Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Strategic tools for socio-spatial transformation in Athens

Ifigeneia Dimitrakou
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation:
Strategic instruments for socio-spatial transformation in Athens
MSc Thesis

Ifigeneia Dimitrakou
ifidimi@gmail.com
4193393

Keywords: Athens, crisis, abandonment, polykatoikia, instruments, socio-spatial segregation

Mentor team
Dr. Diego Andres Sepúlveda Carmona - Chair of Spatial Planning and Strategy - Department of Urbanism

Dr. ir. Gerhard Bruyns - Chair of Architecture Theory - Department of Architecture

Dr. ir. Heidi Sohn - Chair of Architecture Theory - Department of Architecture

External committee member
Salomé Bentinck - department of Real Estate & Housing

Supported by Stavros Kousoulas - Architect, Researcher TU Delft - Department of Architecture

Faculty of Architecture, Delft University of Technology
MSc Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences
MSc track Urbanism
Explore-Lab

This thesis is downloadable for free from the TU Delft library website:
http://www.library.tudelft.nl/collecties/tu-delft-repository/

Delft, July 2013
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Strategic instruments for socio-spatial transformation in Athens
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation
This thesis forms the culmination of the Master of Urbanism at Delft University of Technology. The research & Design Project presented herein was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Diego Sepulveda-Carmona, Dr. ir. Gerhard Bryuns and Dr. ir Heidi Sohn in the department of Architecture of Delft University of Technology between September 2012 and July 2013. The aim of the project was to provide a response to “urban decay” through a strategy which focuses on the betterment of the conditions of inhabitation in the centre of Athens and the socio-spatial integration of the “invisible” or “informal” in the system of the city. The outputs of the graduation project are a context-based strategy for the neighbourhood of Agios Panteleimonas in Athens and three planning instruments which cover all the levels and patterns of abandonment and define from new programs and urban rules to power formations, and decision-making/implementation processes.
I particularly would like to express my appreciation to the main mentor of this project, Dr. Diego Sepulveda-Carmona for, for his patient guidance, enthusiastic encouragement and useful critique. In addition, I would like thank, Dr. ir Gerhard Bruyns and Dr. ir. Heidi Sohn, second and third mentors of the project, without whose knowledge and assistance this project would not have been successful. Special thanks should be given to Stavros Kousoulas, for the provision of material and mainly for his extensive support throughout the entire year as well as during the study trip in Athens. Besides, I would like to thank Prof. N.Vaiou, Prof. N. Vlastos, Prof. M. Mavridou, Prof N. Be- lavis, Prof. P. Tournikiotis Prof. S. Stavrides from the National Technical University of Athens and Prof. T. Maloutas from the National Centre for Social Research, for sharing their experience and point of view regarding Athens in crisis. I would like to offer my special thanks to Mr. Hein de Haan, for allowing me to interview him and provide his views on the subject of collective private development as well for the contemporary facettes of the “collective”, but mainly for giving me the possibility to visit and examine in situ the project of “De Vrijburcht” in Amsterdam.

Finally, my thanks also goes to “Fear and Loaning in Athens” group and to my groupmates: Katerina Salonikidi, Maria Stamati, Marloes Van der Pols and Evgenia Zioga for the inspiring discussions, our fruitful disagreements and the mutual support even after completing the collective project.
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

α Introducing Athens
   Shifting realities in the center of Athens

β Tendencies
   The “return” of the inhabitants in the center of Athens
   Who are the “invisibles”?

γ Problem Statement

δ Hypothesis

ε Aims

στ Research Questions
   Main & secondary research questions
   Parallel Research questions

ζ Methodology

η Analytical & theoretical framework
   Method
   The right to the city
   Urban commons

θ Site specific
   Site Selection
   The 6th district & Agios Panteleimonas
   Agios Panteleimonas as an “arriving point”
   Is this a ghetto?
Contents

1 Diagnosis ........................................................................................................................................... 79
   Context variables & conclusions
   Assessing polykatoikia model
   Official vision & future projects

2α Strategy ........................................................................................................................................... 107
   Approach methodology
   Strategy contextual
   Strategy systemic

2β Planning Instruments ....................................................................................................................... 119
   Instrument α - Social Tenure
   Instrument β - Temporary Use
   Instrument γ - C.P.R
   Instrument γ - Focus on the principles

2γ Evaluation ......................................................................................................................................... 149
   Binding the approaches

2δ Reflection ......................................................................................................................................... 149

* References
  List of images

^ Appendix I
   Interview with Thomas Maloutas- Architect, Geographer- Director of the National center for Social Research
   Interview with Hein de Haan- Architect, Urbanist- CASA architects, Urban Resort

^ Appendix II
   Theory of Urbanism:
   Right to the city: Housing & land policies as an alternative to neoliberal urbanization
   Thoughts about the R&D process and the relavance

* Contents
David Harvey (2012) declares that the current financial crisis is an urban crisis. Specific policies of the last decades defined modes of urbanization and therefore, shifted the dynamics in the city. Neoliberalism, sprawling and suburbanization, commodification of urban space and of the public goods had influenced the gravity points on urban space fact that led to the urban decay of specific areas and had as a consequence to an extended spatial and social segregation.

The above mentioned tendencies, are obvious in Athens urbanization processes of the last decades. More precisely, the suburbanization of the population living in the center, the de-centralization of the services - mainly after 2004-, and the simultaneous immigration flows, have reshaped the social geography of the city and have contributed to the formation of “no-go areas” in the center. Nowadays, these urban asymmetries are becoming more obvious and can be easily identified in the mixed-use areas of the center, where the concept of a certain social mixture existing until 1990’s, is in flux. Central areas are becoming nowadays places of conflict, where the “formal”, the “official” is contrasting the “informal” the “invisible”, the “other”. Furthermore, within the context of the economic crisis and the simultaneous rise of extreme-right ideologies, the above mentioned urban transformations are intensified, threatening the social coherence and to that extent the everyday life of the inhabitants.
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation
Definitions

Polykatoikia

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

Antiparochi

According to Maloutas(2004), antiparochi “is a cashless deal between landowners and builders for the construction of multifamily housing (polykatoikia) in which the builder is paid by the ownership of one or more flats after the completion. Antiparochi is now less used but still an important way of housing production.” (Maloutas, 2004 in Allen J., Barlow J., Leal J., Maloutas T., Pandovani L.)
Figure 1_ Topography (Woditsch R., 2009)
Introducing Athens
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

**Greece**
- 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

---

Figure 2 Demographics, Greece, Attika, Central Athens and the Municipality of the Center, (Fear and loaning in Athens Group, 2012)
Shifting Realities in the center of Athens

Since the 1990’s, the center of Athens is facing several transformations concerning more its socio-economic structure and less its morphology. Athens urban environment, constitute a multi-layered assemblage which according to Zenghelis (2011), at first sight could be described as informal, spontaneous, unplanned. In fact, the city of Athens is the result of very specific but unspoken political projects. Since the 19th century and the formation of the Greek nation-state, Greece is struggling to define its political and social identity, mainly by detaching itself from the oriental past of the Ottoman Empire and by aiming to become part of the West, a Modern European State.

According to the historical analysis developed within the context of “Fear and loaning in Athens Project”-ExploreLab, the ambitious project of westernization, starts from the very beginning of the modern-Greek history, runs along with, defines in the same time the socio-historic processes taking place in this geographical area until today. Athens as the biggest and most important agglomeration in Greece, can easily depict all these processes and transformations towards that direction. In mid-19th century, Athens a small abandoned “village” of 4,000 inhabitants, is aiming to become a European Capital, through big plans from Kleanthis-Schaubert and architectural projects made by foreign architects. Although, the fact that these phase of the city, had defined urban forms, traced social structures and tactics existing until today in the city, it can be said that center’s current structure and image, marked by the socio-political and demographic shifts of 1922, has been defined by the period of sharp post-war urbanization. More precisely, the exchange of population and the inflow of refugees in 1922 had an important impact in the urbanization processes, since the city doubled its population in a very short period. In front an increased demand on housing and land, the legal framework concerning the subdivision of land and the ways of production of housing was set (illegal encroachments, high subdivision of land property, horizontal ownership, antiparochi and the model of polykatoikia).

The socio-political processes taking place during the WWII, the Civil War and the post-war reconstruction phase that influenced and determined the image and the structure of the city of Athens. More precisely, an emphasis was given to the construction economy instead of industrial activities. The sharp urbanization of Athens, the increased urban demand and the lack of welfare state in urban policies led to the deregulation of housing production and market. Small investors and small landowners or families, where exchanging land with built urban space. This systems of production of housing defined i. the current urban morphology of the center of Athens ii. the mixed use and compact/ dense functioning of the city and one of the most important aspects iii. defined a socially mixed environment. Through the model of polykatoikia, a vertical social differentiation was formed fact that led to a certain class cohabitation, although the housing blocks of 1960s and 1970’s in Athens were not designed for this cohabitation. It is the system of production of housing blocks and their typology, which defined a tendency according to which the more affluent inhabitants occupy the higher floors and the lower incomes the lower floors, the ground floor and the basement.

This condition of coexistence started changing from the 1980’s and mainly the 1990’s due to the suburbanization trends in Athens. Therefore, inhabitants of the central neighborhoods, having the financial means, started moving on the periphery of the city seeking a different lifestyle. In 1990’s, under the influence of the economic development of the country, the European perspective and the expansion of the financial domain and loaning reinforced this tendency. The peak of suburbanization in Athens, coincide with the abolishment of the socialist regimes in Europe and the inflow of immigrants in Greece. Therefore, is now the immigrants arriving in the city who counterbalance the flow of inhabitants towards the suburbs. More specifically, immigrants started occupying spaces in the most dense central neighborhoods, areas with low urban quality, with lack of public spaces and lower rents. According to Malouts (2012), immigration of that period constitute a “gift” i. for previous house owners, since their apartments were in use rented ii. for the center of Athens, since the abandonment and the decay of housing in the center was counterbalanced by the augmented immigrants’ demands. Concerning the vertical social differentiation in the center during the 1990’s and the 2000’s, it is still existing with the only difference that lower income families of the first floors are mixed now with immi-
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.

SOURCE:
www.organismosathinas.gr

Figure 3, Map of Centralities of Greater Athens (Fear and Ioam in Athens Group, 2012.)
Strategic instruments for socio-spatial transformation in Athens

Figure 4. Map of socio-economic classes and Olympic project locations, (Fear and loaning in Athens Group, 2012.)

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CLASSES & OLYMPIC PROJECTS

Athens is one of the most dense cities in Europe. This map shows the residential density (inh/km²) in the region of Attica in 2001.
HIGHEST IMMIGRANTS CONCENTRATION

This map shows the areas with the highest immigrants concentration in the metropolitan area of Athens. Athens center and Pireus constitute the arriving points and the main poles.

SOURCE:

Figure 5. Map of immigrants concentrations in Attica, Dimitrakou 2013
grants who are even installed in spaces not appropriate for housing (i.e. storage spaces of the ground floor).

