Urban space under negotiation
Reactivation of underused spaces as a tool for urban transformation

Evgenia Zioga

Master Thesis/TU Delft/2012-2013
Urban space under negotiation

Reactivation of underused spaces as a tool for urban transformation

Fear and Loaning in Athens
Shifting Perspectives of Space

Delft University of Technology
Faculty of Architecture
Department: Urbanism
Studio: Explore Lab Graduation studio

Mentors:
1st mentor: Diego Sepulveda Carmona
2nd mentor: Gerhard Bruyns
3rd mentor: Heidi Sohn

Evgenia Zioga
student number: 4188705
evgenia.zioga@gmail.com
Since the first decade of the 21st century, the Eurozone is facing economic fluctuations that are shocking the core of their societies. The global economic crisis has found the city of Athens in a long established urban crisis that mainly concerns the centre of the city. The urban decay of specific areas and the socio-spatial segregation are two of the main blueprints of this crisis in Athens. Nowadays and in the inner city, ‘islands’ of abandonment and exclusion area easily evident, deconstructing the socio-spatial cohesion.

This thesis struggles with the above conditions and forms the culmination of the Master of Urbanism course at the Delft University of Technology. It contains the aims, the approach and outputs of my graduation project.
This thesis spans the course of one year, during which much was learned and many experiences were gained. At times, it was a difficult process, but more often it was a journey of discovering new information that slowly formed this research and design project.

First of all, I would like to cordially thank my mentors for their inspiring guidance through-out the year and their productive comments.

I would like also to thank all the people we met in Athens during our study trip and provided us with valuable information and sources.

Lastly, I would like to thank the members of UA- Athens group, Katerina Salonikidi, Maria Stamati, Ifigenia Dimitrakou and Marloes van der Pols, for their creative team work!
α. Introduction
   Introducing Athens
   Urban Analysis - Regional scale
   (Collective work)

β. Project context
   Problem Statement
   Aim
   Research questions
   Theoretical framework
   Hypothesis
   Relevance
   Methodology

γ. Specific context
   The 1st district - Agios Pavlos and Vathi sq
   Governormental plans
   Existing opportunities

δ. Urban Strategy
   Aims of the strategy
   Re-programming parking lots
   Programmatic interventions in four selected lots
   Planning Framework
   Gradual alteration of two lots
   On-coming alteration (urban scale)

ε. Evaluation

ζ. Recommendations

η. Bibliography
Introduction
Introducing Athens

The recent global economic crisis has found the city of Athens in a long established and gradually expanding urban crisis, which concerns mainly the centre of the city. Since the 1990’s the centre of Athens has been facing many transformations under severe pressures of social, political and cultural forces that had a direct impact on the urban environment and formed the current image of the city. However, Athens was mainly shaped during the years of the post war reconstruction when the city rapidly sprawled to all directions without official planning. According to many scholars the city of Athens could be described as an unplanned, spontaneous city.

The city’s identity was formed during the post-war period based on the model of Polykatoikia, a multi-storey apartment building. The expansion of this model was based on the system of antiparochi (granting), where the developer covers the cost of the building and the owner of the plot of land takes as a payment apartments within the new building. This system represents the economic development of the city of Athens, as well as of many Greek cities. Based on this model, Athens during the post-war period faced a rapid urbanization which was combined with the legalization of immigrant’s settlements on the surroundings of the city. As a result, Athens was transformed from a small city to a large metropolis. The system of antiparochi and the intense urbanization process defined the current urban morphology of the city and particularly of the city as a very dense and spatially mixed environment. According to Maloutas, the system of antiparochi and the model of Polykatoikia has established a certain social mix in Greek cities because of the fact that low income people, immigrants and higher income people live in apartments of the same building. However, it could be said that even though different social groups live in the same building, there are vertically segregated, with the upper floors containing more spacious apartments occupied by higher income groups while the lower floors with smaller apartments, occupied by lower income groups.

Starting from ’80s and particularly during ’90s, the socio-spatial configurations of the city of Athens changed due to the intense suburbanization processes. Many people who lived in central neighborhoods, started to abandon the dense and polluted city centre, seeking for a different lifestyle in the suburbs. In parallel, during ’90s Greece became the pole of attraction for thousands of immigrants, at first from East European countries and then from Asia and Africa. The majority of immigrants concentrated in the urban areas and a high proportion in more central areas in Athens which offered more working opportunities, low rents and many empty apartments. According to Vaiou (2007), immigrants especially during the first stages of their residence in Athens, live in the basements and on the lower level of the housing buildings, in the most deteriorated areas in the city centre. At the same time, Athens had undertaken to host
the Olympic Games of 2004 and therefore preparations had started to take place. During the preparations, mega-infrastructure and regeneration projects were developed in the periphery of the city, with the attempt to transform Athens to a global destination. The governmental policies of the last decade, focusing on the reinforcement of the new centralities in the periphery, neglected the city centre. The limited governmental policies concerned the beautification of the image of the city and the promotion of its cultural and historical identity. The uneven development between the centre and the periphery led to a gradual decay of the city centre. The deterioration of the building stock, the decrease in activities and the abandonment of the urban housing by the native residents confirm the decay. According to the National Centre of Social Research, the decrease of population in the central areas of the city is almost 24%, while in some areas is even more than 40%. As a result, more than 1600 buildings (public buildings and residences) are totally vacant, as well as many more are semi-abandoned.

The uneven development between the centre and the periphery, the suburbanization processes and the displacement of land uses affected the socio-spatial structure of the city and comprised crucial factors especially for the inner city. Some of the most central neighborhoods in Athens became places of concentration of low-income groups, immigrants, creating ‘invisible boundaries’ in an urban environment that until now was socially mixed. Simultaneously, the economic recession of the last years had a direct effect on the urban space by increasing the urban poverty and the socio-spatial inequalities. Moreover, phenomena that show a disruption on the social network have become increasingly more severe, affecting the social coherence of the city and enhancing urban decay. Nowadays, the Athenian urban core faces conditions of urban fragmentation and socio-spatial segregation or even exclusion.
Greece
autonomous monastic community
13 administrative regions
of which the Administrative region of Attica

Administrative region of Attica
8 regional units
of which Central Athens

Central Athens
8 municipalities
of which the Municipality of Athens

Municipality of the center of Athens
7 municipal districts

Administrational organization from Greece to Athens
The following maps constitute a part of the collective research that has been conducted in order to explore the current socio-spatial conditions in the city of Athens. This research formed the basis for the development of this project.

Urban analysis
Regional scale
Urban space under negotiation
This map shows the residential density (inh/km²) in the region of Attica in 2001. Athens is one of the most dense cities in Europe. The density is measured in the area of interest.
CENTRALITIES/FUNCTIONS

The new centralities in the periphery of the city, easily accessible by the infrastructure network, absorb activities from the city centre. This map shows the distribution of functions in the central cores of Attica, as well as the new poles of attraction.
INCOME LEVELS

This map shows the distribution of income of the residents of the metropolitan area of Athens along the south to north axis. Reading this map, we have to take into consideration that the high and low income is defined according to the economical standards of Greece, where the minimum wage is one of the lower in Europe and the second lower between the countries of the Eurozone.

SOURCE:
Through the historical analysis of the city of Athens, we mapped its urban sprawl. But the way the city has expanded is deeply connected with the movement of social classes to different parts of the city according to their needs. In this map we see the current formation of the socio-economic classes in the city of Athens and how this can be connected with important projects for the city.

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASSES**

SOURCE:

**Olympic infrastructure**
Project context
Problem Statement

From both social and spatial point of view, the inner city of Athens is under pressure. The intense suburbanization process which started at '80s and intensified during '90s led to the abandonment of urban property, the degradation of the urban environment and the decrease in activities in the city centre. In parallel, the reinforcement of the centralities in the periphery of the city, particularly during the preparations for the Olympic Games, led to socio-spatial inequalities between the centre and the periphery. The uneven development between the centre and the periphery had as impact the gradually decay of the city centre which deconstruct of the spatial cohesion. The role of the city centre as the main commercial and administrative pole in the whole region of Attica is diminishing.

