Integration of immigration urban population
Socio-spatial intervention for city neighbourhood
Agios Panteleimonas, Athens
Marloes van der Pols

Image: new daily life activities in the neighbourhood
Fear and Loaning in Athens
Shifting Perspectives of Space

Perspective 1
Integration of immigration urban population
Socio-spatial intervention for city neighbourhood Agios Panteleimonas, Athens

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Giving place to immigration

Image 1: View on Athens with ‘polykatoikies’ (apartment buildings), skyline with almost no high rise building

Image 2: Bird’s view on Ag. Panteleimonas square, with the church of Agios Panteleimonas on the left
Preface

This thesis is the outcome of the Master of Architecture at Delft University of Technology. It is one out of five individual research and design projects that follow-up the collective research ‘Fear and Loaning in Athens’. This collective research investigated current conditions in the city centre of Athens and has set out the historical and urban context in which this individual research and design project takes place.

This graduation project explores the role of public space as a mediator of difference from a theoretical perspective and in the specific case of immigration in Agios Panteleimonas. This comes forth from an interest in and relevance of research on the value of diversity. This thesis contains the aims, approach and output of my graduation project on integration of inhabitants in Agios Panteleimonas. The goal of this one-year project was to develop an approach that explores how an architectural intervention can be a tool to reduce the fear of the unknown other. The output is a proposal for a strategy and an architectonic intervention for Agios Panteleimonas.

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Definitions

Capitalism:  
An economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state.

Immigration:  
'The action of coming to live permanently in a foreign country.' (Simmel)

Neoliberalism:  
'As such, neoliberalism should not be conceived as a closed totality of ideas diffused across nation and through time, but rather as a loosely connected set of concepts, distinctions and arguments that gained meaning as they were articulated and then stabilized in specific ways, depending on the particular discursive and political contexts in which this occurred.' (Kjaer and Pedersen, 2001:221)

Public:  
of or concerning the people as a whole  
• open to or shared by all the people of an area or country: a public library.  
• of or provided by the government rather than an independent, commercial company: public spending.  
• of or involved in the affairs of the community, esp. in government: his public career was destroyed by tenacious reporters. (Dictionary)

'Public space is the quintessential place where the communal is manifested: no one has any more rights to it than anyone else. Its reduction threatens the wealth of expressions, ways, words and acts of human solidarity and hospitality.' (Patrick Bouchain in 'An architecture close to its inhabitants.)

Collective space:  
Something that is done by people acting as a group. The way in which space is used for collective activities/towards a collective aim. The collectivity of space is the way in which or to which extent space is used for collective activities or towards a collective aim.

Integration:  
Activities towards a position where the receiving and the new inhabitants have an equal position towards each other and participate both in the society. These activities can be stimulated, but are also an internal process of trying to make a living and adapt to new conditions.
Giving place to immigration
Research

This project explores the way in which illegal immigrants can become part of the city by putting the attention on all residents of the neighbourhood. The strategy enables both local residents and immigrated people, and everybody in-between, to develop their daily lives in the neighbourhood.

There are different nationalities, differences in work, differences in living areas, different religions, etc. All of these people are present in different networks and not dividable into categories of nationality, work, etc. So the establishment of a position for people in the city is needed in order to position people in an equal relation to each other and make it possible to learn who the other person is.

Urban analysis

The urban analysis showed the need to intervene in the vicious circle of decay. I focus on two aspects: the lack of meeting of different individuals of apparent 'groups' and the lack of possibilities to improve the personal living conditions.

For the immigrants, but also unemployed others (especially youth), this last aspect means the possibility to get a job. For the neighbourhood in general this means the improvement of public space and facilities that are present.

Design

Following from this the project proposes a strategy for development of a city centre neighbourhood. The focus of this strategy, urban plan and building are to connect individual and collective initiatives and needs to municipal interests. The strategy proposes the implementation of an organisation at the level of the neighbourhood. The urban plan places a secondary grid on the existing urban morphology in order to connect non profit driven places and make them part of a larger development that has influence on the neighbourhoods development. The public building design focusses on the creation of real publicly accessible and adaptable spaces for the residents.
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Part 1 - Introduction
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Image 4: Square of Ag. Panteleimonas saying: ‘Immigrants Get Out! Greece Belongs To The Greeks’ (Kousoulas-Vasiliadis)

Image: Non-Greek café sign in Agios Panteleimonas (Kousoulas-Vasiliadis)
Introduction

‘This fixity rested on the fact that the Jew had his social position as a Jew, not as the individual bearer of certain objective contents.’ (Simmel, 1908)

1.1 Problem statement

1.1.1. Introduction

Since the first decade of the 21st century the Eurozone is facing financial and economic fluctuations. The ongoing economical crisis has worsened the living conditions of Greece's population. Help from the Eurozone to Greece's economic situation has been focussed on the provision of financial packages to pay for the loan on debts, but has ignored the living conditions of the inhabitants. In the centre of Athens closed shops and abandoned buildings generate a sense of urban decay. The municipality of Athens develops urban projects that do not focus on the needs and problems of the inhabitants of the city centre, but on the attractiveness of the centre for tourists and new inhabitants.

A major issue in the city of Athens is the problematic position of new inhabitants. More than 80% of migrants entering the European Union do so through Greece (BBC, 2012). Estimations suggest that there are currently 1 million illegal immigrants in Greece, either to stay or on their way to Europe. Many of them do not have the possibility to move on and live in the centre of Athens, where the living conditions are far from normal Greek standards (Kandylis, et.al., 2012). Integration of migrants in the city with 'native' inhabitants is problematic; a situation that is aggravated by extreme-right ideology and action.

Greece as a border of the European Union faces problems of a European scale: immigration into the EU has a large impact on the centre of Athens that acts as entry points of immigrants. It is here where new inhabitants face inhuman conditions. Place needs to be given for integration with inhabitants and structures that are already present. Differences are expressed on space and bridging of differences takes place in space. It is in the public space that we see others than who we already know, it is at school that children play with each other whatever racial expression.

My graduation project deals with immigration in Athens, with a case study for the neighbourhood of Agios Panteleimonas (see image 2). What has created this situation and what are the needs of the residents? Spatial interventions here can play an important role in the process of integration. Interventions on the use of space can change the perception of illegal inhabitants and their (informal) use of the city. This project tries to make immigration an accepted part of the city on spatial aspects. Becoming part of the city contributes to the process of integration, because of the possibility it creates for an equal relation or even conflict between inhabitants.

1.1.2. Goal

The goal of this graduation project is to put forward a proposal for integration of immigration in Agios Panteleimonas and define the way in which this can be part of the cities urban development program and the European Unions approach towards immigration. The research provides insight in the way European cities can handle immigration issues, from the point of the neighbourhood where the immigrants daily life takes place. The intervention is focussed on the the issues of integration with the 'native' inhabitants on the scale of the neighbourhood.

With the research and spatial intervention the project aims at integration of immigrants. The hypothesis is that tackling fear for the unknown other, providing the possibility for differences to co-exist, setting up relations between different people and giving them space to become part of the city by equal participation enhance integration. A large part of this graduation project is therefore to put forward an architectural intervention to bridge differences of origin, time of stay and use of space.
Image 1: Area of design intervention, and in red Agios Panteleimonas, in relation to the centre of Athens.
3. 1.1.3. Research question

The goal is translated to a central research question so the research becomes a search for the answer to the main question. The main question is:

By means of which architectural strategy can illegal immigrants become an integrated part of the city?

In order to answer to the research question the elements are made operational. Therefore the research question is divided into subquestions. They provide an insight in what has to be done to answer the research question. The subquestions are:

1. What spatial framework can allow for immigrants to be treated as existing part of the city?
2. Who are the illegal immigrants in Ag. Panteleimonas and how do they use space?