The Olympic Project started from 1996 constitute the period which the new centralities around Athens started developing. More precisely, the Olympic infrastructure installed on the North-East and South-East of the metropolitan area, and the expansion of the mobility system of the city shifted the gravity points and started absorbing the interest from the centre. However, this tendency was intensified mainly after 2004, when multifunctional centers (consumption, free time, entertainment and business oriented) boomed, public services of the traditionally installed in the center moved toward the periphery and the sprawling of the city became even more evident. In 21st century Athens, face the uneven development between center and periphery. From the one hand the population of the Municipality of the Center remained almost steady with a slight increase of 3%, and from the other hand the increase of the population of the Eastern and Western Attica regions had an increase of 36.3% and 21% respectively.

The displacement of land uses along with residential mobility tendencies had an important impact in the central area of Athens which became the place for the "undesirables" for the "informal". Within this context of urban neglect, realities, intertwined to every urbanity, such as prostitution, drug addiction, informal economic activities started to become more evident and conflicting the "formal" everyday life of the city. Simultaneously, the economic recession of the last years, the shrinkage of the welfare state had as a result the suppression of middle incomes, the increase of urban poverty, the rise of insecurity for the majority of the society fear, aggression.

The "undesirables", the "minorities" in the city, the "others", beaten sharply by the economic crisis, are now targeted as the "problem" of the city which has to be eliminated, are stigmatized and further discriminated. In fact, these groups (mainly immigrants) constitute a dynamic part of the center since their age, their background had and still can have an important impact in central neighborhoods. Therefore, this narrative, forged the last decades and became even official nowadays, can trigger even more conflicts between inhabitants, threatening the "social sustainability" of the center.

Figure 6_ timeline of the "vertical social differenciation" in Athens, (Fear and loaning in Athens Group, 2012.)

Table 1_ Demographics' fluctuations for the center and the periphery of Athens, 1991-2001, Dimitrakou 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Municipality of the Center</th>
<th>Perfecture of Athens</th>
<th>Perfecture of Piraeus</th>
<th>Perfecture of East Attica</th>
<th>Perfecture of West Attica</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2,664,776 inh</td>
<td>3,072,192 inh</td>
<td>3,043,655 inh</td>
<td>2,664,776 inh</td>
<td>2,577,609 inh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>3,072,192 inh</td>
<td>3,043,655 inh</td>
<td>3,043,655 inh</td>
<td>2,664,776 inh</td>
<td>2,577,609 inh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: ELSTAT


max cover max height max cover max height max cover max height

social structure & density

1970's 1980's 1990's

max cover max height max cover max height max cover max height

social structure & density

Figure 6_ timeline of the "vertical social differenciation" in Athens, (Fear and loaning in Athens Group, 2012.)
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Figure 7: Eviction strategies, (Panos Kouros, 2007)
Strategic instruments for socio-spatial transformation in Athens

Blow de la Barra
4th floor - Federico Herrero
5th floor - A. Plessas / M. Manetas
rooftop - Federico Herrero
flags - Carolina Caycedo
open Saturdays + Sundays
4PM - 8 PM

β Tendencies
The “return” of the inhabitants in the center of Athens

Nowadays, a discourse concerning the abandonment and the “urban decay” of the center of Athens have been intensified. We observe that during the last two decades, Athens experience a transitional period during which the center of the city is redefining itself. Multiple factors related to the production of space since 20th century, more recent tendencies related to polycentricity, suburbanization and mobility, along with some aspects of globalization (i.e. from Athens: global-event city to Athens: immigrants city), formed new urban patterns and led to simultaneous processes of sprawling and abandonment. It could be claimed that within the context of crisis, these modes of development, in combination with processes happening in the social, economic and cultural structure of the city form the right ground for the unevenness between center-periphery or between neighborhoods and “neighbors” in the center of the city, become more intense and “islands” of abandonment or exclusion are becoming more evident.

Several issues related to the degradation of certain areas of the center, had triggered the public discussion concerning “inhabitance” and or even the “return” of residential uses/users in the central districts and the policies concerning housing. However, it has to be mentioned that according to demographics and maps for the center of Athens, the city does not lack of built environment and it does not appear a sharp decrease in inhabitants the last 20 years, fact that could have multiple reasons as the i. the important concentration/density of people in some areas, thus an abandonment on other districts. ii. the exclusion of a percentage of the existing inhabitants because it is not considered to be formally part of the city center social structure (immigrants and marginalized social groups such as homeless etc). iii. the abandonment/no use of built space in correlation with boom of homeless etc. According to Vaiou (2012), architect-urbanist and professor at the Technical University of Athens: “the center, apart from the areas traditionally not related to residential uses, is not empty. In fact the decrease of the inhabitants is slight. It has to be mentioned that a lot of groups living in the center are not included to the official statistics for the Municipality of the Center of Athens.”

To that point it is worth asking how decay can be identified. Urban decay describes a shift on the social/economic structure of the urban environment that it is used function in a certain way. If city is considered to be process or a living organism, it could be said that decay is more related to a certain homeostasis which has been broken or disturbed and not to an ideal condition which was destroyed. Although “urban decay” can be used to describe a shift, constitutes a term negatively charged which is related to an ideal and nostalgic perception of the city which was lost. Therefore, within the context of the specific research-design project “urban decay” of the center will not be taken for granted, on contrary it will be questioned. Are the newborn formal and informal conditions in the city lead to a fragmentation or to a chaotic condition or “decay” is part of a narrative which aims in the discrimination/eradication of certain groups and the future “beautification” of the city? Therefore, we can have as a starting point that the social and the economic structure of Athens center transforms, changes, alters through a complex and long-term process in which “economic crisis” or the “other” is the pretext and not the cause of the mutation.

Nowadays, the most dense areas of the center of Athens, traditionally mixed in terms of use and social groups, face problems related to the conditions of inhabitance and quality of urban space (housing & public space), the social mixture and the right to housing (or shelter), the social interaction and coexistence, along with a rise of extreme non-legitimized violent reactions against minorities. The project aims to investigate and define the “urban decay” of the north-western part or the center of Athens (6th district of the Center of Athens- Agios Panteleimonas, Kypseli), where these conflicts between previous inhabitants and “invisible” social groups, are intensified the years. More precisely, housing policies, inhabitance and built environment, within the context of the Athenian urbanity, will be the starting point of the project. In this project I will attempt to define the unpack the urbanization process taken place and understand the decisions, policies and individual actions that formed this special urban form/condition where the “formal” opposes to “the other”, to trace the social transformations happening but mainly to focus on the notion of “inhabitance” and “neighborhood” under the perspective of the notion of the right to the city, defined by H. Lefebvre.

8 We can say that decentralization of public and private services, the suburban dream of private housing, the individual, profit-driven, developments, the “lower” urban quality provided (high density, lack of open space/air, conflicting uses and conflicting users during the day etc) created probably the fruitful ground for this abandonment.
9 The term abandonment characterize: abandonment in use for built and un-built space or even the decrease of the use and the interest for the space.

10 According to Oxford dictionary homeostasis describes “the tendency towards a relatively stable equilibrium between interdependent elements”. In the case of the city it can describe the dynamics developed between the different layers of the urban structure which cannot function perfectly, however they form a functional or accepted reality.
As it has been analyzed above (more though roughly in the collective analysis, see appendix), the last decade fragments of Athens center started becoming the place for the “undesirables” a place where “informal” is booming and conflicts to the existing formal structures of the city. The lack of a specific immigration policies, the shrinkage of the role of welfare state, the economic recession and the social transformations (rise of urban poverty, homeless) in combination with the urban “overloaded” environment of the center with multiple problems (in densities and built environment, in conflicting uses or lack of services accessibility, in traffic congestion, in lack of public space and open/green spaces, in pollution simultaneously) and the lack of strategies for the center (emphasis given in infrastructure and big project on the periphery instead of the center), have led to a vicious circle. Inhabitants with low accessibility to adequate housing or even shelter, low accessibility to jobs –mainly due to the economic crisis, low accessibility to social services, excluded from public life and decision-making, are experiencing further social and spatial segregation and therefore, the notion of the neighborhood is been threaten.

The project will attempt to become an in-situ urban integration project of neighborhood scale, in which demands and daily programs of multiple actors will be tested, taken into account and be redefined within a working-living-interacting system. Taking into account, the importance of the centers and its scope of influence, the importance of a neighborhood revitalization, the project aims in understanding the everyday use, behaviors, tactics, flows as well the multiple demands in urban space and defining through a strategy how all the actors, highlighting different potentialities, can contribute actively in revitalizing- rethinking about physical and immaterial space in the city/neighborhood.

As it has been analyzed above although social segregation is very clear, the spatial segregation due to the model of production of housing - see polykatoikia- is more developed vertically. Thus, the vertical social differentiation is been transformed into a vertical “socio-spatial” segregation.
Who are the “invisibles”

As it has been mentioned above, the discourse about the center of Athens is nowadays around the “return of residents” or the “attraction of new inhabitants”. This opinion promoted the last years, is referring either to a “creative class” that constitutes a very low percentage of the entire Attica population or to the inhabitants of the suburbs, who had left center mainly due to the urban quality and not due to the immigrants. The fact that residential neighborhoods of the center are inhabited - some of them are characterized by inadequate densities- means that an important percentage of the inhabitants of the center is not taken into account.

In order to identify who are the “invisibles” an overview on the actual social structure of the area is indispensable. According to the collective research-analysis of the project “Fear and Loaning in Athens: Shifting perspectives of space” the Municipality of the center of Athens, is mixed in terms of annual income. However, the higher incomes are mainly concentrated in more privileged neighborhoods (close to monuments and archeological, areas, parks and hills / areas traditionally “bourgeois”/ areas with lower densities, some of them gentrified the last decades). The main population of the area of our analysis, is of lower, low and middle income, installed around the historic center or on the residential areas mainly on the western and north-western parts of the center, which will be the area on the individual project.

Concerning the age characteristics of the population in the center, according to the official statistics 17% of the population is over 65 years old with higher percentages on the 6th (area of intervention) and the 3rd districts of the Municipality of the Center of Athens. More precisely, according to the Census of 200112 in the 6th district the percentage of +65 years old inhabitants fluctuates between 18,5-23,7% and in some blocks reach even the 48,5%. These general percentages for the center of Athens are higher than the European average for urban population, which fluctuates around 15% of the total population. To that point it has to be mentioned that this tendency was intensified in the 1990’s although the counterbalance positive effects that immigration had on the total population.

As it has been analyzed above the immigration since the 1990’s had an impact on the ethnic mixture of Greece and to that extent of Athens. Immigrants constitute more 10% of the total amount of the population living in Greece. According to recent estimations, the percentage of immigrants in the Municipality reach the 19% of the total population (Kaminis, 2011). However in the area of interest this percentage can be even more that 40% of the inhabitants per block (Vaiou, 2007). To that point it has to mentioned that immigrants cannot be considered as one group under the same characteristics. Apart from the fact immigrants in terms of age constitute a dynamic part of the active population, they have several differentiations regarding ethnicity, religion, gender. Nowadays, in the center Athens live around 251 different ethnic groups (Vaiou, 2007) categorized by the Hellenic statistics in 5 more general groups which include the percentage of the refugees13. This multi-ethnicity present in the center of Athens, can give already an impression about the different demands and uses of and in the urban space.