Simultaneously, the social composition of the city centre changed and diversified through the progressive arrival of immigrants, at first mostly from the Balkans and the former Soviet Union and more recently from Africa and Asia. According to Stavrides (2010), the fact that people from lots of other places are following their paths towards a possible better future intersecting in Athens, is becoming crucial for this city’s identity. The high concentration of immigrants and marginalized social groups in central neighbourhoods and the lack of governmental policies concerning their socio integration led to the increasing of the socio-spatial fragmentation in the inner city. Immigrants and other socio-spatial groups are socially and spatially excluded because they are considered to be a ‘formal’ part of the social and spatial structure of the city. Consequently, these ‘informal’ social groups are excluded from significant social ties and they deal also with economic exclusion and lack of access to the job market.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that even though Athens was traditionally a socio-spatial mixed city, nowadays the condition of socio-spatial fragmentation is increasing and in the inner city ‘islands’ of abandonment and exclusion are more evident. The recent years, the impact of the fragmentation in the social-spatial cohesion of the city and generally the decay of the city centre of Athens, has been the topic of an intense discourse. The governmental policies of the last years concerning the city centre of Athens have as a main goal the regeneration of areas that have been stigmatised as dangerous and extremely degraded areas and mainly the return of the former inhabitants back there. However, these policies don’t take into consideration the existing realities in the centre of the city which are the conditions of urban fragmentation and socio-spatial segregation or even the exclusion of specific social groups.
INCOME LEVELS II

This map shows the distribution of income of residents in different areas of the center of Athens. The current levels of income, especially in the center of Athens, have been influenced by the high rates of unemployment in Greece. This has played an important role to the living conditions of Greek families (according to Eurostat in 2011, 22.4% of the people in Greece live in jobless households) and to the way low income households are distributed in the center of Athens.

SOURCE:
onsite research.
This map represents the strict land values in the center of Athens. It is clear that there is a variety of land prices, from the higher to the lower. The areas around Acropolis, the Parliament and the Lykabitos Hill have the highest land value, while the area with low land values are historically considered as industrial or working class areas.

From 2008 and on, and mainly due to the economic recession, there is a clear tendency for the land values of the center to fall. Despite the general fall of the prices, the areas with high land value are still considerably high, especially in comparison with the other areas.

SOURCE:
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.

IMMIGRATION

Spatial Clusters
- 19.7% immigrants of which 57.4% from group 2, 14.4% from group 1, and 11.5% from group 3.
- 14.3% immigrants of total population, of which 83.8% from group 2.

Migrant Concentrations, 2001
- >40% 30-39.9% 20-29.9% 10-19.9% 0-9.9%

Migrant Settlements, 2005
- >2.5 2-2.5 1.5-2

SOURCES:
- 2012: Hate on the Streets - Xenophobic Violence in Greece, Human Rights Watch.
This map shows the concentration of abandoned buildings in the centre of the city. The functional decay is identified in the main arteries as well as in central residential areas. Several reasons are related with the functional decay such as the suburbanization process, the new centralities in the periphery and recent economic crisis.
This map shows the concentration of homeless in relation with spaces where common meals are organized. The definition of homeless can be separated in 4 different categories: people who live in the streets, people without houses that live in shelters, people who squat and people that live in unfitted places like containers and slums. The homeless in the center of Athens are increasing constantly and even though until now it looked like the 'greek city' could respond to the demands of housing (usually not by social housing but through policies like granting and legalization of encroachment), the situation now has changed mostly due to the increasing number of people that are under the danger of poverty.

SOURCE:
Aim of the project

According to the problem statement analysed above, the general aim of this thesis is to deal with the existing realities and urban problems of the Athenian urban core and more specifically with the conditions of urban fragmentation and socio-spatial segregation and exclusion of specific social groups. In particular, by focusing on a specific central neighbourhood in Athens, this project proposes a regeneration strategy that takes into consideration all the existing inhabitants of the city centre of Athens, especially those who are excluded from significant social ties and working opportunities. Moreover, this project aims to rethink how the current conditions of abandonment and decay in the city centre can be reversed. Thus, this project aims to provide a platform of negotiation between diverse actors with diverse demands on the urban space. This platform is investigated at the local scale in order to reconsider the role of the neighbourhood as a place of social inclusion where diverse communities can coexist and everyday practices can take place in a dialogue process.

So the main aims of this project are:

- to understand the complexity of the Athenian urban form and the parameters that formed the current socio-spatial configurations in the city
- to define who are the current actors and which are their daily systems and their socio-spatial demands
- to rethink the role of the local scale of a central neighbourhood within the whole system of the city
- to establish a platform of negotiation between top-down decisions and bottom up practices, multiple scales, and diverse actors and demands

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this thesis is that by re-scripting urban negotiation between multiple scales, actors and plans, a possibility is created to develop a spatial consensus, so that socio-spatial cohesiveness can be reinforced.
Reasearch questions

The main research and design question derived from this problem statement is:

**Which are the conditions that allow a platform of negotiation to be developed in the local scale of a neighbourhood?**

The sub-research questions and the methods that are used in order to answer them are:

1. Which are the current conditions that define the socio-spatial structure of the city?  
   (Data study, Urban analysis)

2. Which are the political, economical, social parameters which led to the current socio-spatial structure of the city?  
   (Historical analysis, data study, literature study)

3. Which are the policies concerning migration in Greece and in other European countries?  
   (Theory study)

4. Which is the role of the neighbourhood concerning the social inclusion?  
   (Theory study)

5. Who are the current inhabitants of the city centre, who are excluded and which are the conflicts between different social groups?  
   (Data study, study trip)

6. Which are the spatial needs of the inhabitants and their daily systems?  
   (Data research, Interviews)

7. Which are the spaces that can be form the base ground for the development of a negotiation strategy?  
   (Urban analysis, typological analysis)

8. How can these spaces be re-activated?
Theoretical framework

Socio-spatial segregation

During the last decades, the spatial dimension of social processes has been the object of studies of many scholars in the field of urban studies. Segregation is the projection of a social structure into space (Haussermann, 2005). In general, many authors stated that segregation reinforces social inequalities. Living in a segregated community will increase the chances to be socially excluded.

There are diverse perspectives of social exclusion. In general social exclusion is a process of non acknowledgement and deprivation of social rights and resources of certain segments of certain population groups that takes the shape of power dynamics between groups with conflicting interests (Billete and Lavoie, 2010). Billete and Lavoie (2010), classified exclusion according to the following seven dimensions: (1) symbolic exclusion (negative images and invisibility), (2) identity exclusion, (3) sociopolitical exclusion (barriers to political participation), (4) institutional exclusion (reduced access to services), (5) economic exclusion (lack of financial resources), (6) exclusion of significant social ties (loss of social network), (7) territorial exclusion (unsafe neighbourhood).

Moreover, many other scholars discuss the link between segregation and exclusion. They claimed that someone living in a segregated area has less social opportunities than someone with the same characteristics elsewhere. Segregated social groups usually are excluded from significant social ties and there are the issues of not having access to the kind of networks for climbing the social ladder (VanKempen, 1994). In other words, they deal with economic exclusion and the lack of access to the job market (Buck and Gordon, 2004).

For the new migration flows in European cities, the issues of economic exclusion, exclusion of significant ties, territorial exclusion, as well as civic/political exclusion are particularly important. In many European cities the official data show that the labour market participation of immigrants is still significant lower than the participation level of non-immigrants. This is more intense when were referred to immigrants who live in spatial segregated communities.

When the segregated situation prevents access to a range of services and the job market, individuals will become be excluded from a range of opportunities. This theory was intensively developed by American scholars referring to the disconnection between black ghettos in the US and the jobs that were decentralised towards the suburbs (Wilson, 1987).

However, there are many other scholars who claimed that segregation is not necessarily a negative element in society. They discussed that the spatial concentration of people with the same background creates the ground for newcomers and also increases self-organization of people. According to Kesteloot (2004), segregation can act as an empowering mechanism for social cohesion. He defined social cohesion as the capacity of acknowledge the existence of different social and territorial groups present in the city, their diverse and sometime contradictory interests as well the capacity for these groups to organise themselves and for the city to create institutions in which these groups can confront each other and decide about the city’s future. He claimed that spatial cohesion cannot be found in consensus, but it consists in settlements on conflicting visions.

The above theory is directly related to the concept the “right to the city” which was developed by Lefevre (1974). This concept is based on actually living in the city and oriented towards the production of space. It has a political dimension and it is related on citizenship and the access to decision making (Lefevre, 1974).
Policies tackle with segregation

Spatial segregation and especially socio-ethnic segregation is generally considered as negative for several reasons. Many policies and strategies have been introduced to fight this phenomenon. Some policies aim to decrease segregation by enhancing social mix via housing policies while others tackle segregation by giving the opportunity to different social groups to participate in the decision making and decide together for the city’s future. The first approach of social mix was the basis for many policies that have been implemented in certain neighbourhoods in Dutch cities, where live mainly immigrants and other low-income groups.

