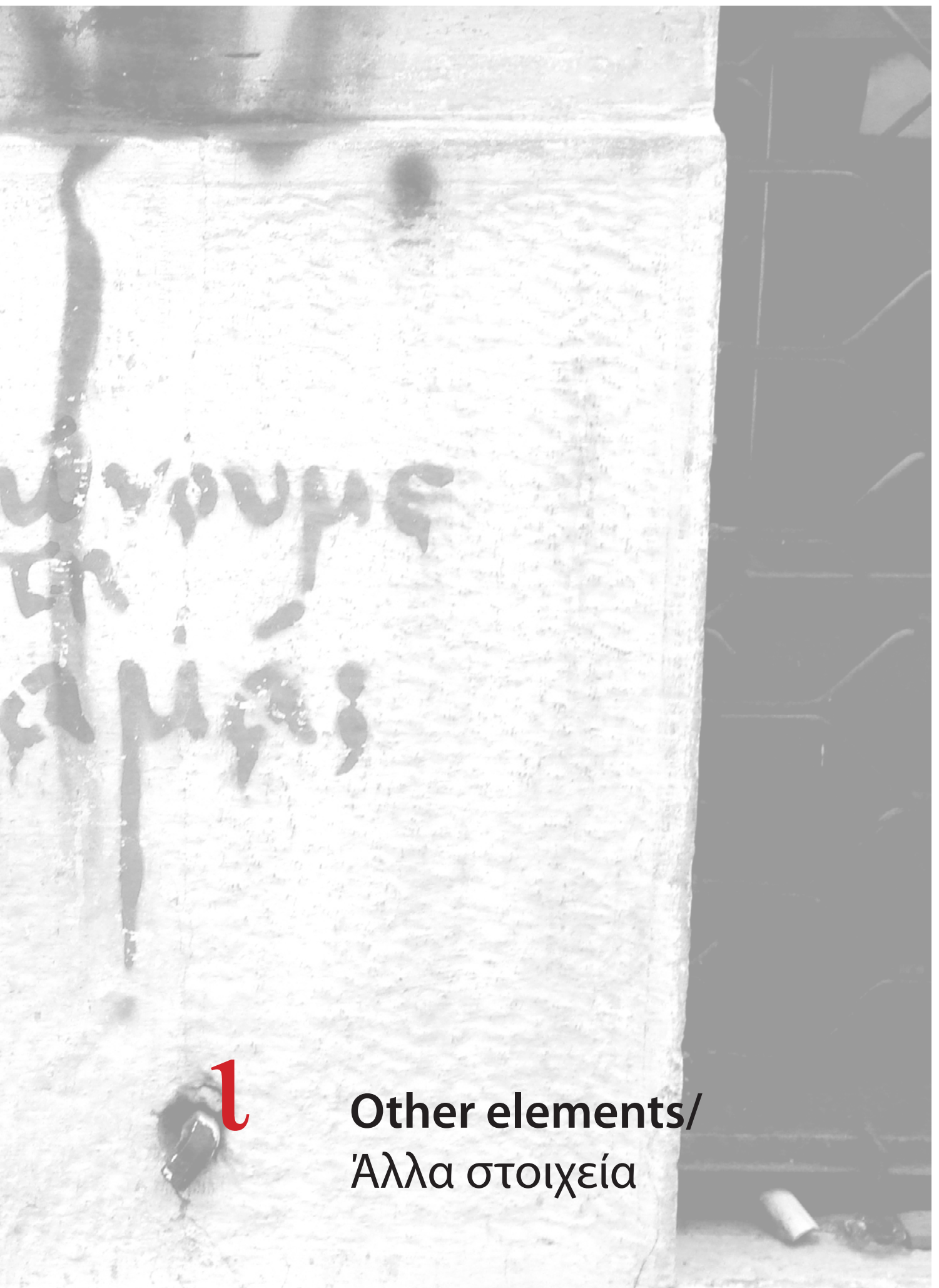
ι Other elements/
Άλλα στοιχεία

_Phasing

P1 **(19/10/2012)** ────────

Studio problematique
Historical Analysis
Creation of the timeline
Preliminary theoritical framework
Preliminary thesis plan

P2 **(25/01/2013)** ────────

Collective research book
Urban Analysis
Strategy proposal
Theoritical & Analytical framework
Thesis plan

P3 **(21/03/2013)** ────────

Research reports/Planning project
Strategy proposal
Master thesis

P4 **(22/05/2013)** ────────

Research reports/Planning project
Strategy proposal
Urban Design
Master thesis

P5 **(04/07/2013)** ────────

Final graduation project

_Involved disciplines

Responsible Instructors:

Dr. ir. Diego Sepúlveda (main mentor Urbanism – Spatial Planning and Strategy)

Dr. ir. Gerhard Bruyns (second mentor Urbanism - MSc Coordinator DSD)

Dr.ir. Heidi Sohn (Academic coordination UA, assistant mentor Urbanism - Assistant Prof. Arch Theory DSD)

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NG CITY, BABE.