1.2. Motive

The collective research ‘Fear and Loaning in Athens’ clarifies that an ignorance towards vulnerable groups leads to social polarisation and clash, which threaten the social sustainability in the city. Focussing on the development of a (touristic) city centre for middle- and high income groups is ignoring more complex problems. This approach brings economical profit, but ignores profit on social, cultural and environmental profit; an effect of capitalistic reasoning.

Seeing immigrated people living in (semi-)basements in Athens and at the same time hearing that the European Union won the Nobel price for Peace is to me an asymmetry. It illustrates the scale that needs to be bridged and the problems and needs that are present at the very local scale. It is in this bridging of space that I see a role for architects. This project explores possibilities for a different approach to the city. The motive of this project is to give immigration a human dimension and consider them part of the city. It is a case within the theme of immigration in the city: In what way do immigrated people use the city? How can cities deal with these people already present? This research and intervention can contribute to the way we see immigrated inhabitants.
Giving place to immigration

Image: Conceptual research structure
* via secondary sources
Method

2.1 Research structure

1. 2.1.1. Structure

For the collective research method from which this research is a continuation, see attachment 1. Literature study of neoliberal effects on the development of spaces is done in the collective research. The research on integration of immigration starts with the political and economical context. This context is formed by the effects of capitalism on the city and the way this influences the actors of the built environment. This information is used to propose a way to approach vulnerable groups in the city.

The main question and subquestions of this research are answered via expert interviews, literature study, interviews with residents, data from the built environment. Image 3 shows the research structure.

The analysis of information from four different sources leads to conclusions and recommendations for different scales of intervention. This intervention will be worked out as a design proposal and a guiding booklet with design recommendations.

The analysis of information of the actors and their possibilities in space leads to recommendations for the framework of the political and legal interventions on space. It also leads to the choice of intervention strategy. The analysis of immigrants and their possibilities for integration in space via interventions in the political and legal framework also influences which information is needed about current residents of the neighbourhood.

Interviews with the inhabitants, expert interviews, literature and newspaper articles on immigration in Athens are used to get specific information on daily life activities of immigrants, origin, characteristics of inhabitation and problems with native inhabitants. This information is used to define a program that enhances the formal integration of inhabitants.

Plans, sections, maps, personal observations (study trip), axonometric drawings are used to get information on the built environment. This information is used to see where relations can be made in space. Spatial implications of the location are found by spatial analysis of the neighbourhood. Previous research on the neighbourhood will be consulted. This will give information about the needs and proposals of the inhabitants, visual information like photos for information about the current use of public space. The analysis of this information has led to spatial requirements for the program and the possibilities and restrictions of the intervention in relation to the location.

Image 4 shows how this method is positioned between theory and the built environment. The research is done on the existing built environment and its development. This information, literature, observations, interviews and data on the built environment, is analysed to answer to the subquestions. These conclusions are used to define starting points for intervention on the built environment. In this way the design is based on the conclusions from the subquestions. Finally the report and the intervention together form the answer to the main question: “By means of which architectural strategy can the illegal immigrants become a formally integrated part of the city?”

2. 2.1.2 Constraints

Not speaking Greek and not being in Athens to bring regular visits to the site is a constraint on the methodology. There was no possibility to map the neighbourhood and to interview immigrated people. To get information about immigrants and about the views of native inhabitants I used data
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- Neo-liberalism and development of space
- Eurozone crisis
- fear for the Other
- ownership and appropriation
- immigrants in Athens
- strength of diversity
- the possibility of difference

- use of public space
- housing situation immigrants
- feeling of fear
- general decay of the urban environment

- Human Rights Watch
- interviews by National Technical University of Athens
- literature by N.Vaiou with interviews with immigrated women

- plans of neighbourhood
- plans, sections & facades of existing buildings
- movies & photos

- report
- recommendations for spatial intervention

intervention for and in Agios Panteleimonas

- design
- possibilities book

Image: Schematic representation of the research phasing

* via secondary sources
from a research of the National Technical University of Athens. In order to get data about needs and uses of space of immigrants I consulted a report from Human Right Watch and present literature on this topic.

2.2 Strategy

Primary and secondary sources are used to analyse the existing situation and possible approaches for integration. The goal of this method is to analyse the spatial implications on different levels of intervention so that a proposal for spatial interventions does not stand alone. In this way the proposal for intervention is connected to a larger change in dealing with space for immigrants and their right to live in the city.

2.3. Report structure

The report is structured according to the scales of the intervention, from a large scale to the smaller scale. In this way the report follows the analysis and design process.

3. 2.3.1 Theoretical framework

The report starts with a theoretical framework in chapter 4. This chapter defines the context in which the research takes place and the context in which the spatial intervention is designed. Research on the integration of immigration starts with the framework in which this takes place. What are the problems they face in their use of space? What are the conflicts in public space between residents? Research of this context is needed to define the origin of the problem and to place it in the wider context of Athens’ history and immigration issues.

4. 2.3.1 Literature study with spatial analysis

The research consists of three parts: political and legal situation, neighbourhood characteristics and local & programmatic requirements. All three parts are divided in research, spatial analysis and conclusions with recommendations for intervention. Chapter 5, 6 and 7 cover this research and give recommendations for the intervention example.

5. What spatial framework can allow for immigrants to be treated as existing part of the city?
6. Who are the illegal immigrants in Ag. Panteleimonas and how do they use space?

In chapter 5 documentation about the position of illegal immigrants is combined with an analysis of the actors in the neighbourhood. This leads to the framework for my strategy.

In chapter 6 the characteristics of immigration is documented. This is done in combination with an analysis of the neighbourhood, with insight in the needs of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

In short the chapter relate as follows:
Chapter 5: Immigration & city processes
Chapter 6: Needs and potentialities of immigrants & existing inhabitants

5. 2.3.4 Intervention

Chapter 7 explains the spatial strategy and the architectural object. The chapters answer to the question:
7. By means of which strategy and architectonic object may the conditions of the
Giving place to immigration

Image 4: Diagram of the relation between theory and intervention
neighbourhood be bettered towards the needs of its inhabitants in times of economic crisis?

Chapter 7 covers what I want to do, which processes I want to start up with my intervention. The strategy will be discussed by explaining the processes that it sets in motion. These processes are not only spatial, but also address the social, economical, cultural and political issues that have been discussed in the previous chapter and are an integral part of my strategy.

6. 2.3.5 Reflection
The last chapter discusses the method that has been used, and to what extend this has worker, or not.
Giving place to immigration

‘In the last few years local anti-immigration actions in the Greek capital seemed to deepen the wider racist discourse against immigrants.’ (Kandylis, 2012@)

3.1 Social relevance

Racism is getting a cultural and religious aspect, which is not based on the fact that they are foreigners, but on essences like religion, ethnicity, etc. (Vasiliadis, 2011) The ‘explosive mixture’ is being formed through the growing poverty and lack of governmental action towards the lower-income groups. ‘Migrants, especially those with a different skin colour, are caught in tough situation in Greece: even more vulnerable to economic pressures than the rest of the population and also increasingly being targeted by violent, extreme right-wing groups that thrive on the desperation that comes with growing poverty. (December 18, 2011) The government is not reacting on the rise of the Golden Dawn and not taking action for the violence against immigrants. The living of daily lives of immigrants and ‘native’ residents are made difficult due to violence and subsequent feelings of fear.

Due to the development of regional centres the old centre is becoming more local, but it is still the cultural centre which has the identity and memory of the centre. It is an national and international attractor which makes it alive. The municipality wants residences for the middle and high income to be developed instead of focussing on the problems of the existing inhabitants. In order to get economic profit the municipal government wants to make the historical centre a new centre for investments. It wants to create a better quality of life, so the investments are on museums, Acropolis, new housing, nice shopping streets, etc.

This city planning doesn’t focus on the real problems of the city centre: the universal rights of people (f.e. refugees) to shelter and the legal obligation of the state to provide housing. (UNHCR, 2011) The selling of public ground to private parties (who will develop the ground with the aim to make the most profit) will be in favour of tourists, middle- and high incomes and large companies, since this generates most profit out of the ground. This process expels the lower income groups out the centre and creates a mono-functional space that can’t sustain itself.