At 2007, in cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague in The Netherlands, one out of three persons were from a non-Western origin. A large number of these immigrants mainly live in post-war neighbourhoods (VanBruggen, 2000), in houses offered by the social rent sector. The concentration of immigrants and other low-income population groups in these neighbourhoods was noticed as a negative condition by the Dutch state which created policies towards an urban renewal. By constructing new buildings in place of the old building stock, the aim was to attract middle class or higher income people to live in neighbourhoods that were constituted mainly by low-price social rent housing where mainly immigrants and low-income people lived. These policies aim to tackle spatial segregation by changing the socio-spatial structure and enhancing housing mix.

However, housing and spatially targeted policies have been the subject of many critics. These policies might have a positive impact on the living conditions of people in the targeted area but its potential effect on overall levels of deprivation and exclusion is very limited (Body and Parkinson, 2004). The spatial proximity does not necessarily help in reducing the social distance.

Moreover, in order to move towards a good city, one needs to foster social cohesion at the level of the city as a whole (Amin, 2006). Therefore, policies wanting to tackle segregation should target the exclusion mechanisms, not only support the poor in targeted areas or promote spatial mix of different social groups. Spatially targeted programs are problematic because instead of social integration, displacement and further polarization are often achieved (Kesteloot, 2004).

A different approach was developed in Germany, through the national programme ‘Socially Integrative City’ (1999). A key instrument in this programme was a tool which is so-called neighbourhood management and the main aim of this tool was a particular structure of urban governance which empowers cooperation among local actors and existing administrative. A budget was provided by the national state to neighbourhoods in order to use it for the creation of small scale interventions according to the local needs, in that way the decision making was in the hands of local communities. This means that the local communities were responsible to decide how to use this budget.

The local communities were represented by a body of representatives who can be local residences, businesses or institutions, however local residents should represent at least more than the half of the members of the community council. All the residents of the neighbourhood can participate in these councils and that fact gives the opportunity to immigrants to participate in decision making. The main aim of this instrument is that by giving the opportunity to diverse social groups to participate in the decision making, to deal with segregation.

The programme ‘Social Integrative City’ was constructed through institutional reforms both at the local and the national level. According to many scholars it is necessary to act in multiple levels in order to tackle segregation. In the next chapter the particular role of a neighbourhood as a place of social interaction will be discussed, as well as the necessity of multiscalar thinking to tackle segregation.
The role of the local scale

Urban space is the place where different social groups meet each other and diverse activities happen. According to Kestellot (2004), the city is an arena where different socio-spatial groups can confront each other. He referred to the confrontation of everyday activities and the conflicting interests of different social groups within the urban space. However, how is it possible to find a way of negotiation between segregated communities with conflicting interest? Which is the role of the local scale of the neighborhood in this process?

In literature, urban neighbourhoods are related with the word ‘community’. Moreover, they are related with the collective activities and practices of people living in a specific place, their social networks, social encounters, as well as the sense of belonging. Consequently, understanding the neighbourhood in administrative terms is a rather straightforward business; it is much more elusive if neighbourhood is conceptualized as a particular form of a non-bounded spatial scale constituted by far-stretching relations or trajectories, but in particular by everyday practices. (Vaiou, 2007). Seen this way, the neighbourhood is much more than a container; it is also a privileged place of the everyday and an arena for claims to the city – a set of resources through which people lead their lives (Vaiou, 2007:p.60). In other words, it is important not to see the neighborhood as a bounded territory but as a place where diverse social networks overlap each others.

Wilson (1987), referred to the importance of neighborhood for economic weak groups. He stated that these groups are more dependent on their immediate environment, the neighborhood, rather than people from mainstream society. In this way, their daily life is dominated by the neighbourhood, and therefore the neighbourhood influences strongly the behaviour and attitudes of its residents. Even people without political rights, in the places where they live their everyday lives can take part in many social and cultural activities and even find ways of political expression (Amin, 2006). Especially for the immigrants that live in European cities the possibility of integration at the local scale gives them the opportunity to establish their social and spatial networks.

Many scholars have stated that the neighborhood is an arena for claiming the right to the city. However, many other scholars claimed that the local level is not powerful enough in order to form the conditions that claim the right to the city. The local scale has only a limited impact on the overall mechanisms producing inequalities (Dreier et al., 2004). The mobilization in different scales is needed in order to forge new institutional arrangements out of the social innovative action (Fernandez, 2007). The local action is necessary to be combined by collective actions at other spatial scales, thus interrelated different levels of political negotiation and struggle (Kesteloot, 2004).

Consequently, it could be said that actions at the local scale can have a very positive impact on the living conditions of the inhabitants, however according to many scholars there is a necessity for a multiscalar thinking in order to deal with socio-spatial inequalities and more specific urban fragmentation. With respect to this approach, a continuous negotiation process between the local, the metropolitan and the regional scale could be more effective than acting only at the local scale. Kesteloot (2004), referred to the concept of a negotiated city which according to his theory can only be achieved if the different social groups recognize each other as equal partners in the city and if negotiation institutions are created for this purpose.
source: Dimitis Michalakis, Burnout, 2010-2012
Relevance

Scientific

As it has been analysed above, the recent economic crisis has found the city of Athens in a long established urban crisis. This urban crisis is a result of a complex process that has to do with trends, events and policies during the last decades and led the urban core of the city to the current conditions of urban decay and socio-spatial fragmentation.

What this thesis aims to achieve is to detect which are the overall mechanisms that formed the ground to the current urban crisis and to define the spatial effects of diverse social and political processes. In general, the spatial effects of social processes have been the subject of studies of many scholars in the field of urban studies. However, the urban crisis in Athens is combined with the intense economic recession of the last years. Consequently, this thesis aims to rethink how an urban regeneration strategy can be developed in a time of crisis and which is the role of urban designers and planners in this process.

More specifically, by rethinking how an urban negotiation platform can be established at the local scale of a neighbourhood, the main aim is to provide guidelines on how the local scale can be re-activated in a time of crisis and which is the impact of this process to the condition of socio-spatial fragmentation. Therefore, the main academic relevance of this thesis is related with the issue of social cohesion in cities in a time of economic crisis.

Societal

The aftermath of the social and economic crisis in the Athenian urban space is at the heart of the public debate during the last decades. The fragmentation of the urban space and the development of urban ‘islands’ in the city centre, has a direct impact on the socio-spatial cohesion. The stigmatization of central areas as dangerous, extremely degraded areas where low-income social groups and immigrants are concentrated, has triggered social conflicts and xenophobic behaviours. Moreover, the lack of governmental polices concerning the existing realities reinforces this phenomena.

The aim of this thesis is to take into consideration the existing realities in the city centre, the diverse actors and their socio-spatial demands in order to develop an urban strategy that re-establishes urban negotiation. By re-establishing urban negotiation between diverse actors and their demands, socio-spatial cohesion can be reinforced. Moreover, by taking under consideration the restrictions imposed by the crisis, this thesis rethinks the ways that an urban regeneration process can be developed and how diverse communities and local inhabitants can have an active participate in the process.
Methodology

The general field of the research part of thesis is the shifting urban conditions in Athens. In order to identify these conditions a historical timeline was created. The timeline gives insight in the relations between global, political, social, economical factors and shows their effect on the city of Athens. Moreover, a detailed urban analysis (regional and urban scale) was developed in order to research the current urban conditions.

Based on the above historical and urban analysis, the problem statement of this thesis was defined in relation to the urban decay of the city centre as well as to the socio segregation and urban fragmentation. The main aim of this thesis is to deal with the existing realities in the Athenian urban core and to create a platform of negotiation between these diverse actors and their socio-spatial demands. Consequently, the main research and design question is: which are the conditions that allow a platform of negotiation to be developed in the local scale of a neighbourhood?

The research question is investigated at the local scale in order to reconsider the role of the neighbourhood as a place of social inclusion where diverse communities can coexist and everyday practices can take place in a dialogue process. In order to answer the main research and design question some necessary steps have been followed:

- socio-spatial analysis of the specific location
  The spatial analysis of the area focuses on the existing spatial problems that the specific location faces along with its potentialities.

