Eleonas* of Athens

Searching for a relation between the residual and the city

*olive grove

Konstantina Georgoula
Complex Cities/ TU Delft/2013-2014
“With cities, it is as with dreams: everything imaginable can be dreamed, but even the most unexpected dream is a rebus that conceals a desire or, its reverse, a fear. Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else.”

Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities
Eleonas of Athens

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As you set out for Ithaka
hope the voyage is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,
angry Poseidon—don’t be afraid of them:
you’ll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,
wild Poseidon—you won’t encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

Hope the voyage is a long one.
May there be many a summer morning when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you come into harbors seen for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfume of every kind—
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to gather stores of knowledge from their scholars.

Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you are destined for.
But do not hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you are old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you have gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you would not have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka won’t have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.

C.P. Cavafy, Collected Poems
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1. Preface (the context)
The modern city, resulting from the rapid urbanization and being liable to the forces of the global economy and industrialization, is examined through three main features that characterize the “sprawling city”: its size, its density and its composition (William, 1958; Berger, 2006). The first of these key characteristics is its size. The constant shifting of city limits is now referred as urban sprawl, a term that describes the continuous integration of new parts in the periphery of the city. The second characteristic of the modern city is its density. The low density of the “sprawling city” leads to the conclusion that the numerical-population, economic and social thickening in the space, are vital to the proper functioning of the city and ensures its urbanity and therefore its viability (William, 1958).

The modern city is described above through its increasing radius and its decreasing density. Henri Lefebvre (1968) describes these two features as the paradox of “urbanization that de-urbanizes and is de-urbanized “. What somebody should notice here is that the widened urban space is homogeneous neither to its population characteristics, nor to the distribution of the structured and unstructured areas. With this observation we come to the third feature of the city, which is its composition, by examining the combination of voids-solids at the urban scale. In other words we identify the characteristic of heterogeneity in the sequence of the urban structures and the urban voids, which vary in frequency, size and origin (William, 1958). These discontinuities are not only related to the structural interruption, but also to interruption of use. In maps that illustrate the production of cities most of the urban voids are post-industrial places in expectation of role.

“The modern city is neither compact nor continuous; it is a city where different densities with large urban and territorial voids resulting from uncontrolled dispersion and change of use or institutional transformations are alternating. The idea of density, rather than the compact form, describes this fluid transitive situation: it is a situation of “neighboring” of elements which are completely disconnected and a “galaxy of gaps that seems to want to fulfill its destiny as a discontinuity ” (Lerup, 1996).

The model of the fragmented and sprawled city was the result of problems such as the environmental downgrading of the cities, the traffic congestion and demographic factors (the continuous concentration of population in the big urban centers because of internal immigration in parallel relatively new need for more personal space). The mega-cities that are created are a live organism that has a potential not only to parasite, but also to feed maintaining this way the human functions.
2. Introducing Athens
Attika
Population: 3,686,371
Area: 2,928.717 km² (1,131 sq mi)
Density: 1,259 /km² (3,260 /sq mi)

Central Athens
Population: 3,130,841
Area: 411.717 km² (159 sq mi)
Density: 7,604 /km² (19,695 /sq mi)

Municipality of Athens
Population: 745,514
Area: 38.964 km² (15 sq mi)
Density: 19,133 /km² (49,555 /sq mi)
“Athens is the city manifesting the contemporary era: noisy, polluted, extended and fragmented. Opposed to the cities of culture and rationality, Athens is the city of the myth and the chaos. Opposed to the cities of order and rules, substantiates the inordinate and the lack of rules.” (Richard Scoffier, 2007)

Athens is a special case where urban sprawl has been influenced historically from the waves of internal migration and the development of arbitrary housing in the urban region, from the environmental urban pressures, and more recently, from the large investments in infrastructure in urban areas for the Olympics. In the case of the Greek city, its sprawled and unplanned nature were inherent characteristics of it. The modern Greek city is a sprawled city.

In the case of Athens, the concentration of the population in major urban centers has taken explosive dimensions. Today, the 80% of people live in cities. Moreover, urbanization is growing at a faster rate, than that of global births, while the living conditions are getting worse continuously. This phenomenon has been associated with the industrialization, the change of the agriculture, the tertiarisation of the economy and the disintegration of social structures in the countryside. At the same time, great contribution to the expansion of population of Athens was the refugees’ concentration from Asia Minor, refugees of the civil war and internal migrants the first year of rebuilding. These migratory flows forced the sprawl of Athens which was not ready to handle this situation properly. The continuous, unplanned, growth of the urban fabric produced high density buildings while produced also deficit of greenery and open air public spaces. In the period 1978-1983 is drawn up for the first time in the Greek state a Master Plan for the capital that is institutionalized in 1985 at a time when in Europe the strategy and the policies for decongestion in the large urban centers was already dominated. Athens nowadays, despite the visions of the previous twenty five years for decentralization and improvement of environmental conditions, it is still uncontrollably magnified, guided by financial powers. The sprawl of the city contributes to increasing environmental problems the last few years that significantly affect the quality of life and significantly threaten citizen’s health. The city has reached its limits, because urbanization has covered all the existing space in the Attica basin, where the city is located, and has reached its physical borders which are the surrounding mountains of Mount Aegaleo to the west, Mount Parnitha to the north, Mount Penteli to the northeast and Mount Hymettus to the east as well as the sea in the southwest. Today, the capital of Greece is undergoing different transformations due to the shift from the industrial to the postindustrial and informational era.
influx of new residents (1950-1970)
saturation of the centre (1965-1980)
sprawling to the suburbs (1975)

Source: Athens Lessons, EPFL Lapa
Spatial expansion of Athens

Source: Athens Lessons, EPFL Lapa
3. Problem statement
"The residuum is not inert" (Pope, 1996)

“Unincorporated margins, interior islands void of activity, oversights, these are simply un-inhabited, un-safe, un-productive. In short, they are foreign to the urban system, mentally exterior in the physical interior of the city, its negative image, as much a critique as possible alternative”.

The continuous development of the contemporary city together with the deterioration of the historic cores through uncontrolled reconstruction caused increased heterogeneity in the urban tissue, both morphological and functional. The reading of the city, through its sequential historical stages, makes the presence of spaces and places that seem to have lost their identity and their original character obvious.

Thus, spaces that initially resulted from design turn into unidentified spaces that cannot be combined with the emerging conditions. Consequently, these unidentified spaces interrupt the continuity of the urban tissue spatially timely and functionally. These are the residual spaces that disintegrate the city of Athens.

The appearance of the “residual sites” (Pope, 1996) in the body of the city is connected directly to the development process of production of the city itself. What is interesting is that apart from the determination of their industrial origin and their corrupted situation, the transitional nature of these voids is highlighted. The transitivity of the large urban voids states exactly the dynamics of the process that produces them. Those inactive and usually downgraded city parts were for a while active fields of economic, productive or other civil procedures, therefore it’s worthy to be interpreted as “indicators of the healthy urban development. As Alan Berger (2006) mentions, the ‘rust’, which means the residual and as a consequence the residual sites, is a natural effect of each change process, especially in the scale of production processes.
3α. residuals in Athens
The creation of the residual in Athens:

These residual spaces are the result of various reasons that are related to “connection” issues. In the case of Athens the residual spaces are related to the existence of water and the quality of the river soil. At first, the main problems of these spaces were the floods and consequently they were abandoned by the official urbanization processes.

Second reason for the creation of such residual places is infrastructure. In other words, the dynamics of the basic elements of infrastructure create certain connection conditions that attract special activities, such as the industries and services that are mainly related to the economic production of that time. The abandonment of areas from the urbanization process is also explained by the two fold character of infrastructural elements of high level connectivity. To be more specific, despite the fact that railway lines and highways link a city with the rest of the world, they create borders at a neighborhood level. Thus, the twofold character of these elements is the high connectivity at a national scale, but the low accessibility at a neighborhood scale. As an example we have the north east part of the Attica basin and more specifically along the National Road (Leoforos Kifisou) and Attiki Odos that connects the city with the airport. From the moment of the construction of the airport it attracts great development.

For example, the area along the banks of Kifisos (once the biggest river of Athens): A more complex example is the example of the area between the city center of Athens and the port of Piraeus, which can be an example of both the two important methods that lead to the creation of residual places. On the one hand we have Kifissos which was once the biggest river of Athens. People could not live on the banks of the river because of the floods and this land was exploited by industries. On the other hand, along the river there was always a big road that connected the port of Piraeus with the northern part of Greece.

According to the relevant diagrams that present the creation of residual places in Attica we can conclude that the axis that connects the city center of Athens with the port of Piraeus is neglected, while the axis on which the city of Athens expands is reinforced. This situation makes the city center a potential residual place.

The sprawled city of Athens seems to appreciate again the residual areas, as the identical place for the capitalization of cheap land. However, areas such as Eleonas cannot be reused easily, since at first they need careful reshaping in order to be integrated but most importantly to contribute to urban whole. The phenomenon of the integration goes with the urban development that is the main means for “upgrading” of various “downgraded” areas in the metropolitan center of Athens.
during the last years. It is obvious that the notion of “development” results into a
deeper restructuring of the area in a “brutal” way regarding the local population
that live in these “downgraded” areas. Consequently, regarding the study area, it
is considered that the construction of all these big centers will not lead to the up-
grading or the development of the area. It will result into a commercial “develop-
ment” that will not cover the need of the residents. According to Stavros Stavrides
(2012) “The city is not an archipelagos where in one island you work, in another
one you sleep, in another one you have fun...” In this project we will attempt to
define the policies and strategies that can help in the integration of Eleonas in the
urban tissue reinforcing the existing local diversity(functional) for the benefit of
the residents and the environment.
3β. the case of Eleonas
the position of Eleonas in the metropolis
Eleonas: the olive grove of Athens

The frenzied residential development in Athens, which was due to reckless speculation over the land, impelled all incompatible with residential development uses to non-imbedded urban areas plan. At the same time, these areas also had to meet certain criteria in order to serve these uses: firstly, to provide the physical infrastructure (like level ground suitable for clay taking, abundant groundwater etc.) for the newly founded potteries, soap factories, tanneries etc. and secondly, to serve the major industries of the 50s and 60s, which needed to be close to the markets of Athens and Piraeus and major intercity axes. Located between Athens and Piraeus, Eleonas ideally fulfilled all these requirements. The region of Eleonas presents an unprecedented -in terms of size- spatial discontinuity in the urban fabric of Athens. It occupies an area of about 9,000 acres, just three kilometers far from Omonia Square, the center of Athens and is divided into five boroughs. Its scale is vast and there, numerous abandoned industries, gardens, warehouses, trucks, fences, gypsy camps, arbitrary houses can be found, along with the remnants of the ancient olive grove of Athens. From the mid ‘80s onwards, the productive base of Eleonas, which enclosed the headquarters of major companies and function as the workplace of thousands of people for a century, gradually diminishes. Many industries were fleeing one after another, leaving behind contaminated land and dilapidated facilities and other companies transferred their production facilities outside the country, maintaining only their storage and retail facilities. Thus, it evolved from rural suburban countryside to an intergrated city within a few decades, playing the role of the recipient of functions which aggravate the environment. Placed around the town at first and then inside it, Eleonas slowly turned from space of supra local green and agricultural production, into a “supra-dump”of disturbing urban uses.

A. morphology of the urban fabric: Bigger blocks appear as opposed to the smaller blocks that exist (and properties) of the city. The road network has a labyrinth structure, as it consists of multiple deadlocks, creating a chaotic urban landscape.

B. land uses: Warehouses and freight forwarders, industrial and commercial units, smaller or larger workshops, stockyards materials, machine shops and garages, trade are those that dominate. At the same time there are military and charitable facilities, railway stations, schools, depots, crops, small pockets of residential and Roma settlements.
industries located mainly in the area of Eleonas
housing occupation in the metropolis
C. geomorphological features: In the area flows the river Kifissos, the floods of which have occasionally been recognized as major disasters in the nearby areas. Although the overflow of the river made the land fertile for growing crops, conditions of habitation were probably bad and unhealthy, so here turned lower social caste. As we will see later, the river feeds the region in every period, either as water flow, or flow of cars, directly affecting the activities of Eleonas.

D. architectural elements: the context in which the area was developed, except illegal construction projects, justifies the existence of shoddy construction materials, with the possibility of change or movement (sheet metal, concrete blocks, caravans, containers, prefabricated), which represent a sample of its special nature. In status urban sprawl, open spaces are scarce or lacking, in any case rather inappropriate to accept human activities.

E. use of free public space: Life on free public space, which is based on the use of motor vehicles, is coordinated with the schedule of the respective activities. Life is in regulated shifts, but it does not stop there, marginalized groups or activities included in the space time of Eleonas.

Catalytic role in the development of the region, as described above, played the fact that until 1991 the area of Eleonas had not yet joined the city plan - was literally a 'hole' in the urban tissue and there was virtually no regulation that relates to building and land use. This resulted in concentrating here those activities that "could not lift" the rest basin, but it was necessary for the economic development of the city, such as crafts, industry, transport and other supporters of the above sectors uses.
the infrastructure as a barrier

highway
railway
street network

vast vacant spaces inside Eleonas

vacancy
green open spaces

monofunctional land uses

industries
warehouses
trade and logistics
4. Research and Design Question
Under this perspective, there are some key questions to be answered.

-What strategy is needed to allow the social, spatial, environmental and economic integration between Eleonas and the city of Athens?

-How can the redevelopment of Eleonas bring an equilibrium between the dying downtown and the outspread of the city?

-What is the role of Eleonas in the metropolis?

-Is Eleonas a leftover of Athens or a new strategic territory of the metropolis?

-How economic crisis conditions can lead to alternatives in working-living?

The following sub-research questions will help in order to make more clear the situation of Eleonas:

What’s an urban a residual place? What is an urban enclave?
What is an urban void? What is a leftover? What is a terrain vague and a drosscape? Where are they? How can we re-use the residual places? What are the potentialities of these places within the attica basin?
What can bring the acceptance of the void as a key element in an urban structure and under what conditions it can be re-incorporated into the city, but without losing its special characteristics?

Is Eleonas to bring nature back into the city, or to protect the exurban reserves with its urbanization?

Which can be the future living conditions in Eleonas?
5. Research and Design Aims of the project:
My main motivation for this study is my interest for the residual places. Our main goal is to confront these spaces but no more individually and fragmentarily through interventions of small scale. More specifically it is important to integrate these spaces into a unified and constantly changing urban ecosystem. These places are the only opportunity to find ways of expression of the relationship between urban and natural landscape, where open complex ecological systems interact and correlate with social systems, cultural systems, economic systems and systems of infrastructure of the contemporary city.

To be more specific, the main aim of the project is to propose a spatial, social, environmental and economic integration model for the residual place in the Attica basin, which is Eleonas. In other words we want to achieve the reintegration of the area in the activity network of the city. By working with the context – natural, physical and human- and having as starting point the governmental plans, which discuss the reinforcement of the conjunction of Athens and Piraeus and the fragmentation that is caused by the urban residual places at a big scale, the project will attempt to propose alternatives for the union and the reinforcement of these pieces both at a metropolitan and at a local scale. It would be interesting as well to propose a strategy which is referring to multiple layers, levels and scales of the city that counterbalance effects of an integration process, such as displacement and disposition of people in the area. Challenging will be to find small scale and low-cost ways for revitalization that could be feasible and applicable in a period of crisis.

The two main aims of the research & design process are:

a. The spatial, environmental, social and economic integration between Eleonas and the city of Athens
   - spatial: to break the borders that create enclave conditions, and improve the spatial conditions
   - environmental: to recuperate the landscape dynamics
   - social: to make people feel the space as place, as home
   Economic: to search for alternatives of working against economic crisis

b. To offer a new living environment to the city of Athens
Main challenge for this design project is to propose

1. a flexible multi-dimensional model that will work as an example solution for many problems in the rest of Athens about housing, public spaces, green spaces, urban voids and natural landscape.
2. a proposal that works in small scales, taking into consideration the existing patterns of the urban form

Certainly urban spaces not only contribute to a better quality of urban environment, but they can also be regarded as receptors of human social activities. The open public spaces can accommodate aspects of everyday life of the population and become the occasion for social interaction and for contact and acquaintance with nature.