From the analysis done within the context of Fear and loaning in Athens: Shifting perspectives of space (see appendix intolerance map), it is evident that this ethnical mixture does not lead linearly towards the understanding and acceptance of “the other”. According to Park (Park in Hagan 2011) the heterogeneity of ethnic groups in the urban environment can lead to competitiveness in and for space or event conflict. More over different cultures, age groups and status define multiple demands and tactics on space which, within the density that cityscape provides, can be create a fruitful ground for either the development of certain narratives of fear of the “other”, further marginalization and clash. The fact that people concentrate in specific areas of the city because they do not have any other possibility (deregulated housing market14, low land values or community bonds that lead groups to certain areas in the city) it does not mean that they coexist or that they are able to interact.

Since the individual research design project attempts to provide alternatives on inhabitation in the central neighborhood, the issue of homeless cannot be ignored. The phenomenon of homeless in Athens and generally in Greece, used to be very limited. The importance of the family bonds and relations constitute one the most influential characteristics of the Greek-society (phenomenon developed in all the countries of European South). During the past decades more intensively, family constituted a solidarity network which sometimes was able to satisfy demands resulting from the lack of welfare state. This family-base model is still existing in Greek society, however in the bigger agglomerations (such as Athens) this model is steadily declines. This fact in combination with the austerity policies and the shrinkage of the social net provided by the state have as a consequence more people to live on the streets. According the more recent statistics provided by the NGO Klimaka, around 10,000 homeless are concentrated in Athens, which means the 50% of the total amount of homeless in Greece. Moreover, the reason why Greece did not have a high percentage of homeless is probably related to the high

12 The statistics from the last Census of 2011 are not available.

13 As defined in the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (the Refugee Convention), a refugee is defined as a person who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country or return there because there is a fear of persecution [...]”

14 According to the collective analysis for Athens, social housing policies were not promoted. Apart for some exceptions, the housing issue in Greek cities was “solved” through the subdivision of land and the distribution to multiple private owners in combination with the legal framework concerning antiparochi. Therefore, the housing of the urban population is depending mainly on private initiatives. Although, in case of the Greek system of production of housing, we are talking about small investors and land owners, housing is a commodity totally deregulated.
level property ownership. However, this "commodity" of private property last two years is threatened by the austerity measures promoted in the name of crisis. The issue of adequate housing and housing property will be analyzed in depth in the following chapters.

To conclude, the above text aimed to analyze the more vulnerable groups of the neighborhoods in the center of Athens, which constitute an important percentage of the social structure. As invisibles, it will be considered i. citizens neglected/not taken into account ii. or groups as immigrants (due to the limited rights) who do not have accessibility in services, in the decision making or the planning of the city ii. inhabitants that due to their current status and the disappointment towards society they deny to participate actively in the city life.

The groups analyzed above can be seen as the thread as the problem and the cause of multiple other urban issues. However, this narrative tends to exclude the existing dynamics resulting from these groups and the potentialities/long term benefits in multiple levels (social, economic, cultural or even political) for a neighborhood and to that extent for a city. In the following chapters, it will be attempted the understanding and the highlighting of these dynamic configurations that can exist in the city and under certain perspectives strategies and counter-policies can lead to the revitalization of a neighborhood.

The above analysis concerning the “invisibles” aims in understanding and putting in the discussion an important issue for urban life, which is the “right to the city”. According to some narratives mentioned above, city is seen as privilege of certain “desirable” or powerful groups, therefore “undesirables” or “invisibles” will always exist or be created in order to maintain it. Division is intertwined to urbanity however, is the market which expands it (Marcuse, 2000). Therefore, this tendency can potentially ii. lead more parts of the society into segregation and marginalization, ii. shrink the importance and the meaning behind the right to the city.
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 in 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.
OVER 65 YEARS OLD

Figure 11. Map of concentrations of elderly population in the center of Athens, (Dimitrakou, 2013.)
GREECE
Population: 10,749,943
Immigrants: 1,132,794
% population: 10.54%
Migrant native countries:
ALBANIA  676,846
BULGARIA    53,973
ROMANIA    45,289
GEORGIA   41,817
RUSSIA   37,980
POLAND   37,695
UKRANE   24,836
PAKISTAN  24,537
CYPRUS  19,712
U.K.    14,107

GREECE
Population: 10,749,943
Immigrants: 1,209,813
Migrant destinations:
GERMANY  470,350
U.S.A     151,239
AUSTRALIA  140,114
CANADA    85,126
ALBANIA   80,778
TURKEY    66,344
U.K.      28,102
CYPRUS    20,937
ISRAEL   19,919
BELGIUM  15,143


Figure 12_ Immigration flows from and to Greece, (Dimitrakou,2013)
Immigrants population in the center of Athens is according to estimations the 19% of the total population of the Municipality of the Center.
20,000 Homeless in Greece*

AGE
- 60.7% 41-45 years old

EMPLOYMENT
- 22% service domain
- 25% construction domain
- 19% tourism domain
- 18% free lance
- 7% sailors

EDUCATION
- 52.5% obligatory education
- 19.6% higher education

NATIONALITY
- 10.3% not Greek

- 1 out of 2 lives with less than 20 euros/day
- 82.2% men
- 17.8 women

* most of them living in Athens

Only in Athens 15,000 do not have access to adequate housing*

SOURCE: NGO Klimaka, 2012
Strategic instruments for socio-spatial transformation in Athens

Figure 15. Map of homeless concentration in the center of Athens, (Fear and loaning in Athens Group, 2013.)

HOMELESS CONCENTRATION

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:
& Athens National Technical University of Athens - School of Architecture and Engineering.

Figure 15. Map of homeless concentration in the center of Athens, (Fear and loaning in Athens Group, 2013.)
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Figure 16. 46 year-old Saiboul behind the bank of his mini-market narrates every day stories of violence in the area of Agios Pantaleimonas, (Eleutherotupsa, 2010)
Problem Statement
Problem Statement

The center of Athens the last decades faces socio-economic transformations. The suburbanization processes, the emphasis given on the peripheral centralities of the city, and the lack of interest for the central areas, converted the socially-mixed neighborhoods of the center into low income neighborhoods for the most vulnerable groups (mainly immigrants).

More specifically, the vertical social differentiation proposed by the polykatoikia urbanization model achieved a certain level of social mixture of the population which maintained until 1970’s and the 1980’s. Therefore, this system of production of housing promoted by antiparochi - polikatoikia model, based on small land owners, small investors and family networks, although being a deregulated system which contributed in the creation of a complex pattern of house ownership, proposed a increased social mixture starting from the unit of the building and expanding to entire neighborhoods. This condition of cohabitation started changing steadily from the 1990’s, when the higher and upper-middle income left their apartments and either 1. they rent their properties to families or per capita or 2. they left with no use their properties, waiting for the right circumstances to invest again. The last decades this tendency of abandonment and “invasion” of new actors has been intensified, from the unit of polykatoikia it has expanded to the block, to smaller entities of the neighborhood and subsequently to entire neighborhoods or even to larger areas in the center of the city, triggering a socio-spatial transformation of the center. However, it has to be mentioned that although this model has been deformed gradually, still has not lost its capacities in contributing in social (and nowadays ethnical) mixture of the neighborhoods.

The process of physical abandonment has triggered a functional abandonment and decline of the neighborhood. More precisely, the mobility of the population, had as a result the decline of residential, commercial activities and public services in the neighborhood and the rise of informal or even illegal activities. Nowadays, this functional shift is reflected in several scales in the neighborhood, from the building to the block, and from the block to the neighborhood, and 1. emerges “conflicts” in uses (formal-informal) and between users (“us”-“others”) 2. creates gaps in the functionality of the neighborhood (lack of programs and uses which correspond to actual demands) 3. influences significantly the local economy, the social-economic sustainability of the neighborhood and its role in the system of the city center.

All the above transformations in the social/cultural/functional profile of the neighborhood are interrelated to a process of abandonment which occurs in multiple scales and levels and form complex and diverse patterns (abandonment in several uses, in several scales, related to multiple stakeholders). Within this process of abandonment-invasion-decay the existing inhabitants having no means to intervene in these processes (low accessibility, low level of participation) are led to further segregation and stigmatization.

The role of the center of Athens has altered and a redefinition which correspond to the actual conditions, is important. The center as point of reference (a “connector”) for the peripheral areas, as an “arrival” point for immigrants, as a multifunctional and socially mixed collective project, as part of the collective memory of all the inhabitants needs to redefine its role and its function.

The last years the official regeneration plans propose the creation of a “new center” with the “return of the inhabitants” in the center. Main cores of the public discourse about the regeneration of the center are: the “urban decay” of the center and the “abandonment” due to the decrease of the population and the “return of the inhabitants”. Although, the decrease of the “legal” population of the center and the increase of the levels of abandonment are trends evident, it has to be mentioned that:

1. Although, these are not new phenomena, but processes evolving since the late 1990’s and the pick of the decentralization, the interest for the redevelopment of the center convert them into “the problem”.

2. There is a blind-eyes approach towards the existing conditions in the center, since “informal” or “illegal” or “undesirable” groups (such as immigrants, homeless, prostitutes) are not entirely included in the statistics.

We can conclude that the abandonment in multiple levels and scales is a ongoing process which demands a response, but at the same time inhabitants exist in the center which are not considered as part of the city. Therefore, the proposed visions for the center cannot respond to the existing realities and demands, since they focus in only one of the aspects of decay (abandonment).
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

geitonas
neighbor. A person who lives just in the next building but you don’t even know. His name or you are not interested to do so. You share with him your back-yard

akalyptos
the left over space of the block. It is a space not designed which sometimes is the place for “discovered” for kids. Most of these are not accessible

unfolding polykatoikia

Figure 17_Unfolding polykatoikia, (Dmitrakou, 2012)
Hypothesis
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Figure 18: Inhabitation in the center through a multi-scalar redefinition of polykatoikia model (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Hypothesis

The center of the city of Athens, apart from its historical importance, has a significant meaning not only for the people living there, but for all the inhabitants of the Metropolitan area since it is part of the collective memory. Despite of the decentralization of the last decades, the center still remains the most important multifunctional point of reference. The importance of the center and the asymmetry developed between center and periphery, impose a revitalization of living conditions in central residential districts. The question is under which term renewal can happen in the specific contexts, which will be the actors taken into consideration.

The groups which are not part of the official discourse concerning the inhabitance of the center, can be part of a revitalization strategy. These members of the society, due to their age and their background can become key actors for the revitalization of a central neighborhood and from “the problem”, “the other” can become indispensible part of the daily system of a self-sustained neighborhood. The aim is not to create an introverted immigrants’ community, but to find how discriminated parts of a residential neighborhood can i. find a meeting point/a point of interaction ii. start to create interrelations and interdependencies, with each other, with the rest inhabitants and the city in common spaces. This concept of integration in situ can have a strategic importance for the center for the center of Athens. Social integration and the empowering of the neighborhood can become a response on the “decay” of the economic crisis.

All the inhabitants, regardless of their economic means, gender, race, ethnicity or religion, can inhabit actively can claim their right to the city, though participation, negotiation, action and interaction with the city and the neighbors.

