The oppositions of Kifissos

From static duality

To dynamic coexistence
Kifissos - An ambiguous landscape
Kifissos - An ambiguous linear landscape
A landscape full of problems

Fifty-two floods are identified between 1880 and 2010 in various locations around Athens basin, which caused 182 casualties and substantial damage.

- 1980-2002: Increased
- 1955-1980: Increase
- 1893-1955: Decrease
- 1890-1893: Decrease

Flood protection works

2002-2017: More intensive

Only temporarily increased
A landscape of conflicting identities
A landscape of conflicting identities
The oppositions of Kifissos
The dynamic river or the functional highway
The consequences of over-control
The dynamic river reclaims its land
Nature as a threat - the conceived necessity of over-control
The opposition between “natural” and “engineered”
The consequences of over-control

Boundaries and Isolation
A spatial and social boundary

Opposition between formal and informal
A landscape of conflicting identities…

…and latent coexistences
Can we address the opposition of Kifissos…
…through a creative reading of the site?
Method - reading the site

1. Extracting existing qualities - potential conceptual tools

2. Interrelating the extracts on the plain of Kifissos
Territorial layer
Natural processes erased by urbanisation
Urban Layer
Fertile situations between formal and informal

Pier Vittorio Aureli, Maria S. Giudici, Platon Issaias, Elia Zenghelis and postgraduate researchers Juan Carlos Aristizabal, Hyun Soo Kim, Ivan K. Nasution, Davide Sacconi, Roberto Soundy, Yuichi Watanabe, Ji Hyun Woo, Lingxiao Zhang
Redefining residual space as the river–highway pulse
Residual spaces: in between different identities

Segments a, b, c: between the residential and the post-industrial city

Segments b, c, d: between the infrastructural network and the city

Segments e, f: between more and less contained streams

Segments g, h: between the river and the highway
The residual spaces of “Elaionas”: Cracks of Hybridity
Athen’s leftover
Messy and inactive
From river to Highway avulsion - A way to make room for the river
Concept 2. From residual fragments to an integrative landscape

The "cracks" define the widened river space
Concept 3. A topography of Affordances

Relocating the excavated land: from a practical solution to an integrative landscape
“Polykatoikia”: The formal-informal hybrid

stage 1:
property division
agriculture

stage 2:
arbitrary building

stage 3:
accumulation

stage 4:
“antiparochi” - replacement
the formal “polykatoikia”

stage 5: appropriation
the formal as a framework for
the informal
In contrast to the new towns that were built in post-war Europe, the mix of uses that was achieved in the “semipermeable” Athenian urban block has contributed to the creation of intimate, safe, and vibrant neighbourhoods. This “osmosis of private and public spheres” that takes place in a modern urban context has been the strongest output of the informal urban development in Greece.

Panos Dragonas, “The birth of polykatoikia”

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Concept 1. The formal as framework for the informal
The expanded river space as a flexible framework for appropriation
Layers of intervention

Layer 6 - Informal interventions

Layer 5 - Framework for informal interventions

Layer 4 - Transformation laboratories – Material recycling

Layer 3 - Vegetation: boundaries, enclosures, spaces

Layer 2 - Transforming the land

Layer 1 - Highway avulsion and widening the river space

existing condition
Layer 1 - Highway avulsion and widening the river space

After - An associative extended landscape

Before - A strictly controlled linear landscape
Layer 2 - Relocating / Transforming the land

- Relocating the Land
  A new topography in the city

- Highway Avulsion
  Extension of the river space
Layer 3 - Boundaries of Vegetation

Using vegetation to create enclosures

Relocating the Land
A new topography in the city
Layer 4 - Transformation laboratories

Reuse of Material - Recycling the post industrial city
Recycling the post industrial city - reusing material for new constructions
Existing typology of the industrial buildings
Principle of transformation
Involving people in the transformation of the city

Renzo Piano - Otranto Mobile Wolkshop (1969)

Circle of different functions
Connections
Layer 5 – Generators of intervention
Plateaus - Spaces open to appropriation
Connective architectural elements
Plateaus and amphitheatrical spaces
Bridges as flexible places
Existing Bridges
Layer 6 - Informal interventions
Appropriation of the plateaus
Adaptable “observatories”

The “polykatoikia” quality of appropriation – from observatories to temporary shelters
“Signifiers” of social (inter)action

ANTONAS Office, Urban Hall: spatial practices of creative activism
Involving in construction the local population

Analysis of the existing socio-professional condition
Different operations and Construction phasing

Prioritizing neighbourhoods in need

stage 1: definition of different operations

stage 2: first construction phase

stage 3: second construction phase

stage 4: third construction phase

engineering works
accumulation of excavated land
excavation
Steps of transformation in time

Existing condition
1. First fragmented interventions

Function of the “Workshop cluster”
Urban farming

Public river banks

Material to be re-used (collection sites)
2. The integrative landscape starts to grow

Function of the “education” cluster

Land and highway intersections

Soft river banks

Vertical avulsions
3. The first connections

The topography creates enclosures.

Elaborated public bank

Urban farming

“Construction” clusters
4. The topography grows into a connective tissue

The river and the highway weaved in a common landscape
5. Integrative landscape

Complete river space, topography and circle of functions for transformation
6. A Topography of affordances - first acts of appropriation

Lightweight built structures
Urban farming
The created order (of any formal plan) is everywhere punched and torn open by ellipses, drifts and leaks of meaning: it is a sieve-order.

Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*
Kifissos - An open changing landscape

Thank you