In the second part, the designing part, the main objectives of the project are:

To create a strategy and a model in order to integrate the region of Eleonas in the Attica basin. More precisely, it will attempt to

A. redefine the relationship of Eleonas, in the metropolitan scale, and if we can recuperate the landscape (natural, cultural) dynamics strengthening and completing the ecological connections. This part of the basin may be a link with the natural and historical landscape of Attica. Traces of each stage of development of the region are emerging in the contemporary urban landscape. The coexistence of all these elements has recounted to us the history of Eleonas and can be calculated as “anchor tools” in the city.

B. invent the connection with the neighbouring fabric which is the city centre of Athens

C. design a better quality of living environment that includes public spaces, new functions for people and a good connection

D. redefine the residuals and especially Eleonas as a tool to revitalize the everyday city life into a metabolism

Also in the designing part will be presented the ways how abandonment and vacant spaces can work in favor of the neighborhood. More precisely, how these spaces can be used in order to create new opportunities for the region

The main aim is to break the condition of the spatial enclave that exists now in Eleonas because of the reasons that aforementioned. Then, we have to think its relationship with the city in order to find the tools for the connection between this and then we will start the integration in all these levels. Eleonas is the last large site in the basin of Attica that still has such a potential for development to
to the benefit of the whole city, that demands planning responsibility instead of temporal solutions for quick profit. Moreover, Eleonas, gives the opportunity for a thorough practice of urban strategies, towards not only a spatial and qualitative restructuring of the secondary and third economy sector, but also green development in cohesion with the urban continuum.
6. Methodology
Motivation
Sprawling cities create discontinuities in their urban structures

Problem Statement
In the city of Athens there are some unidentified, residual, misused spaces that interrupt the continuity of the urban tissue spatially timely and functionally. These residual spaces disintegrate the city.

Aims
- Spatial-social-environmental and economic integration of residual place, Eleonas, in the structure of the city, Athens

R&D Question
- What strategy is needed to allow the social, spatial, environmental integration between Eleonas with the city of Athens?
- How, can the redevelopment of Eleonas bring balance between the dying downtown and the outspread of the city?

A. Theoretical Framework
- Terrain vague, dosscrapes, enclaves, urban voids
- The notion of the neighborhood
- Participatory Planning and bottom-up activities

B. Multi-dimensional urban analysis
- Historical analysis
- Urban analysis
- Demographic analysis/data
- Official Plans of the Government
- Site observation
- Interviews

C. Case study
- "Double Regeneration", a plan from the government. It is used for the strategy

Strategy
Dual Redevelopment: the tool in order to find the relationship with the city and its integration
The constructions of the city of Athens based on: SQUARE+PROGRAMME+CONNECTION

1. Spatial strategy
2. Social strategy
towards to new environment

Design
1. Iera Odos
2. Urban villages
- Promote green space and housing
- Extend the architectural unification project
- Promote an alternative source of economy through urban farming and small local businesses
Focusing on methodological approach of the topic the research will be developed as an assemblage of three directions that will work simultaneously and dependent to each other. The aim is each of these directions to inform the other two and be updated according to the data, information and results emerging from.

A. the Theoretical Framework and Definitions

B. Multi-dimensional analysis of Athens and Eleonas on a timeline and

C. Eleonas in Situ. More precisely, taking into account the results of the analysis a spatial, social and environmental integration strategy will be structured based on the theoretical framework and the existing context.

The design proposal is to be developed in accordance with the framework and theory that have been tested during the whole process of Research and Design. The project will lead to a strategy for the spatial, environmental and social integration of a residual place, Eleonas, and its upgrading as part of an urban fabric that will be revitalized as a whole. The proposal attempts to suggest possible actions and methods for space integration, as well as urban design strategies, that show how the plan can be applied, revealing possible positive or negative consequences that will be examined as well.

A. Theoretical framework and Definitions:

The theoretical framework is where it will take place both literature reviews together with other theories as a background for the research. More precisely some literature reviews will be necessary and will give better understanding about the concepts and theories used. More specifically:

A. The first one will research for the role and meaning of the residual places, the urban voids and the terrain vague in the cities, which is focuses more in the spatial aspect.

B. The other will be about the living environment and the sense of the neighborhood in relation with its citizens. The notion, the characteristics and the sense of what neighborhood is will be referred as well as the concept of collectivity which is defined on this. what is the role of people in the neighborhood and what is the relation that they have on it? It is about bottom-up processes that Henri Lefebvre described in 1968 as Right to the City and David Harvey later explained as “the right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights”. Participatory procedures are in favor of the promotion of targets and integrate them in the real needs of the citizens.
On the other hand, this participation in the planning procedures makes the citizens active and helps them maintain their interest in the exploitation of these spaces. Participatory planning is a practice that respects the particularities of different groups of population as well as the uniqueness of each person. The basic principles emerge mainly from the need to give a socially sensitive complexion and legitimacy to the designing process and, generally, to contribute to the improvement of quality of living standards.

B. Multi-dimensional analysis of Athens and Eleonas:

The theoretical framework, the definitions and the examination of case studies works dependently with the analysis of the physical space through a timeline. The most important part in the process of this research and design project is the historical analysis in a timeline. It is very essential to know all the stages of development and shaping of the region from the ancient times until now. What were the factors and what were the conditions which affected the study area which is Eleonas, the olive grove? What are these stages of evolution? Eleonas as a study area is mapped and all the components of the spatial, social and physical nature of it are collected and analyzed. The research is specialized more in the integration process and hence is specialized in the development and regeneration in the region of Eleonas. It is very important for the project to be presented and analyzed all the plans that the government propose all these years for the area of Eleonas.

The analysis of the existing living condition of Athens is going to be analyzed as well. The bibliographic research that took place made me understand the structure of the city of Athens, the production of space in the city and the role of “polykatoikia model” which is the multistorey apartment on Athens urbanization. More specifically the most important urban problems that exist now in the centre of Athens will be referred as well. Also, data related to the population, the rate of unemployment and homeless people, about the uses of land will be presented in order to be held responsible to document the strategy that will be tackled later further.

Interviews with academics and practitioners, specialized in the case of Athens and especially Eleonas, were executed. Planners, urbanists, civil engineers, architects and PHD students working and researching on the main issues of the city (immigrants, networks, regeneration processes, land prices and uses, big projects natural environment and cultural heritage) were executed as well. In my field trip in Athens, I tried to talk and discuss with some residents and some workers and employs that I found in the area of Eleonas. They talked to me about the situation of the area and what they want to be improved there. Also a very interesting part for me was to observe the daily actions of some residents. Where do they go,
what are their main meeting points and what are the places they avoid to pass by. Thus, the most important thing for my research was the situ observation. The boundaries and all the elements inside the area and outside around it were defined as well. Furthermore a categorization of built and unbuilt spaces, used and unused buildings was made.

It is also considered very important the study of the plans that the government, the Organization of Planning and Environmental Protection of Athens, has proposed about the whole Attica basin. The trends that are presented in these plans, about the management of the urban sprawling and the strengthening of the Athens and Piraeus will be mentioned as well. More specifically, guidelines are given for the strengthening of the spatial and functional relation between the centre of Athens and the Piraeus port, creating with this way a Mediterranean Metropolis. More specifically, the objectives for 2021 that will be analysed further are:

A. Environmentally sustainable spatial development, with effective and consistent protection of the environment together with the cultural heritage, preservation of natural space and biodiversity and adaptation to climate change.

B. Improvement of quality of life for all residents, equalization in the allocation of development resources and benefits, perceived as basic conditions for sustainable economic growth and social cohesion. Promotion of policies so as to mitigate social exclusion phenomena.

The main objective through the study of the plans that the government has for the Attica basin is to identify what is the role of Eleonas in the whole metropolis.

After the collective historical and urban analysis, the strategy for the interventions started to be formed. My research in situ and the theoretical framework will be the starting point of this strategy for the issue of integration of Eleonas in the city of Athens. The general aim is this strategy to be followed as an example for the integration of residual places to the urban fabric. It is not only about Eleonas but also for the integration of these places throughout Attica basin. Hence, this strategy could be an integration example for the whole neglected centre in ever expanding Athens. The adaptation of Athens in this new reality, the local peculiarities and the consequences of these strategies in the urban fabric will be studied as well.

-Case study:

In order to understand in depth the context in which the urban issues that the project examines a research on case studies is necessary. In this case, the example comes from the city of Athens and more specifically from the plans that the government has for the area of Eleonas which is the study area. The Case study related to strategies is Athens by itself and the proposal plan from the Government which is called “Double Regeneration”.
The “Double Regeneration” project is referred to the transfer of a football stadium which is located in the center of Athens, from the center, to Eleonas, the study area, converting the part of the centre into a park. The stadium is moved to Eleonas and there the “great development” as mentioned by the economic stakeholders and the investors begins. I consider that this example of “moving Athens” is a good example to see how different functions fit, integrate in different parts of the city. How do the inhabitants of both areas react in this; How do major shareholders react? Why these specific uses and why there, in this areas? This is a case study which is the beginning of my strategy. How can we find the equilibrium within the city.

This action and strategy could be a point of reference for the research and the design part of my individual project. Using examples that had multiple effects in built space (although specialties of each city), will be helpful in understanding which can be the alternatives and which could be finally the aspect of the integration in space.

Then follows the design part which takes place in a multi-scalar way. We will try to connect the design with the research part that is conducted on the area in terms of spatial, social and environmental integration. The results on the research on the governamental plans, the living conditions both in Eleonas (the study area) and Athens, the structure of the city of Athens, the urban block and the housing typology will come to effect the design elements and process.

At the end there will be a review, an evaluation of the entire design, stating the pros and cons of this as well as the relationship, the connection that finally has with the metropolis. In that way will be tested if the design gives answers to the research questions and the aims of the project.
The site in Eleonas

The site in the city centre
7. Relevance (Societal & Scientific)
**Societal relevance:**

In an era that ideologists blabber about structure, the dislocation of the city betrays to depth of phenomena of decomposition (social, cultural). This society at its whole is proved pierced. Among the subsystems and the structures that destabilize through different means (compulsion, terrorism, ideological persuasion), there are holes, once the abyss. The existence of these gaps is not random. They are places of the possible” Henry Lefebvre *(Right in the city)*

Athens is hybrid because is simultaneously dispersed and centralized. The urbanized character of the city is not reduced as the city spreads out: the density of the build space remains the same, the streets are narrow, public space is most often neglected and undefined, nature is residual. What Athens needs more than a large privately managed urban redevelopment is a new model of urban life that is more responsible towards its citizens and the environment. These residual places are conflictual, without any established urban structure. Are not worthless, awkward pieces in the tissue of the city but contrary they are interim. Intermediate urban void place is the magnetic field that either attract either repel crowds. In conclusion, these heterogeneous in appearance, spaces are all areas ‘expectation’, and expect their role to be incorporated into the urban fabric and become an organic part of the city and social life. The vitality of the urban voids affects the image of the city, the quality of citizen’s life, the economy and the environment of it. Athens undergoes a severe urban crisis that becomes apparent in four levels; social, demographic, economical, and environmental. The urban conditions set by those parameters questions the role of the typical urban development, like the one that is currently underway in Eleonas, and opens-up the opportunity for alternative scenarios. Since Greece led the way into the eurozone crisis, it seems topical to use Athens as starting point for an alternative exit strategy.

**Scientific relevance:**

As far as the academic relevance is concerned this research-design project aims to be part of the discussion about the role of the planners in conditions of development, the strategies and the proposes for a new mode of urban life, the small interventions with a large impact strategies, the re-evaluation of the urban policies under the scope of human needs and rights. I tend to agree with researcher Alan Berger, who believes in the necessity of a change in outlook from the designer as ‘sole expert and authority’ to one of ‘collaborator and negotiator’. In order to overcome this challenge designers have to think like a landscape architects, urban planners, architects, developers, politicians and users all at once. In a critical time of economic recession and social segregation, the question of the large urban voids emerges and the traditional urban development practices are questioned.
8. The Metropolis
What is the role of Eleonas in the Metropolis?

In order to answer this question, an analysis of the area based on the metropolitan scale is needed. The analysis is divided into two categories according to the natural and artificial characteristics of the area. The first one includes the natural landscape, the mountains, the rivers as well as the green spaces. These condone includes the infrastructure and the public transportation and the functions and centralities in the whole Attica basin.

The continuous sprawling of the Urban Block has the following result. The external borders of the urban block of Athens enclose an area that is many times bigger than the one that was enclosed 50-60 years ago. Thus, the sprawling of the continuous urban tissue tends to occupy the wider peri-urban space of Attica, beyond the borders of the Attica basin. As a result, the forest areas and the green free spaces are consistently reduced. As we can see in the relevant map, the green spaces in Athens are very few and fragmented. It is also very interesting to mention that traditionally the street network in Greece has been constructed over rivers destroying them. This is common practice as it is a cheap and easy solution.
metro network

metro line 1
metro line 2
metro line 3

Network length:
metro (Attiko metro): 25.5 km
metro (isap): 23.6 km
bus: 6.900 km
tram: 26 km

Average users per day:
metro (Attiko metro): 650,000
metro (isap): 400,000
bus: 1,380,000
tram: 25,000

extension of metro network

extension
It is important to mention that this development is supported by the existence or perspective of big infrastructure in the metropolis. In the same time, that it causes the necessity to develop new infrastructure to cover its needs. To be more specific, in 2001 the international airport of Athens was transferred from the area of Helliniko to Spata. The construction of the highway, which is called Attici Odos was finished parallel to the Olympic Games and connected the city of Athens with its new international airport. Attici Odos is a highway that runs through Attica territory from Eleusina until Spata. The role of Attici odos is very important, as this new road axis connects the south and west. More specifically, Attici odos creates a new transversal axis from East to West, which is vertical to the South-North axis of Kifissos that used to be the backbone of the city until now.

The new centralities in the periphery of Athens, which are easily accessible by the infrastructure network, absorb activities from the city centre. New areas-satellites were structured as areas with residential character. They were organized in urban unities around local centers. In these areas, excluding the residence, most of the uses of land such as trade, services, culture, etc. are placed. However, the industries and the infrastructure were placed in special zones of the area around the city. There location of public services that are located in the center to the periphery is one the most important factors that led to the downgrading of Athens. After 2009, 8 ministries and big central services are removed from the city center. There location of the functions is followed by the relocation of 4000-5000 employees, most of which –while they were working in the city center- lived in it and are part of the consumers of the central market. The trend of decentralization leaves the buildings empty and creates new ones since many small shops and businesses that were working due to the existence of the public services are closing. In parallel, the uncontrolled creation of department stores and commercial centers in other areas of the city during the whole decade, harms the shops that are located in the historical center. In 2009, 18% of the shops in the central streets of Athens are bankrupt.

To sum up, the mountain volumes of Attica are downgraded and unconnected. Additionally, we notice that the green free spaces are very few and fragmented. It is important to mention that because of the sprawling of the city and the creation of new centralities around the new infrastructure, the city center is downgraded while the periphery is reinforced boosting this way further sprawling.

ORSA takes measures regarding both cases. Inititally, it gives some general directions for the protection of the mountain volumes and the upgrading of the environment of Attica and some guidelines for the reinforcement of the city center.
Eleonas
NOW
Eleonas
FUTURE

fragmented green structure
Reinforced centralities diagram that represents the neglected city centre and the reinforced new centralities.
1α. Protection Zone of the mountains

The guidelines that relate to the mountain volumes target the containment of the sprawling of the urban tissue, the removal of incompatible functions from their area and the increment of the greenery in the whole Attica. The program includes all the mountain volumes of Attica. The mountain volumes of Attica and more specifically the ones that surround the Attica basin are undisputedly one of the most important natural resources of Attica. This is not only due to their notable ecosystems but also their determinant role in the shaping of the climate conditions, the reduction of the atmospheric pollution and the anti-flood protection.

For a long time, the mountain volumes have undergone the destructive consequences of the uncontrolled sprawling of the urban tissue and the frequent fires. Main aim of the program is to protect and highlight the mountain volumes of Attica, which are the bigger potential free and public space that is converted into lungs of green and supra-local recreational nodes.