- actors’ analysis and daily systems analysis
  The analysis of the existing / conflicting actors, their spatial demands and daily systems is crucial since ‘negotiated’ spaces have been defined as the spaces that can respond to diverse daily systems and demands of different social groups.

- analysis of governmental policies
  The analysis and the understanding of the governmental policies for the city centre of Athens is necessary in order to establish a platform of negotiation between plans, actors and demands.

Combining the above information, the principles of an urban renewal based on platform of negotiation can then be defined. A strategic plan for the neighbourhood will be created and then specific design interventions will follow.
These diagrams describe the overall structure of this graduation process. The first part analyses the process of the research ‘Fear and Loaning in Athens’ conducted by the members of the Urban Asymmetries - Athens studio that formed the basis of my individual problem statement. The second part describes the structure of the individual research and design process and explains how the different parts of the process relate to one another.
GENERAL PROBLEMATIQUE
Shifting role of the city centre - Uneven development between the centre and the periphery

PROBLEM STATEMENT
- Urban decay in the city centre - Spatial inequalities
- ‘Visibles’ and ‘Invisibles’ realities - Social segregation - Conflicting interests
- Current conditions in the city city
- Governmental policies don’t correspond to existing conditions

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Socio - spatial segregation
Urban fragmentation
Negotiated city

AIM
Deal with existing realities and urban problems in the Athenian urban core and more specific with the condition of social segregation and urban fragmentation

HYPOTHESIS
By rescripting urban negotiation between scales / actors / plans, a possibility is created to develop a spatial consensus, so that socio-spatial cohesiveness can be reinforced

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Which are the conditions that allow a platform of ‘negotiated’ spaces to be developed at the local scale of a neighborhood?

SPECIFIC CONTEXT
1rs district of Municipality of Athens: Agios Pavlos - Vathis square

SPATIAL STRATEGY

DESIGN INTERVENTIONS

EVALUATION

DIAGNOSIS
Spatial Analysis
Actor / Daily systems Analysis
Governmental policies
Site specific
This map shows the centralities of different functions in the center of Athens and the network they create. In this map is represented a diagram of the most important knots of public space in the center of Athens. These are green spaces, landmarks or functional spaces, and could be understood as basic spaces that create links between different areas of the city. They create a network of possible movements or functional links, important characteristics of the centrality of Athens. The differentiation of colour and radius shows the different function and importance of each knot, while the network that is created by their connections is also separated in primary and secondary links.


Relation between the specific context and the centralities in Athens
The 1st district - Agios Pavlos & Vathi square

The specific context of the design project is located in the 1st district of the Municipality of the centre of Athens. The 1st district is the most central district of the city centre which includes in its territory the neighbourhoods of Ilisia, Kolonaki, Agios Pavlos-Vathi square, Gerani, Plaka, Koukaki, Psurri and Monastiraki. It is the district where the asymmetries in terms of income of the population, land prices and concentration of immigrants are more intense. The project focuses in the neighbourhood of Agios Pavlos-Vathi square which is located North-West of the district, in proximity to the central square of Omonoia. The area is bounded from the West by the rail tracks and from the East by Patission street, which is one of the most important commercial streets in the city centre. At the North, the area is bounded by Lianou street while Karolou street is the Southern limit.

The neighbourhood has passed through several transformations the recent years and today faces important socio-economic and urban problems. Until the ‘60s, it was a bourgeois neighbourhood mainly inhabited by upper and middle class population, however during ‘60s and ‘70s due to the building boom of this period, has gradually transformed to dense mix-use area. During this period, especially the part which is located around Vathi square, concentrated many commercial and administrative functions and was one of the most important centralities in the municipality of Athens. However, after 1970, the suburbanization process had important percentage of the inhabitants left gradually their properties in the city centre and started moving towards the suburbs seeking for a different lifestyle far from the high dense and polluted city centre. The abandonment of properties led to an urban degradation of the building environment while public space was cramped by vehicles parked everywhere. Open plots were transformed to parking spaces in order to cover the needs of local inhabitants but mainly the needs of the city users since in the area were located important centralities.

During the ‘90s the social composition of the neighbourhood changed and diversified through the progressive arrival of migrants, at first mostly from the Balkans and the former Soviet Union and more recently from Africa and Asia. The empty apartments, the low rents and the opportunities in employment that the city centre provided due to the mobility systems and the concentration of economic activities attracted a high proportion of immigrants who having low financial means were searching for housing and working opportunities. During this period where in the city existed an intense construction boom, immigrants as low-cost labour had the possibility to find a job and become gradually socially and spatially integrated.

At the same period, the development of new centralities in the periphery of the city, absorbed functions from the city centre. Around 2000, there was a decrease
of public and administrational services. The role of the area within the metropolitan scale weakened and consequently this transition had an impact on the living conditions. The abandonment increased and was related also with public buildings, hotels, commerce even parking spaces.

In the beginning of the 21st century, there was a transition from gradual abandonment to reuse due to a second wave of immigration in Greece. Due to its location on the east border of Europe, Greece started to become the arriving country for thousands of immigrants mainly from Asia and Africa and the city of Athens the principal arriving city due to the amount of working opportunities being offered. The second wave of immigrants who arrived in Athens concentrated mainly in the 1st district of the city centre and particularly around Omonoia square.

Even though the second wave of immigrants influenced the socio-spatial configuration of the city, as has been already stated there was a lack of governmental policies concerning their integration. That fact led to social segregation and to the development of a xenophobic tendency between immigrants and native inhabitants.
This map shows the distribution of income of residents in different areas of the center of Athens. The current levels of income, especially in the center of Athens, have been influenced by the high rates of unemployment in Greece. This has played an important role to the living conditions of Greek families (according to Eurostat in 2011 22,4% of the people in Greece live in jobless households) and to the way low income households are distributed in the center of Athens.


The following part presents the research that has been conducted in order to recognize the existing social and spatial conditions in the area, focusing mainly on issues related with the urban decay. This recognition is essential in order to develop an urban strategy that counteracts to existing problems that the neighborhood faces and also to recognize existing opportunities. Through the research were identified the urban character of the area, the high level of abandoned and vacant spaces and their concentration in specific parts of the area. Moreover, a part of the research concerns the governmental plans for the specific area as well as for the surroundings in order to identify if the official plan corresponds to the existing socio-spatial characteristics.
Urban character

The current urban character of the location can be defined by dividing the area in two parts. The one part is related with the existing centralities on the surroundings and it has a supra local character. The other part that is more isolated from the primary network, it has the local character of a neighborhood.

data source: www.archive-gr.com
Abandonment

The consequences of suburbanization and decentralization led to the high level of abandoned urban properties. The recent economic crisis contributed in the decrease of commercial activities in the area. The abandonment of the urban property and the decrease in commercial activity led to a gradual degradation of the building environment.

Activities in the past

In the past, the activities in the area were distributed in its whole extent. In the primary network were concentrated mainly administrative and commercial functions, while in the local streets were concentrated mainly small shops, workshops and some warehouses. However, during ’90s the development of new centralities in the periphery of the city, absorbed functions from the city centre. Around 2000, there was a decrease in activities in area as a result of the abandonment of urban properties and the decentralization of public and administrative services. Nowadays, the activities are mainly concentrated on the primary network. As a result, the flows of people are concentrated on the periphery of the area.

data source: www.archive-gr.com
The high percentage of low income people and the presence of marginalized groups, combined with the urban abandonment and the gradual decrease in activities the last decades, led to the disconnection of the local scale from the city network and to its stigmatization as a marginalized area with high level of abandonment and criminality.

Local scale

The high percentage of low income people and the presence of marginalized groups, combined with the urban abandonment and the gradual decrease in activities the last decades, led to the disconnection of the local scale from the city network and to its stigmatization as a marginalized area with high level of abandonment and criminality.