The current double process of abandonment-invasion of new actors forms a complex condition in the city and although these processes do not have always a cause-effect relation, shape a new condition in Athens central neighborhoods. Within this process of abandonment-arrival the new social configuration in the central neighborhoods of Athens is linked to the reconfiguration of the model of polykatoikia, which is responsible for the social and functional mixture of Athens. Since the results of the analysis show that these processes are intertwined to each other in combination with the official vision for the center of Athens, shape the right ground and become at the same time the pretext for the gentrification of the center, my hypothesis is that: “The problem” (abandonment or/and “the others”) is the strategic potential for the revitalization of the central neighborhoods. More precisely, 1. the recognition and the engagement of the existing inhabitants 2. the redefinition/ the reuse and the management of the abandonment starting from the polykatoikia model and expanding in all the scales of the neighborhood are key issues in a twofold process of social integration and urban regeneration.
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Figure 19: Uncategorised, (Vagaries, 2011) http://fantasiopliktia.wordpress.com/tag/%CE%B7%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%B4%CF%8C-%CF%84%CE%B8%CF%80%CE%AF%CE%B1/
Aims
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation
Main & General aims of the R&D process

The main aims of the project is to counteract urban decline by addressing two main issues of “abandonment” and “otherness” and extract the potentials out of these issues. Main objective is a duplex and reciprocal process of urban regeneration and socio-spatial integration by rethinking the polykatoikia model. The revitalization of the urban environment with the active contribution of multiple actors and stakeholders through a process which allows and aims in social integration and interaction in multiple scales of the neighborhood. Using the potentialities of polykatoikia and starting from the unit expanding to the block, and from the block to the sub-areas of the neighborhood and the city rethinking and managing abandonment through this point of view, the revitalization can be activated and probably be expanded.

More precisely it is about a revitalization and social integration model for a residential neighborhood in the center of Athens. By a working with the context - physical and human, formal and informal- and having as starting point the demand for affiliation with space, social interaction and tolerance towards otherness and right to difference, the project will attempt to propose alternatives that can emerge by focusing on a socially and programmatically system for the participation of all the actors existing in urban space today. Important will be i. to understand the existing policies and plans, the level of implementation and their ability to respond to the existing realities ii. to think about the tendencies and future scenarios resulting by the municipal proposals of their lack in order to to propose a strategy which is referring to multiple layers, levels and scales of the city in combination with instruments which can address to the complex processes of abandonment and vacancy by taking into account the effects of a revitalization process, such as displacement and disposition of the weakest social groups. By redefining the social and functional mixture, and the ways of living proposed by the polykatoikia model the proposal aims to become a model for rescripting and reusing the main principles of this model, and respond to one of the main issues of “urban decay”, which is the abandonment of this model. Challenging will be to find small scale and low-cost ways for revitalization that could be feasible and applicable in a period of crisis.

The steps of the research & design process are:

A. to understand the existing patterns and the complexity of Athenian urban landscape as this is expressed through i. the form of the city the built space and the processes concerning the production of space ii. the social structure and the social geography as it was formed horizontally (examining the city in plan) and vertically (examining the social mixture in section).

B. To map the urban -social, morphological, economic, cultural- transformations and understand the factors (policies and lack of policies) that led to the abandonment of polykatoikia model and to that extent to the vacancy of the central neighborhoods. To map the abandonment in several scales (un-built urban gaps, listed buildings, abandoned apartments) and identify the potentials rising from this vacancy.

C. To define who are the actors and finally the users - mapping the invisible and marginalized groups- and which could be the “common ground” between the conflicting groups.

D. Which could be the balance between top-down approaches and bottom-up initiatives in order to restore the “social sustainability”, balancing in the same time some aftermaths of crisis on the physical space and the public sphere.
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation


Figure 20, Interpreting Economist, (Dimitrakou, 2012)
Research questions
Main & Secondary research questions

Under this perspective, there are some key questions to be answered.

- Which are the capacities of the model of polykatoikia for rethinking social and functional mixture in multiple scales? Under which variables it has to be redefined?

- Which are the potentials of the existing groups in contribute in the process of revitalization and simultaneous integration? How revitalization can take place with the agency of the inhabitants?

- How the reuse of the abandoned spaces in all the scales can contribute in the revitalization process? For whom? How the process can be managed and monitored.

- Which can be the motives and the obligations for the agents to be engaged in these processes?

- How the management and reuse of the abandoned spaces in all the scales can contribute in the revitalization?

- Which is the “meeting point” between inhabitants and between actors and stakeholders (in physical space / in the decision making)?

- Which can be a model of cohabitation which responds to the actual demands emerged within the context of economic crisis?

Secondary research questions:

Can we conditions under which, inhabitance can be the starting point for claiming back the right to the city/ claiming the existing built space. (HOW & WHY housing-reuse of the space-alternative ways to use the space, redistribution of uses and users)

If and how the notions of “right to housing” related to the affiliation with place, and to that extent to the neighborhood feeling? and which is its importance within the context of crisis and the increase of urban poverty?

How the recognition of the local level and its participation in the decision making can be a key issue for the implementation and the monitoring and how all these can contribute in the the social coherence of the neighborhood.

Who (groups/individuals/users) is considered to have the right for housing in the central areas of Athens? And how local inhabitants can be converted into agents or stakeholders of the renewal project? (Not-another-gentrification-project) Which can be the alternative patterns of urban living (housing, public space, services and small scale economy based on the existing daily systems) that can work in favor of social integration, balancing in the same time crisis consequences in physical space?

Can we rethink Athens’ urban complexity and by taking into consideration 1. dense built environment 2. modernistic existing “heritage” 3. the potentials for social mixture highlighted by the typology of polikatoikia, provide a context-base proposal.
Figure 21. For sale or for rent, (Imerisia, 2012)
Methodology
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Figure 22. Outline of the methodology (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Methodology of the project

Tendencies regarding the future of the center of Athens as well about its future inhabitants, was the starting point for the graduation studio. Therefore, the problem statement based on the tendencies regarding the creation of a "new center" and is questioning the official narratives about the abandonment and decay of the central neighborhoods (demand for big projects for attracting back the "inhabitants" in the center) by referring to the dual process of abandonment and "arrival" of new actors which is occurring in multiple scales of the city. More precisely, this process is related and has as a result the deformation of the polykatoikia model and therefore the social and the programmatic mixture proposed is gradually decreasing creating spatial and social conflicts. Therefore, the hypothesis is based on the idea that the recognition and the engagement of the existing actors and a multiscalar redefinition of the polykatoikia model are the key issues for the revitalization of the city centre. In other words, that big interventions on public space (re-think Athens) are not enough for a gradual regeneration process and that if we do not recognize the dynamics and the problems in the local level, we are displacing the "problem". Then, a set of main aims of the graduation studio are organized and subsequently the research questions are elaborated intertwined to the main aims. In order to respond to the main aims and result into a strategy and into spatial interventions, the selection of a analytical - theoretical framework and the way to approach and analyze (see methodology and theoretical framework), is necessary. The theoretical and analytical framework, helps 1. in understanding and analyzing the conditions and the urban phenomena occurring in the area of intervention and 2. comprehend how through theory (urban theory concepts and case studies) we can highlight alternatives that respond into the specific context. Since the problem statement is questioning the official vision for the center of Athens, the critical review on the policies and the projects concerning Athens center, is necessary. These theoretical-analytical framework in combination with The mismatches between official visions and existing realities, the threats and the potentials resulting from these projects, are going to become the starting point for the formation of a strategy. The aim, as it has developed in the begining, is to propose a strategy, which can respond to the context (analytical framework and official visions), illustrate how theory is translated into actions and respond simultaneously to the main aims of the project. Concerning the final output, the project proposes reactivation strategy which is developed in two directions: one related to the context of the specific neighborhood and one which is related to the redefinition of the model of polykatoikia and is more systemic (can be applied, under certain conditions to the rest of the city). These two directions are intertwined to each other and informing one another, composing a holistic approach. Regarding urban design, this is about a set of principles, a manual for the implementation of the strategy in space.

Figure 23_ Methodology of the collective and the individual projects (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Figure 24: Victoria metro Station, (Drivas S., 2011). http://enthemata.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/spiros-drivas-1.jpg?w=610&h=391
Framework
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

AIMS
Urban revitalisation through inclusive multi-actor approach. Redefine inhabitation in central neighborhoods by reactivating the abandonment of polykatoikia model.

R&D QUESTIONS
Which are the potentials of the new actors in polykatoikia model? How can a consensus between all actors be reached? Which can be the motives, rights and responsibilities proposed by an alternative strategy? How to revalue polykatoikia model by reconfiguring the patterns of inhabitation?

HOW?

A. Multi-dimensional urban analysis
Data & urban phenomena analysis
typological diagnosis
timeline
site observations
interviews

B. Theoretical framework
Bibliographic research in urban theories concerning
- active inhabitation
- right to the city
- commonalities

C. Case studies
Research in strategies and policies related to the concepts of the theoretical framework.
Critical review on the implementation and the relation theory-practice

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Right to the city
Urban commons
Definitions & Case studies

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK
Urban analysis, historical analysis, demographic analysis, critical review of official plans

Figure 25, Methodology of the research, (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Method

Focusing on methodology of the research be developed as an assemblage of three directions that will work simultaneously and dependent to each other. The aim is each of these directions to inform the other two and be updated according to the data, information and results emerging from.

A. Multi-dimensional urban analysis of Athens and of the selected area. A Theoretical Framework and Definitions C. Case studies related to the theoretical framework. The same methodology will be used on the group work of the studio (P1-P2 analysis and collective approach) and on the individual project (P2-P5). More precisely, taking into account the results of the analysis a socio-spatial integration/revitalization strategy will be structured based on the theoretical framework and the existing context.

The design proposal is developed according to the context and the theory and been tested and transformed throughout a research-design and vise versa process. The project results into a strategy for social integration and empowering of the neighborhood through active participation which aims in the urban revitalization of the polykatoikia model. Therefore, the proposal attempts to provide possible actions and tools for the implementation in space, such as specific instruments and urban design interventions which show how the vision and the strategy can be implemented, which can be a possible result and which could be the consequences in space. Since the project does not aim to become a “gentrification project”, a critical review on the official urban policies and the tendencies of the center of Athens seems necessary.

A. Multi-dimensional analysis & timeline

The theoretical framework, the definitions and the examination of case studies works dependently with the analysis of the physical space through a timeline. Within the framework of the studio “Urban Asymmetries”, city, is considered to be a socio-historical process in which a multi-disciplinary assemblage of events/decisions/shifts and urban phenomena are shaping the space. Therefore, the analysis of the existing condition of the center of Athens is going to be deconstructed throughout events and decisions concerning the political economy, the evolution in social structure, the legal framework regarding space and ownership patterns and social issues, the political or social events concerning the distribution of power in space (stakeholders and actors of this process). Important is considered to be the examination of the relation between ownership patterns, big public projects, European Union programs and provisions regarding space and how they influence the form and the functioning of urban space, and how all the above traces are evident in space (evident as constructions or as consequences on space). Focusing more in the center of Athens, the current urban condition is going to be analyzed and mapped. Our aim is to identify the formal and the informal structures of the city and spatialize the conflicts emerging nowadays. The aim is to understand the city through a trial-error-revaluation process in which the theoretical background and the case of studies will infill the research and help in understanding what is the urban crisis of the center of Athens? Which are the elements that formed or influenced it? Which are the real issues and demands for the Athens? Is there is a way-out of this condition and how crisis in the specific context can form tendencies for alternative policies to be implied and for a wider consensus between actors. The multidisciplinary research regarding Athens has been approached through bibliographic research, in-situ observations and interviews with academics and researchers in Athens.