The mapping of the greater area of the Attica basin proves the determination of the urban development by mountainous volume both in the west and the east. Despite the environmental pressures and the destructions that they undergo, these mountains remain areas of great natural potential and are important for the metropolitan area of the capital in general as well as for the area of the city center more specifically.

1β. Protection and upgrading of the environment

The main priorities are the protection, ecologic management and highlighting of the protected natural areas as clusters of biodiversity, as well as the restoration of downgraded landscapes. Within the urban tissue, it is a priority to develop a network of open public green spaces in order to create favorable microclimatic conditions, reduce the atmospheric pollution, defuse the noise, recreate the citizens and help them relax.

The valuable and already downgraded water element is highlighted as ecologic wealth as well as a natural resource of critical importance. Insisting on the environmental and landscape importance of the streams we must highlight that apart from their obvious function as natural hydraulic receptors and anti-flood conductors, they are an important element of the urban ecosystem of the wider metropolitan city area and the landscape of Attica. In other words they are important parts of the urban whole. Thus, it is necessary to have a complete ecologic management of the streams, and the design of the streams and the areas around them should respect the landscape. Moreover, we should try to integrate them into the network of the enclave of the free urban green spaces and the green routes.
1. STRATEGIC GUIDELINES
1a. PROTECTION AND UPGRATING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

- urban greenery
- metropolitan park
- green corridors
- green archades
- agricultural parks
- agricultural land

1b. MANAGEMENT OF PRODUCTION

- logistics
- manufacturing
- culture
- tourism
- administration
- health care services
- research
- 3rd sector services
What is also promoted is the protection and the ecologic management of the agricultural land, as an ecologic resource of great production value. Additionally, environmentally friendly practices are introduced to the primary sector of production.

Concluding should be mentioned that, in an effort to ensure continuity and consistency of the green arc that created by the mountains that surround the Attica basin, a set of measures for the containment of the building activity and the protection of the lowland parts, in order to protect them as communication neck. For the environmental upgrading and the improvement of the quality of life inside the urban tissue, the institutional strengthening and protection of urban green islands (of forest or ecologic character) and the creation of metropolitan parks are promoted.

2. reinforcing the city centre

Further in our research, we highlight the plans of the government that promote the reinforcement of the city center of Athens. To be more specific, despite the fact that the north-east part of the metropolis is more reinforced, there are efforts to change this situation. To make these efforts successful, the government gives motives to the citizens in order to make them return to the currently downgraded city center (for which there are plans for upgrading it).

Conclusion:

In both cases, due to its strategic position in Athens, Eleonas is a key point. First of all, it is the area that can function as a link for the ecological unification as well as a lung of greenery for the whole Attica. Moreover, Eleonas can be a new centrality, a new living environment which can reinforce the city center of Athens. The role of Eleonas can be also seen in the relevant diagrams.
diagram that represents the new reinforced city centre due to new functions
Eleonas as a new Centrality that will host diverse functions and will reinforce the city centre again
“Today cities spread out of their limits, even beyond the suburbs, making a chaotic, complex urban web”, while at the same time... “they seem to resemble a chess set, with oases of affluence and patches of poverty. Walled enclosures, actual or implied... instead of living in one city we live in separated cities, cities for the rich, cities for the poor. This segmentation leads to lack of social cohesion and political tensions”.

David Harvey
Living conditions in Athens:

Searching for a new living environment in Eleonas and looking for a link with the city of Athens I got inspired and I am trying to test the bad living conditions that exist now in the city centre.

What does Athenian living environment look like today?

Modern Athens is incapable of offering powerful templates of living to its new residents and encouraging their integration to the social tissue. The public space of the city remains shrunk and empty of inspiration, while the public assets and the natural landscape are wasted for the benefit of the building development.

In 1933, the 4th CIAM took place in Athens. It praised the “functional city” and triggered, through the “Athens Charter, the beginning of “zoning” of the cities. However, the map of land uses of Athens is a puzzle that consists of unorganized, mixed uses of housing, central functions, manufacturing, wholesale, while there
Athens (centre) by program:

- administrations, stores, offices
- local stores
- health, sports, education, entertainment
- warehouses
- quarriers
- infrastructure
- parking spaces
- green spaces
- housing

Green open spaces in Athens (centre)
are scattered enclaves of greenery and archaeological spaces and very few en-
claves of greenery that are unified. In the areas of the central functions, all uses
are allowed: housing, trade, services, administration, education. Most of the
neighborhoods are characterized as areas of general housing which means that
apart from housing, commercial uses are allowed. Even in the cases of purely
residential areas some commercial uses are allowed in order to cover the needs
of a neighborhood.

In Athens, there are no big parks, free spaces and endless squares. The ratio of
greenery in the urban block of Athens is 2.55m2/inha, while in most European
cities the same ratio is greater than 15m2/inhabitant. Public space in Athens is
fragmented, residual and shrunk in its first, last and most authentic element; the
street. However, it is lively during the whole day due to the mix of uses. Graffiti,
stencil, stickers, signs, labels prove the use that becomes increasingly intense be-
cause of the new inhabitants. Additionally, the street consists a place of outdoor
trade, meeting, job search, and protest.

The limited public space is a dominant characteristic of a Greek city. The absence
of adequate free-unbuilt public space was a result of the fast and unplanned ex-
pansion of the Greek cities. Furthermore, the urban tissue of Athens is character-
ized by the small size of the urban blocks because of the multi-fragmented small
individual property. Small individual property results into very small distance be-
tween crossroads, with an average of 70 m. The frequency of crossroads plays an
important role in the communication flows of the inhabitants and for the creation
of a neighborhood feeling. In various extreme cases, the area of the plots is about
200 m2 or less, but also the size of the urban blocks is bigger than 70*70 m2 or
50*50 m2. This way, with a building coverage of 60 or 70% the ability to have a
functional yard is eliminated.
The process antiparochi (part-exchange) is the basic building mechanism of the canvas of Athens. The process of distribution of the apartment—through antiparochi—between the contractor and the owner and the need to deliver the “agreed deliverables” were so powerful that eliminate any intention for architecture or composition both at a morphological and at an oncoplastic level.

Neighborhoods and districts do not have visible borders or identity and differentiation characteristics, leading to urban complexes that are characterized by anarchy in their structure and lack of hierarchy, not only at an aesthetic but also at a functional level. The notion of the neighborhood, as an element of connection between the resident and the space, is impossible, mainly because of the reduced capability for connection between polykatoikia with the direct entourage, the road or the public space.

The dominant building type is polykatoikia that is defined as a building that consists of apartments and has various uses apart from habitation, while in some cases it is the residence of expanded families. Polykatoikia takes the form of 5 or 6 floor buildings that are located in the urban tissue. Characteristic morphological peculiarities of polykatoikia are the recesses of the upper floors and the narrow balconies that run along the façade.
section of the city centre of Athens

densely built

NOT densely populated yet

source: Re-roofing Athens, Chortogiannis Alexis
densely built

NOT densely populated yet

section of the city centre of Athens
Polykatoikia:

Constitutes the multi-storey apartment building and since the 1950’s is the most dominant building typology of Greek urbanity. Apart from typology, the term polykatoikia, connotes a system of production of housing, a compact model of urban living and a mixed social configuration.

Antiparochi:

According to Maloutas (2004), antiparochi “is a cashless deal between landowners and builders for the construction of multifamily housing (polykatoikia) in which the builder is paid by the ownership of one or more flats after the completion. Antiparochi is now less used but still an important way of housing production.” (Maloutas, 2004 in Allen J., Barlow J., Leal J., Maloutas T., Pandovani L.)
Production of housing: system of antiparochi and the model of polykatoikia (Dimitrakou, 2013)

- Marousi
- Kaisariani
- fragmented public space
- Zografou
- Patisia
- terrace: no use
- penthouse apartment
- floors: no public spaces
- ground floor: stoa
- basement

Production of housing: system of antiparochi and the model of polykatoikia (Dimitrakou, 2013)
The structure of polykatoikia includes the characteristics of the vertical social-class segregation: semi-underground (low income), basement (shops), floors (apartments for the middle class and offices, penthouse (high income). The vertical classification in the social composition of polykatoikia exists in the whole urban block of Athens. At the same time, a coexistence of variety of land uses between the shops of the basement and the offices and apartment of the upper floors is developed. Despite its initial purpose -housing- polykatoikia, through its flexible structural system, offers numerous alternatives: housing, office, ministry, shop, warehouse, restaurant, workshop, supermarket, café, furniture exhibition and garage. Housing and workspace coexist in the same space which reminds of a medieval city. Because of the very few public spaces and very narrow streets, polykatoikia both absorbs the city inside it and it diffuses its character into the city (Woditsch, 2009). The city seems to be poured into the building and vice versa. The private and the public interact in the corridors, the balconies and the facades.

Athens could be a privileged place to live, an ideal environment of education but also a popular travel destination. The heterogeneous Athenian society need to shape new collective references based on the special characteristics –both natural and historical- of the city. What Athens needs more than a large privately managed urban development is a new model of urban living that is more responsible towards the citizens and the environment.

In this landscape, a city (Athens) that dismisses the citizen from the public spaces and especially its squares, emerges. Apart from some exemptions, for a long time the squares of Athens consist spaces whose special characteristics can be hardly recalled/memorized.

“As the city was growing, it would swallow the sad story that existed around I until there would be nothing left but grey streets and 6-floor buildings with the laundry waving on the terraces. I just realized that the city itself was an invention of people coming from lost places, people that were settled by violence, people that were persecuted by was and massacres, people that were persecuted between them, people that were hungry and looking for work. They were exiled in their house, Athens, which was expanding/sprawling towards the sea and over the hills further than the Attica basin, looking for a direction, memory compass”

(Don DeLillo, the names, 1982)
the photo shows the absence of public space as well as the kids bike on the roof-scape
的社会危机以百分比形式呈现

失业率

贫困

无家可归

- 绝对值 -

失业率（1999-2012）

百分比计算的劳动人口

估计值2013年

< 32%

41.1%

20,000人

社会危机以百分比形式呈现
1 out of 7 people left the municipality of Athens
789,166 people

percentage of people that leave the centre of Athens because of its bad living conditions
neighborhood:
“The old courtyard house fronted by a calm side street provided Athenian urban life with a ground-floor pedestrian realm connecting internal, private space to external, public space that was available to children and the elderly. This was replaced by the four-storey apartment building, with shops on the ground floor.

Even more serious is the elimination of mixed use. The parking garage has replaced the traditional commercial ground floor. A cheap solution -- easing parking problems at home by putting cars under apartments (but not underground) -- has dealt the final blow. Today, monofunctional apartment high-rises sit on stilts, with the ground floor entirely taken over by parking (following the 1922 Citrohan model of the hysterically antisocial Le Corbusier). This disconnects inhabitants from urban life, reconnecting them only through their cars.

I cannot overemphasize that urban society forms in the pedestrian realm, which itself has to be nurtured at street level. But the postwar residential urban model evolved into new and unsustainable typologies. The height of a typical apartment building in Athens has now increased beyond four stories, which surpasses the critical limit of density capable of sustaining urban life. Above four stories, there is no visual or spoken exchange with the street level (Alexander et. al., 1977). Children and the elderly are virtually imprisoned in their apartments, thus disconnecting society.”

Towards a New Urban Philosophy: The Case of Athens, Nikos A. Salingaros
β. The pillars of the strategy
In this chapter, we will present the principle of the strategy that will be implemented. We have a reference to the different ways of connection of between Eleonas and the city center.

Its size and strategic location of the area of Eleonas establish it as a privileged area for restoration. Eleonas can offer to the greater urban complex, urban and environmental-local conditions of important improvement.

Additionally, we describe the way in which—apart from the mountains in the perimeter of Athens—smaller elements of natural repose, covered by urban planting, emerge in the center of Athens. It is obvious that most of the active planted enclaves of the urban complex of Athens are concentrated in the area of the center or in its direct neighborhood. Thus, despite the fact that it can be upgraded further both environmentally and locally, the city center of Athens is favored—concerning the available enclaves of urban planting—compared to other areas.

This part of the Attica basin can play the role of the link with both the natural and the historical landscape of Attica. Traces of the different development stages of the area are highlighted in the modern urban landscape. The coexistence of all these elements can tell describe the history of Eleonas and these elements can considered as “connection tools” with the city.

Additionally, the principles that are the pillars of the strategy that will be followed for the spatial, social, environment and economic integration of Eleonas into Athens are the following. To begin with, we present various problematics and the principles that are followed for the solution of these problematics. Most of the problems are stable. Initially, a green connection to the city center is attempted. Our aim is to recuperate the landscape dynamics. Following this, the connection takes place, though archaeological spaces. For the city center, there is an existing program for the unification of the archaeological spaces which can be extended to Eleonas, since the area is an important part of the history of ancient Athens. The third connection, is attempted through the road network. Despite the fact that the most important transportation axes pass by Eleonas, this situation makes Eleonas a spatial enclave. Thus, it seems important to change this condition by making the area more permeable and better connected with the city center.
break the enclave
enclave condition
diversity/flexibility
recuparate the archeological sites through the landscape dynamics
monotonia/fixity
recuparate the landscape dynamics (environmental)

1.

2.

3α.

3β.

1.

green connection
recuparate the landscape dynamics

abstract diagram
break the enclave

archaeological connection
recuparate the archaeological dynamics

abstract diagram
3.

**Abstract Diagram**

*enclave condition*

*better spatial connection*

*break the enclave conditions*
better spatial connection
break the enclave conditions

1. functional connection
reinforce diversity, more uses are needed

2. diversity/flexibility

abstract diagram
Personally, I think that the most important issue is the issue of the uses that consists the forth pillar, the forth “connection tool”. These uses include both people and their needs. Thus, in this project we will put emphasis on the conversion of Eleonas from being an area with mono-functionality and fixity into an area that is characterized by diversity and flexibility. The uses that will be proposed are based on the logic of a “smart landscape” where people will live, work, be informed and interact. The smart landscape is an example of a new environment that offers new living conditions. These new living conditions can be the solution to the problems of the city center of Athens. Overall, it is about a proposal for a new living environment.

The Smart Land(scape)

diagram that represents the type of the city that will be tested in Eleonas
9. Eleonas
An area of 900 hectares, two kilometers from the Acropolis and 8 kilometres from Piraeus. Although its story was connected with the processes of production, from the old gardens to industry and until recently the growing sectors of the tertiary sector, eleonas does not have a character. It has at least as many as the different types of its daily users and visitors are.

Eleonas remains the mirror of spatial inequalities in the city, the receptor of poverty, the organization of significant environmental degradation and the special area of sectors’ development of the informal economy. It was and it still is in a way unknown and isolated.

The area of eleonas stands awkwardly between the surrounding residential areas, a cracked portion of the city’s fabric, which sometimes separates and sometimes unites. Apart from the limits to assembly of with the city, eleonas that grows in a longitudinal band of width about 2km in a NE-SW direction, creates by itself a boundary between, poorer, western districts and the most prosperous eastern.
"That is Acropolis! The only place in the whole city with an open view, where you stay there and imagine how was the Attico landscape before the urbanization"
photos taken during the field trip in Eleonas.
The whole area is represented
“Eleonas. A bike tour around the neglected Athenean landscape”

Atenistas
What are the problems inside Eleonas?

1. Socio-economic and administrative borders:

Demographic distribution shows socio-economic disparities, poor quality of life and increase over time of unemployment. The social fragmentation occurs due to the introverted and autonomous nature of the whole area. Also, Eleonas is a rich fragmented array of industries, social groups, and spatial conditions. This context offers an interesting site of intervention with complex conditions. Moreover, should be mentioned that the area of Eleonas is administratively divided into five municipalities. Municipalities tended to ignore the unity of the area and the need of comprehensive planning. A key mission of the proposal is to intervene along the different municipalities in an integrated way, creating a unified development and potentially single administrative area.