The necessity for a spatial intervention is made clear by the UNHCR report as well: ‘At times, the authorities evacuate locations where third-country nationals, including asylum-seekers, reside as squatters, because of conditions that pose a risk to public health, but make no provision for their relocation. In central Athens, in 2009 and 2010, dozens of such sites were emptied and sealed in police operations. Those who had been living there were evicted and left homeless. Among them were asylum-seekers, including families with young children.’

3.2 Academic relevance

‘Social conflict is a result of territorial stigmatisation, racist policing and the political capitalisation of fear.’ (Maloutas, 2011) From this perspective, we believe that it is important to work towards more complex approaches and explanations which link formal and informal processes and practices and bridge gender, migration and space. (Vaiou & Stratigaki, 2008) The relevance is also made clear by the following quote from a research about ‘Immigration, inequality and diversity: socio-ethnic
Relevance

hierarchy and spatial organisation in Athens: ‘Qualitative research would be in order to increase our knowledge about the experience of inequalities and about practices adopted to deal with inequalities and deprivation in everyday life. The need for more microscopic, case study, research on the socio-spatial mechanisms of ‘settlement’ and ‘integration’ (Vaiou and Stratigaki, 2008) becomes even more acute following our results.’ (Kandylis, et al., 2012)

On the academic side this project contributes to different relevant issues. The method that is followed touches upon the issue of actual intervention. This project explores how the context of ideology (politics) can be bridged to actual interventions. The highest level of, sometimes ideological, aims will just stay aims if there is no method to implement these ideas to the level of actual change. The intermediate is not just an action plan or a model, but it takes into consideration the levels in between: local constraints, current processes, etc. The intermediate part makes the transition from theory to reality: it proposes how ideas are going to be implemented. This thesis is relevant for this topic, since it takes a European problem with effects on a neighbourhood in Athens as a starting point and goes through all levels of intervention.

‘And we continue - as indeed we should - to think of alterity as a social condition which holds out the promise of subjective freedom, freedom from arbitrary definition and identification. But the larger conditions of capitalism have taken a new turn, and this change in political economy has altered both the nature of the city itself and the intellectual tools we need to understand our own times.’ (Sennett, R.)

A project in which not all uses are fixed, but that focusses on principles that are set and that allow for a more free development in a certain context with its specific urban tissue and social issues.
4. Theoretical framework

‘The real can never be completely fixed.’ (Lefebvre, 1991:399)

4.1. Introduction

The theoretical framework creates the context for this research and intervention and narrows the focus from the effects of neoliberalism to the case of Agios Panteleimonas. A disquisition of the origin of the problem statement is made. In paragraph 4.2 the urban growth of Athens and the development of the polykatoikia is discussed. This building type covers almost entirely the centre of Athens and influences the way in which immigrants came to live in the city. In the third paragraph (4.3) the issue of immigration is discussed from EU to Agios Panteleimonas. Finally paragraph 4.4 sets out the history of immigration to Agios Panteleimonas and the choice for this location.

4.2. Development of Athens

This research is the follow-up of a collective research on Athens. The collective research focussed on the political and economic influence on the development of the city since Athens became the capital in 1833. The following quotes describe the development of the polykatoikia building.

‘Moreover, widespread home-ownership contributed to relatively low rates of social segregation, in the sense that many densely populated areas around the city centre were characterized by social mix. The co-habitation pattern of home-owners from different social strata involved vertical social segregation in the buildings of antiparochi, albeit dominated by the intermediate categories’ (Maloutas and Karadimitriou, 2001). The typology in itself was able to take in different social groups. ‘Thus home-ownership in Athens was meant to absorb parts of both the social and the spatial dimension of urban inequalities. Massive exploitation of the urban land for residential purposes provided the opportunity for many to self-regulate other social mobility prospects, while mixing residents of different socioeconomic backgrounds.’ (Kandylis, 2011) This is the urban morphology in which current developments take place and in which this intervention takes place.

The development towards of the city towards pure economic profit is in need of an alternative. Quoting Lefebvre (1991 p:422): ‘The transformation of society presupposes a collective ownership and management of space founded on the permanent participation of the ‘interested parties’, with their multiple, varied and even contradictory interests. It thus also presupposes confrontation – and indeed this has already emerged in the problems of the ‘environment’ (along with the attendant dangers of co-optation and diversion).’ The outcome of the collective research is an approach towards which we think the city should be developed. This is described in the following excerpt from the collective research: ‘The container city is a place where everyone, regardless of their economic means, gender, race, ethnicity or religion, is enabled and empowered to fully participate equally in the social, economic and political processes taking place in the city. Having as a starting point the concept of the right to the city developed by the French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre, the container city is perceived as collective project in which all the inhabitants and the users of a city can reshape its future, by inhabiting actively, by participating in public life.’

This notion of city development needs to be operationalised. This is what an architectural intervention can propose. It can show how to deal with notions of participation and how they influence the built environment. The next paragraph contains the context of immigration to Athens: How does the development of the city influence the way in which is dealt with immigrants?

4.3 Immigration in Athens

To deal with this migration is to accept incoming people and act on their needs. The argument of permanence, of living somewhere for a longer time, and by that having a stronger say in decision making about space, leads to an unequal say in decision making. We need to consider that it might
This map shows the differences between groups of immigrants and their presence in relation to the total population. The Albanian immigrants that reside in the north part of our sample are living there for 20 years now. Conflicts are taking place between Greeks and recent immigrants from Afghanistan and North Africa.

**SOURCES:**
- 2012: Hate on the Streets - Xenophobic Violence in Greece. Human Rights Watch.
be precisely this ephemerality that disconnects people from participating in decision making, and by that leave their needs unclear and unknown.

The collective research concludes the last urban development and immigration wave as follows: ‘The Olympic infrastructure and the post-Olympic urban development, characterized by the decentralization of public services traditionally located in the center and the creation of big commercial and entertainment hubs supported by heavy infrastructure, absorbed more interest from the center, led to urban sprawl and to the indifference/ deterioration and “abandonment” of the centre and gave room for the informal to emerge. In fact, the centre of Athens, as being a place of non-interest -economic and political-, area with low rents, area was one of the places that could host the new waves of immigrants, refugees, low income and poor. This condition in combination with the lack of integration policies/ immigration policies /policies for vulnerable social groups, converted areas of the center to places for the undesirables. Therefore, inhabitants of the center -elderly people who denied leaving their property and moving on the outskirts, young people seeking for affordable housing, immigrants searching for accessibility to housing and to temporal informal jobs- having low quality urban services, facing the lack of policies/actions for the everyday life in the center of Athens, formed an explosive mixture and started conflicting to each other.’ (see image @ kaartje waar migranten wonen)

According to Schinkel (2012) a large problem of integration lies in the perception of this process. Integration implies that there is a fixed society in which people that are still outside of this society need to be integrated. This is a fictive representation, since these people are present in society, just not in the constructed image of the society. Problematic in this perception is that it sees problems as separated from society, in stead of part of the system. This reinforces the logic of groups that are a ‘danger’ for society. In order to deal with the notion of integration in a more realistic way, integration will also be explored from the experience of the immigrants that try to find a way to settle in the new environment. On the local scale the reality of ‘integrating’ is more often a situation of co-habitation. To integrate immigrants in Athens implies that they are perceived as already present new inhabitants. According to Vasiliadis (2011) the centre gathers flows of energy, of which also immigrants and decay, since they are symptoms of the system of the city. He proposes to consider these flows as such, so you’re not ignoring ‘bad’ parts that the city produces, but see them as part of the same system.

There is no need for inhabitants to get deeply involved with each other. But the establishment of a position for both groups in the city is needed in order to position people in an equal relation to each other. Co-habitation is a term that fits better than integration, since people don’t have to actually become part of the same ‘society’, but they inhabit the city with mutual respect.