After the collective historical and urban analysis, the Explore-Lab group, is defining collectively a common approach towards the center of Athens, based on the results-statements of our analysis. The approach of “Contain-er city”, (definitions and ways to reach to a vision) is proposed. Since each member is developing a different perspective on Athens future, an individual strategy is elaborated based on the approach-vision developed collectively. The individual research in-situ and the theoretical framework is the starting point of this strategy regarding the issue of active inhabitation in the neighborhood of Agios Panteleimonas, in the 6th district of the Municipality of the Center of Athens. The aim of the individual project is to give a possible interpretation of the concept of “container city” and have a practical application in space that corresponds to the ideas of this notion developed collectively within the context of the “Fear and Loaning in Athens: Shifting perspectives of space”.

B. Theoretical framework and Definitions:

In order to make precise the objectives and scope of the project it is necessary to give definitions about: 1. ideological background and approach by focusing on active inhabitation-co-habitation in relation to the production of space and to the right to the city. Besides, the examination of applied practices related to the general background such as policies and strategies concerning social inclusion and neighborhood empowerment related to the notions developed by H. Lefebvre, seems important. 2. The notion of the common and the urban common and how these notions can be related to the right to the city, community empowerment and active inhabitation and how they can become part of an integration/revitalization strategy.

According to David Harvey (2008), “The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources:

“It is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.” (p. 315)

Since an important percentage of people living in cities, due to multiple discriminations (social, cultural, ethnical, gender), cannot have equal access to sources or even satisfy basic needs,
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation
Claiming the right to the city and redefining urbanity collectively, within the context of crisis is becoming important. Having as a starting point, the above mentioned ideas, the project aims in proposing strategies that take into consideration that common right, and has the ambition to propose possible new modes of social cohabitation (through residence, public and collective spaces, infrastructure and services) instead of being a deterministic housing policy applied without taking into account dynamics and peculiarities of each context.

As it has already been mentioned, important for the project, is the theoretical research and the overview on case of studies concerning the relation between that social inclusion/integration policies and bottom-up initiatives and how they can contribute in proposing alternatives in inhabitation and interaction in a local level. The theoretical approach concerning these issues, will be the notion of of common and commoning in cities. Based on the ideas developed by E.Ostrom about the different kind of commons and their management, and the hypothesis stated by D.Harvey (2012) that “individuals and social groups, through their daily activities and struggles, create the social world of the city, and thereby create something common as a framework within which all can dwell” (p.74). The aim is all the above mentioned theoretical approaches (right to the city, governing the commons, to give responses to the main questions and the aim of the project and to be binded for shaping an integration strategy for a residential neighborhood in the center of Athens.

A theoretical review concerning Athens’ urbanity-identities, the production of space and the urbanization processes in the city, the social and physical characteristics of Athens center, seem necessary, in order to understand the living realities in the specific site (Athens city center) - for example how social and economic segregation was formed, how inhabittance is perceived in the center of Athens, (privacy, amenities, quality), and how human interaction/ tactics and practices of everyday life are defined in urban space. Athens specialties should not be ignored. Local characteristics and conditions can be the starting point and the theoretical context of the proposal. Crucial for the design project is to define the living realities in Athens city center- how inhabittance, privacy and ownership, public space and public realm are perceived, are considered to be. Therefore, an overview on the urbanization processes, decision making and future projects in the neighborhood, along with a research on the social structure and geography produced by it, seems indispensable. However, this part of the theoretical research will be mainly developed for understanding and arguing on the context, therefore it work as a supportive part of the site specific analysis.

C. Case studies

In order to understand in depth the context in which the urban issues that the project examines a research on case studies is necessary. This overview will be developed in two direction 1. case of studies related to the context of the crisis and the aspects on physical space 2. case of studies related to proposals (urban policies, strategies and legal framework) related to the possible solutions for social integration and active participation in the everyday life of the city.

In first place neoliberal urbanization and the aspects on physical space and on the inhabitants’ life, has to be understood in a global context. Although Greek crisis, expressed in Athens urban landscape, is not only a result of neoliberal tendencies, it is still connected. The Athenian contemporary condition is multilayered and has its routes on processes taking place already from 1960’s (ex. production of housing, shifts on the economy), however the processes as well the phenomena developing in the city along with the political and social transformations during the last years seem similar to situation happened in other countries of the South (i.e Latin America). Therefore, a comparative study between them could be helpful in understanding processes, phenomena in the city, intentions and interests in space and finally proposals for the urban space.

As case study, the issue of Caracas urban poverty and socio-spatial segregation will be examined. An overview i. in processes took place during the years of financial crisis, ii. in top-down decisions, and counter policies or bottom-up initiatives developed or emerged as a response to social and spatial marginalization. These actions and strategies, developed under the perspective of the right to the city i. could be the way to understand which can be the interpretation and practical implementation of a theoretical model developed by Lefebvre and ii. could be the way to think and develop a critic upon these ways and their success ii. could be a point of reference for the research and the design part of my individual project.

Using examples that had multiple effects in built space (although specialties of each city), will be helpful in understanding which can be the alternatives and which could be finally the aspect of the implementation in space.

15 Some thoughts about the crisis of Advanced Economies of Eurozone: One of the interesting points or aspects of the global uncertainty is that the economies considered to be most advanced, are beaten by the system they are structured upon. Therefore, the case of Greece cannot be compared in a direct way to countries for instance of Latin America that had passed in the past from a similar situation.
“Everyday life, in a sense residual, defined by “what is left over” after all distinct, superior, specialized, structured activities have been singled out by analysis, must be defined as a totality [. . . ] Everyday life is profoundly related to all activities, and encompasses them with all their differences and their conflicts; it is their meeting place, their bond, their common ground.”

Henri Lefebvre, 1947
The right to the city

In the late 1960’s, the French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre in his book Le droit a la ville, developed an ideological framework for re-thinking the socio-economic and spatial relations emerged in the cities and redefining the power rela-tions which form the urban space. His aim was to challenge explicitly and directly the social and spatial relations emerged in the city within the context of capitalist societies and to propose alternative modes regarding the production of urban space and the shaping of urban life. Lefebvre argues that city constitutes a collective “oeuvre” of all the inhabit-ants and the users of a city. People can be part of the city and reshape its future, by inhabiting actively, by participating in public life and by appropriating space in the city. Actually, he declares that the right to the city, “should modify, concretize and make more practical the rights of the citizen as an urban dweller (citadin) and user of multiple ser-vices. It would affirm, on the one hand, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in the urban area; it would also cover the right to the use of the center, a privileged place, in-stead of being dispersed and stuck into ghet-tos (for workers, immigrants, the ‘marginal’ and even for the ‘privileged’)” (Lefebvre 1991 in Purcell, 2002, p. 102).

The right to the city according to Lefebvre is highly connected to: i. the right to participation -which is related to the acces-sibility in all levels of decision-making upon urbanization pro cesses- ii. the right to appropriation16 which refers to the right to access, occupy and use urban space or create new space that fulfills people demands and necessities of everyday life.

The “right to the city” as it was expressed by Lefebvre is a “uni-itary vision” (Marcuse, 2010),that it is not related to an existing urbanity but it is referring to a “new city” that could fulfill all the fundamentally common interests and desires of the inhabi-tants. The right to the city is linking separate rights (right to housing, right to education, right to employment, right to express freely, right to participate and being represented in the decision making) under a single right that encompasses them all, thus it is an idea that brings together individuals with different priorities but with fundamentally common interests.

According to Harvey (2008) the right to the city “it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city”. Since city can be perceived, as the socio-economic and physical interrelations between individuals, developed within the context of urbanity, the right to the city is referring to a common right that can be claimed and exercised in collective way. Therefore, reshap-ing the urbanization processes and to that extent our lives, depends upon a collective power. Although, the priorities can remain different, this unitary vision, that address to the complexity of a system in a holistic way, can be the ideologi cal/political background for this collective power to emerge. Individuals, by understanding the city as a field of conflicting powers, can collectively take control over the urbanization processes and rethink on the nature of the city.

For Lefebvre, the right to the city encompasses the notion of the conflict since “it does not abolish confrontations and struggles. On contrary!” (Lefebvre, 1973 in: Sangla 2010). Thus, although a part of the society has already all these above mentioned rights, there is that invisible/deprived/margin that needs to obtain them through collective empowerment. To that point the right to the city propose the restructuring of the power relations over the production of space and the displacement of capitalistic forces (translated into neoliberal forces nowadays), through conflict / opposition.

To sum up, Henri Lefebvre understood the city as a set of eco nomic, political and social processes taken place inside or out side the boundaries of the urban, their interrelations. There fore, City can be perceive as a cultural and political product of the collective. Through the idea of the right to the city, Lef ebrve proposed a “unitary” common perspective for envisioning the city as a collective space of inhabitants’ desires, which could be achieved through collective practices, democratic participation, active presence in space.

To that point it is worth asking how this abstract proj ect of Lefebvre can be translated into spatial strategies. How the right to the city can be implemented, or how it can be part of a concept for space. How the notions of participation and self-management could operate. Which is the role of the gover nance and planning within this context? And how policies and strategies can create a framework for all these notions to be applied in everyday practice?

16 According to Lefebvre, the appropriation of space is not related to ownership. More precisely, he considers that appropriation/ac tive use of space is more important than the domination produced through ownership.

17 In 1973 Henri Lefebvre declare: Le droit à la ville signifie donc la constitution ou reconstitution d’une unité spatiotemporelle, d’un rassemblement au lieu d’une fragmentation. Il n’abolit pas les confrontations et les luttes. Au contraire!
As it has been analyzed in Venezuela, the response in crisis, social segregation, and human rights was the introduction of the concept of the right to the city in multiple levels of planning and decision making. Through this approach, successful or not, one of the main urban issues (informalization and socio-spatial segregation) was identified and the importance and the qualities-potentialities of this part of the society as a dynamic configuration, was recognized, taken into account and became a strategy on its own.

Therefore, it could be said that revitalization within the context of economic-urban crisis, can be activated by the engagement of “the others”. By empowering localities, through participation negotiation and action the “undesirables” the “invisibles”, the “others” can be merged with the “formal” the “widely accepted” and reshape the city and vice versa. Is the concept of the right to the city according to Harvey: the right to change ourselves by changing the city.
Urban Commons

The theory of the commons is dealing with the definition and the governance of shared natural and human-made resources. The concept regarding the commons or the new commons, is open to several interpretations since it refers to material but as well to immaterial resources that people share. The interesting thing with the notion of “common” is that is a general idea for describing shared resources in which every individual has an equal interest. Hess (2008) defines as new commons the various types of shared resources that have recently evolved or have been recognized as commons. (image diagram of the new commons). According to Hardt and Negri, for “the metropolis as a factory for the production of the common” (Hardt, Negri, 200 in Harvey D., 2012). Therefore, within the context of the city, the urban common can be a set of local material and immaterial resources in which all inhabitants have a common stake and an equal right and obligation to benefit, to contribute and to sustain it. Analyzing Hess’s taxonomies it could be said that urban commons, consist of fragments of all the main categories. Therefore, if city is perceived as multi-layered and complex construction, urban commons can include all the neighborhood commons, some of the infrastructure commons be related to cultural or health commons etc.