Closed commercial spaces and workspaces

source: author’s own photographs

Abandoned buildings

source: author’s own photographs
The images show some of the abandoned properties and vacant spaces that exist in Agios Pavlos. Many of the abandoned spaces in the past were residences of higher income people that during 90s moved to the suburbs of the city. The commercial activity that existed on the ground floor of ‘polykatoikia’ buildings, it is obvious that has been decreased. However, during the last years some new shops appeared that have been established by immigrants who live in the area.
In the last two decades the social composition of the area has changed and diversified. Gradually, there was a transition from abandonment to re-use due to the progressive arrival of migrants, at first mostly from the Balkans and the former Soviet Union and more recently from Africa and Asia. However, nowadays the vacancy rate of housing units is high, as well as the vacancy rate of commercial spaces and work spaces. Concerning the socio-economic characteristics the majority of the population is low-income people while the number of unemployed people is also high in comparison to other areas in Athens.
permanent inhabitant - elderly
source: author’s own photograph

immigrants with their children
source: author’s own photograph

immigrant worker
source: www.lifo.gr

immigrant collecting metal scrap
source: author’s own photograph
During the last decades, there was a lack of governmental policies concerning the city centre of Athens, since the governmental interest focused on the development of the centralities in the periphery of the city. However, after 2004, the public interest returned to the city centre because of the multi-dimensional problems that is facing. The last few years, there is a general discussion concerning the future of the urban core of Athens which is expressed through proposals and policies that concern mainly the regeneration of public space.

The most recent proposal is the regeneration of Panepistimiou street, one of the most important axis of the city centre. Panepistimiou street is located on the 1st district, in proximity to the area of Agios Pavlos-Vathis square. Consequently, this proposal has a direct impact to the specific location of this thesis. More specifically, the project of the regeneration of Panepistimiou street was organised and funded by the Onassis Foundation through the European Architectural completion “Re-think Athens” – “for the creation of a new city centre”. The project is a multifaceted intervention centered on Panepistimiou Street, extending from Amalias Avenue to Patission Street and ending at a new brand Omonoia Square. The project aims to make the city centre a destination for people instead of a traffic area for automobiles and on the same time to aesthetically and environmentally upgrade it.

Moreover, another goal is the reinforcement of the commercial, administrative and financial activities of the city and the re-habitation of the city centre. Simultaneously, the project aims to highlight the historical and the cultural profile of the capital. The overall strategy will be beneficial to a mix of users: today’s inhabitants of the central district, new pioneers, entrepreneurs, artists and tourists.

Main principles of the project:

- Panepistimiou street will be transformed into, a green spine, central in a green network, providing shade and shelter.
- The green network is combined with a new tram line (connecting Syntagma square with Patissia) which contributes in reducing car traffic and make pedestrian-friendly the heart of the city.
- The green network is treated as a coherent network of public realm and a link between the adjacent neighbourhoods.
- Panepistimiou street will change from street to boulevard, by adding inviting spaces to stay to the linear space.
- Vacant buildings will be reused for cultural and artistic events. Programs are also related to Greek philosophy, science and drama.

Stakeholders who are involved are:

- Onassis Foundation
- Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climatic Change
- Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport and Networks
- Attico Metro S.A
- Region of Attica
- Municipality of Athens

source: www.rethinkathens.org
This project is one of the most important projects that have been developed during the last years in the Athenian urban core. The implementation of this project, that is planned to be completed until 2015, is expected to have an impact to the area of intervention of this thesis and to other areas in the Athenian urban core that face multi-dimensional problems such as abandonment of the urban property, urban fragmentation and social segregation.

It could be said that the danger that exists because of the implementation of this project, if it will not be combined by additional governmental policies, is to become a gentle process of gentrification. The land and rent prices will be gradually increased, so the low-income people who live in the neighbourhoods around Panepistimiou street will be forced to move to other areas. However, the relocation of the problem doesn’t offer any solution to the existing problems that the Athenian urban core is facing. Therefore, the main questions based on the above are: How is it possible to make a renewal process to work in favour of diverse actors who have diverse socio-spatial demands? How can a platform of negotiation be developed?
In a precious section was described how the booming growth of the suburban development has an impact on the degradation of the Athenian urban core and particularly the area of Agios Pavlos – Vathis square. This transition in urban dynamics promoted the demolishing of the vacant buildings that exist in the area and their replacement with parking lots, in order to serve the needs of the city users or to attract people back into city centre offering 'easy parking'. During '90s in Athens, parking facility offered an economic opportunity for property owners because decent income could be generated without much investment in the city core where vacant buildings were demolished. The parking lots were for many property owners short-term profitable solutions for reusing the vacant land while waiting for long-term opportunities for economic recovering. In that way parking lots had a speculative value for property owners.

In the area of Agios Pavlos, are located more than 30 open parking spaces. Nowadays, the parking facilities in this specific area cannot offer much profit for the property owners and for this reason many of them are fairly empty and used only specific hours per day, or even totally vacant. In particular, the parking lots that are located along the main arteries (Patision Avenue, Acharnon and Liosion street) are mostly used on a daily basis. On the other hand, the parking lots which are located in the local streets in the inner core of the area are less used on a daily basis, or even not used at all.

The diminishing use of parking facilities is related with the decrease in flows of people and combined with the concentrated abandoned urban properties enhances the feeling of insecurity in the area.

The above conditions formed the basis in order to start rethinking if these fairly empty open spaces can provide something more than car storage especially in an area that faces urban fragmentation, social segregation and abandonment. In other words, to rethink how these spaces can be transformed, in order to acquire a social value instead of a speculative value.
source: author’s own photographs
By considering as an opportunity the possible transformation of fairly open parking spaces, a further research was made in order to identify the specific characteristics of each parking lot. The research focused on the following elements:

- location
- physical characteristics / size
- control and ownership
- financial system
- network connectivity
- programmatic correlations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>22 Mezonos str</td>
<td>23 Mezonos str</td>
<td>7 Ipeou str</td>
<td>54 Ipeou str</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>3460 m²</td>
<td>560 m²</td>
<td>780 m²</td>
<td>720 m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cars</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times</td>
<td>7.00 - 22.00</td>
<td>7.00 - 18.00</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>7.00 - 20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>Privately owned same owner</td>
<td>Privately owned</td>
<td>Municipality of Athens</td>
<td>Privately owned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Usage</td>
<td>40% City users (8.00-18.00) 60% Local users (65 cars)</td>
<td>80% City users (8.00 - 18.00) 20% Local users (4 cars)</td>
<td>80% City users (8.00 - 20.00) 20% Local users</td>
<td>80% City users (7.00 - 20.00) 20% Local Users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay per hour</td>
<td>Pay per hour (5€ / 1-12 h)</td>
<td>Pay per hour (4€ / 1-12 h)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Pay per hour (5€ / 1-12 h) Monthly rent (50-110€)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly rent</td>
<td>(40 - 120€)</td>
<td>(40 - 100€)</td>
<td>Monthly rent (50 - 100€)</td>
<td>Monthly rent (50-110€)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Station</td>
<td>Metaxourgio (400 m)</td>
<td>Metro station Victoria (300 m)</td>
<td>Bus station (50 m)</td>
<td>Bus station (500 m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus Station</td>
<td>(150 m)</td>
<td>Bus station (50 m)</td>
<td>Metro station Victoria (300 m)</td>
<td>Regional Rail Station (350 m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>(10 m)</td>
<td>Vathis square (150 m)</td>
<td>Patision street - commercial activity (50 m)</td>
<td>Ipeou street - commercial activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTUA - School of Architecture (250 m)</td>
<td>National Archaeological Museum (100 m)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
δ Urban strategy
Aims of the strategy

The spatial organization of contemporary city can be described as a network, which includes nodes of concentration of economic, cultural and commercial functions. These nodes can be described as centralities where people, flows, vehicles and activities are mostly concentrated. As it has been analysed before, during '80s and '90s the area around Vathis square at the centre of Athens was an important centrality where commercial and administrative functions were mainly located. The degradation of its role within the city network due to the decrease in activities and the suburbanization process had an important impact on the whole area of Agios Pavlos-Vathi square, and contributed to urban decay.

The strategy of this project aims to rethink the social and the spatial conditions of the area in order to provide opportunities to counteract the processes of decay, urban fragmentation and socio-spatial segregation. The main aim of the strategy is to propose a revitalization process for the area of Agios Pavlos-Vathi square in Athens that can encounter directly the existing conditions of decay and socio-spatial fragmentation and at the same time to create the base for the long-term revitalization of the area.

Through the recognition of the existing socio-spatial characteristics, the spatial strategy that has been defined is not based on a fixed final design, but on the development of a transformation and integration process that is shaped in time. More specific the proposed strategy aims towards the re-activation of the local scale of the neighborhood on a short and long term basis and its re-integration in the city network. In addition, taking into consideration the governmental driven plan for the regeneration of Panepistimiou street, and thinking the potential negative consequences that were analysed before, the strategy aims towards the empowerment of the existing social infrastructure in order to counterbalance these consequences.