4.4. Agios Panteleimonas

The location of this research and intervention is the residential area Agios Panteleimonas in the city centre of Athens. This neighbourhood was once a middle class area (1950’s-1970’s) but depreciated after the 1980’s when the original Greek inhabitants moved to the outskirts, something that happened as well in the rest of the centre of Athens. The motive for leaving the centre was to have a life in the suburbs in a larger house; the American dream. When former residents of the centre flowed out to the suburbs, it became the place for immigrants to move in. After the fall of communism around 1990 the centre faced an immigration wave from Eastern Europe, of which Albania. The adaption of these first immigrants didn’t cause the setting of two opposite groups, like is happening now. This is made clear in the following quote: ‘Due to the gradual influx of relatively similar appearance and religion of the new coming population, the assimilation with the rest of Greek society is much easier compared to what subsequent immigrants will face.’ (University of Athens, 2010). The spatial implications were that the residents that remained mainly occupied the higher floors. The wealthier residents also preferred the front façades, which led to a horizontal segregation in the housing block. A positive point is that the vertical social differentiation prevented the creation of enclaves and facilitated interaction with new residents in local schools and social services.
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This neighbourhood is chosen as the case study for research and intervention because of different reasons. The first contact with the neighbourhood came in the form of a visit that started at the central square with the Agios Panteleimonas church. The empty square felt strange in a city so densely populated and with such a good climate for being outside. Even though it was November. The closed-down playground exemplifies the differences that exist in the use of public space and how one use excludes another use. Walking through the neighbourhood we noticed the inhabited semi-basements and abandoned apartments. This is when the idea started to develop to focus the project around the inhabitants of this neighbourhood. So, what are the issues in the neighbourhood? And what architectonic strategy is suitable in this context?
Giving place to immigration
Part 2 - Research & spatial analysis
Giving place to immigration

* of 87,205 irregular border crossings in 2011

Image: Actors in the neighbourhood TO BE EDITED
5. Setting up the framework for intervention

Athens is not divided into mono-functional areas and does by no means illustrates a functionalistic city structure, in which separation of unlike functions is the goal. (Woditsch, 2009)

5.1. Introduction

As noted in the theoretical framework, integration is not a matter of ‘integrating people into a society’. This gives the impression of one society in which there is a need to integrate, although these people are already present and active. They are in some way already integrating. Immigrants are already inhabitants of the city, but in a way that differs from native residents. They still need to adapt to their new situation and find a way to deal with the existing inhabitants. This chapter explores this immigration process in relation to the city of Athens. It answers to the question: What spatial framework can allow for immigrants to be treated as existing part of the city? This chapter focusses on this change of perception: from immigrants to new inhabitants that are already in the process of integration.

The first paragraph covers the notion of the other, economic crisis and giving space to diversity. What does the perception of ‘the Other’ mean? The second paragraph is written on the question of development, how can inhabitants be responsible for development of their neighbourhood? In the third paragraph these needs are seen in the light of the municipalities plans for the city centre. These paragraphs are concluded and from this conclusion follows a the framework for my spatial strategy.

5.2 Perception

1. 5.2.1 The change of stranger to other

The area now faces a new wave of immigrants from Asia, the Middle-East and Northern Africa (see image 6). The new groups do not adapt and mix well with the former residents. Their religion and economic situation is different, which are two important parts of everyday life. Both groups do not congregate on these uses of space (meeting at the church) or moments in life (meeting at work). Present in the same neighbourhood, these different groups of people don’t establish a way to live together. The new inhabitants bring a different way of living (religion, use of public space) into the neighbourhood that was not present before they arrived. Simmel, G. (1950) describes this position as determined by the fact that the inhabitants did not belong to the group from the beginning and have brought new qualities into it.

Both groups living separately would not be a problem if this would be an equal, violent free get-along. But there are issues that take place in the area that illustrate the gap between inhabitants:
– immigrant women do not dare to go outside anymore, (Human Right Watch, 2012)
– Greek inhabitants fear violent attacks from immigrated people,
– lack of different types of public space, which is a problem because the pavement as a public space is excluding users due to the intake by adjacent activities and the type of activities that can take place,
– elderly see their neighbourhood being ‘taken over’, which is a problem because it endangers the will to relate to the new inhabitants and subordinates them (University of Athens, 2010)

Human Right Watch also reported violent conflicts from and towards immigrated people, but it is not certain that the violent actions were committed by inhabitants of the neighbourhood. Therefore the actions themselves will not be part of this research, but the fear for violent attacks is considered.

But what influences these problems? The ongoing economic crisis has led to a rise of the unemployment rate in Greece from 22,1% in 2008 to 55, 3% in 2012 for people under the age of
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Image 6: plan showing identified abandoned buildings in the neighbourhood of Ag. Panteleimonas
and from 6.6% in 2008 to 22.2% for people in the age of 25 till 75. (Eurostat, 2012) This has led to a situation where there is no clear economic separation: Greek are competing for the same jobs, which causes tensions in tolerance. The activities that were done by immigrants were mostly construction and agricultural jobs, but after 2004 the vast majority focused on informal activities that compete with the formal activities in the city. (Vasiliadis, 2011) Apart from the worsened economic situation, there is also distrust in the old political system. This discrepancy is illustrated by Vradis, A., & Dalakoglou, D. (Eds.). (2011): ‘What has bankrupted the Greek government, in other words, is the cost of popular rejection of its basic institutions of rule; it has been forced to pour borrowed money into maintaining an endlessly expanding apparatus of coercion for the very reason that many of its citizens refuse to accept that apparatus as inherently legitimate.' It is not possible to name the clear causes and the clear effects, since the apparent effects (fear for the Other) become causes themselves (calling names on the street) in a vicious circle. The perception of people as others, without having any relation to them creates different worlds on public space. Worlds that are not connected except by the use of the same space. I have taken this as a first starting point for the design: to create points in space where different lives do make a connection.

2. 5.2.2. Diversity

The new immigrants have a different characteristic that is connected to their motive to come and live in Athens. Some of the immigrants from Asia, the Middle-East and Northern Africa might have come to Greece as a point from which they can move on to other countries in Europe, but are not able to do so. This situation of being present in space, with the possibility to move on, but the action of staying, is illustrated by Simmel, G. (1950) ‘The stranger is thus being discussed here, not in the sense often touched upon in the past, as the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, but rather as the person who comes today and stays tomorrow. He is, so to speak, the potential wanderer: although he has not moved on, he has not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going.’ This instability is a factor that is taken into consideration in the approach and design (see chapter 8). A sense of belonging is now altering the perception of Greek and ‘older’ immigrants to see themselves as the stable factor. This sense of belonging, in combination with the other factors that are discussed, is not allowing for other groups of people to arrive easily.

An explanation for the troublesome effects of this situation is pointed out by Vasiliadis (2011). He argues that the symptoms of crisis creates two contrasting spheres. The perception the inhabitants have of the city changes because they do not have the possibility to move on themselves. The positive experience in the city of finding something new in difference is now contrasting with the experience of being afraid of the difference because it is endangering. Since you are not able to leave your experience of the city, feelings of the city become more intense. On the specific topic of immigration he argues that it is the visibility of immigrants in the city centre, as a point of attention, that is a problem. ‘It is their concentration in the center of the city, due to the presence of already developed networks and labor opportunities, which turns them into perhaps the most visible group of inhabitants. And it is their visibility which, falsely, turns them as the obvious scapegoat for all spatial, social and economical problems of the capital.’ (Vasiliadis, V., 2011:105)

The acceptance and equal positioning is difficult since it is harder to understand each others viewpoints and differences in interests. Sennett, R. (2005) says about this: 'About the sociability of living with strangers: the mark of the civic realm now is mutual accommodation through dissociation. That means the truce of letting one another alone, the peace of mutual indifference. In the language of cultural studies, identity has taken the place of alterity in urban life. This is one reason why, on the positive side, the modern city is like an accordion easily able to expand to accommodate new waves of migrants; the pockets of difference are sealed. On the negative side, mutual accommodation through dissociation spells the end of citizenship practices which require understanding of divergent interests, as well as marking a loss of simple human curiosity about
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The Other: This negative side, of there being no conversation or relation between inhabitants of the same city or neighbourhood, enhances the separation. It also confirms Vasiliadis point that the positive experience of finding something new, has turned into something endangering. A point has to be made on his statement that the modern city can easily accommodate new waves of migrants, because this is not true for all aspects. The city of Athens did have space to accommodate migrants, but the ‘pockets of difference’ are not sealed. Rather, all immigrants are placed under the same banner of ‘different’.