![Graphs represent the sectors of economy in the whole area of Eleonas](image)

Eleonas divided into 5 municipalities
2. urban limits:

The territory of eleonas is not only fragmented socioeconomically, but also spatially. Major infrastructure has caused this spatial fragmentation throughout the area. High-speed vehicular roads run across the area and cross the river at various points. Introverted residential neighborhoods and industrial zones have been created due to the slicing infrastructure structures. The flow of activity and flow of circulation from one area to another has a lacking desirable character.

3. open, vacant and green spaces:

Eleonas is one of the major under-development sites within the built up, urban fabric Athens. There are numerous leftover and undeveloped sites as well as degraded building sites.

Vacant, minimum green spaces, soil and groundwater contamination by accumulation of waste in the streams and open spaces, leftover plots were highlighted to allow for an approximation of the potential territory of intervention. There are numerous vacant spaces, with various sizes, shapes and are fragmented and scattered across the area. Such sites would become potential adaptable or integrated green areas into the design intervention.

The defined riverbed of eleona's stream suffocates between warehouses, workshops and arbitrary scraps, while the water that flows on it is clearly contaminated. Despite the fact that the stream is in extremely poor situation, Prophet Daniel still has on its banks vegetation that works as a narrow green corridor which runs through the area. The symbolic dimension of Prophet Daniel is important since it is the last part of the Athenian stream that has survived uncovered in the city center.

4. Land uses

A survey across eleonas region was carried out to identify the main land uses currently present. As anticipated, the urban fabric is mainly occupied by industrial uses. Eleonas is characterized as a backyard, as a dumping ground of disturbing uses, in which there is conflict use of Industry-housing, a downgraded urban environment, infringement of public spaces, light constructions, contrasting urban landscape and increasing cost of land. Lighter industries, such as carpentry, food packaging, and textile factories occupy sites in the area. The concentration of industrial uses also portrays monotonous zoning, creating dysfunctional areas by night. We need a more comprehensive programme distribution.
the natural landscape and the water structure

1.

2.

river

green spaces
public spaces
empty spaces
the economic sectors

industries

offices

trade

residential

housing
5. transportation

Eleonas lies in an area that is very well connected to economic and industrial centres of production in the metropolitan region. Nevertheless, the area of eleonas is characterized by narrow roads, poor quality of pavement, increased traffic volume almost the whole day, absence of sidewalks and pedestrian streets and lack of parking spaces. The infrastructure lines are poorly connected to eleonas highlighting the segregation of the area.

The new bus station has been planned to be constructed next to the metro station, setting up a potential multimodal transit in the region. These infrastructure connections could help link eleonas with other clusters located both around the site and athen’s metropolitan region.

Conclusion:

improving the degraded social and spatial conditions of the area requires an overall alteration strategy. traces of existing industrial and agricultural productivity are enhanced in order to make eleonas a productive and smart landscape, creating jobs and sense of communal character. A hierarchy of communal programs are allocated in the whole area, creating focal centralities within the area and also encourage the circulation of residents and visitors from one district to another.

Emphasis should be given to the design and construction of the sewerage network

Emphasis should be given on the architectural quality of the historical buildings.

the residents consider the regeneration of the whole area to be better than a do-nothing solution

the development of the residential clusters will provide long-term "stability" to the area.

infrastructure network and relocation of the unwanted land uses creating extended green areas

the do-nothing option is better than the implementation of projects that promote the tertiarization of Eleonas, because this way the unfulfilled potential of creating a metropolitan scale park remains intact for the future.

stakeholders’ demands

Mrs Nana Spyropoulou, Deputy Mayor for technical Services of the Municipality of Athens

Mr Pericles Malamas, Deputy Mayor for Technical Services of the Municipality of Nikea-Agios Ioannis Rentis

Mrs. Katerina Dori, President of the “Double Regeneration” Stakeholders’ Committee

Mr. Christos Karamanos, representative of the “Citizens Committee to Save Eleonas”
Plans from the government:

Since 1995, a Presidential Decree was established for the redevelopment of the area of Eleonas, providing for the merger of crafts and industries in special zones and widespread communal green areas, with the aim of reviving the historic region of Eleonas. The green areas occupy 30% of the total area, which will increase approximately 14% of the compulsory planting unsecured portions of private land and the removal in second phase units. According to Presidential Decree, approximately 3,000 acres of green space are provided. On the map we can see fragments of green planting and more concentrated planting at the Agricultural School and the Botanical garden. Similarly, the natural landscape in only a few places reminds of its old version.

programme in the area during the years

programme proposed by the government

plan ‘95(proposal)
Aims:

The main aim also in this scale is the spatial, social, environmental and economic integration of eleonas with the city of Athens. To proposal scenario for the whole area is a balanced development in relation to the built, cultural and natural environment. The main axes of the proposal for the entire region are:

A. the preservation of the natural environment:

The natural element is a key element of the configuration of the urban space. Where it has been already developed vegetation is maintained, is enhanced, and it is organized into a comprehensive network of open spaces that are designed to upgrade both the aesthetic quality of these and also constitute nodes of cooling by improving the microclimate of the area.
B. the preservation of the built environment

The process of selecting those buildings that are considered worthy of preservation is a very important issue.
C. the preservation social environment

Priority is the protection of any possibility of the persecution of low social layers and minority populations that currently live in the area. The general direction is to improve the collective life of the residents and their interpersonal relationships creating a community. An important point here is the integration of minority and marginalized populations.
More specifically:

- a network of public green spaces is created which includes a large park in the heart of the area. Parks and green parts that already exist are reinforced and new are created, that are larger in size, with the main axis of the regeneration of Pr. Daniel stream. Green flow (pedestrian, archaeological walks, public promenades) from the surrounding areas are entered into the part of Eleonas expanding the green network.

- The most important functionalities (small and big industries, storage rooms and transport business) take place near the part of the national highway, in contact with the local highway which is essential for their function. They are organized in areas with suitable infrastructure for their services but also for the people. The existing active industries are incorporated, wherever it is possible, in the design, while in parallel they are motivated to reestablish their businesses in organized areas outside of the center.

- New urban agriculture is established in respect to the river and the stream. The urban agriculture consists the new productive usage that is brought into Eleonas. The land between the steam and the University of Agriculture consist the extension of the cultivations that already exist and their reinforcement with new ones. Grape and olive fields complement the cereal and fruit cultivations, in an effort of renewing the landscape of the area.

- A residential ‘bridge’ is created, by incorporating the residential “pockets” that already exist, organizing the neighborhoods

- Small units of processing and packaging produced agricultural products are being created. In the same area exhibition stands of several large and small industries of the area are incorporated.

- The schools, training centers and universities have new additions (school of industrial design), while the abandoned building and/or the destroyed building the can be used are articulated into a network of training and cultural facilities (museums and cultural municipality centers).
first conceptual diagram of the proposal (Eleonas)
10. Site Spesific
In this chapter, we present the site specific where we will make the first attempt to connect Eleonas with Athens and the new living environment will be tested. This area is the area around IeraOdos and includes a surface of 4 km². We chose this area because it has great historical value for Eleonas, it is a part that belongs mainly to the municipality of Athens and there are already proposals for the creation of some interventions which can be a starting point for the new proposal. Furthermore, it is the part of Eleonas where there are houses that show exactly how was the neighborhood before the system of antiparochi and the model of polykatoikia.

**A. Current situation:**

In the area, there are a big number of industries and warehouses. In the following map, we present their building volume that will be maintained and the one that will be demolished. The existing active industrial units are incorporated – wherever that is possible – to the planning while there are motives in order to be moved to areas that are outside of the city center.
proposed green from the Government '95 empty spaces dead ends parcelling voids buildings green to be implemented

parcelling

voids and buildings
Future plans of the government and private plans:

In order to formulate my proposal and strategy, I have started analyzing the official governmental plan for the area. My proposal aims to tackle these issues and propose a new strategic plan that will combine some parts of the scenario of the official plan with my vision for the area. There is no plan of the government exclusively for this specific area. We will refer to the plans that exist and are mainly private. More specifically, we refer to the Stadium of Panathinaikos and the National Bus Terminal.

1. The first existing plan for the area and that has already started to be executed is the stadium of Panathinaikos. In 2005, the government announced an agreement entitled “Double Regeneration” between the municipality of Athens and the team of Panathinaikos. The main goal of the agreement was the construction of sports infrastructures of Panathinaikos at Eleonas combined with the demolition of the existing football field of the team in a central, densely populated area of Athens. The construction of the new football field required a vast area with easy access for the crowd. Moreover, the construction of the field within the borders of the Municipality of Athens was a necessary requirement of the team because of the historical connection of the team with the city of Athens. The aforementioned requirements were successfully fulfilled by the region of Eleonas and particularly by the part of Eleonas that belongs to the Municipality of Athens.

For the acceleration of the procedure a law was voted in order to legalize the “double regeneration” of construction area and greenery between the region of Eleonas where the new field will be constructed and the block of the city center where the old field will be demolished. In the block of the city center, the buildable spaces are abolished and it is characterized as green public space where the only buildings allowed will be those of cultural and recreational uses. The creation of two new blocks in the area of Eleonas is achieved through the modification of the street plan. The construction of the football field will take place in one of them. On the other one a building with commercial, business and recreational uses will be constructed.
2. The second plan is the National Bus Terminal. The creation of the new station moves the activities that are related to the national buses to the Bus Terminal of Eleonas. This will facilitate the transportation of the passengers towards the airport, the port and the city center of Athens, since the National Bus Terminal will be located next to a Metro station. The targets of this project are high. First of all, there is a desire to offer services of high quality to the passengers of the intercity buses (that are 10,000,000 people per year) allowing the transfers from all the public transport (Metro, buses, cars, taxis) in an organized way. Also, there is a need to design a project of high architectural and aesthetical value that will become a landmark of the area and attraction pole for commercial or other activities. This landmark will activate and accelerate the required procedures for the development or completion of the networks of urban infrastructure (e.g. local road network) that are absent from the area of Eleonas. Finally, this project aims at the urban restructuring of the area (whose current character is industrial – wholesale) into an area with modern businesses of the tertiary production sector (mainly). This project is privately funded and its realization will be done through competition.

Apart from the new bus terminal, which will cover an area of 38,500 m², the investment will include commercial uses of 11,000 m². Additionally, 29,000 m² of free spaces and green, 1,500 m² of cultural interest and a parking of 480 places will be created. The area that has been chosen is almost 9 ha, 50% of which are related to the National Bus Terminal. In the rest 50%, commercial uses and common green spaces will be developed.
Proposed Program:

The new program that is proposed for Eleonas—as it has been already mentioned—is based on the logic of smart landscape. Eleonas, will be an area that will offer living, learning, working and interacting conditions. The program will be related to the environment, the public transportation, the economy, the working and the housing. All these parts of the new program will bring the spatial, social, environmental and economic integration of the city of Athens with the area of eleonas. Definitely it is needed a program that ensures the activation of the area until late hours. The most import factor are the actors: The user that are proposed for this area are people with socioeconomic problems, victims of the economic crisis with no decent house, people that leave the center of Athens in a search for a better quality of life in the city center of Athens as well as students that are the most active part of the society. Students will bring fresh ideas to the area. This way, motives are given to new couples and new families, in order to choose Eleonas as their new place to live.

Transportation:

The public transportation system works as a backbone. It connects the existing metro system and the new bus terminal. The walking distances are no longer than 10 minutes 500m radius. Tram lines are proposed as well. Bike points are located in the area. The cycling network is combined with strategically located spots of bike renting and is united to the greater network of the city. In the areas around the stations there are parking places.

Culture:

the area, apart from the Agricultural University, will have a University of Industrial Design. Both universities are totally connected with the history and the economy of the area. This way, we have the creation of a university campus, a library which is used by both universities- and the free public space between them. This free public space between them is a place of exchange of ideas and discussions; a bank of knowledge. Art Institutions, such as dance and theatre academies, workshops and cinemas, galleries with exposition spaces are located also in the area. One of the most important things that is located in the area is the museum of the city of Athens.

Recreation:

Sport facilities are reinforced with open courts as well as with non-mainstream urban sports which take place in public spaces, vertical fields/gyms, freestyle areas for parkour, jogging routes, refreshment stops, squares, urban furniture and observation towers. In parallel the recreational sector is also strengthened through the development of some Cafes, Bars and Restaurants in the area.
Economy:

Every Saturday, in the area there is a big open informal market which is enhanced. In this market, residents will be able to sell some of the products that they produce.

Working:

In the area there are also sectors that contain work uses such as Businesses, offices, Work Space and retail. Also, Innovation Center and fab-labs (fabrication laboratories) are located. In the fab-labs students from the industrial design university and workers can work. As, already has been mentioned in the whole area urban agriculture and urban gardening are introduced. This is something that benefits not only the users but also the budget of the municipality.

Housing:

residence is reinforced and the sense of neighborhood is created in it. The system of polykatoikia is studied and a new model is created. The typologies that will be analyzed later on are two: the urban and the agricultural. Also, some buildings of the area used with a different use than their traditional ones and they facilitate student housing. Because of the existence of the educational institutions (Agricultural University and University of Industrial Design) student housing is needed. The enclaves spread creating a network and the population also “spreads”.

Environment:

Green spaces such as squares, vegetation, playgrounds, Meeting Places, Play Facilities, Rest & Refreshment Stops, Parks, Open Walking Area create an environmental network and they are all connected.
Strategic plan about the actors:

Concerning the users, and more specifically the residents of the city center of Athens that move to Eleonas, there is an integration strategy that has been studied within the scope of this research. To be more specific, the “double regeneration” is the stimulus for the development of a strategic plan that is proposed is generally implemented in various areas of the city center of Athens. It is proposed as a way to integrate uses and quality of life and in the city center of Athens public and accessible free space is given to the crowd. Similarly, the proposal aims at encountering the existing plans of the Organization of Planning and Environmental Protection of Athens and use them as a condense set of needs.

It is a strategy of adding and subtracting that takes place between the space that is cut from the city and the space that is added to it at a different area.

This plan will be implemented mainly in densely populated areas of the center. This way, the city center decongests from the System of Polykatoikia while Eleonas enlivens through housing. Now, the design of houses becomes human-centric and not profit-centric. Thus a study of strategic moves, demolitions and evacuations is suggested and the stakeholders are indemnified by being given new spaces at Eleonas. An important argument that supports this strategy is the opportunity to increase green public spaces. Athens is –after Paris- the most densely built city in Europe. Moreover the population of Greece will remain almost stable until 2060, the households increase and the center of Athens is abandoned –even in the most densely populated areas. Taking into consideration the aforementioned information we can claim that the inhabitants that will activate Eleonas are those who will abandon the city center in order to find higher quality of life not in the suburbs of the city but within it. Additionally, the abandoned areas of the city center will be selectively transformed into public spaces. Thus, the housing will work as a “bridge”, as a connection with the neighboring fabric, will bring new inhabitants to the area that will animate public spaces and new collectivities inside Eleonas.

There is an evident need to empty some urban space in the modern city centre of Athens because the main city’s problem is its very dense fabric. Thus, it is proposed to turn down entire blocks. “Destroying” these parts of the city means the construction of new fields, the green field that is missing.
1. people from the center of Athens
   - better quality of life
2. people with socioeconomic problems (victims of crisis)
   - housing, job, quality of life
3. students
   - better quality of life
   - life next to the city centre, they need recreation
11. The structure

Kaupert's plan 1875, The structure of the city of Athens in relation to its surroundings.
Precise depiction of the relation between the Greek capital with its direct natural environment in the 19th century: Kaupert’s plan of 1875 (1881). We notice the great number of streets that connect the city with the rural countryside, we mark the special elements of the natural environment (rivers, streams, hills) and the rural areas, as well as the local toponyms.
A. The main axis structure of Athens:

When Athens was declared the capital of the new Greek nation in 1833 it had a population of only 12,000 people, most of them in the original settlement situated under the northern slope of the Acropolis. That area constituted the nucleus around which the new city was designed.

The aim of the plan that was proposed by the first urban planners of Athens was to get rid of the Turkish character of the city and highlight a new neoclassical identity. Their plan included the creation of linear axes, widenings, etc. The plan for the perimeter of the old city took the form of an isosceles triangle, on the vertices of which the most important new functions were sited.