Nowadays, the loss of things that people used to have in common and share in combination with the shrinkage of the public (as a physical space and as a notion), triggered again the discussion about commons. According to Harvey, this tendency reflects the reaction towards “the privatizations, enclosures, spatial controls, policing, and surveillance upon the qualities of urban life (Harvey D., 2012). At the same time highlights the potentialities for inclusive participatory strategies upon urban space and resources which can respond to local demands through a certain freedom for self-organization.

To that point, it is worth questioning which are the things that remain common in the city and the neighborhoods, which are the new or lost “urban commonalities”, which is their importance and then to understand who shares what, how we share it, and how we manage and sustain these commons for future generations. Elinor Ostrom proposes eight principles for managing the commons based on the collective action, which are the following: 1. Define clear group boundaries. 2. Match rules governing use of common goods to local needs and conditions. 3. Ensure that those affected by the rules can participate in modifying the rules. 4. Make sure the rule-making rights of community members are respected by outside authorities. 5. Develop a system, carried out by community members, for monitoring members’ behavior. 6. Use graduated sanctions for rule violators. 7. Provide accessible, low-cost local arenas for conflict resolution among users or between users and officials institution. 8. Build responsibility for governing the common resource in nested tiers from the lowest level up to the entire interconnected system. Therefore, by defining flexible principles and not hierarchies, she suggest that after highlighting a common, people who benefit and have responsibilities from and for this common, can manage it through participation in the decision-making and action in and for space. The proposed model can be considered as way that highlights the local and

The above analyzed approach can respond to several issues mentioned already in the problem statement about Athens and the aim of the individual approach. Moreover, it seems that the theory concerning the right to the city and the management of urban commons, develop a similar narrative since both propose active inhabitance and participation in the processes of the city, discuss about the equality between inhabitants and equal accessibility. Therefore, these principles can become the core of an inclusion strategy, in which all the inhabitants can benefit equally by the city, having responsibilities which are not the same but contribute equally in the commons. Besides, this system of self-management, influenced but not determined by either the state or by the market, can become a response for the economic crisis, a parallel flexible system adaptable to local realities. Taking in to account the social capital, we can reinforce or re-introduce the common in order to revitalize and to rethink urban life.

“From California to Greece, the crisis produced losses in urban asset values, rights, and entitlements for the mass of the population, coupled with the extension of predatory capitalist power over low-income and hitherto marginalized populations. It was, in short, a wholesale attack upon the reproductive and environmental commons.”

David Harvey, 2012
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation
Site specific
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation
Site selection

The individual research and designing project will focus in the neighborhood of Agios Panteleimonas in the center of Athens. The selection of the site is related to multiple reasons. Firstly, the specific neighborhood faces important socio-economic and urban problems, however is the area with the more frequent violent conflicts between “natives” (extreme right groups under the name “indignant inhabitants”) and the “others”. These incidents in the neighborhood become nowadays the flagship for the polemic narrative regarding immigrants. Within this context, the image shaped by the media in the last five years is the image of a “ghetto”, a no-go area, fact that leads to the stigmatization and to further segregation of the area and the inhabitants.

Secondly, the current characteristics of the area (for example the social structure and the land values), in combination with the vision for the regeneration of the center form a fruitful ground for a gentrification process to begin. Although, the current political and economic condition of the country does not seem able to trigger investments, in case that the “climate” change, the neighborhood of Agios Panteleimonas will be highly affected.

Thirdly, the specific neighborhood is one of the characteristic examples of post-war urbanization through the model of polykatoikia which is gradually “decays”. Therefore is an area where the abandonment and the existing potentialities of the specific model, which has defined finally athenian urbanity, can be addressed.

Since my interest is concentrated around the notions of “inhabitation” and “segregation”, a residential neighborhood with important urban socio-economic problems such as Agios Panteleimonas, constitutes an interesting terrain for exploring these notions. Finally, neighborhood as a structure, constitute a space where the friction and the conflict can emerge, however neighborhood and the human networks developed in its body, can become potentially the place for integration and solidarity.
The boundaries of the neighborhood defined by a local initiative for the neighborhood issues.

Figure 29_Agios Pantaleimonas in relation with the area of collective research, (Demitrakou, 2013)
6th district, Agios Panteleimonas

The 6th district of the Municipality of the Center of Athens is located on the north part of the historical center, having as boundary with the neighborhood around Omonoia, loulianos str. The district is developing along with the rail tracks in the west, and around Perion Areas park in the east. The district embodies in its territory the neighborhoods of Kypseli, Patisia and Agios Panteleimonas-Attiki, areas which are part of the urban plan of the city of Athens since late 19th century. From that period the area passed through several transformations and was mainly an area where the bourgeois class of the early 20th century was installed, after the arrival of refugees in 1922. However the period that defined the morphological and typological characteristics is the post-war period, when the antiparochi was widely applied in Greek urban areas. More precisely, the building boom of 1950’s-1960’s and less the 1970’s converted the area into a dense, mixed use and mixed income neighborhood. This mixture does not mean that social differentiations were eliminated, however the fact that middle and higher income families were living in the same building introduced a certain level of interaction friction and sometimes even solidarity. As it has been analyzed above, the suburbanization tendencies had an important impact on the neighborhood, since an important percentage of the inhabitants left steadily their properties in the city and started seeking a different lifestyle: single-house or less density- garden-private car became the triptych that forged the mentality of the urban population during late the 1980’s, the 1990’s and the 2000’s.

This mobility of the population, coincided with the inflow of immigrants from ex-USSR and Balkan peninsula during the 1990’s. Athens, as being the capital of a monocentric 27 administrative structure, from that period concentrated an important percentage of immigrants. The first immigration wave had an impact in the neighborhood since immigrants with low financial means, searching for housing in a deregulated housing market - lack of social housing or even an immigration policy-, started installing in central neighborhoods where the rents were low due to the residential mobility and the gap left from older tenants, lower urban quality (high density, lack of public space), the typology of the spaces provided (underground spaces, spaces in the street-level or very small apartments) or even the opportunities in employment that the center provided due to the mobility system and the concentration of economic activities. This transition from the steady abandonment to the reuse was an opportunity for the area since young people and later entire families were keeping in use the built space, providing in the vitality of the neighborhood.

Conflicts between “new” and “older” users and discrimination towards “the others” were existing, however that period coincide with the economic development of the country and the construction boom of the 1990’s therefore, immigrants as low-cost labor had the possibility to find a job even though sometimes part of an informal economy, and steadily be integrated in the neighborhood. At the same time the demand for services that feminine immigrants could work, helped a lot the integration process of immigrants families. Shifts in family bonds and solidarity system, ageing of the population and feminine economic emancipation had as a result the creation of new service domain in which immigrants could be easily absorbed. The fact that immigrants were part of the active population, it does not mean that they had equal accessibility to services or equal opportunities with the Greeks, since their employment did/do not reflect their educational background (the educational level of immigrants coming from ex-USSR countries was higher that a lot of people think, since X% had tertiary education).

After 2000, the global circumstances led to the increase of immigration towards Europe. Greece due to its topography and geography(water national frontiers) and its geopolitical location, started becoming the arriving country. The restrictions of the Lisbon II European Agreement, led to the increase of immigrants concentration. This time people coming from Middle East, Asia and Africa arrived in Athens, a lot of them with seeing Greece as the transition point not as the final destination. That period the suburbanization started transforming into a decentralization trend, fact that in combination with the lack of interventions or plans for the improvement of the neighborhood, intensified the mobility towards the outskirts and gave the room for new immigrants to install in the neighborhood.

In the beginning of the 21st century the Olympic Project and the expectations for a Post-Olympic growth gave the opportunity to an a percentage of immigrants to be introduced in the Athenian society through their employment, however the second wave of immigration had different characteristics from the first, fact that influenced their integration in the neighborhood. More precisely the new wave had a totally different characteristics from the first wave in cultural background, sex, family structure, solidarity networks. More analytically: i. different cultural and religious background - The first wave due to similarities in religion or in mentality of Balkan populations they were able easily to find a meeting point with the local population and to adapt ii. different gender structure, since there is an increase in men immigration- feminine immigration in Greece and generally in Europe is more increased percentages 28 iii. different family status, since an important percentage of immigrants arrive single or do not have the possibility to bring their families ( distance, political instability in the origin-countries). Family creates certain responsibili-

27 Athens Metropolitan Area is the biggest agglomeration in Greece and concentrates until now the most of the administration services in the entire country. From the 1980s, peripheral development is promoted however Greece nowadays remain the administration center of the country, concentrating services that. For example, any immigrant of refugee entering the country either from the mainland or the water frontiers, has to pass by Athens in order to prepare its documents. It has to be mentioned that nowadays, due to the increased numbers in immigration in Greece, there is an entire “economy” developed in the areas close to the national frontiers, which is in charge of transporting immigrants in Athens or Piraeus.

28 As Vaiou (2008) has observed, feminine population probably due to their employment (household, health-care services) interacted easier with the local population and create relations with the neighborhood
ties for the parents and increase adaptation. At the same time children could constitute the interface of their environment to the rest of the neighborhood, since through school they come in contact with the Greek culture and create relationships. iv. due to their cultural background or due to the lack of family solidarity support they create ethical solidarity networks and they started forming communities. In the case of Albanians for instance, who constitute until now the largest ethnic community in Athens and generally in Greece, they were dispersed in the city, although the high concentration in the Municipality of Athens. v. some of them did not have Greece and Athens as a final destination and they were seeing the installation process as a temporal solution, thus the affiliation with the neighborhood did not happen or happen later.

As it has been analyzed above, the structure of the group so-called “immigrants” is pretty diverse, fact that approves the complexity in understanding the specific demands and tactics of the different ethnic groups. The main thing that connects these populations, is that they have been and still are victims of discrimination and exclusion and that within the context of crisis are becoming even more vulnerable. In particular, for the second wave of immigration, we have to admit that sometimes are multiply discriminated due to their ethnic, religious cultural background simultaneously from the locals and some parts of the first group of immigrants.

From the late 1980’s until today, immigrants housing and employment, were always a field for speculation and exploitation. Since, home ownership had become increasingly inaccessible to poorer groups and social housing does not exist, the only option left is the small spaces on the lower floors which constitute the last level in the housing hierarchy (Maloutas and Pantazis et al., 1999). As the number of immigrants were increasing this tendency was intensified property owners in the neighborhood, started putting in the real estate market built spaces not appropriate for living. Simultaneously, they started renting apartments per capita and concentrating immigrants (which have low financial means, not steady jobs etc) in small apartments. Low quality spaces, some of them without the necessary amenities (water, heating), became the housing solution for the “others”. Without any state regulation or even sanity control, these apartments and simultaneously “the others” started becoming the problem for the “locals”. However, it has to be mentioned that although the problems, immigrants and old inhabitants (mainly elderly as it has been analyzed in the begging), still find their meeting point and a lot of them have developed relations.