Is this lack of understanding diversity within difference enhanced by the lack of spaces in which diversity can become clear and negotiated, and maybe even be seen as something positive? Which leads me to the next point: the vision of immigrants as ‘the Other’ although there is not such a group. There are different nationalities, differences in work, differences in living areas, different religions, etc. All of these people are present in different networks and not dividable into categories of nationality, work, etc. This leads us to the next paragraph: How can we give more possibilities to the inhabitants themselves? How can they develop their own life and communities? How do they (get and) take responsibility for this process?

5.3 Responsibility and development

The following quotes (Sennett, R., 2005) illustrate how large international companies do not have any responsibility towards the location in which they are situated. ‘The reason for this change is that the global economy is not rooted in the city in the sense of depending on control of the city as a whole.’ My proposal is that the wishes of residents of the neighbourhood are equally represented as the wishes of the ones that can financially profit from decisions. The ideas that come forth from the inhabitants are more complete in that they contain many aspects of life in the neighbourhood and the city. The creation of powerful neighbourhood organisations is a way to encounter the over-empowerment of municipality decisions that might have other aims. The neighbourhoods are an important part of the city and they have knowledge about what is going on at the local level. Considering that the activities mainly focus on basic daily life activities and improvements. It acts as the missing link between the scale of the city and the scale of inhabitants.

The municipal actions for the city centre are focused on the fear of crime and feeling of insecurity and the flight of residents and occupation by illegal immigrants. The goal is to re-insure the right to a safe, sustainable, attractive and lively city for its inhabitants and visitors. The municipality wishes to develop the city centre as cultural and touristic centre and aims at attracting new residents to live in the city centre. Bringing new middle and higher income residents into the centre is seen as the solution of the problems the centre currently faces. It doesn’t take into account the users that are already there and the problems that they have. (Koutrolikou, P. et. al., 2012) The dual approach of the government to, on the one hand, beautify the city centre for cultural and touristic purposes needs to become a more complete approach. It should not deny the inhabitants that are already living in the centre and the quality that the centre already has, just so it does not become another touristic, beautified centre. I propose a more sustainable approach to attract middle- and high incomes in the current neighbourhoods, without excluding the current inhabitants. This project aims for more mixed social income areas, since they can profit from each others presence and counter horizontal segregation.

If the inhabitants are a social mix there are more possibilities for the neighbourhood to develop. For this reason I propose to add new program on the empty plots that are scattered around the city. They are the starting points for development of the neighbourhood. The middle- and high income groups will be seen as future residents, when the perception has changed as a way to create more sustainable city centre neighbourhoods.

5.4 Conclusion

The perception of the other person as endangering to you, together with a lack of tolerance, has
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Image: Axonometric drawing of the neighbourhood showing the empty plots and the conceptual role of the neighbourhood organisation.
led to a vicious circle of non-relating. The creation of different worlds on public space is taken as a starting point to create points in space where different lives do make a connection. This connection is not forced, but different kind of connections are articulated. In these spaces the differences can become interesting again and not endangering for people's own life. In my proposal it is seen as important that there are different kind of spaces in which diversity can be expressed.

A neighbourhood organisation is proposed to create the intermediate level of decision-making between the city and its inhabitants. The aim of the municipality to attract middle- and high income to the city centre is connected to the development of the neighbourhood and by that connects these aims with the aims for the lower-income groups that are already present.

5.5 Framework

3. 5.5.1 Integration framework

In order not to discriminate against the local Greek and Albanian residents all efforts in the neighbourhood are inclusive for all residents. This is even stronger since the local population feels the effects of the economic crisis. Equal participation in decision-making, illegal or not, is a starting point. Not wanting to enlarge the gap between people implies that the intervention should be presented as an intervention for the entire neighbourhood. Divisions in target groups for certain programs can be made, but not on the basis of ethnicity. In order to create the possibility to participate in decision-making I propose a neighbourhood organisation with more power to make actual spatial interventions.

The experience of change, the consciousness of the developments by the inhabitants is an important aspect of the intervention. In order to develop according to the needs of the inhabitants, I phase the intervention. By phasing the intervention, since the intervention takes place in an environment where inhabitants fear each other, this allows for a slow change of perception. The time-phasing is something important, because it puts the accent on the fact that the 'stable' factor, local people already residing here, can also move on and develop 'their' neighbourhood. The approach starts e.g. with one event, then changes the plot for more permanent functioning as public space and when this place is attracting people a weekly market can be organised. Phasing is an integral part of the strategy as a way to let inhabitants become involved in their neighbourhood.

Large-scale urban redevelopment is not possible without large investment from the municipality. That is why I propose the development of a small intervention that can adaptions to existing buildings and public space on a smaller scale. Developing empty plots doesn't inflict with the ownership and use of existing housing blocks. The plots can be found all over the city, but for this project the area of Ag. Panteleimonas is chosen. The plots I choose will be an example for the other plots and will contain implications for development of other plots: a systemic approach. The small scale of the interventions is also part of the strategy to involve inhabitants with their neighbourhood. The development of multiple small scale interventions creates multiple collective spaces on the level of the street. My intervention will focus on small scale interventions in or at the border of the neighbourhood of Agios Panteleimonas.

4. 5.5.2 Legal and financial recommendations

A note for the legal framework is: illegal immigrants should be given equal permission to participate in the decision-making of these developments. Their own efforts can be assisted and supported by the neighbourhood organisation. For more notes on changes of the legal framework see the recommendations of Human Rights Watch (2012) in 'Hate on the streets'.

A note for financing: the neighbourhood organisation should be a central political point in city regulating. It empowers the inhabitants of the city to have a say in the development of the city and counters the profit-driven activities of the city as a whole. Money to make this reorganisation possible should come from the government itself, but can be started up by money from the EU. It is more profitable for the EU if problems are solved on a smaller scale with less costs, then to
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centralise decision making in combination with top-down implementation.

The ownership-issue of the empty plots can be met by the municipality by buying these plots (with EU money) for development that is not only (financial) profit driven. This can also be accomplished with the money that is earned from developing the abandoned monuments as middle-and high income housing and the touristic centre (Rethink Athens project). In this way the project is part of a development process on the scale of the city.

Financing cities by the European Union, is seen as a more direct way to solve immigration problems in Greece. Common European money is then used to tackle the humanistic socio-spatial problems that appear in Athens, but are a problem of entire Europe since Greece is also Europe’s boundary. In this sense illegal immigrants are a European problem too.

Growth is a conditio sine qua non for democratic capitalism and became an excuse not to ask fundamental questions, to not take political decisions. (Sedlacek, 2009)
6. New inhabitants, new situation

‘The incompleteness of capitalist time returns us to the issue which marked the very emergence of the industrial city, a city which broke apart the domus - that spatial relation which had before the coming of industrial capitalism combined family, work, ceremonial public spaces, and more informal social spaces. Today, we need to repair the collectivity of space to combat the serial time of modern labor.’ (Sennett, R. 2005)

6.1 Introduction

In order to accomplish the buildings for the Olympic Games of 2004 Greece accepted immigration flows for the labour force. These immigrants worked in construction and domestic care services, but they weren't legalised. Another problem that arose was the Dublin I1 agreement. Because of this agreement immigrants gather in the countries of entrance. In Greece this means that most of them (from South East Asia, the Middle-East and North Africa) gather in the two main cities and the ports. The immigrants have more difficulties to settle and integrate than the immigrants in the 1990's because of a lack of possible work, due to the economic crisis.