B. The urban structure as a factor of centrality:

The city of Athens, is designed from the beginning based on the urban squares and the axes that connect them. The vertices of the triangle of the city are three squares which have different characters. Theses different characters are directly visible by the people that approximate them. Even the view of the city map, gives an impression that a walk along the perimeter of this shape, is enough for someone to see, feel and comprehend the physiognomy of Athens, this triangle is the “heart” of the city.

Between this triangle and the Acropolis, there was an unstructured space, where there were planned archaeological excavations. The public space of the city was defined not only by the green boulevards but also by free spaces and squares. According to the urban plan, the roads follow the hippodamian system without avoiding radial road structures around the central squares. The central square, Agora and the position of the public buildings are the most characteristics spots around which the urban planners structured the overall functional form of the city.

However 19th century bequeathed the urban tissue and the public space to the city center and shaped its plan of development. The urban structure, which was the result of the etching of the neoclassical plan—despite the important changes that this plan underwent—was responsible for the creation of new forms of ideological and functional centrality. This forms determined the identity of the Athenian city center during the 19th and 20th centuries.

The orthological structure of the neoclassical geometry and the phenomenal equivalence of the axes and the central area that has a form of an isosceles triangle did not negate important internal differentiations of the character, the function and the social composition of the various areas that consist different centralities.
The “triangle” of Athens
C. Connect the site specific with the Athenian structure:

In an effort to connect the urban tissue with the new proposal, I “borrowed” the methodology of the urban planners of this era. Through careful study of the urban plan of the city center of Athens, it seems that each time, centralities of different characters are created. These centralities connect with roads of big width. The final shape of this structure is an isosceles triangle, which is definitely an influence by the perceptions of the neoclassicism which were dominant in the beginning of the 19th century.

The plan proved very successful, despite the fact that during its application, there were interventions of third parties which changed at a certain level the quality of the initial idea of the first researchers (e.g. the capability of the radial expansion of the city). Its most important characteristic was the topography of the space and the natural landscape.

*Current and proposed programme/current connections*
The triangle of the city center of Athens—not as a shape, but substantially—was the motive for all the axes of the solution. I attempt a direct connection to the city center by extending the existing lines and creating new centralities, where I place the uses that will give a new breath to the space. To be more specific, the logic behind the planning of the city center of Athens is based on the relationship between square, program and connection. My spatial strategy is based on this logic.

In the following diagrams, we attempt a schematic presentation of the most important centralities in the wider area of Eleonas. The existing or planned centralities that correspond to natural elements, structural landmarks or space of functional density—indoor or outdoor—(e.g. parks, archaeological spaces, basic squares, transportation nodes, stations, culture nodes, museums, important public buildings and other sights), are interpreted as basic elements of the definition of the conditions of the relationship between different areas of the urban tissue. They form a grid of references, moves and functional interconnections, optical correlations or conceptual connections, which are characteristics of the Athenian centrality.

The diagram proposes the spatial connection of the city center of Athens with Eleonas by reinforcing the relationship between these two areas. By extending the first triangular formation, we can claim that a number of important urban landmarks in the area of Eleonas, can be integrated to a diagram of organizational etches that are related to the natural repousse of the area. Some of these etches will be constructed and visible, while others will be presented as conceptual lines.

To be more specific, for the study there is an existing and a proposed program. These programs will integrate spatially, socially, economically and environmentally into the city center of Athens based on the logic of its structure. This structure is based, as it has been already mentioned, on the combination of program, public spaces and connections—roads. The existing program, which is analyzed on the maps, consists the social and economic connection of the selected area of Eleonas with Athens. What is missing from the area and has already mentioned in my analysis is public spaces as well as their network which consists the connection. Thus, based on the new proposal, the program is connected and reinforced by the green spaces, creating this way not only the spatial but also the environmental connection of the selected area with Athens.

This new plan does neither reproduce shapes and symbolisms of the past nor acts competitively to them. It is based on the idea of the spatial planning of basic elements of a city such as uses, roads as well as green public spaces. This is the part of the logic of the past that is used, it is connected to the existing structure of the city and indicates a new planning era with new needs for the citizens.
Proposed connection/axis
D. The spatial strategy:

The starting point of this strategy Keramikos or the third square, as it is called, and it is the meeting point of the ancient and the contemporary city. Keramikos is located on the edge of the selected area and is highlighted as the west gate of Athens. The connection starts with directions towards Piraeus Road and Iera Odos (Holly Road). The strategy provides guidelines on how the centralities that exist inside the area of Eleonas can be transformed into nodes of activities that allow the spatial, social, environmental and economic integration with the city of Athens. These centralities will be based on a new network of streets and public spaces which, through the new program, re-activate the local scale and provide a functional link between the local and the urban and further the metropolitan scale. No action can be effective when it takes place independently and is not part of a general plan.

The final structure
The general strategy is based on flexibility and for this reason the new structure of Eleonas proposes not only a re-programming process but also acupuncture interventions that allow the possibility (flexibility) of transformation of the area in the coming years depending on the urban transformation of it and the needs of the actors. Based on the above, the key goal of the strategy is to define the spatial program that answers the local demands and at the same time meets the demands of the urban users for a new better living environment.

Besides the interventions that will be proposed the project aims on the connection of the local and urban level with the city-level intervention. A more flexible program (focused on new living environment) will work together with the stable area structure and becomes the starting point for the spatial and programmatic integration of the area of Eleonas and the city of Athens.

The main goal of the project is the spatial, environmental, social and economic integration of Eleonas and simultaneously the creation of new living conditions in the area of Eleonas for all the actors affected by having as starting point the socio-spatial integration of the most vulnerable of them. Important is the empowerment of the local level and the engagement of the inhabitants in the process of revitalization.
**SPATIAL + SOCIAL + ENVIRONMENTAL + ECONOMIC INTEGRATION**

1. break the enclave
2. diversity/flexibility
3. archeological unification
4. landscape (recuparate)

**Programme + Public Space + Connection**

- **social & economic**
- **environmental**
- **spatial**

- **urban villages**
  - houses
  - green spaces
  - activities

- community spaces

- reinforce local economy

- agriculture park
- productive park

- green public spaces that has been the reference for the citizen’s life

- better connection with the city of Athens, Attica, Greece

- public transportation

- clean the polluted land

**SPATIAL + SOCIAL + ENVIRONMENTAL + ECONOMIC**
E. The spines:

In order to achieve a plan of integration, the proposed strategy aims to provide not only the tools but also an environment where integration can start to happen. This can be achieved by a combination of different programs.

The aim is to build a new programme in the area of eleonas in order to attract Athenians from all over the town and locate it strategically in the vicinity of a new tram line to start a revitalization of the area at infrastructural and programmatic concentration points.

There are spines of mixed uses. These spines are the following:

The identity of the spines
1. The exchange spine:

Located next to the highway, the exchange spine aims to use the existing built and proposed infrastructure as a driver to set up transit oriented development. It is the area where one can find most of the services and industries. It is a transportation node, since the national bus station is located there. In this area all the sectors of the economy (primary, secondary, tertiary) coexist. Our ambition is to preserve and integrate with participatory light industries in the area. Urban agriculture is introduced in vacant sites. This allows for social and spatial cohesion and economic stimulation of existing productive communities as well as creating new ones. The highway and the national bus terminal could help the productive activities to scale up. Also the national bus station and the metro station work as a potential multi-modal transit hub in the region.

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2. Urban village:

The urban village is mainly focused in habitation and the living environment. Housing combined with a series of courts and spaces for community engagement and productive activity are involved. Families, university students and people that are victims of the economic crisis live, work and communicate. Through the urban village, they offer a new living environment which is based on the concept of neighborhood and has the role of a pilot example for the rest of Athens.

3. Recreation spine:

This zone is characterized as a recreational area. This is because of the existing program which has been proposed for the area. Its basic element is sports, since in this area fields, restaurants and various spaces of culture and green are placed. This is adjacent to the area of the production spine, creating a connection between them and an area of metropolitan green.

4. The production spine (agricultural village):

It is the area that refers to the agricultural production (the primary sector) and brings memories of the past alive. It consists a production park of metropolitan range which is directly related to the Academy of Plato and the history of the area. It is located in the hear of Eleonas, providing museums, walks and an area where there will be mixed housing types and spaces for production, which will accessible by visitors. Thus, live-work housing as well as cultural routes will be included in the production spine. In this productive territory, the inhabitants are included in productive networks across the city and city-region. Engagement with other urban productive clusters offers the opportunity to facilitate an improvement in the living and working conditions in Eleonas. Additionally, a social field is created, aiming at the production of common grocery which will cover the needs of both
the nutrition needs of the citizens that will actively participate in the production procedure (exchange economy) and the social structures that support the victims that are most affected by the economic crisis.

5. Culture village:

Basic elements of this area are the university and the ancient botanic garden that is located in it. The university consists a cultural enclave which opens to the city and the public. It is reinforced through other cultural and recreational uses and the creation of a new faculty of industrial design. This university faculty is directly related to the production spine and reinforces the notion of a metropolitan park.
F. The backbone:

All these areas are connected spatially, socially, environmentally as well as economically through Iera Odos that is the basic axis and backbone and the green boulevards that create a continuous connection towards the city center. Along Iera Odos, there are interventions that are capable of connecting these axes either through the landscape or through architecture. Iera Odos is the stable corridor, the backbone between the area of Eleonas and the rest of the center. More specifically, it can become the connector between the public squares and the city-level public transport.
In Athens, during the last decades of the previous century, motorways were constructed in order to facilitate the massive transportation by car. These motorways became borders in densely populated urban areas. In most cases the results were disastrous. Internationally, because of the development of public transport these closed motorways turn into urban boulevards in an effort to reorganize the neighboring urban areas and qualitatively upgrade the urban environment for the benefit of people. The car is replaced by sustainable mobility. We will research the conversion of Iera Odos into an urban boulevard, as a pilot example of direct implementation taking into consideration the perspective of the connection of the city center of Athens.

There definition of the urban character of Iera Odos is proposed. This will be done by limiting the width of the road, reducing of the car circulation, organizing permeable surface connections between opposite areas, reinforcing the cultural, functional and recreational uses, constructing a wide zone of high planting on both sides of the road for the circulation of pedestrians and cyclists, environmental interventions and the creation of a tram line that will connect the selected area with the city center of Athens. The new Iera Odors will be a road oriented, less to cars and more to people; it will be a cultural boulevard.

section of the backbone Iera Odos
Apart from the basic connection structure between the various spines and between these spines and the broader area of Athens, there is a network of green roads. Introduce elongated green spaces, green corridors, in the urban fabric that have the capacity to link neighborhoods. These green roads are etches that have been created by the historical triangle of Athens. We propose the conversion of these axes into axes of limited circulation of cars by putting emphasis to pedestrian roads, cycle paths and public transportation. We highlight the intensive planting with the form of tree lines, green islands and linear parks. The form of these “linear parks” connect the main roads of the 19th century, the triangle, and it is continued.
The creation of a complete Tram Network in Athens is part of a strategy that is based on sustainable mobility. The combination of a dense Tram Network and the urban tool of Green Urban Boulevards, contribute to the upgrading of sometimes downgraded central areas, such as Eleonas. This is achieved through the reinforcement of public transport, the facilitation of the accessibility and the moves of all the social groups and means, toning up the multi-functionality of the area and the substantial upgrading of the public space in Athens. It is very important also to be mentioned the network of bike lanes that will be set up in the area and it will be connected to a network corresponding to the center of Athens. Within the area of Eleonas are located several bicycle stations in the metro area and around the tram station, where residents, employees and other visitors will be able to rent a bike for a while during the day, in order to move around the area. This is a “green” mode of transportation inside the city.
G. The masterplan:

What do we have to consider in order to provide a better living environment for future generations? In the following picture we see the Masterplan of the area, and the points in which the acupuncture interventions will be.

*Source, Point Supreme, Sugrou Street*
The masterplan
Existing and proposed buildings

Green Structure
The local interventions:

The design interventions: an alternative approach to “live”:

The site analysis and the initial development strategies have allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the site of intervention. The main design strategies, constructing the design intervention are: activating Iera Odos, and the riverbanks, achieving a gradient program, a typological approach to flexible housing, the creation of a common ground and the introduction of 2 distinctive urban characters.

The interventions should be faced as parts of a united chain, each node of which, reinforces the next one and has benefits that spread and multiply additively.

1. Iera Odos:

Iera Odos is described not as a homogeneous axis, but as a sequence of urban nodes that correlate the road with the broader area of Eleonas and differentiate qualitatively (geometric characteristics, range, uses, historical value, etc.). The important nodes are the following: IeraOdos/Kifisos Highway, IeraOdos/AgiasAnnis, IeraOdos/ Stream of Prophet Daniel, IeraOdos/University of Agriculture, IeraOdos/Piraeus Street. Between them, we find some other nodes that are equally important to the previous ones and complete and reinforce the unity of the activities and the importance of Iera Odos. The intervention that is proposed for some of these nodes is based on the strategic interventions on other less important nodes, taking into consideration the qualitative differentiations and the position of the nodes in the overall network. Apart from the new urban plan, this intervention tries to include the creation of the frame for the reception of a typology of uses, the creation of preconditions for the functional and spatial structure of the opposite areas and the provision of directions for the sustainable development of the surrounding urban space. The upgrading of each node can stimulate change functions to broader areas through the networking of this with other local or supralocal urban nodes. Iera odos is now changing from its current industrial character including more mixed-use functions such as commercial, institutional and cultural uses. The width of the current road is reduced, while the circulation of pedestrians and cyclists are reinforced.
1. Market sells fresh vegetables

2. open theater, fes takes place here

3. building of offices

4. observatory and bridge

5. open air gymnasium

6. underpass, referred to archeology

7. observatory and bridge

2km

"Market" "Village 1"
1. Market sells fresh vegetables

2. Open theater, festivals take place here

3. Building of offices

4. Observatory and bridge

5. Open air gymnasium

6. Underpass, referred to archeology

7. Observatory and bridge

8. Underpass, referred to archeology

"Profit's Daniel" "Village 2" "Agriculture University"

Diagram showing the tram stations along Iera Odos
Starting the description of the interventions from west to east – from the National Highway to the city center of Athens – it would be useful to mention that Iera Odos connects Athens with Elefsina and is related to the Mysteries of Elefsina. On its eastern part, Iera Odos shapes the western gate of Athens. There, the first intervention takes place. It is a transportation node that will be presented through relevant examples. This node will be used both by pedestrians and by cars and buses. It will be the point that will introduce the entrance to the city center of Athens. After this, a building of offices works as a bridge for Iera Odos, in the exchange spine. This spine, as it has been already mentioned, is the spine whose main element is economy (primary sector-agriculture, secondary sector-existing industries and tertiary sector-services, mainly related to transportation). Additionally, light constructions such as pedestrian bridges with observation posts are put alongside Iera Odos, giving to the walkers the ability to cross the road and have a general view of the whole route, of the whole Iera Odos.

1. *Parc de la Trinitat, Barcelona*

2. *Peripherique, Paris*
Next, as it can be seen in the relevant drawings, a square-node is created. This square functions as a big market. It is the spot where the tram stop is located and informally, every Sunday there is an outdoor market where small vendors and residents sell various products. It is a market that takes a metropolitan character because of its location at a metropolitan node. In an effort to formalize the informal activities that take place in the area, we design this market. This neighborhood market is a place of commerce but it is also a social meeting place, a place to exchange both goods and ideas. Athens is facing one huge problem of social cohesion due to unwillingness on both the Greeks and the migrants to meet. The market works as an “urban attractor” and as a place for integration, and its social goal is to encourage immigrants and citizens to meet and feel part of the same community. The flea market square also functions as a transport hub that controls circulation. The car speed is reduced, a tram stop is located in the square facilitating the access of people there while underground passages that connect the neighboring areas with this node are created.
Then, at the location where the stadium is, in the recreation spine, Iera Odos goes under allowing the extension of various uses, mainly sports above it. It thus becomes a smooth junction between the residential areas and recreational activities.