Consequently the main aims of the strategy are:

- counteract fast to the existing conditions and create a basis for long term revitalization
- re-activation of the local scale and empowerment of existing social infrastructure
- re-integration of the local scale in the city network and coexistence of the diverse and different
Re-programming parking lots

A key element and the starting point in this regeneration process is to use the existing system of brownfields and fairly empty parking lots that exists in the area, as the main pattern of interventions of the urban regeneration strategy. The reprogramming of these spaces based on activities that have mainly a temporal character can contribute to the fast reactivation of the local scale. The aim is to provide guidelines on how these spaces can be re-programmed and transformed to nodes of short and medium term activities that allow a continuous negotiation between diverse stakeholders and interest groups who will gradually become agents in this revitalization process.

This process starts from the parking lots that are located in the core of the selected area since these lots are fairly empty on daily basis and can influence directly the local scale. The specific lots have been selected according to location, functional correlations and network connectivity. Diverse activities are proposed that have a revertible and flexible character. These activities need to correspond to the local demands and at the same time to create a platform of negotiation between local and city scale.

Through the research on the existing urban conditions and the demands of the inhabitants, a template of possible activities was defined which is based on three main principles: local facilities, collective spaces, local economic empowerment.

The program provides the inhabitants with access to social facilities such as green spaces, playgrounds, sports fields and to short term activities that contribute to the empowerment of local economy such as urban temporal open markets and food tracks. The inhabitants, who are mainly low-income groups, can participate in these activities and gradually generate profit. Many of the these activities aim to attract external population in the area and contribute to recreate a link between the local and the urban scale.

Moreover, as it was mentioned before, the proposed activities have a revertible and flexible character that aims to rapidly re-activate the local scale while at the same time in a long term plan can create the basis for a long term activities in the area.
The nodes of activities are divided into two categories:

1. **nodes of internal-external integration**
   Four parking lots located in proximity to existing centralities comprise nodes of activities shared by the local inhabitants and external population such as market places. These nodes function as attractors for external population enhancing the permeability of the area to diverse actors.

2. **nodes of local activation**
   Four parking lots located in the inner core of the neighbourhood constitute nodes of activities that contribute to local re-activation and to the development of social relations between the inhabitants. The proposed activities in these nodes provide mainly everyday services. Based on the existing network of public spaces, these two categories of spaces are connected through functional links and are incorporated in the existing functional structure of the area. The new activities on the parking lots are combined with the existing parking facility, with two exceptions; the two parking lots that are totally empty. The proposed activities are the starting point for negotiation and integration between people and space.
The proposed activities can take place on a short or medium term basis which is depended on the negotiation process with the parking owners. According to the type of node, some of the activities have a more stable character and in order to take place need infrastructure and funding like a playground while others have a more temporal character and can take place in a short term time plan, such as an open market. Activities like the open market can attract external population in the area take place in the peripheral nodes which are located in proximity to public transport.

Each node can host more than one activity in different time lapses and frequencies. The aim is to activate the flows of inhabitants and external population in the area in different time spans in order to re-activate the flows of people in the area not only a specific time but every day of the week during day and night.
The weekly timeline illustrates the relation between time - activity - frequency. The following diagrams compare two days of the week, Wednesday and Sunday in order to illustrate how activities can differently influence the flows of people these two days but also during the same day.

The new activities and empowerment of flows of people in the area will contribute to the reintegration of the area in the city network and the gradual decrease of spatial fragmentation. Parts of the area that are avoided by external population due to the high level of abandonment and the concentration of marginalized groups can be re-integrated in the city network. Moreover, the reinforcement and the gradual consolidation of flows is necessary for other activities to happen on a long term basis.
Activities - Flows of people

Wednesday

Sunday

flows at 11:00 am
flows at 8:00 pm
existing centralities
new nodes
parking lots
Programmatic interventions in four selected lots

Having analysed the basic parameters of this transformation process, it is necessary to zoom into a part of the area in order to illustrate the proposed programmatic interventions. In the location that has been selected, there are eight open parking lots. The majority of them is fairly empty on daily basis, consequently four of them are proposed to host new activities. The type of the activity has been formed according to various parameters such as:
- size and location of the lot
- network connectivity & functional correlations
- inhabitant’s demands
PARKING LOT 1

The specific parking lot is one of the biggest lots that exist in the area and is located close to the metro station. The activity that is proposed to take place in this lot is an open market. A part of the lot can be used by local people who have something to sell or exchange, such as: wooden small furniture, second hand products, metal products, vegetables and many more. The variety of products will attract external population to visit the market. In that way, the activities and the flows of people in the specific location will gradually increase.
PARKING LOT 2&3

These parking lots that are located on the core of the area are fairly empty on daily basis. The aim is these fairly empty lots to be transformed into spaces that will empower the social interaction and relations between diverse inhabitants: elderly people, kids, immigrants. Each lot has different character according to its specific location and functional correlations. A part of the parking lot 2 is proposed to be used for urban agriculture. The parking lot 3 is proposed to be transformed to a space for urban game.
PARKING LOT 4

The fourth parking is located in a narrow street in proximity to Vathis square. On the other side of the street there is a seven-storey parking building. A part of the lot is proposed to be used in order to host two types of activities: mobile food tracks and a temporal market. The mobile food tracks stay in the lot for some hours per day, while they can move also to other parts in the area. The market is open on weekends together with the market on the parking lot 1. Local people who participate in these activities can have a small economic profit. At the same time the proposed activities contribute in the increase of flows of local people and external population in the specific location.
Proposed condition

- Flea market
- Vegetable market
- Urban agriculture
- Food Tracks
- Second-hand market
- Playground
The proposed strategy aims to revitalize the neighbourhood of Agios Pavlos in Athens in a way that empowers the re-activation of the local level and at the same time its re-integration in the city level in order to overcome the current condition of socio-spatial segregation. A key element in this process is the re-programming of the existing parking spaces based on activities that have flexible and revertible character. These activities can contribute to the fast re-activation of the local scale and will become the basis of long-term activities in the area.

The overall regeneration strategy needs to be considered as a gradual process that will be shaped in time. In order to establish a systematic implementation process, the strategy is built up in phases. The whole process is based on a continuous negotiation between diverse stakeholders and interest groups who become agents in this process of neighbourhood revitalization.
1. establishment of a LOCAL COMMITTEE
2. negotiation with PARKING OWNERS
3. information of LOCAL INHABITANTS & EXTERNAL POPULATION
decrease in municipal taxes in order to convey temporally their property
organization & implementation
license agreement (short or medium term)
MUNICIPALITY
NGO
INHABITANTS
PARKING OWNERS
information kiosk
local economic empowerment
parking space
vacant buildings
vacant commercial spaces
The starting point of the whole regeneration process is the establishment of a local committee with the participation of local inhabitants and members of the municipality. By this, the local inhabitants can be involved in the whole regeneration process and take part in decision making. The responsibility of the local committee is the organization and the implementation of the whole process as well as the negotiation process with the involved actors. The local committee acts as a mediator between residents, municipality and diverse stakeholders.

The process starts with the aim to re-programme the existing parking spaces which are fairly empty on daily basis or used only for specific hours per day. The re-programming of these spaces aims to increase the activities and the flows of people in the area. In order to enable the re-programming of these spaces is necessary to negotiate with the parking owners with the aim to have a license agreement that allow the use of their ownership. The tool that the strategy proposes is the decrease of the taxes that the owners pay to the municipality. By this way, the owners will have a financial profit without investment while the municipality has the right to use these open spaces in order to host new activities for the neighbourhood. At the same time it is also necessary local inhabitants to be informed for this municipal programme and more specifically about the proposed collective activities and opportunities for their economic empowerment though their participation.
3. re-programming of parking spaces  → short and medium term uses

- negotiation with the local cooperatives
- local economic empowerment / collective spaces
  - a. flea market  public workshop  COMMERCIAL COOPERATIVE
  - b. urban agriculture  → AGRICULTURE COOPERATIVE
  - c. food tracks  flea market  COMMERCIAL COOPERATIVE
  - d. playground

provide basic infrastructure

MUNICIPALITY

parking space  vacant buildings  vacant commercial spaces

Metro station

4. empowerment of flows / external integration

attract EXTERNAL POPULATION
PHASE 2

The second phase of this process is the implementation of phase 1 concerning the re-programming of parking spaces. The base unit in this phase is the inhabitant, who in groups will form cooperatives applying for participation in the proposed, by the municipality, activities. The cooperatives form the basis for a greater self-administration of local inhabitants, the formulation of their collective needs and an easier negotiation with the municipality (local committee). The participation of the inhabitants concerns the activities that aim towards the local economic empowerment and through their participation the inhabitants can generate small profit. These activities are: market places, food tracks, urban agriculture.