So who are the illegal immigrants in Ag. Panteleimonas? What are activities in their daily life? How do they use space? The activities of the native Greek people are also important, to find out where possible relations can be established, or where distance is needed. These findings result in a program that stands as an example that can be developed by the neighbourhood. This chapter answers to the question:

Who are the illegal immigrants in Ag. Panteleimonas and how do they use space?
The chapter ends with the design statement that is the starting point for my specific intervention (strategy and architectural object) in Agios Panteleimonas.

6.2 Immigration in the city centre

6.2.1 Immigrated

The immigrants that arrived into Greece from the beginning of the 21st century are mostly coming from Asia, Eastern-Europe and Africa. The illegally immigrated people are divided as follows: from Afghanistan 33%, from Pakistan 23%, from Albania 11% and from Sub-Saharan Africa 6%. Other countries include: Iraq, Morocco and Bangladesh. These percentages comes forth from data from the Greek police through the report of Human Right Watch (2012) from 87.205 irregular border crossings in 2011. The different residents came during different moments in time, with different backgrounds and different believes. Depicting all these people as ‘immigrants’ gives the false impression that they are in one way or another united as one. This also falsely defines a group as a static thing, in stead of an open process in which people come and go and of which the boundaries can change. Since this is an architectural project it is more suitable to characterise the problem as multiple ongoing lives that, at a certain moment, are bound together by place, which is in this case Agios Panteleimonas.

It is important to see integration from the side of the persons themselves: the immigrated people. What are their activities in trying to make a place for themselves in Athens? Vaiou & Stratigaki (2008:120) mention in this process:

- ‘the complex experience of […] making a home in an unhomely environment’
- ‘adhering to and challenging the terms of belonging to a ‘community’
- ‘negotiating identities and redefining place(s), […] of being active agents in the project of migration

This elucidates the process of trying to find a place in the city of Athens. The immigrants are people that are already in the process of integrating themselves. This integration is dividable in two processes: to settle and to integrate, the first includes actions towards basic every-day life facilities (e.g. a house, a job) and the second focusses on the integration into institutions (e.g. child-care,
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Image: appearance of the polykatoikia on the street depends strongly on the presence of users of the ground floor and balconies
public health services). Both are centred around the creation of a safe home and a better future (for the children). Problems in this process are difficulties of participating in labour activities. Being in a country without having the possibility to work is slowing down the process and reducing the possibilities for development towards settlement and integration.

1. 6.2.1 Vertical social differentiation

Social differentiation in the city centre is defined vertically. Due to the housing block with different apartments in one block, the city centre has nearly no horizontal segregation. The urban tissue of Athens consists of areas that are divided by high traffic roads rather than by different building typologies/styles. The existing building type polykatoikia (multiple housing) covers almost entirely the centre of Athens and has been capable of providing housing and taking in new lowest-income groups. This type of building combines housing with a 1.5 level ground floor; sometimes under an arcade, that houses different functions like shops, cafés, offices, etc. The housing blocks constitute of multiple dwellings and are in this way the property of multiple individual owners. The arcades make the transition between functions on the ground floor of a building and the public space of the street. (see image on the left) Sometimes also the sidewalks are claimed by the function in the adjacent building. In the warm climate of Greece with a lot of sunshine the arcades are very comfortable public spaces in the shadow. The trees on the sidewalks also contribute to the possibility to stay outside.

Vertical differentiation does take place; basements and small ground floor apartments have become rental apartments in downgraded and vertically differentiated areas in the city centre. The traditional working-class households have a restricted residential mobility due to several aspects; ‘the mixing of activities in the urban tissue and the proximity of workplace and residence, strong family networks, the modes of housing provision, the high percentage of home ownership etc.’ (Maloutas, et. al., 2001) Renting out an apartment on the (unwanted by Greeks) ground floor is a new income for the former residents of the neighbourhood. It is also a solution for households of recent foreign immigrants that seek low-status service jobs in the centre. The government doesn’t supply social housing, which means that immigated people are designated to these apartments for low-cost rental housing. Maloutas & Karadimitriou (2001) note that: ‘Neither end of the social hierarchy has chosen to coexist in these vertically segregated areas. Unlike gentrified space, these areas are not desired by anybody [...] Areas of reluctant and/or entrapped residents, in a context of an ethnocentric and xenophobic culture, they become a terrain where the ‘other’ is at best tolerated with reserve and mistrust.’

2. 6.2.3. Activities

The neighbourhood is important in daily life activities of:
- having a private space to eat, sleep, wash yourself, be safe.
- labour related activities, shops and offices and collection of garbage and domestic work
- walking from the house to another point in the neighbourhood, leaving the house for a longer time
- going and returning from bringing children to school, doing groceries, leaving the house for a shorter time
- recreational activities: going for a short walk around the neighbourhood, going to a playground, meeting somebody in public (especially important if you don’t have the financial means to travel elsewhere)

Possible important aspects that need to be present in the neighbourhood when people’s mobility is reduced:
- health care services
- life improving activities (learning Greek language, learning to work with the computer, etc.)

The image on the previous page shows how these activities take place in the neighbourhood. This analysis shows what the role of public space is in daily life activities.

6.3 Conflicts
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3. **6.3.1. Fear for the unknown**

The fear on which my project focusses, and which has a relation to architectural intervention, is the fear that results from a lack of understanding of the other. Fictive stories and phobias take over reality and influence behaviour. People see public space outside their home as unsafe due to the fear for ‘the immigrants’ and immigrants feel fear for possible attacks from ‘extreme-right Greeks’ (Human Right Watch, 2012). This fear for violence from certain groups wrongly generalises these characteristics to all people that have the same appearance. This further depicts the ‘other’ as the one that is endangering your life and worsening your living conditions.

The aim is not to force inhabitants to have a direct relation with each other via architecture, but I am interested in the creation of spaces in which different kinds of relations can be created; from observing, to seeing each other, saying ‘(hello), to getting a view of what is happening in the neighbourhood: to change the perception of the neighbourhood towards one where there is not one Greek and not one Afghan. The strategy for this is to make inhabitants part of the neighbourhoods development in favour of their living conditions. The program is focussed on direct needs and developments that are already taking place from the inhabitants, in order to enhance the possibilities of different relations in these spaces. As is shown in the previous paragraph, the focus of all inhabitants is to improve their living conditions, so this is taken as the program for creation of different relations.

4. **6.3.2 Housing differences**

The few remaining Greek residents and already socially embedded old immigrants house in the most common forms of habitation. Research from Athens University notes that in these cases reasonable rental property is found, usually in apartments on the medium and higher floors. These conditions are encountered in the rest of Athens. The horizontal integration does lead to problems within the building. People that have been living inside the building for a longer time distinct themselves from new residents: ‘Experiencing an intense sense of ownership, feeling real anxiety about who lives next to them, the Greek minority perceives itself as the only unsolicited regulator of the inner life of the building. Startled by the unexpected turn in the history of their region, are now forced to mingle with what they considered as the final stage of the lower classes.’ (University of Athens, 2010) The places to live for the other residents are far less sufficient for the provision of housing.

Some immigrants have no other option, due to financial limitations and the non-existence of alternatives, than to share small spaces with large groups of others in the same situation. In the worst case, 15-20 people are found to rent two bedrooms, and in the best case 4 individuals sharing a single room. (NTUA, 2010) The housing conditions where immigrated people live in semi-basements and basements together with others creates a lack of private space and a stronger presence in public space. Since people share their living space with others they can’t be at home whenever they want. There is no place to stay inside, so logically they are left with no other option then going outside where they become very visible. For the people inhabiting these spaces it means a lack of privacy, since the next step in privacy is the public space of the street. (see image) There are no spaces where you can leave the private house, but not immediately be in public space. There is no possibility to spend free time in the private space or with friends or family without setting foot on contested public space.