There are also interventions where the role of the walker is downgraded. This is done by positioning the walker in an open museum that shows the history of the road. Following the trace of the ancient road, the walker can see individual elements that highlight the findings and the history of the place. Additionally, there is a possibility to extend the proposed interventions either towards Athens or towards Elefsina, based on the same logic. The compositional choices here are directly related to the procedure and the traces of this route from Athens to Elefsina and aim at highlighting the historical landscape in the modern city. The history of Iera Odos will be shown in these interventions. Horizontal and vertical elements are used in order to delimit the outdoor interventions.
Another important area is the area where Iera Odos meets the river of the Prophet Daniel. In this area, we place two towers that function as landmarks of the area. One of them is a water tower where the rain water is collected and a watch tower. They are located in the production spine. These two constructions are connected, creating a bridge for Iera Odos, as it can be seen the relevant drawing.
In the area of the Agricultural University and the Botanical Garden the role of the road is downgraded in order to unify the opposite regions, extending this way the outdoor space of the University. The walker passes through new Eleonas in order to be finally guided to an open theater which has a view to Acropolis. There, the students of the two universities (the Agricultural University and the University of Industrial Design) will gather in order to have outdoor conversations and enjoy outdoor festivals. The theater works as the market. This means that the theater consists a meeting point that people come together. We are talking again about a place that creates social cohesion.
plan of the open theatre
Starting our description from the west, the national road with direction to the city center of Athens we see the following interventions.

2. **National Bus Terminal:**

Usually the central stations consist the expression of the city’s prestigious spot acting as a gate, as an entrance into the metropolis. The project that has already been explained aims to build an efficient public transportation hub for the whole city of Athens including the public transportation at all the scales, from the greater region and the country as well.

3. **Stadium of Panathinaikos:**

A stadium which will be also used for other sports acitivities, with capacity up 40000 seats and underground parking spaces. It is directly related to the intercity Bus Station and its planning is related to the landscape of Eleonas.
4. Museum of the city of Athens

Inside Eleonas, a new centrality with cultural character is created. The new museum of the city is placed there. The new museum of the city has a direct relationship with the river, it is located in the production spine and its theme is the city of Athens. The interest of the museum turns towards the local society and the visitors. The social groups and their characteristics are brought to the foreground, giving a meaning to what the museum wants to show. The close connection of the museum with the place is highlighted introducing this way to exhibit objects and social structures in situ. This intervention could be:

a) a city museum of big building scale, as it has been establish by the international standards (e.g. Museum of the City of London)
b) a city museum of small scale – a local intervention
c) the combination of the previous options

The local interventions are not necessarily of building character. Outdoor temporary exhibitions and formations as well as events of local communities in order to highlight a place or an axis, are also a possible proposal. In this case, both apply in parallel.
Source for the observatory:
OBA Northern Lights Observatory Finland
5. Stream Profitis Daniel:

Today, the stream of Pr. Daniel has a bed that is visible along its whole length. It is an important element of the production park in the production spine, and it is turned into a linear park with intense planting and ranging width. Outdoor routes, bridges and stops and limited interventions are created, highlighting the reinstatement of the natural landscape. The revelation of an old stream generates the circular city’s metabolism. The stream creates designing events relevant to the memory of past geography and allows observation of seasonal cycles. Part of the project is about giving back to people and nature the city’s public space, to re-inhabit and shape it dialectical.
“To think is not to get out of the cave; it is not to replace the uncertainty of shadows by the clear-cut outlines of things themselves. To think is to enter the Labyrinth. It is to lose oneself amidst galleries which exist only because we never tire of digging them; to turn round and round until, inexplicably, this spinning round opens up in the surrounding walls cracks which offer passage.”

Cornelius Castoriadis, Crossroads in the Labyrinth (1978)
6. Housing:

“The acquisition of a home by those who are deprived of it or are inadequately housed are subject to special treatment of the State.” (Greek Constitution 1975, article 21, par.4)

What if we return to the situation before “antiparohi”? What if we change the living conditions? New housing, along with the design of mixed-use building typologies, which combine spaces for living, working and small scale production is proposed. We have to re-think the role of housing in creating and transforming urban environments. Issues related to transport, education, production and employment are used to build the new neighborhoods.

The strategy that is followed for the creation of the neighborhood is the following and is presented in the relevant diagram:

the housing strategy:

1. part of the abandoned property should be used for: social infrastructure community activities neighborhood commons

   programme: guest house pocket park education health housing and workspaces community centres school and library sports/playground

2. abandoned property such as factories can be re-used through an agreement between owners/tenants

   AIM: cover local demands in food and housing, re-introducing collective practices

3. new housing_ 2 typologies

   HOUSING=LIVING+WORKING+PRODUCTION
Part of the abandoned property will be used for social infrastructure, community activities as well as neighborhood commons. More specifically the abandoned property will be used as schools and libraries, as guest houses, pocket parks, health clinics, housing for students or vulnerable groups.

As far as the abandoned buildings of industry is concerned, can be re-used through an agreement between the owners and the tenants in order to cover the local demands in food or housing. For instance, can be used as food markets, as manufacturing places for food or as fab-labs where students can work for the creation of low cost housing.

With these methods, will be introduced to the new neighborhoods collective practices that create a social cohesion between the neighbors. The neighborhoods are organized with a good infrastructure and local centres, where there is no traffic congestion and the liveliness of the area is enhanced. The new housing typology that will be introduced and will be analyzed later is based in the combination of living, working and production. It is an attractive, green housing typology that is located in these specific areas as an alternative to single family housing in the ever-expanding periphery.

What is a neighborhood?

In Greece and more specifically in Athens, the recognition of a part of the city as a neighborhood is based on historical procedures of gathering of the residents (e.g. with common origin) and is followed by the existence of landmarks (such as a temple, center of social service, a school, a historical building, a square or a natural characteristic of the environment), elements that are or prove a historical moment in the gathering of people and the delimitation of the neighborhood. The social networks are in many cases a generic factor in the creation of neighborhoods and the gradual formation of the areas composes the urban tissue. There are many examples of cities where the neighborhood or the district is perceived as a spatial expression of a set of social networks of solidarity which is formed historically though the human relationships that develop in a specific place. The reference to specific historical events interprets in a better way the importance of what is mentioned so far and highlights the weight of the social networks and the role of the community in the creation of homogenous –in terms of population- spatial unities during the first years of the formation of the neighborhoods of Athens.

The neighborhood as a “social space” is a field of socialization where codes of conduct are learnt through observation and the company of others. The person uses neighborhood as a structural social element in order to build his perception and understanding of the social organization.
The square is a reference center of the neighborhood. The streets are pedestrian-friendly, are low in traffic, allowing the residents to discover the beauty of the neighborhood. The pedestrian streets are areas of protected public space, and spaces of gathering and entertainment or access areas for housing.

photos that represent the neighborhood, Markoni/ the existing neighborhood in Eleonas
The proposed villages in the masterplan
11α. The Design of the villages
a. Agricultural village:

The agricultural village is found in the production spine where the productive park is located. It is a residential typology combined with storage areas, commercial stores and cultivation plots. The agricultural housing unit forms a continuous built up area along the riverbanks. The new urban fabric is permeable with a variety in the number of apartments and the number and size of cultivation plots. The cultivation plots have different uses. There are common gardens that are open to the public, green public spaces and the private gardens. The open spaces become more publicly accessible towards the river front. Emphasis is given to the restoration of the natural landscape and its harmonization with the new urban tissue that is proposed. The production, communal and commercial activities take place on the ground floor of the units to promote the social and the spatial integration with the surrounding. The public shared river front offers a continuous accessible pedestrian area for the district’s residents and visitors. Each unit is attached to a private garden. The garden can be taken advantage of the uses that are related to the agricultural production.

The main idea concerns collective urban cultivation which is self-organized, self-sufficient and built upon relations of solidarity and confidence.

The research tool is a collective action which takes place in the public space; the olive harvesting on the districts sidewalks as well as the cultivation of the land. Community buildings which were the abandoned properties and gardens help small neighborhood collectives to offspring.

The main aim is to create a new perception of the urban habitation: we are not trying to negate the complexity of the city or to return to the notion of the village. We are trying to boost collectivity, common practice and common thinking. We are using the term village as a habitation status in which, the way of living of people is based on self-production of products that cover basic needs, the balanced relationship between human and nature and the cooperation. The olive tree, is a symbol of life of the past, it is a point of memory for the old inhabitants.

Creation of an ecological consciousness and ecology: reclaiming of the land by the inhabitants, reintegration of people in the social life, neighborhood conditions, self-organization and a sense by the resident that he is responsible for the quality of the environment where he lives. The cultivation is limited and integrated in the urban tissue of the city. Additionally, there are interventions in the public and common spaces (e.g. pavements, squares, open spaces).
Masterplan of the agriculture village
Diagrammatic masterplan of the agriculture village

- water
- common gardens
- green public spaces
- private gardens
- river promenade
- housing typology
- existing buildings
- street network
- pedestrian street
- tram line
The decisions are taken collectively by the participants. Our aim is not to divide the existing production itself, but to share and spread this differentiated practice and induce more people to follow it.

The soil in the area of Eleonas could not be characterized as suitable for the development of cultivation. The lasting use of the area by the various production units (bigger or smaller) that operated inappropriate or no waste management led to the pollution of the area. The first step for the restoration of agriculture in the area is the sanitation of the soil. This procedure can be executed with either artificial or natural methods, such as plant-sanitation. Plant-sanitation is the use of specific plants that can gradually remove harmful elements from the soil in order to restore its past composition. One of these plants can absorb lead from the soil. Initially, the prospective cultivation fields, are planted with sunflowers, in order (after some time) to prepare the soil for urban farming. The areas around the river are planted with lemon trees, orange trees, pomegranate trees, almond trees, olive trees and vegetables.
section α-α

courtyard shop

workspace

housing

diagrammatic axonometric view of the agricultural typology

courtyard

shop

greenhouse

166
3D visualization in the agricultural village
gradient of materiality and programme
axonometrical section on the stream Profitis Daniel in the agricultural village
3d visualization of the agricultural village neighborhood
bird’s eye view
B. Urban village:

The main challenge of this site, the urban village, is the existence of a residential neighborhood which is called Markoni that is socio-economically, spatially and programmatically fragmented. The new housing district is envisioned to contain a programmatic mix with residential and support programs. The urban village mainly focuses in the habitation and the living environment. A new living environment based on the principles of the neighborhood is offered.

The urban village is placed in Eleonas, around Markoni and restores neighborhood in the center of Athens. Eleonas is activated. It is an example where we have a transition between landscape and city. The urban village is inhabited by specific groups of people that have been already mentioned. They are people coming from the center of Athens and are looking for a higher quality of life, victims of the economic crisis but also university students that bring to the area the wind of innovation due to their fresh ideas. The suburbs of Athens which are today on the edges will be upgraded to green lungs in the centre of the city.
The procedure that is followed for the creation of this urban village is the following and it is presented in the following diagrams.

The industrial buildings that are no more used, are maintained in the area. Each of these industries is characterized as a point of reference. This way, we have the cluster of the neighborhood, which is Marconi, and around it all the industrial shells are ready to be used.

Each municipality sub-rents a number of closed industries that are appropriate for use and renovation through the following procedure:

a. Contacts the owners of these closed buildings
b. Chooses those who accept the concession
c. Provides compensation in 2 ways:
   - Financial compensation
   - A residence is given to them in a different place
1. the neighborhood and the abandoned buildings

2. the clusters
3. try to connect the clusters through an “element”

4. functions and common ground
5. public transportation
us
bike lanes
pedestrian street
tram

0 - 60m

the users of the neighborhood

residential
cafe
service
courtyard/roof garden

education

residential

cafe
courtyard/roof garden

education

restaurant
cafe
courtyard/roof garden

recreational facilities

public transportation
cafe
courtyard/roof garden
The points of references seem to create some sub-clusters around the main cluster, which is the neighborhood. The union, the cohesion of all these sub-clusters is executed through an architectural-urban element. To be more specific, this element is a public part of the neighborhood and consists of many buildings. The “element” consists a covered public space for the neighborhood which extends into an open public space, a plaza on the street. It is inspired by the morphology of “Agora” with diversity of building heights forming a terraced roof-scape. Public structures such as cafeterias, exhibition spaces, markets, sport fields, skate parks are located in the ground floor. The floors above host more private ones, such as education and offices. Considering the existing urban fabric and the building scale, the project creates a new point of attraction in the neighborhood offering a multifunctional social space and an extension of the street into a public interior. The “element” behaves as a connecting factor between the building blocks and as a main axis vertically to which the new urban tissue develops. Thus, it is the cluster of the whole neighborhood. Following this, there maining bulding blocks are constructed. They are based on the typology and the regulations which are presented later on in the relevant diagrams. Buildings with a maximum height of three floors, with an open (sometimes) basement, unification of the terraces and easy transition to them since in this solution, terraces area part of the outdoor space of the city.

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**Figure ground of the “element”**

**Plan of the “element”**
axonometric view of the “element”

programme on the “element”

3d visualisation of the “element”
life in the roof-scape of the element

life around the buildings of the element

life in the archades of the element
Program such as shops, cafes, and communal would take place in such parts of the district. Residential typologies combined with commercial and communal spaces. The open spaces become more public as they approach central civic facilities. The ground floor is a common ground accessible by the public in most areas of residential districts. The clusters appear to be introverted towards pedestrian and courtyard active spaces rather than facing busy roads.

In this neighborhood, is observed the clear configuration type in the few existing housing buildings, where Markoni is: the “patios”, the commonly inner spaces, are places publicly accessible but that still feels private when passed through. Each urban block is organized as a village made up of buildings that are separated by common patios. Each house is connected to the ground directly and creates an exterior green space, either on the ground floor where it can be used for agriculture, or the rooftop that works also as a public space as have been already mentioned before. The balconies, a very typical element in Athens, lead to a common life. The variety of building typologies avoids the feeling of a continuous repetition.

Towards the direction of reinforcing mixed uses in the area, we place mainly work spaces with emphasis to the neighborhood uses, in the basements since this way the whole space is more alive. However, taking into consideration the special relationship between the basements and the public space (in the way that this relationship has been developed in the area because of the big number of basements with a yard), we try to place a residence in the basement. Social housing for young people and students in reused industrial buildings, cafeterias, exhibition grounds for new artists and cultural events, cultural spaces, centers of creative occupation for children and playgrounds are parts of the program as well. Small local businesses are supported, something that is very positive for the liveliness of the neighborhood.

The proposal is flexible and is based on the combination of all these different components such as the “element”, the building typologies and the public spaces. The importance of the common space is highlighted, as well as their relation with the public and the in-between spaces. These ideas will be explained later through plans such as top views and sections, in order to show the real spatial relationship that is created in the neighborhood.

In the following picture we see the masterplan of the urban block which works in an extrovert level with multiple entries, a core public space (green space, playground, flea market) that passes through the middle of it bringing the public life into its core. The common spaces that are created are connected with each other by a network of pedestrian. The urban block “plays” with the different levels of public, private and common. This mixture plays also an important role to the activation of the area.
The basic characteristics of this neighborhood are:

1. The Participative procedure in planning: The residents participate in the planning of their community so that it corresponds to their needs.

2. The Planning of the neighborhood: The planning of the community is executed in such a way that the free space for the neighborhood is maximized.

3. The Common infrastructure: The existence of both private and public spaces in the planning of housing communities. Public spaces include yards, free spaces, playground, common housing, etc. The common house is the center of the community and usually has a big dining room, kitchen, living room, space for children, workshop, visitors room and washing machines.

4. The management by the residents. The residents manage the infrastructure and participate in the required work for their maintenance.

5. Non-hierarchical structure and decision making. Each resident participates equally in decision making and the required work, depending on his capabilities.

The proposal consists an urban structure that is characterized by mixed uses (an area where there are shops, services and industry in), provision of good public transport (in order to reduce the use of the car) and emphasis on the integration of spaces for pedestrians and public use in order to create a feeling of neighborhood in the city (for the upgrading of the quality of life).

**the urban(block) rules:**

1. rooftops:
   this space can be used and managed in common and they can host out-door recreational activities, small kitchen, gardens. the merging of terraces between buildings can be applied.