Other activities such as playgrounds will be implemented in collaboration with local inhabitants, architects and other cooperatives in order to enhance the participation of diverse people in the process.

The main aims of this phase are:
- The re-activation of the local scale and the increase in activities in the area
- The enhancement of social relations between the inhabitants and the local economic empowerment
- The increase in flows of people (local inhabitants) and external population towards the area through their participation in the proposed activities.
5. re-activation of closed shops / vacant spaces  →  short and medium term uses
increase activities in buildings until that future long term activity will happen.

MUNICIPALITY (organization)

negotiation with PROPERTY OWNERS
providing their empty spaces for new activities on a temporary basis

LICENSE AGREEMENT short term (3 months)

LOCAL SOURCES  GOVERNMENT SOURCES

AGRICULTURE COOPERATIVE
COMMERCIAL COOPERATIVE
LOCAL COMMUNITIES
CULTURAL COMMUNITIES
CRAFTSMAN COOPERATIVE
ARTISTS

funding

 temporal use / maintenance

retail spaces commercial spaces workspaces
PHASE 3

The third phase of the process focuses on a further increase of the activities in the area and the consolidation of flows of people. It concerns the re-activation of the high percentage of vacant spaces that exist in the neighbourhood. At this stage the strategy focuses on a further reinforcement of short and medium term uses in order to create the basis for long term activities to happen. A model has been created in order to generate new activities in the currently vacant, disused or awaiting for redevelopment buildings and commercial spaces. The model proposes the negotiation between the local committee and the property owners in order to borrow their empty properties.

The model relies on the negotiation between the local committee and the property owners who have vacant buildings within the area, to make them available for short-term activities. They can negotiate the terms they wish to make the space available on and the type of the activity that will take place. The aim is the local cooperatives as well as other social groups such as cultural groups and artists to use these spaces on a short of medium term basis. The process leads to a short or long term license agreement between the future users and the owners.

This model aims to a further increase on activities in the area and on a further local economic empowerment. At the same time this model offers a number of positive outcomes to diverse actors:

- Short or long term modes of production (PARTICIPANTS – LOW INCOME PEOPLE)
- Spaces for social interaction (INHABITANTS)
- Reduce of vandalism, squatting or other illegal activity (PROPERTY OWNERS)
- Lower maintenance costs (PROPERTY OWNERS)
- Long term value of the property – activities and vitality in the area will increase the long term value of the area (PROPERTY OWNERS)
- Renewed interest from commercial tenants (PROPERTY OWNERS)
- Attract visitors – revitalize of the local scale (ALL ACTORS)
from short and medium term uses to long term perspectives → consolidation of uses

transformations on public space

consolidation of uses

increase accessibility

Ministry of Development, Competitiveness, Infrastructure, Transport and Networks

Ministry of Environment, Energy & Climate Change

MUNICIPALITY OF ATHENS

transformations on public space

increase of pedestrian space

more lighting and green spaces

PROPERTY OWNERS

LICENSE AGREEMENT (TEMPORAL BASIS)

PROPERTY OWNERS

LICENSE AGREEMENT (PERMANENT BASIS)

PROPERTY OWNERS

PROPERTY OWNERS

redevelopment of their own property

USERS

LOCAL COMMITTEE

provide guidelines
PHASE 4

The former phases which are based on the short and medium term activities form the basis for long term activities in the neighbourhood. The activities will have mainly commercial and retail character based on the former activities. Until this phase, the whole organization model was based on the continuous negotiation between inhabitants, local government and diverse stakeholders.

In this phase, in order to form the ground for long-term development perspectives, the strategy proposes the transformation of public space focusing on the streets profile in order to contribute to the consolidation of flows in the area and the attraction of external population. By improving the quality of public space, adding more lighting and green spaces, the aim is to enhance the permeability of the neighbourhood to visitors. The Ministry of infrastructure and different municipal departments are primary responsible for these kind of transformations.

However, the local committee can provide the general guidelines concerning the collective needs of the inhabitants and generally of the neighbourhood.

The aim of this phase is to contribute in the overall strategy for the revitalization of the neighbourhood in a short and long term basis. The proposed short term activities on the fairly empty parking spaces and the empowerment of short and medium term activities on the vacant buildings and commercial spaces can lead to long term license agreements or to redevelopment perspectives of vacant ownerships. The transformation of public space will contribute in order to get the neighbourhood active and used again.
The overall revitalization strategy needs to be considered as a gradual process that will be shaped in time. In order to establish a systematic implementation process, the strategy is built up in phases. The following part presents the gradual alteration of two of the nodes. The aim is to predict or propose how this network of activities can evolve through time. In this way, we can see how temporal activities can construct the possibility for more permanent uses. Nothing is absolutely permanent, however if it works well during time, can gradually influence its surroundings. The aim in this process is the proposed short-term activities to form the basis for further short or long term activities. In order to illustrate this process, two nodes have been selected.

Gradual alteration of two lots
PHASE 1

The process is at its very beginning. The parking lot is there, but it is fairly empty on a daily basis. In the surrounding streets the activities and the flows of people are limited. Many commercial shops at the ground level of 'Polykatoikia' buildings are vacant while some 2-3 storeys buildings are totally abandoned.

In this process the negotiation between the local committee with the parking owner has just started. The municipality offers a decrease in the municipal taxes to the parking owner as a barter in order to use a part of his property as a temporary market place.
PHASE 2

In this phase the agreement between the parking owner and the Municipality has been completed. It is Saturday morning and a part of the parking lot is used by local people who sell a variety of products such as wooden small furniture, second-hand products, metal products and many more. Many of the vendors are immigrants who live in the area. People who don’t live in the area have came in order to buy products because of the variety that the market offers.

The participants in the market have started to organize themselves in cooperatives. These cooperatives form the basis for a greater self-administration and formulation of their collective needs as well as an easier negotiation with diverse actors.
The market continues to function on a temporary basis. The local vendors, through the cooperatives that have been formed with the collaboration of the Municipality, have negotiated with the owners of the vacant commercial spaces in order to create new activities there. They pay a low rent to the owners and they are responsible for the maintenance of the property. The owners are satisfied since their properties are protected from vandalism and illegal activities. Moreover, the increase of activities and flows of people in the area, contributes to the increase of the long term value of their properties.

It is Sunday afternoon and the activities and the flows of people in the surrounding streets are increased. New vendors sell products in the market while others who have a small commercial shop or workshop on the surrounding streets sell their products with discount in the market. The location have started to become ‘famous’ as a place where people has find retail shops and a variety of products in low prices. At the same time the local economy have started to be reactivated. Low income people and immigrants have started to become small entrepreneurs.
The activities and the flows of people keep increasing. The market still functions on a temporary basis while there is a consolidation of the commercial activities and workshops on the first floors of ‘polykatoikia’ buildings. The flows of people in the location are increased on a daily basis.

The profile of Chiou street has been transformed and the street functions as a local corridor with mainly commercial uses at the ground floors of the ‘polykatoikia’ buildings. The parking lots along the street have been transformed to an extension of the pedestrian pavement. The archades are used temporarily as extensions of the activities in the private space, creating a threshold between private and public space. This street that connects the Central Railway station with the historical centre of the city gets a supra local character. The location functions as an anchor of people and products from diverse origins and cultures. The local inhabitants, immigrants or not, live and work on the surrounding streets, while external population visits the area on a daily basis.

PHASE 4

Sunday 19 June 2020. 12:20
Gradual alteration
Urban space under negotiation
Supposing that the starting year of the implementation of this process is 2013, the process has been shaped in phases that create a 5-10 years plan. In order to illustrate in various ways this process, perspective views have been created. These perspectives give a better understanding of the spatial characteristics and urban morphology of the specific location.