5. **6.3.3. Public (?) space**

The researched area has two large squares around the church and near the station. Apart from these spaces the public space is mainly the pavement. For the inhabitants that need to spend their time on the public space, there is not much choice. This behaviour is contrasting the way in which Greek inhabitants think public space should be used. They might feel that their values are violated due to inappropriate behaviour of ‘immigrants’. This is a strong rejection of activities, that might or might not have happened, but that affect the feeling that their space is infringed.

On Sundays the church and the squares are a meeting place for people from other neighbourhoods.
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Other religions are not visible in the public space, but take place in hidden spaces. Researchers from the University of Athens observed in 2010: ‘...migrant groups spending their time in front of small convenience stores, owned by compatriots, mostly in front of the many internet cafés, operating as one of the most powerful (and perhaps the only) direct communication channel with their homeland.’ Informal meeting places are created naturally around places that are safe and where people in the same position gather.

The space of the streets is in use by many objects (e.g. containers, telephone boxes, motorcycles, half parked cars, extension of cafés or shops, etc.) that they can’t be named ‘public’ in the way that they do not belong to everybody. There is a blending of private sphere in public sphere. The mixing of function by ground floor occupation by commercial activities is mostly present along big roads (e.g. Acharnon street, Mich. Voda street & St. Meletius street) and around large squares (St. Panteleimonas, Attika and St. Nikolaos). The side streets are more mono-functional. This is where ground floors are also used for living. In these areas public space is used by local residents. The public space of the larger streets and arcades is in use by the adjacent functions. (see image)

Issues of public space as indicated by the inhabitants are:
- the need for squares as recreational areas within the dense urban fabric
- pedestrian precincts and the planting of existing roads,
- the problematic use of public space due to an excessive number of parked cars,
- a general sense of degradation of the urban environment and
- undesirable to use outside areas at night due to fear for violence

These proposals will be taken into account for the creation of different spaces in the neighbourhood.

6. 6.3.4. Production space

The reason the illegal immigrants are living in the centre is because they gain money by small commerces on the streets of Athens and with the collection of cardboard. The centre with it’s diverse functions gives them a means of production. This can be enhanced by giving space to part of the labour activities and by that enhancing people’s economic position.

6.4 Conclusion

The illegal inhabitants have different needs from the city. They stay for a shorter time, use different spaces and have different collective spaces. The lack of work possibilities for all inhabitants, the absence of proper social housing and the economic and urban decline experienced by the inhabitants has made integration a tight process. Immigrants are already trying themselves to find ways to negotiate between adapting to the unhomely situation and keeping the own identity. And at this moment, when they are not easily taken in by the labour market, trying to make a living. Public space is not solely public in its use to get from one place to another or as a place neutral of any expression of private activities. The space outside the house or shop is in use by the extension of commercial activities; owners of shops, visitors of cafés, or by private activities; drying laundry, balconies, etc. This extensive use of the street as part of daily life activities makes that the presence of ‘other’ people is extremely visible. So the development of more public spaces is an important aspect of the design.

Program for the neighbourhood is focussed on the problems of basic living conditions and the problems as described by the inhabitants. There is a need for:
- collective spaces: a mosque, a day-care, a health centre
- labour places: a market, a shop
- public places: for the expression of different activities and events

The next paragraph will put forward the statement for my strategy that resulted from the collective research and individual analysis.
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6.5 Statement for design

My project deals with creating the possibility of an architecture of relations by the design of an architectural object. As a result from the collective analysis on the worsening socio-spatial issues in Athens at a moment of economic crisis I focus on the disempowerment of a large part of the urban population to use their own neighbourhood and take part in the processes by which their neighbourhood is developed and used. By means of which strategy and architectonic element may the conditions of the neighbourhood be bettered towards the needs of its inhabitants in times of economic crisis?

In times of crisis it is important to do things to develop the neighbourhood. The municipality doesn’t want to built space for public functions that do not make financial profit. My proposal is that in this case the space itself is released so inhabitants can meet their needs by themselves. It is important to develop public interior and exterior space for the improvement of the living conditions in the neighbourhood. If the municipality and the government don’t provide basic public needs, they could support the possibility for people to use the space themselves to meet their needs.
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Part 3 - Strategy, intervention & recommendations
Giving place to immigration

* source to be translated for me from book about immigration in Athens by University of Athens

Image: program for the neighbourhood

Image: overlapping functions
7. Allowing for different relations

‘...public space is a space for human and social interaction, a rich spatial instrument to see and to be seen, to participate and to withdraw, and to be the actor or the spectator in the theatre of social interaction at one’s will.’ (Pallasmaa, 2007)

7.1 Introduction

To develop program for all residents in the neighbourhood, space is changed or developed towards their needs: the creation of public space and the possibility for collective space. The strategy proposes ways to let the neighbourhood population become part of the processes by which their living environment is developed, treating conflicting groups in the neighbourhood as important aspect of this strategy. This is a precondition for the achievement of my goal to better the living conditions in the neighbourhood.

The strategy that I propose for the development of Agios Panteleimonas focusses on collective spaces, interior public spaces and exterior public spaces as a way to create relations between users in the neighbourhood. This strategy is done as a spatial approach to social issues, the concerns of all inhabitants and the improvement of the disadvantaged position of immigrants specifically.

The neighbourhood organisation with architects and urban planners takes in applications for collective organisations. They are situated in one example of my intervention, so people get an impression of the possibilities of the intervention. The neighbourhood organisation proposes locations and possible configurations of the object or objects. With the ‘DIY neighbourhood-booklet’ people can see possible locations and their possible configuration and which configurations is possible for exemplary program.

The program of the intervention is flexible: it allows for different functions over time. The configuration and placement of the intervention is defined by the program that inhabitants want to develop. A mosque needs to be placed towards the east and might need some distance from the street, while the market needs to be as visible as possible. The object can also be taken away and placed at another location if the function is not needed anymore or if it has become so embedded in the neighbourhood that it moves to a more stable location.

Every location where my object is placed becomes a public space and a collective space that people can use for a specific function. Since every program has a different relation with the public space to which it is connected it should be possible for the object to change position on the plot and towards other objects. In this way the program defines the type of public space around the object with the collective function. In order for the object to be suitable to all kinds of program with different relations to public space and different needs from the object, I propose a transformable object. The way you place the object creates an open space, a closable space, only a roof, a stage, etc. This is further discussed in chapter 8.

This strategy of intervening via the neighbourhood organisation with an object that changes space the moment it is placed allows for inhabitants to fill in the spaces with their program. What I set in motion with this strategy is the creation of collective and public spaces by the inhabitants themselves, without the need to be owner or to be permanent. My strategy shows how the city can be developed in times of economic crisis and in the situation of a neighbourhood where there are many different needs and conflicting uses of space. My multidimensional object is an object that can
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be placed and transformed by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood so that:
  – they are responsible and active in the process of creating places
  – there is no need for a large investment from the municipality, just a small investment for building the element
  – the program is flexible and defines the public space around it the moment that it is placed

7.2 The processes

The strategy aims at changing city development towards a more inclusive approach in which all inhabitants have the possibility to develop the spaces that they need. My intervention focusses on the different residents in Ag. Panteleimonas, their needs and how they can be involved in the development of their neighbourhood although they have become detached from their neighbourhood by processes and use of space that they don’t value as theirs. So the processes that my object aims to trigger have as a goal to transform the process for city development towards better living qualities for all inhabitants, with the specific attention on processes that counter the other as negative and endangering.
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8.1 Secondary grid
The main processes I focus on for the integration of new inhabitants within the neighbourhood, as well as the integration of the entire urban population in the process of urban development, are economic development and taking away fear for the unknown ‘other’. My strategy for these processes is the implementation of a neighbourhood organisation. This organisation bridges the gap between local initiatives, collective and individual, and the aims of the municipality. Naturally the collective and individual development consists of multiple small interventions in space. As an element of connection of all these various projects I place a secondary structure of pedestrian and biking paths on the existing urban morphology. This structure is a grid that runs through unused streets, courtyards, empty ground floors, vacant lots and left-over spaces between buildings. It connects spaces that have a potential to become used and counter the sense of degradation. The grid functions as the backbone for occupation, use and developments of inhabitants. It lets them become part of the processes by which the city is produced, without implementing a hierarchy of importance.