2. pilotis:
   the main concept is to create openings towards the back side by opening up the ground floor space

3. blind walls:
   vertical circulation leading to the rooftop which is transformed into a green terrace
diagrammatic axonometric view of the urban neighborhood

proposed building typology

typical building typology from Athens in the past

public space

diagrammatic axonometric view of the urban neighborhood

the “element”

common patio
A gradient of Materiality
playground

used from the residents as storage, laundry, and gathering

religious spaces

water tank

gardens in the rooftops
common space for the residents

stores

pedestrian zone

cafeterias

bike lane

art galleries

section α-α
“The healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human soul the whole community is shaped and when in the community lives the strength of each human soul.”
Henri Lefevre
section β-β

community centre

commerce

passage
“Keep in mind that there nothing more beautiful in this world than a night with the stars and the feeling that you fulfilled your duty...” Ghete
Isn’t it totally irrational that a whole area of the city remains unused and it used only for the romantic tet-a-tet between the tiles and the stars....! LeCorbusier
3d visualization of the neighborhood
view of the common patios inside the building block
12. Conclusions/Evaluation
This project initiated from an interest on the theme of residual places, that are created mostly because of the sprawling of the city, and with the question: how can Eleonas be socially, spatially, environmentally and economically integrated to the city of Athens?

It is very important to deal with the factors that disintegrate Eleonas with the rest of the city and try to re-establish the missing links. The design proposal is going to be evaluated by putting it to the whole territory and comparing the metropolitan area before and after this proposal. It is very important to see the final approach in the entire territory and not as an isolated fragment and this is because interventions like this can be opportunity for the whole metropolis and massive changes.

Eleonas is a residual place that disintegrate the city of Athens but also offers a great potentiality for the whole city. More specifically Eleonas is the key element of the reconstruction of the ecological system of Attica and consists a new centrality for the city of Athens not only because of its connection with the infrastructure but also because of its programme that has metropolitan value. The comparison is divided into two directions, the natural and the artificial one. The first is referred to the metropolitan green system with the ecological connections and the second to the street network and the programme.

The government proposed the reconstruction of the basic ecological connections and also the reinforcement of the city centre. These two opportunities were combined in an integration strategy and eleonas is the link. By this action the important ecological connections from north to south are created and the west part of the city, which is the one most lacking in green but also the lower topographically, gains some green. This linear structure with strong existence in the city is avoiding the risk of fragmentation of green. By comparing the existing with the proposed it becomes clear how the strategy is effective in completing the metropolitan green system and providing the missing ecological connections. It also increases the low rate of green space per inhabitant that is a major problem for Athens.

As far as the green strategy is concerned, eleonas becomes the green area that is proven essential for completing the metropolitan green system and reconstructing the ecological relations of the territory. As far as the infrastructural and programmatic strategy is concerned, the creation of new centralities is feasible and the integration between the metropolitan and the local is successful. Understanding the reality of the chosen site, not only in terms of its urban elements, its socioeconomic conditions but also the greater reality in the scale of the city and the modern world was an important structural element of the project. The structure of the city of Athens is being extended bringing to the area the structure of public spaces, functions and connections that are missing. This is not a strategy easily applicable to other areas and is feasible due to the specific characteristics and location of the area of Eleonas. The principle of creating centralities even of
district scale by extending the street network of different levels is important for the integration. The design of the new centrality is succeeded with the introduction in the area of street network of metropolitan, city and neighborhood level following the city’s structure. The same thing happens also with the program.

The current demand for a metropolitan park should remain the principal. It’s not a proposal of simply a new city or a new park, or a combination of the two, but a whole new proposal for a new way of living. This thesis proposes an alternative vision for Eleonas that has the potentialities to be an example of a new urban environment. Its focal point is also the response to the current issue of the city which is the bad living conditions.

My goal through this project was to present the importance of Eleonas for the whole city of Athens which is much more than a residual place. Eleonas, is the last chance to recast the landscape of Attica, the last outdoor residue in the city center and its last lung. The municipality states that it is trying to expropriate 132 acres, 86 in the area of Eleonas in order to ensure new green spaces. Its redevelopment comes at a moment when Athens suffers from a deep urban crisis and lack of living environment and for that reason eleonas could become a place occupied by social forces that denounce economic growth and are willing to built these villages relying to its own resources.

The design aims to connect the fragmented sites, upgrade the area economically, spatially and propose a new housing system through specific typologies. The new typologies respond to the scale of existing social conditions and economic situation. Although they are designed based on site, urban rules in the scale of the quarter and typologies in scale of the block and unit are proposed allowing a general implementation across the city adjusting to the needs of each site.
the ecological unification through the intervention in Eleonas

green public spaces

forests

ecological corridor
current situation/road network

new street network inside Eleonas connected with the structure of the city

entrance to the city

*Iera Odos as the main connection with the city*
the green boulevards as part of the ecological corridor

future extension of the green boulevards

green public spaces

tram line as the basic mean of transport connected with metro lines

metro line 1
metro line 2
metro line 3
tram line
transportation nodes
Eleonas as a new centrality with its metropolitan range programme which is part of the ecological corridor an public transportation network.
residual places in Attica where the alternative vision for Eleonas has the potentialities to be an example of a new urban environment.

1. Eleonas
2. Hellinicon Airport
3. Goudi Army Camp
position of the industries in the Attica basin (current situation)

proposed position of new industries, start companies located next to the airport
Evaluating the project from the beginning, I can understand the correct parts of the design and the ones that need further elaboration. I think that I took the location of the new bus station for granted as the government proposed and did not propose initially another location for it. Despite the fact that the national terminal bus station is located in the exchange spine it does not have a direct relation with the national highway, Iera Odos and the metro station. Thus, rethinking what could have been done in a different way, the national terminal bus station should have been located in a more strategic spot that would be directly connected to the metro station. It should be a prestigious spot that works as a gate, as an entrance into the metropolis. Thus, the national bus station is becoming a public transportation hub for the whole city of Athens, including the public transportation at all the scales, from the greater region and the country as well, such as metro, tram and buses. The new position of the bus station is in direct relation to the National Highway, Iera Odos and the metro station creating a new circulation node which functions autonomously and does not affect the rest of the circulation in the area of Eleonas. This would result in the reinforcement of the ecological unification which is now referred only to green, animals and pedestrians.
We also need to mention that apart from the area of Eleonas, there are no solutions given for achievement of the ecological unification. The unification is mainly achieved through green boulevards that have been already analyzed. The unification is not only green, but functions of metropolitan range such as museums, archaeological sites and public buildings of cultural value are also located in it. And all these elements are very well connected also through public transportation, especially tram.

The proposed interventions of every scale are applied in different phases. Some changes are applied directly while others are applied in the long term. The time limit for these phases cannot be precisely defined since it depends on multiple factors. With the changes that are gradually realized, in every phase the initial plan is reviewed and readjusted.

If today, the reflection about life in the city is at a turning point, once embarrassed toward major changes, there is a need to re-examine the tools of contemplation for space, architecture and the contemporary city. The analyses and theories for the “metropolitan condition” need to be tested in conditions where new collective experiences emerge.

The masterplan

- **proposed buildings**
- **existing buildings**
The new National Bus Terminal

proposed buildings

Green proposed by the government

common agriculture

private agriculture

institutions agriculture
The new National Bus Station

1. market sells fresh vegetables
3. building of offices
4. observatory and bridge
5. open air gymnasium
6. underpass, refered to archeology
7. observatory and bridge

Iera Odos after evaluation in relation with the bus terminal.

Fresh vegetable tables underpasse, refered to archeology.
2. open theater, festivals take place here

8. underpass, referred to archeology

New tram stops. The new Bus Terminal works as a station for all the means of transportation.
The bridge now works as an ecological bridge
“The inferno of the living is not something that will be; if there is one, it is what is already here, the inferno where we live every day that we form by being together. There are two ways to escape suffering it. The first is easy for many: accept the inferno and become such a part of it that you can no longer see it. The second is risky and demands constant vigilance and apprehension: seek and learn to recognize who and what, in the midst of the inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, give them space.”

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*
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Appendix
Reflection

This document comprises a reflection on both the process and the results of my graduation project. The main issues that need to be examined at this final point are the following:

- the relationship between research and design

The project “searching a relation between the residual and the city” is an individual project which has been developed within the context of the studio Complex Cities and it is characterized as a research and design project. The problem statement is focused on the issue of residual places and the new living conditions in the city of Athens. More specifically, there are unidentified spaces that interrupt the continuity of the urban tissue spatially timely and functionally. These are the residual spaces that create fragmented conditions in the urban tissue, leaving the city of Athens disintegrated.

The main aim of the project is the spatial, social, environmental and economic integration of the residual place, which is Eleonas in Athens, with the rest of the city.

A multi-disciplinary historical analysis through a timeline of the evolution of Athens, a multiscalar analysis regarding the relation of Eleonas with the whole metropolis and the centre of Athens, in-situ observations and interviews with academics in Greece, formed the first part of my research and helped me understand the complexities of the area. From the one side, the area of Eleonas which is characterized as an urban residual and on the other side the urban decay of the city center of Athens. Within this context my hypothesis developed on the idea that the spatial, social, environmental and economic integration of the area of Eleonas is the key issue, a proposal for the new living conditions for the whole Athens.

Through literature studies I address and define the character of urban residual places, as a situation that exists in all the sprawling cities and in Athens as well. With influences from the terrain vague (de Sola Morales, 1995), the drosscapes (Berger, 2006), the stim & dross (Lerup, 1995) and metropolitan tissue (Berger, 2006), the characteristics of the urban voids are identified. Also, bibliographic research took place in order to understand the structure of Athens, the production of space in Athens and the role of polykatoikia model on Athens urbanization.
During the project, research process and design had worked together in a relational way therefore research defined a base for the design and the design itself had raised questions which informed and reconfigured the research. The final product of the design is strongly connected with the research that is conducted on the area in terms of spatial, social and environmental integration. In the whole process of the project, the research and the design were a link which was always affecting each other. The results on the research on the governmental plans, the living conditions both in Eleonas (the study area) and Athens, the structure of the city of Athens, the urban block and the housing typology are coming to effect the vision, the actions and the final result of the design elements and process.

- the relationship between the theme of the studio and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework (location/object)

The complex cities studio is a graduation studio of the chair of spatial planning and strategy. The objective of the studio is to investigate spatial processes related to globalization and the increasing complexity of the built environment. On this general context of the studio, I have chosen to focus on the area of eleonas. The reason for choosing this area starts with the fact that needs not only a relation with the rest of Athens, needs a structure that will be related to the structure of the city, but also needs a creation of quality spaces that respond to bad living conditions that exist in the center of the city.

I tried to understand the evolution of the metropolitan spatial structure and its results that are the residual places and through this I tried to create the conditions that will have positive effect on the human well-being. Also, the project is related to the regional planning and design as it works on the plans of the government.

- the relationship between the methodical line of approach of the studio and the method chosen by the student in this framework

Previously, I mentioned the general approach of this project in the studio context. The Studio complex cities has a specific methodology. The methodology is based on the identification of the phenomena and the establishment of the problem statement and of a strong hypothesis that will lead to a final strategy and furthermore design proposal. After the multi-scalar analysis in the area of Eleonas and the definitions of the theoretical framework, the first steps of strategies started to be created. Two strategic approaches are defined, the first is about the people that will come in the area of Eleonas and the second one is about the spatial, social and environmental integrations of Eleonas in the the rest of the city.
As it has been above analyzed, the general problematic of my project is the integration of a residual place with the urban fabric and the how this integration can bring new living conditions.

Athens is hybrid because is simultaneously dispersed and centralized. The urbanized character of the city is not reduced as the city spreads out: the density of the build space remains the same, the streets are narrow, public space is most often neglected and undefined, nature is residual. These residual places are conflictual, without any established urban structure. Are not worthless, awkward pieces in the tissue of the city but contrary they are interim. Intermediate urban void place is the magnetic field that either attract either repel crowds. In conclusion, these heterogeneous in appearance, spaces are all areas ‘expectation’, and expect their role to be incorporated into the urban fabric and become an organic part of the city and social life. The vitality of the urban voids affects the image of the city, the quality of citizen’s life, the economy and the environment of it. Athens undergoes a severe urban crisis that becomes apparent in four levels; social, demographic, economical, and environmental. The urban conditions set by those parameters questions the role of the typical urban development, like the one that is currently underway in Eleonas, and opens-up the opportunity for alternative scenarios. Since Greece led the way into the eurozone crisis, it seems topical to use Athens as starting point for an alternative exit strategy. What Athens needs more than a large privately managed urban redevelopment is a new model of urban life that is more responsible towards its citizens and the environment. By recognizing the new actors, I can propose an urban structure, design, that will take into consideration the potentialities for a new better urban structure for co-habitation.
The urban void as intermediate place: an important opportunity for the city

“The residuum is not inert” (Pope, 1996)

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Abstract – The analytical approach of the characteristics of a contemporary city helps us in the interpretation of the residual sites and the conversion of the urban area into dynamic landscape (Frampton, 1995). The objective of this literature review is to comprehend the residual places and the urban voids and to identify the relationship between them and the urban tissue of the city. Furthermore, it aims to highlight the conditions of the urban voids and to interpret their meaning and role in the city. To be more specific this research will try to explore where the urban voids are, why these voids are constantly created and which are the actors of these places. The purpose of the research paper is to examine the potentialities for the rehabilitation of the urban voids in the mechanism of the city. The main research question of this paper is related to how we can define the urban voids and which is the transition from the compact urban tissue into a residual place (Berger, 2006). Relevant research will be studied and discussed and existing theories will be compared in order to achieve a comprehensive and consistent overview of the topic. On the one hand there is theory supporting that these areas have a negative impact on environment (Trancik, 1986; de Sola Morales, 1995). On the other hand there is literature arguing that these places constitute the dynamic part of the city (Berger, 2006). However, both believe that the issue of urban voids and residual spaces need to be tackled. Thus, taking into consideration the comprehension and the analysis of these spaces, a tool that can help to approach them is suggested. This tool refers to the way that these spaces will be designed and their redefinition in the city (Corner, 1999). Our aim is to make urban voids function as multiple connections, maintaining the useful aspect of their voidness.

Key words – urban sprawl, residual, urban void, terrain vague, drosscape, Landscape Urbanism

1 Introduction
“Different events have created lack of unincorporated boundaries in cities. Unincorporated margins, interior islands void of activity, oversights, there are simply uninhabited, un-safe, un-productive. In short, they are foreign to the urban system, mentally exterior in the physical interior of the city, its negative image, as much a critique as possible alternative” (de Sola Morales, 1995). The continuous development of the contemporary city together with the deterioration of the historic cores through uncontrolled reconstruction caused increased heterogeneity in the urban tissue, both morphological and functional. The reading of the city makes the presence of spaces and places that seem to have lost their identity and their original character obvious. Consequently, these unidentified spaces interrupt the continuity of the urban tissue spatially timely and functionally. These are the residual spaces, the voids that are encountered in the contemporary city (Berger, 2006).

With influences from the terrain vague (de Sola Morales, 1995), the drosscapes (Berger, 2006), the stim & dross (Lefebvre, 1995) and metropolitan tissue (Berger, 2006), the characteristics of the urban voids are identified. The aim of this paper is to review the problems and concerns around the existence of residual spaces in the urban structure of the city and to highlight the reasons of the appearance of the urban voids. Initially the concept of urban sprawl is analyzed (de Sola Morales, 1995; Berger, 2006; Lefebvre, 1995). Following this, the term “urban voids” is introduced. At the same time, the importance of urban voids as inactive intermediates territories is clarified. Then, the reflection on the lived
experience of the walker in the urban structure of the city is discussed. Thus, we define the perceived empty places and the not perceived ones through the movement of the walker (Tversky, 2003). As a result, the urban voids are defined as confrontational, intermediate, inactive territories while the processes that lead to their production are presented. However, possibility of being perceived is a matter of manipulation by the architect-urban planner. At the end the view point of “landscape urbanism” is approached and is suggested as a tool for interpretative and design redefinition of the contemporary urban environment (Waldheim, 2003).