**PHASE 1**  *Friday 15 June 2013*

**PHASE 2**  *Saturday 9 November 2014*
PHASE 4

Sunday 19 June 2020

re-activated commercial shop

Hassan and Nadir use a small vacant space as workshop on a short term basis

extended pedestrian pavement

Tuesday 21 June 2020

re-activated commercial shop

extended pedestrian pavement
Gradual alteration of two lots - LOT 2
In the previous part was analysed how the proposed temporal market can create the basis for the re-activation of the commercial activity and workshops located on the surrounding of the specific parking lot. However, it is very important to test the effect of the proposed activities on the urban space in different locations. The same analysis was made based on another parking lot.

As it has been analysed above, in this phase the process is at the very beginning. The parking lot is there, but it is fairly empty since across the street there is a seven floor parking building that attracts more users. In the surroundings, many 2-3 storeys buildings are abandoned or totally vacant. Moreover, some workshops at the ground level of ‘Polykatoikia’ buildings are vacant.
PHASE 2

In this phase the agreement between the parking owner and the Municipality has been completed. It is Wednesday morning and two mobile food tracks have parked at a part of the lot. The food tracks have attracted some passengers that are having lunch on the small space that has been created with movable chairs and tables. In the afternoon, a part of the lot hosts an open market. Local people and many immigrants sell or exchange a variety of products and services. People who don't live in the area have came in order to visit the market. The market operates also on Sunday in collaboration with the other market in the previously analysed parking lot.
PHASE 3

The food tracks and the open market have created a basis for the economic empowerment of local people and for the reinforcement of social interaction. Based on the above, it is possible that the local people to start to organize themselves in cooperatives.

In a three year plan, some local people will be able to rent based on a negotiation between the cooperatives, the local committee and the Municipality, an abandoned building and re-use it as collective workshops. At the same time the increase in the activities and flows of people had created the basis for more permanent activities that can be hosted on the vacant buildings and shops.
Gradual alteration
PHASE 1  Wednesday 5 June 2013

PHASE 2  Sunday 9 November 2013

PHASE 3  Wednesday 19 June 2020
This process indicates a gradual increase in activities in the area starting from short term activities on empty parking lots. Over time the flows of people are increased, vacant spaces are gradually reused and the commercial activity on the first floor of Polykatoikia buildings is reactivated. Finally, an alteration on the identity of the area is achieved. Gradually, if the site benefits from this process, it is can be applied to other empty lots in the area or to be expanded in other parts in the city with the same conditions.
The proposed activities start to take place at specific parking lots in the local scale of the area. However in this first phase the activities are limited at the specific spaces while in the area there are many vacant shops and abandoned buildings.
PHASE 2  2014

The urban structure of the area starts to seem different. On the surroundings of the re-programmed lots new activities have started to appear. Vacant commercial spaces and abandoned buildings start to be re-activated. In some streets the flows of people start gradually to increase.
At this phase many vacant spaces and abandoned buildings have been filled by new activities. The streets that in the past were characterized by high level of abandonment and were stigmatized as dangerous, start to get a new identity, re-connecting the urban and the local scale. The hierarchy of the street network starts to change.
PHASE 4  2020

In 2020, the local scale of the area is not anymore segregated from the city network. Some of the activities at the parking lots continue while others have stopped or alternated. Many more vacant spaces have been reactivated and there is a stabilization of flows of people in the area. In this stage if this process has been evolved as it has been defined above, it could be beneficial to start being applied in other parking lots or vacant spaces in the city.
In 2025, the governmental plan concerning the regeneration of Patission and Panepistimiou street has been realized. Patission street has been transformed to a green boulevard within a ‘European context’. Higher income people start to return back to the centre and the land prices on the surrounding streets have started to increase. The social composition of the area of Agios Pavlos starts to diversify. The low income people and immigrants who live and work there take advantage of the increase in flows of people in the area. Finally, the regeneration of Patission and Panepistimiou street is beneficial for the area since new connections between the local and the urban scale are being created.
Evaluation
The urban strategy that is being proposed by the present thesis aims to rethink the social and the spatial conditions in the area of Agios Pavlos in Athens, in order to provide opportunities to counteract the processes of decay, urban fragmentation and socio-spatial segregation. The main aim of the strategy is to propose a revitalization process that can encounter directly the existing conditions of decay and socio-spatial fragmentation and at the same time to create the base for the long-term revitalization of the area. In order to evaluate the outcome of the project, it is necessary to step back and rethink if the proposed strategy corresponds to these aims.

The starting point of the strategy concerns the re-programming of brownfields, currently used as parking lots, in order to create a platform for new activities to happen in the area. The proposed activities have mainly a short term character and constitute the first step for the re-activation of the local scale. Some of the activities such as the flea market and the food tracks contribute to the empowerment of the existing social infrastructure since local people through their participation can generate profit. Moreover, these activities can attract external population in the area and consequently the flows of people will be gradually increased. In that way, it is possible to achieve the re-activation of the local scale even in a short-term basis and the gradual re-integration of the local scale in the city network.

According to the planning framework, the process that is necessary to be followed in order to start the implementation of the activities, is not very complex and it will take a few months to build up. What is needed is an agreement between the parking owners and the Municipality of Athens, as well as informing the inhabitants in order to participate in the activities. In that way, the proposed system can encounter directly the local scale without the implementation of governmental resources. This parameter is considered as critical for this project since we need to keep in mind that Greece is now facing the 5th year of economic recession.

The second substantial aim of the strategy concerns the long term revitalization of the area. For this reason the strategy has been set as a gradual process shaped in time which has been divided in phases. The first phase that concerns the re-activation of parking spaces with temporal activities forms the basis for the next phases that concern the empowerment of more permanent activities. The analysis that has been made explains and predicts how some of the proposed activities can be evolved through time, contributing to the re-activation of vacant commercial spaces and abandoned buildings. In that way, the proposed strategy aims to decrease the urban abandonment and finally, to establish the long term revitalization of the area.

However, it is necessary to recognize that there are some potential risks regarding the whole process. The first concerns the negotiation process with the property owners, since it is possible to deny cooperating. For that reason, the benefits for the property owners have been extensively analyzed in the planning framework. The second potential risk concerns the time-span of the
proposed planning framework. For instance, the period of three years that was defined as the starting point of the re-activation of vacant spaces, could be regarded as too ambitious since it depends on the complexity of the negotiation process. However, keeping in mind that in a time of crisis it is necessary to propose solutions that can have a direct impact, we consider that the proposed time plan can be realistic.

A third risk concerns the potential ‘failure’ of some of the proposed activities. However, as it has been already explained the whole process and more specifically the proposed activities have a flexible and revertible character which means that they can be alternated during time according to the corresponding conditions. This parameter is also critical since this project reinforces the idea that urban space is not the psychical construction of a designed object but it is continuously developed as social, cultural and political production.
Recommendations
Based on the evaluation that has been analysed above, there are certain recommendations for further research.

1. Potential application to others locations
   The main recommendation for further research concerns the potential application of the proposed strategy in other locations with similar conditions in Athens or even in another city. By testing the proposed pattern in another location, it will be identified if it can be a generic model or not. Moreover, it will be beneficial to test if it is possible to be expanded to the surroundings of the specific area creating the basis for the re-activation of activities there.

2. Platform of negotiation
   The second recommendation concerns the negotiation process between the diverse stakeholders and interest groups. A further research could be focused on the financial parameters of each phase of the process. More specifically, what is potentially required is the calculation of the implementation cost during the first phase in order to reactivate parking spaces. Furthermore, a feasibility study that calculates the economic profit for diverse stakeholders such as parking owners would also be beneficial.

3. Transformation on public space
   The third recommendation concerns the possible transformations in public space. This project has already proposed possible transformations on the street profile of specific streets based on a long term plan. However, if this strategy works at it has been planned, the re-activation of the commercial activity and the increase in the flows of people can be intensified in more streets. Consequently, it is equally beneficial to have a complete plan concerning long term transformations of public space.
ё Bibliography


KAZEPOV, Y. (2005) Cities of Europe, Changing contents, Local arrangements and the challenge to urban cohesion

KAZEROS, N. (2005) The Urgent Fact – the City in Urgent Condition, Athens, Futura


Websites

http://www.cityofathens.gr/AthensMaps
(Accessed 27/11/2012)

http://www.gsis.gr/ggps/statistika/statistika.html
(Accessed 20/11/2012)

http://www.rethinkathenscompetition.org
(Accessed 19/3/2013)

http://www2.ekke.gr
(Accessed 20/1/2013)

http://www.indice.gr
(Accessed 10/1/2013)