Concerning immigrants and public space. Public space constitute the first connection of all the immigrants arriving in the city of Athens since most of them arrive either in train station, just on the boundaries of the neighborhood or in the most important transport hub in the center Omonia square, 700 meters away from the neighborhood of Agios Panteleimonas. Public space, constitute for them the first contact with the city and the way to approach their community, find the first recommendations for the next steps of their “integration”. Apart from that, immigrants give a different meaning in public space since they use it a meeting point a point of interaction. The interesting thing is that, in the case of Agios Panteleimonas there are public spaces as (Agios Panteleimonas square) in which they are excluded, since violent incidents against immigrants and their children constrained even more the space that are able to use. This does not mean that immigrants are totally excluded from public space (see Victoria square) however shows a xenophobic tendency cultivated since years and expressed through apartheid actions.

Agios Panteleimonas neighborhood and more precisely Fils street constitute traditionally and area where prostitution was (legally most of the times) developed. Within the context of globalization and international migration, the Greece is an important passage as well final destination of the global human trafficking (Vaiou, 2007), therefore this part of the neighborhood was influenced by this tendency. Policies and legal framework concerning prostitution and the increase of prostitution due to trafficking in Greece in combination with socio-economic condition of immigrants population are some of the factors which influence the expansion of these activities (“traditional” and street prostitution) and due to the general economic and social deterioration of the area of the center, an increase of organized crime activities. Nowadays, apart from the specific areas we can observe that illegal and “informal” prostitution (mainly during the late hours) is spreading in the neighborhood, fact that brings friction and conflict between the users and puts into the discussion the issue of “safety”.

From 1990’s the feeling of fear of the other in the neighborhood of Ag. Panteleimonas, was forged and through a discourse promoted mainly by the mainstream media the last years, was strengthened and converted into a xenophobic, racist and violent reaction. All immigrants were steadily converted into the “public enemy” and therefore violence against them started to become legitimized. In the context of crisis this rhetoric is becoming official demanding for measures or even their elimination. The 20-year the lack of a concrete policy regarding immigration and their integration, left immigrant residents of Greece without any support from the state or rights, and therefore immigrants until now (or even more within the context of crisis) extremely vulnerable positions of exploitation and discrimination.

The fear of otherness and the insecurity resulting from the economic recession increased the levels of poverty, suppressed the middle incomes and led to a further deterioration of the population in the neighborhood, which due to the “fear” (from both sides) constrain even more their space in the city. The

---

29 Feminine prostitution in Greece is legal. However only 3 houses of prostitution are legal in Athens. In 2004, under the Olympic Games policies all the houses of prostitution became temporarily (only for 6 months) legal. This framework gave the possibility for the expansion of these activities in the city and at the same time, by converting them into illegal after 6 months, increased the informalization and no-control of these activities in the center.
shrinking role of the state, the lack of immigrants integration policies, the loss of security net provided by the state, the increase of homeless or people with no accessibility to adequate housing, the constrained elderly inhabitance with even less support from the state, the increased criminality levels has led to the isolation of individuals, to the decrease of the vitality of the area and to the loss of inhabitants’ commons. It is worth questioning which could be a possible revitalization strategy which includes equally all the inhabitants of the neighborhood and give them the possibility to develop, interact and integrate? How with less top-down decisions and state intervention, the “social sustainability” of the neighborhood can be restored and people could fulfill most of their demand from the neighborhood in the neighborhood?

Invisible people-invisible problems?

- high density, lack of open space-public space or space for interaction
- low quality housing and lack of accessibility in adequate housing
- abandonment (buildings and single flats and shops)
- lack of public services and social infrastructure
- high poverty levels
- high % of elderly (non-active population) who have low accessibility to public services, therefore their “space” in the neighbourhood is even more constrained
- high concentration of immigrants who are becoming victims of exploitation since they are stuck in small apartments not appropriate for inhabitation
- immigrants excluded from adequate housing (xenophobia, deregulated housing market and rents) and sometimes from public space.
- violence against immigrants or between immigrants
- “intolerant” neighborhood of the center (violence towards the “others”)
- sprawl of illegal prostitution and general “informalization” raise questions about “safety issues”
collective site area of intervention

clusters with the highest concentration of immigrants arriving points - first information interaction and networking

searching for accommodation

FLOWS OF MIGRATION

Figure 31. Flows of immigration in the center based on the arrival points/concentrations (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Agios Panteleimonas as an arrival point

According to estimations immigrants constitute the 19% of the population living in the center, a percentage consist of 215 different nationalities. Agios Panteleimonas is one of the neighborhoods characterized by higher from the average concentration in immigrants. However, under the label “immigrants” several different groups, with different background and demands are included. Therefore, an overview in the concentrations in the neighborhood and the formation or not of “communities” is necessary. On the following part, some data from the research “Interweaved Everyday Lives and Socio-spatial Transformations in the City: Migrant women and local women in the Neighborhoods of Athens” elaborated by the National Technical University of Athens, will be presented. Percentages, and spatial concentrations and the way that immigrants introducing themselves in the neighbourhood.

Albanian population constitute the largest group being the 50% of the percentage of immigrants in Athens. Spatially they are pretty dispersed in the center into a wide area of the center creating at the same time clusters of higher concentration in some neighborhoods (Agios Panteleimonas, Attiki square Liosion street are some of these areas). Polish population had already a community which is located close to Larisis Station and in Ag. Dimitrios (on the limits with the area of interest) but they have formed social and cultural activities along with Michail Voda street (area of interest). Ex-USSR population (Armenia-Georgia-ex-Yugoslavia-Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Russia) create concentrations around Agios Panteleimonas and Victoria squares. These concentrations are expanding towards North and the area of Patissia. Middle East population (Egypt, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria) is dispersed in the area, since it creates clusters in other central areas of Athens. Egyptian population thought create concentrations around Agios Panteleimonas square and along with Acharnon Street. North African, Sierra Leon, Congo and Soudan Populations are concentrated in small apartments around Acharnon Street and according to Vaiou (2007) are victims of discrimination since they face many difficulties in renting a space.

As it has been mentioned on the previous chapter immigrants without papers or refugees demanding asylum, entering into the country either from the sea frontiers (Eastern islands of Aegean sea) or from the mainland (Evros or Macedonia), they are obliged to go to Athens in order to complete a bureaucrat-
Figure 32. Social differentiation in the building of polykatoikia and ethnic division. On top: immigrants living in groundfloor or semi-underground spaces (TVXS, 2011) in contracts to a Greek family living on top floors (Vimagazino, 2011). On bottom: "Immigrants" and "Greeks", both "victims" of violence. Right: 46-years-old Saipoul in his food store in Agios Panteleimonas (Epyherotypia, 2010). Left: Ms. Zerva in her mini-market after a violent attack from right extremists (Ethnos, 2009).


Figure 33. Analysis on the social and ethnic configuration of polykatoikia building. (Dimitrou, 2013)
Is this a “ghetto”?

According to Park, the heterogeneous contact of racial and ethnic groups in the city often results in competition about space and conflict in it. However in the case of Agios Panteleimonas is more about a conflict concerning the status which takes spatial expression. As it has been analyzed on the historical and social transformation analysis of the center of Athens and of the neighborhood of Agios Panteleimonas, the shifts in the neighborhood as well the existing condition cannot be explained by the deterministic approach the School of Chicago, according to which the “invasion” of one new group influence the displacement of the inhabitants and results to the “succession” from the one group to the other, is a deterministic scheme to approach the case in Agios Panteleimonas. Moreover, the concept of “dominance” is not reflected in the case of this neighborhood, since the “powerful” group seems to be either police or extreme-right groups - under the name of “indigenous inhabitants” - who violate human and civil rights of minorities.

Nowadays the words “ghetto” and “no-go areas” constitute the main cores of the public discourse concerning the problems in the center of Athens. As it has been analyzed above, the concentration of immigrants in the center of the city is a fact, however this polemic narrative towards immigrants is speculative since until now there is an ethnic and social mixture in the residential neighborhoods of the center. The percentages and the concentrations for the Municipality of the center of Athens, do not show specific and rigid boundaries of spatial segregation of immigrants although depicts a tendency: concentration around public spaces and around “the entrances to the city” such as Omonoia transport hub, Larisis Station and Peloponissou Station (Vaiou, 2007). Focusing on the scale of a block, we observe that higher concentrations of diverse ethnic groups (non-Greek) however we cannot linearly result to the conclusion of a ‘ghetto’. As Wacquant (1997) have mentioned that the premise of the “ghetto” is losing its meaning, when is divorced from historical origin and sociological content. Therefore, it could be said that Agios Panteleimonas is more an “ethnically diverse neighborhood” where a social and in cases spatial segregation of otherness is taking place. Besides, this diversity in ethnicities, religions, income levels, age and their mixture results in a complex diversity in segregation with some of the inhabitants being victims of multiple discriminations (for example some of them are discrimination for their color, sex, income simultaneously). Therefore, it could be said that Agios Panteleimonas, is a place of segregation. “Involuntary segregation 30 and poverty do not convert a neighborhood into a ghetto” (Wacquant, 2004).

Segregation can be the expression of social inequalities within the territory of cities, and reflects the unequal appropriation of land, goods and services by different social groups. (Lojkine,1979 in Bógus). Furthermore, segregation takes the form of spatial and social isolation due to the distance, expressed by low accessibility, from territories or spaces (physical and non-physical) providing of urban services, qualities, working possibilities and cultural equipment. In the case of Agios Panteleimonas, an important percentage of the inhabitants have limited accessibility in the above mentioned categories due to 1. the lack of this qualities from the neighborhood 2. their economic, social, ethnical, family status. Thus segregation is developed in two axes: the first one is related to the role of the entire neighborhood for the rest of the city and results from the lack of interventions, actions for the area and the inhabitants and the second one is developing within the framework of the neighborhood where “difference” is perceived as “lower” or “ infectious”, since some groups considering themselves as superior express through violence their “exclusive” right to decide on space (Kandylis, Kavoulakos, 2011). Besides this extreme reactions, cultivates even more fear in all the inhabitants and destroys any interaction between groups until now. Nowadays, the central neighborhood of Agios Panteleimonas is representing both the possibilities for multicultural living and places of difference and for exclusion and fear. According to the results of the research, apart from the threats there are potentialities which can trigger the revitalization if they are evaluated and organized in a strategy. Concerning the social capital:

Age: Immigrants population with high percentages in the category counterbalance the “ageing” issue of the neighborhood. They can be easily part of the active population.

Active population: According to the census of 2001 more that 84% of the immigrants were employed. Although these numbers had changed within the context of economic crisis still shows that an important percentage is skilled and able to work in several domains.

Mixture: Ethnic mixtures does not produce tolerance however contributes in the diversity of a neighborhood, since more groups and individuals with different qualities as well demands can contribute in the economic, social and cultural domain of the neighborhood. Moreover, multi-ethnicity forms an identity for the neighborhood.

Solidarity networks: although they are not visible in space they exist around the area and form a variety of patterns. Therefor, they can contribute in the integration-revitalization process

Reaction against violence: the racist violence against immigrants has emerged reactions and social movements.

30 Here the term involuntary is used for describing the restricted options, or sometimes no-options for the lowest incomes and for immigrants to find a house or a shelter in other areas.
Figure 34. Satellite view in the neighborhood of Agios Panteleimonas.