1 Shifting boundaries - scattering densities - discontinuities - the “sprawling city”

The modern city, resulting from the rapid urbanization and being liable to the forces of the global economy and industrialization, is examined through three main features that characterize the “sprawling city”: its size, its density and its composition (William, 1958; Berger, 2006). The first of these key characteristics is its size. The constant shifting of city limits is now referred as urban sprawl, a term that describes the continuous integration of new parts in the periphery of the city. The second characteristic of the modern city is its density. The low density of the “sprawling city” leads to the conclusion that the numerical-population, economic and social thickening in the space, are vital to the proper functioning of the city and ensures its urbanity and therefore its viability (William, 1958).

The modern city is described above through its increasing radius and its decreasing density. Henri Lefebvre (1968) describes these two features as the paradox of “urbanization that de-urbanizes and is de-urbanized.”. What somebody should notice here is that the widening urban space is homogeneous neither to its population characteristics, nor to the distribution of the structured and unstructured areas. With this observation we come to the third feature of the city, which is its composition, by examining the combination of voids-solids at the urban scale. In other words we identify the characteristic of heterogeneity in the sequence of the urban structures and the urban voids, which vary infrequency, size and origin (William, 1958). These discontinuities are not only related to the structural interruption, but also to interruption of use. In maps that illustrate the production of cities most of the urban voids are post-industrial places in expectation of role.

Cedric Price describes three morphologies of the city through the graph of the three eggs (Figure 1): the “boiled egg” corresponds to the pre-industrial city, with a basic core and concentric circles of development, the “fried egg” is the industrial city where the railways spread and expand its radius at a linear rate, while the "scrambled eggs" symbolize the modern multi-central city where everything is distributed freely in space and landscape is organized in a continuous network (Graham, 2006). This situation scatters—in terms of population-areas of activities: empty lanes parallel to highways, parking areas, unused terrain, warehouses, abandoned buildings and rubbish dumps. Thus, one could find that locally the modern city consists of many fragmented places. Un-built units of the cityscape are shrinking and marginalized as intermediates of architectural objects in the urban tissue. Progressively, the regions are no longer regions, but developing urbanities that are constantly changing the image of the city (Frampton, 1995).

![Figure 1: The city as an egg, Cedric Price](image)

2 Defining the meaning of the void

"Void" spaces characterized by the absence of the structured, the formed and the predetermined. These sites were used in the past but they have “died” during the time. Roger Trancik (1986) defines these spaces as “undesired” urban regions that need to be redesigned, “anti-places” that have negative contribution to their environment or to the users. Manufactured sites, industrial wastelands, terrain vague, dossescapes, wastelandscapes, transitional landscapes, in-between landscapes, are terms that describe these voids as damaged, degraded, corrupted, abandoned and 'residual' places.

The term terrain vague, which was first reported by Ignasi de Sola-Morales (1995), marks the empty and abandoned sites, on which they have taken part several uses, being uncertain. These strange places exist outside the city’s effective circuits and productive structures. From the economic point of view, industrial areas, railway stations, ports, unsafe residential neighborhoods, and contaminated places are where the city is no longer."(de Sola Morales, 1995) They are deprived of organization and a clear role while their meaning is emerged by the "random" of an occasional event. As far as the location of these conflicting sites, is related to the city and its growth characteristics, the geography and the unused mass. These urban vacant sites may
be interpreted as inactive territories outside the productive structure of the city. The city is a system that produces and eliminates items like body.

Alan Berger (2006) argues that the drossscapes is a natural progression, a parallel process that never stops. The city is a mechanism composed of solids and voids that are regulated and altered by the crowds which live within them. Another view on this subject states that the urban sprawl of the city and the land-use changes lead to the dynamic constitution of the system. “Dross emerges out of two primary processes: first, as a consequence of current rapid horizontal urbanization for what some refer to as urban ‘sprawl’”, and second as the leftovers of previous economic and production regimes, which are both catalyzed by the drastic decrease in transportation costs [for goods and people] over the past century.” (Berger, 2006).

**Figure 2:** Dispersal Graph Atlanta, Georgia

Lars Lerup (1995) analyzes the urbanized areas of the city as “holey planes”. He describes the modern cities as perforated surfaces, created by forgotten, residual or intermediate spaces, which are characterized as "holes" due to their inactive nature. According to Lars Lerup (1995) the urbanized area consists of "energetic" sites, the stim, and "inactive", "residual" sites, the dross. The term "stim", as in stimulation, qualifies the recognized landscapes which are designed to be used as residential, work or industry, while the term "dross" describes the abandoned and undervalued places situated among active places. Lars Lerup recognizes the sequence of points in tension (social, economic, productive) and staging points (uncertainty, transition, degradation) (1995).

Lars Lerup (1995) recognizes the sequence of points in tension (social, economic, productive) and staging points (uncertainty, transition, degradation). The analysis of Lerup (1995) basically negotiates the relationship between landscape and urbanism saying that the city is a dynamic eco-system that continuously produces inactive landscapes. The urban voids are spaces which can raise people’s interest in the city. Firstly, it is easier to handle controlled empty space compared to the uncontrolled accumulated masses. Secondly, vacancy, landscape and space can be used as battlegrounds and can be used to gain general support from everyone. Plugging in Lerup’s (2000) terms-dross can be seen to be what we call the “in-between” of a city’s urban fabric.

“The void cannot be earmarked as ‘nature reserve’, ‘succession habitat’, ‘recreational field’, or any other such designate, because to name it is to claim it in some way. And what is potentially more socially liberating about the void is precisely the absence of recognition and the subsequent indifference toward it. One simply does not “see” it, even though it surrounds and enables performance, and is itself sustained by invisible mechanism and regulatory infrastructures.” (Corner, 1999)

In “Generic city” Rem Koolhaas (1989) states that "the voids are the essential building block of the City", the interactive space and the positive, productive place. Also he mentions that the city is not composed of static objects but in contrary is a dynamically evolving field of continuous flowing actions and changes in the content. Thus, landscapes and masses, as non-permanent structures, can become mutations any time.

According to geographer Pierce Lewis (1983), the elimination of borders between the city and the periphery not only creates a visual problem, but it mostly affects the balance of the system. Lewis argues that the metropolis is almost everywhere and that the modern city is so diffused that it can be called as "galactic metropolis. It is a galaxy composed of stars and planets with huge
intermediate vacant areas where, because of traction, a system is formed. The "vast plenty areas" are those referred with the term metropolitan tissue. These are the areas that are often located in long distances from the centers of cities. Not only the voids and solids, but also a system of forces holds this composition in equilibrium. They can be characterized as dynamic, intermediate attractive areas of the urban system. So, based on the above interpretations, urban void sites are inactive intermediate territories that constitute the balance in the system of the city. They are interpreted as waste, which are continuously produced and placed between active places.

2a Characterization of the urban void

Norberg-Schulz (1980), makes the distinction between place and space. Based on this distinction, the place is the space that has a special character. The place is identified as the friendly human environment, where people feel like home while the space is characterized mostly by the geometric features and lack of specific character. Contrary to places spaces have a social sign.

The voids in the tissue of the city are not places in the abstract sense of the term but places with real dimensions, textures and materiality. They are the intermediate places where the conflicting phenomena are incorporated into twin phenomenon. Aldo Van Eyck (Struven, 2007) argues that the intermediate is "the common ground where conflicting dipoles can be reconverted into twin phenomenon" (Struven, 2007). The twin phenomenon arises from the fact that the actual polarization is not conflicting entities, but complementary distinct concepts (closed/open, partial/whole, small/large, void/solid). Thus the urban voids have a dynamic that appears in connection with the activity of the crowd. The intermediate urban empty places are, therefore, the magnetic fields that either attract or repel the crowds. These could be the connecting links that integrate discontinuities of the urban, natural and artificial land. Therefore, it can be said that the urban voids are potentially productive as they can be places of union of opposing situations.

The walker, while moving in the urban structure, can understand the spaces either from their natural or artificial boundaries. The perceived urban spaces are discrete, identifiable from the crowd and characterized as active, empty places of the urban structure. They are collective places, which are used or capable of being used with their shape-form, their character and their role that can vary depending on users and time. Un-built places which are not incorporated into the urban tissue and do not contribute to its hierarchy and organization are considered non-perceived empty places. These are the places that do not "belong" anywhere; they are forgotten, abandoned and isolated. They are characterized as inactive "holes" in the urban tissue, because they remain non-perceived from the crowds of the cities. They are uncertain territories which the walker feels uncomfortable to cross or approach, since it is impossible for him to understand his surroundings and his boundaries (Tversky, 2003).

In order to understand a changing landscape or an urban void, it is necessary to understand the relationships between the residents, the local communities and the region, along with any interventions and strategies. It is important to investigate how people affect these places and how they shape practices not only for their everyday lives but also for the space. As reported by M. De Certeau (1988) "there is no existing system and there is no structure that cannot duplicate the everyday life that produces mapped territories". The contemporary phenomena of migration flows are channeled today to the geographical and urban voids of the sprawling city. These voids act like magnets, like "host" spaces of displaced people, who in this way complete and "fulfill" them in a temporary way.

3 Residual Land as indicators of healthy urban development

The appearance of the "residual sites" (Pope, 1996) in the body of the city is connected directly to the development process of production of the city itself. What is interesting is that apart from the determination of their industrial origin and their corrupted situation, the transitional nature of these voids is highlighted. The transitivity of the large urban voids states exactly the dynamics of the process that produces them. Those inactive and usually downdgraded city parts were for a while active fields of economic, productive or other civil procedures, therefore it's worthy to be interpreted as "indicators of the healthy urban development. As Alan Berger (2006) mentions, the 'rust', which means the residual and as a consequence the residual sites, is a natural effect of each change process, especially in the scale of production processes.

Moreover, another interpretation by Robert Smithson (1996) is focused on the new type of "ruins in reverse" which is reflected in all the deprived areas. It is "not a ruin that has been created over the years but the ruin which is contained potentially in any process of environmental changes". These are the "contemporary ruins" of the post-industrial urban change that although they are treated as 'black holes' in the urban imaginary map, they constitute important actors of the urban memories that they record and reflect.
4 The transition from the city to the void
In the late 90s mainly at a theoretical level there is a change in the way of thinking, regarding the relationship between city and landscape (Comer, 1999). Through this change interdisciplinary approaches such as «Landscape Urbanism» emerge (Waldheim, 2003). Escaping from the “traditional” treatment of the landscape as something foreign and distant from the mechanisms and functions of the city, (McHarg, 1969) landscape can be the way, the mean and the prism through which the contemporary urban environment is perceived. In this new approach the spatial organization starts from the un-built environment and especially the multiple activities that it may contain (Waldheim, 2003).

Today, the term “Landscape Urbanism” refers to a hybrid practice that can be defined among the scientific subjects of landscape, urban design and urbanism. Starting from contemporary theoretical approaches, there is a supported argument that “landscape” has the ability to reorganize the urban surface and propose new strategic interventions at a greater extent than architecture. There are authors that support that this new scientific field releases a group of functional capabilities and sets new priorities for the viability of the urbanized environment (Waldheim, 2003). Landscape architecture is a “normative notion” (Ipsen et al. 2005) that includes both the interpretative approach of the contemporary city (through the investigation of the procedures that produced it) and the capability of strategic design within a contemporary city and in terms of landscape. The main feature of this method/practice is its potentiality to adapt both to the changing requirements and to the self-acting and initiatives of the users.

"The constant desire of collectivity", which Rem Koolhaas mentions, "will happen the moment when the increase of the income would lead to a desire for a beautiful city, beyond a beautiful home, where comfort in the city will seem so essential as comfort at home" (Aesopos Y. Simeoforidis, Y. 2001). This phrase reflects one more reason for the absence of individual interest to the city. According to David Harvey (2008), "The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.”

5 Conclusions

"The modern city is neither compact nor continuous; it is a city where different densities with large urban and territorial voids resulting from uncontrolled dispersion and change of use or institutional transformations are alternating. The idea of density, rather than the compact form, describes this fluid transitive situation: it is a situation of “neighboring” of elements which are completely disconnected and a "galaxy of gaps that seems to want to fulfill its destiny as a discontinuity" (Lerup, 1996).

What we consider urban or territorial void is becoming an urban dynamic situation in continuous transformation (Berger, 2006). Because of the different scales, the common and special feature of all these proposals is the way in which the relationship of urban and natural landscape is redefined. Empty lots, abandoned buildings and obsolete infrastructure are no longer treated separately and selectively with small-scale interventions. In contrast, they are incorporated within an integrated, continuously changing and evolving urban ecosystem. Thus, the urban voids (Waldheim, 2003) appear as a unique opportunity to search for ways to express the relationship between urban and natural landscape where open complex ecological systems interact with and are correlated with social, cultural, economic and infrastructural systems of the modern city.

"Pope discovers that these new places are the result as well as the cause of an ever increasing polarization: between private and public, interior and exterior, between the spotless landscape of corporate campuses with its artificial undying “nature” and the abandoned and disintegrating residue. They are composed in other words, by a succession of islands of decreasing entropy in a world in which entropy as a whole tends to increase. Pope identifies this accelerated disorganization as not only spatial, but also social and political" (Doxiadis, 2001).

The challenge for designers is thus not to achieve drossless urbanization, but to integrate inevitable dross into more flexible aesthetic and design strategies (Berger, 2006). As discussed before, in this literature review we defined the notion of urban void relative to its reading, analysis and approach. At first we defined the notion of the urban void and extracted the conclusion that these spaces are ruled by certain dynamics (Berger, 2006). Being intermediate places of opposing situations they seem to be potentially productive. However, these spaces are in fact inactive holes and gaps in the urban tissue. The main results of this situation are the inability of the crowd to perceive them and the deactivation of their potentialities. Thus, they are assumed to be static dead places that have no role in the city life and are incapable of attracting the walker. The
heterogeneous, numerous, various voids, which are scattered in the urban tissue, are not a subject of marginal involvement, but they can - and have to - provoke our thinking about the upgrading of the urban environment. These spaces constitute an offer for landscape design and are worthy enough to occupy the environmental sensitivity of citizens. The city of today has to take advantage of every opportunity in order to improve the living conditions of its population.

6 Recommendations

"When architecture and urban design project their desire onto a vacant space, a terrain vague, they seem incapable of doing anything other than introducing violent transformations, changing estrangement into citizenship, and striving at all costs to dissolve the uncontaminated margin of the obsolete into the realism of efficacy." (Morales, 1995)

Having understood both the vague nature of the void spaces within the city and their crucial importance in the formation of whole city at different levels, one wonders what could finally be the responsibility of an architect or an urban planner, in the process of reactivation of these sites. It is very important that designers-architects study the horizontal surface of the landscape and the conditions that constitute it. This should be done not only at a configuration level but also to the extent that concerns the materiality and the function of the landscape. This way the space can be activated and urban events can be produced, without the need of conventional architectural means.

The first step towards this direction is to consent that the city is bankrupt at specific points. The general public, governments and industry must recognize that land is limited. They need to understand the economic value of land, along with the ecological, cultural and esthetic consequences of the existence of these voids. Cultural attitudes towards land management are crucial to face the reality of the 21st century. Failure to perceive the real dimensions and impacts of this problem in an ever-growing society hinders decisions on how to manage resources and create meaningful, "livable" places.

I tend to agree with researcher Alan Berger (2006), who believes in the necessity of a change in outlook from the designer as ‘sole expert and authority’, to one of ‘collaborator and negotiator’. In order to overcome this challenge designers have to think like a landscape architects, urban planners, architects, developers, politicians and users all at once.

Landscape urbanism is called to orchestrate a series of factors such as the urban infrastructure, the functions and the elements of the natural environment (Corner, 1999). It aims at the formation of a functional program according to which, under the supply of specific elements of infrastructure, the differentiated use of the infrastructure and the appropriation of space. Landscape urbanism is a practice which overturns the so far known ways of organization and sets nature and its functional mechanisms as a norm. Finally, the production of a field—intermediate space—capable of stimulating events and hosting change tends to become an important objective.

What we are looking for is not an established implementation plan, but a system of actions and programs that are implemented in phases (phasing) and are open to constant redefinitions. Design is now a dynamic, participatory and open process of interdisciplinary communication. It is worth to be mentioned that citizens should play an active role in formulating design guidelines through multiple meetings and participatory planning processes (Philadelphia LANDvisions, 2005).