8.2 Intersections
The new grid is placed in between building blocks. It runs through courtyards via abandoned ground floor spaces, vacant passages and empty lots. Its precise route is set out according to existing vacancies if this is possible. The main path runs through large courtyards, activating them, and through the secondary streets. These quiet streets will be car-free. By connecting them the possibilities of the unused spaces are uncovered. New nodes are created by the new routes. These new routes create intersections on the grid itself, and with the existing streets. At some points in the corners of the neighbourhood it intersects with spaces that are of importance at the city scale, like a station, parking and a large square. All intersections are treated differently.

8.3 Economic, social & cultural aspects
The creation of paths for bikers and pedestrians through the urban fabric makes that interventions become part of a larger development plan. In this way it becomes more profitable for e.g. a shop-owner to extend his terrace to the rear side of the building. In a different way, it becomes interesting to develop collective gardens if this creates a green path through the neighbourhood through other green areas. Placing a grid on top of the existing morphology makes it possible for existing inhabitants to tap into this development. It does not demolish the existing urban fabric, but start to make connections with it. Activities to better living conditions in the neighbourhood are opened-up to each other.

The paths run through so many different spaces that it triggers curiosity of what is next. The fact that there are different cultures living in the neighbourhood becomes a value for it can create many different functions and spaces. It gives a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood. Their differences are of value and make the neighbourhood what it is. Space is used for the economic, social and cultural profit of inhabitants. The space is used by them and profitable for them. The municipality gives the base for a development of public spaces, collective spaces and private spaces that are very diverse and changing over time. In this way responding to the needs and potential of local residents. It unleashes a process that counters the ‘faded glamour of the past’ by creating a new perception over time that can ‘replace the perception of Greek and Other by the reality of multi-layered, multi-faceted groups of people which do not have an internal structure.’
Design area

ag. Pustelnikow

infrastructure

pedestrian bridge/phase 1
pedestrian bridge/phase 2

interactions in other neighborhoods
interaction in neighborhood

car parking

elements on the path

collective interaction

public facility in connected building

connected to compound via left cross space

city level facilities (fountain, bridge cross road & parking space)

market

educational facility

secondary education/urban development

important in site designation

additional connections

building into connected

left cross space in between building
9. Reflection

9.1 Relationship research and design
The dialectic method that we used as a group for the research was for me an eye-opening method. Using this method has led to a better understanding of the world around me. For this I am very thankful to have been able to study at the Delft School of Design. The research of this graduation studio was a wide investigation into the (social, economical, political) processes that have formed the city of Athens and are currently affecting the development of the city. This method led to a timeline in which all these processes where made visible and where connections between events became evident. We conducted the research in this way in order to understand the forces behind the urban forms and typologies that exist today. The outcome of this research were statements for alternative city development that include the existing urban population into its focus. For me this type of research has learnt me to look at cities in a different way. Underlying structures that form space became visible and allowed me to intervene with consciousness of these processes. The awareness and understanding of underlying processes also proved a difficulty for the formulation of a design task; the transformation from analysis to synthesis. The conclusions of our research were statements about city development that did not deal directly with space itself. These statements were broad but not yet spatially specified, e.g. “Top down decisions are not responding to reality”. This made the transition from research to design different from conventional methods, because the research did not end in spatial starting points. The research did not have a specific location either, but dealt with the entire city of Athens. For next time I would define earlier in the process a location or spatial problem. When a specific (spatial) problem or characteristic is defined the research outcome can include already a general spatial strategy for a specific area and in this way bridges the transition to the design. Then the dialectic method leads from a problematic spatial condition to a possible 'solution'/action to a location/spatial problem and gives insight in relations of events that are not obvious. With our project this was not the case and, in my opinion, the problem lies in two missing starting points of the research. These two elements do not question the dialectic method as a useful method for the extraction of knowledge and information. So I think we should have defined as a group a specific site that constitutes of a specific phenomenon in space or vice versa. The research would have been more focussed on issues contributing to this specific phenomena and with this we could have developed a spatial strategy. I think the research we did is very relevant, but in my opinion the methodology has not been a method for the proposal of an architectural intervention. Now we took this step individually after the research semester.

9.2 Relationship theme of studio and subject student
As a location I chose a neighborhood in the area of research: the city centre of Athens. In order to see the spatial effects of our research findings I did an urban analysis of the public space of the neighborhood, in combination with literature research on immigration in Athens and (secondary data) interviews with inhabitants. This theme relates to the studio in the sense that it deals with a neighborhood and a group of people that, according to the studio research, should be taken into account in urban planning. The method I used led to a broad understanding of the problems and processes taking place and the effects on public space. Something I would do different next time is the transition from these problems and processes to a design. My method did not include a clear program and location for the design, so the urban analysis became very broad. Since this was not done I spent time on defining a program that would fit with my social aims. In this way I translated a social aim into an architecture program. If the choice of location and program are fixed the process if more focussed on the architecture itself. I wanted to see how I could let people free to intervene in space, to create a diversity of spaces and uses. To see what needs to be fixed and what can be free around/in/on/with this. The difficulty in this type of design is to define what is necessary, also spatial, and what it is that can be adapted and to what extend. To me this is not about letting a person choose his own window frame and brick color for his house. What I find interesting is that the space leaves you free to define space itself. Space not as an enclosed room with a open or closed border to the next space. With my design I have tried to give people possibilities for limitations and uses in order to create other spaces than if designed for one use. This was also
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Image of model. Scale 1:50
the most difficult part, since the design should be led by other arguments, in order not to become generic.

9.3 Relationship methodical line of approach of studio & student
The methodical line of the studio was focussed on the transition of research results into a spatial strategy for the city. This method was different from design methods that I have learnt so far. I am used to start a design from a spatial aim: a certain program is needed on a certain location, both with their own restrictions and possibilities. Now the focus was on a design from a social aim: a certain process in a certain area. This resulted in difficulties of creating a spatial aim out of this social aim, since there are many social, legal and cultural aspects to this type of aim. However I think that this method leads to architectural projects that use spatial understanding to deal with urban problems.

The design process, the forming of spaces by tryin spatial interventions, was different than I was used to. I wanted to make a building that is free for a diversity of uses and that could be placed on any vacant lot in the neighborhood. In this way I was designing without direct context and program, which made that the building was quite long standing on itself. It was very interesting to approach the design process in this different way. It has made me aware that I had to make decisions based on other arguments than specific program and direct location, while not becoming formless. As Zaera Polo puts it: “We must first distinguish between the formless and the informal: the informal does not comply with well-established forms but operates within a well-defined frame of reference.” This frame of reference becomes important when dealing with the informal. Also the actual dealing with space has proven to me to be the main element in the design process. Only when you can see the impact of an intervention can you start talking about if it is what you aim for.

9.4 Relationship project & social context
The project deals with the socio-spatial problems in the city: immigration, possibility of employment, violence, racism, integration, fear and violence. It aims at the development of a socially mixed city that is not excluding people from its use. This type of research and design is very important in my opinion in order to be able, as architects and urban planners, to be critical about the processes you are involved in when dealing with the creation of spaces. This semester has made me more confident to be active as an architect in my own city and use my knowledge of space to propose changes in the urban fabric that combine social, economical and spatial aims. The main note I have on the conduction of this type of research and design is to be extremely precise and focussed on the spatial aspect of the multi faceted aim.
Attachments
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Kandylis, Maloutas & Sayas (2012) Immigration, inequality and diversity: socio-ethnic hierarchy and spatial organization in Athens, Greece
Maloutas & Karadimitriou (2001) Vertical Social Differentiation in Athens: Alternative or Complement to Community Segregation?
Sennett, R. The spaces for democracy
UNHCR. (2011) Assylum situation in Greece including for Dublin II Transferees.