Source: National Cadastre inc. (Ktimatologio A.E.)
Diagnosis
“Physical boundaries along with N-S axis and smaller invisible boundaries related to the use/users”
Context variables & conclusions

Boundaries

The neighborhood of Agios Panteleimonas is defined by strong physical boundaries on its East and West of its official limits. More precisely: Patission street on the East, one of the longest and high traffic boulevards (morphology: large scale of the building blocks, high traffic) of the center of Athens and on the west the juxtaposition of Liossion street, the trolley depot and terminal and the Central train station (Larissis Station) and the train tracks shape a “grey zone”. Both boundaries work on N-S direction fact that influence the permeability of the neighborhood. Important but secondary boundary is Acharnon street which is dividing the area in two sides, one more active towards east and one less active towards west and the “grey-zone”. At this point, it has to be mentioned that the recent official proposals regarding the center of Athens are related to these boundaries. However the interventions are probably intensifying the N-S direction instead of “breaking” them and open up the neighborhood towards the rest of the city-center. Apart from the visible boundaries that are related to the urban morphology and the infrastructure, invisible boundaries shape sub-areas within the neighborhood. These boundaries are more related to specific uses (see Filis street and prostitution) or to specific users (see Agios Panteleimonas square, the official public space of the neighborhood, where immigrants are “unofficially” excluded or been attacked)

Flows and discontinuities N-S and E-W

As examining the flows in the neighborhood and the discontinuities resulting from the urban morphology and the uses, it is observed that along with N-S direction there are minor discontinuations and dead-ends. The main N-S axis define at the same time the levels of interaction between the neighborhood and the rest of the city, therefore it could be said that the three main axis (from East to West: Patission, Acharnon, Liossion street) define a gradient from a city level to local level programme. More over these axis are related to more “stable” or more defined areas such as the three main squares of the area of Agios Panteleimonas. Stable areas are considered areas with defined character, related to a city level use (such as transportation). **On contrary, to the E-W direction the discontinuities are higher and that the “dead-ends”, T-joint streets and “cracks” in urban morphology are highly related to the boundaries (see above) of the neighborhood. In the following maps flows and discontinuities has been related to the “stable site” of the neighborhoods, which are the official public spaces. Regarding the relation of flows discontinuities and “stable areas it is observed that the “stable areas” are either restricted by N-S flows or are “blocking” E-W flows.**
"Morphological and programmatic continuities along with N-S axis & around stable areas. “Stable” areas (3 main squares) limited by the N-S strong flows cannot contribute in the E-W flows."
"Morphological discontinuities and dead-ends towards E-W direction affected by the strong boundaries do not facilitate the permeability and the flows in the neighborhood."

Figure 37. Discontinuities E-W. (Dimtrakou, 2013)
Higher income families left their properties:
1. Purchasing better living conditions
2. Their property was listed and they could not demolish and redevelop (see polykatoikia).
Properties with no maintenance

Families left elderly stayed

Families left elderly stayed

Inhabitants with apartments and a small business on the ground floor left

Families moved to higher floors. Some of them from tenants became owners.

Social-spatial mobility of the Greek population

Empty ground levels the space for immigrants.

Businesses (food, restoration, communication)

Rent per capita in inadequate spaces

60m²/20 persons
6.7 persons per 8 hours

Left over spaces - open spaces - incomplete buildings - occupied:
1st accommodation for immigrants or temporarily used by homeless.

Informal flows
- Housing for immigrants and per capita in inadequate spaces
- Economic housing for immigrants and per capita in inadequate spaces

Figure 38. The model of abandonment through a long-term perspective and the spatial consequences. (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Strategic instruments for socio-spatial transformation in Athens

Process of abandonment

The issue of abandonment is not referring to stable condition but it is related to processes taking place in the entire system of the city. Focusing on the city scale, the abandonment of the central areas of Athens constitutes a process occurring since late 1980’s and 1990’s. More specifically, a fast developed, high density and low living quality city center (built mainly with the process of antiparochi), being unable to respond to the demands of the population, triggered the mobility of the population towards the outskirts. It is the period of the 1990’s when the good economic “climate”, the social mobility of the population in combination with official plans promoting decentralization had as a result the moving of the inhabitants who the given period had the financial means. However, during an important percentage of inhabitants preferred to live in the center due to its multifunctional and livable character. As it has been mentioned above, that period of the city coincides with the abolishment of the USSR and the first wave of immigration in Athens. This dual process of abandonment- new arrival was positive for the city center since, the most dense areas of the center were the places where immigrants found their first accommodation. Therefore, the gap left by the process of abandonment was covered by the immigrants inflow. It was only in the 00’s and “Olympics” Project when this process of decentralization was intensified and important economic, administrative and public services moved to the outskirts and formed new centralities around. This process shifted the gravity points of the city and the points of interest. Therefore, after 2003 and the second wave of immigration this dual process was intensified.

Focusing on the neighborhood scale this process is evolving gradually: Listed buildings (single family buildings) left without any maintenance, start to become spaces for prostitution or for first accommodation for immigrants. At the same time inhabitants are moving to other areas leaving their own properties without any maintenance or trying to rent their property to finance their new house. Since the demand for “affordable” housing is high, vacant apartments or commercial spaces on the ground level or storage spaces on the underground level are converted into spaces rent per capita. Vacant space gives possibility to inhabitants arriving in the neighborhood to install their economic activities, such as call centers, food stores and little cafes or restaurants. Elderly people, not willing to leave their property and their neighborhood, stayed in the neighborhood (apartments of the higher floors). However, these two groups (elderly and immigrants) having a small scale daily system, important cultural differences and not enough space to interact are becoming more constrained and distant to each other. The absence of state regularization regarding non of these processes or intervention focused on the actual demands of the inhabitants, converts the neighborhood into a neglected part of the city life.
"High levels of abandonment and vacancy are related to morphological characteristics. “Clusters” of abandonment in contrast to the “stable areas”"
Levels of abandonment and vacancy

As it has been analysed above, the neighborhood of Agios Panteleimonas is highly affected by the process of abandonment occurring in the center, gradually from the late 1990’s. However, the last years these processes have been intensified since the beginning of the economic crisis. Due to the long process of abandonment, the complex ownership patterns, the subdivided property, the variety of typologies, vacancy forms complicated patterns. From vacant plot or unbuild spaces, to abandoned listed buildings, vacant apartments and commercial spaces. On a first sight scattered vacancy, occurring in three dimensions (horizontally - in plan and vertically - in section) forms sub-areas or even clusters with similar characteristics regarding their morphology (street pattern, density, relation with the boundaries and the flows and the stable areas in the neighborhood). More precisely, it is about areas with high density, narrow streets. On the other hand, regarding the boundaries of the neighborhood, abandonment is related mainly to the commercial activities of the ground floor. Finally, concerning the “stable areas” these although affected, show lower levels of abandonment.

Regarding the typologies of the abandonment, according to the research, most of the built space of the neighborhood is developed according to the model of polykatoikia (although the different building typologies the concept of the multi-storey apartment remains the same in the whole area) and a smaller percentage is related to listed buildings (2-3 storeys single family houses). The complexity of the patterns of abandonment is not only related to the variety of typologies but mainly to the complexity of the ownership patterns.
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Figure 40_ Typological timeline of abandonment and building activity (Dimitrakou, 2013)

Figure 41_ Actors & stakeholders analysis of the abandonment (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Typologies & stakeholders of the abandonment

The dual process of abandonment-new arrival in the center of Athens is occurring in the city since the late 1980's and has affected, all the existing building typologies in the city. Slums, listed buildings, modernistic multi-storey apartment buildings from the 1930's till the late 1970's, unfinished buildings, "ruins" of the construction boom of the 1990's and of course industrial spaces and warehouses. The above diagram represent the most characteristic typologies of the neighborhood in a chronological sequence, juxtaposed to the diagram of building activity for the center of Athens in time. According to the research most of the building in the neighborhood are built according to the polykatoikia model and although the listed buildings were the first affected by this process, polykatoikia model is facing, and most probably it is going to face, most of the transformations in its programmatic and social configuration configuration.

Important step towards the strategic actions for the neighborhood, is to understand the relations between the process of abandonment, the stakeholders and the actors affected and their vertical distribution in the body of polykatoikia. The diagram on the left presents the who are the stakeholders (owners) of the abandoned typologies, who are the actors affected by this process (although they might not have a stake) which are their social characteristics and how they are distributed vertically in the "body" of polykatoikia.
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

“Informal activities around high abandonment in distance from “stable areas”. Lack of public/social infrastructure and defined common/collective spaces responding to local demands.”

Figure 42_ Daily systems - focused on local economic activities (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Daily uses/ formal and informal

Important for continuing with the strategy is the understanding of the daily system of the neighborhood instead of mapping the official “land-use”. According to the masterplan the neighborhood of Agios Panteleimonas is a mixed-use area. However, the level of programmatic mixture is decreasing due to the decay of local economic activities and the lack of social services, public infrastructure. Therefore, the mapping was focused on these two domains. Besides, it is important to understand why the area cannot correspond to the new socio-cultural configuration and how abandonment is related to the rise of informal uses or the concentrations of immigrants in space and how these are conflicting or not the more official uses/users.

The neighborhood is surrounded by city-level activities which are developed along with the main boundaries. On the East, the transport zone (train and suburban train stations) and on the West a multifunctional zone developed along with Patission and 3rd Septembrouriou street. The neighborhood is adjacent to Pedion of Ares park and in approximity with the National Archeological Museum, however due to the strong eastern boundary, these city-level activities do not constitute part of the daily system of the inhabitants.

Regarding economic activities, Patission street is a mixed, mainly commercial, use axis which addresses the only in city level since constitutes one of the main N-S axis of the center and a strict boundary for the neighborhood. Similar activities but with a smaller radius of influence are located on the northern limit of the area. Local commercial activities (commerce or call centers) developed by both Greeks and immigrants population are located along with Agorakritou street (E-W axis) but due to the morphological discontinuities these activities are limited between the two of the main public squares of the neighborhood (Attiki sq., Agios Panteleimonas sq.). These activities are related to the temporal commercial activities emerge along with two minor streets (Pergamou street and Alkamenous street both N-S direction). These temporal markets are official however they constitute a place where free-street vendors are developing their activities in a more informal way. Another informal economic activity observed in the area but in several neighborhoods of the center, is the scrap-collecting. This activity, does not form specific concentrations since it works mainly as a network which connects central mixed use areas of the center with the south-east semi-industrial area where the collectors sale their findings. This activity emerged from the first years of the economic crisis, is one of the lower-paid informal jobs for the most segregated, poor of the immigrants population (mainly male). Moreover, this recycling process, totally informal and deregulated, is an economic activity based on exploitation, creates economic losses to the municipality and does not follow environmental guidelines. Important in the area is the presence of prostitution. Agios Panteleimonas was one of first areas of the center experienced the process of abandonment even from the late 1980’s which gave the space for these informal activities to take place. The specific activities are located 1. in single family houses, listed and abandoned by their owners or by the municipality (no neighbors-no problem) along with Filis street and around Mirsinis and Prousis street where most of these typologies are concentrated 2. close to transport hubs (Larissis train station, Attiki metro station, Victoria Metro station 3. in minor streets but very close to main transport axis.

Regarding the public infrastructure. The neighborhood is well connected with public transport. Two metro stations, one suburban train the main train station of Athens are located in the neighborhood. Moreover, bus network passing from the main axis connect the neighborhood with the rest of the city. The new tram line and the extension of the red Metro line are two main future project which are going to increase the connectivity between the area and the outskirts. Regarding public space: the area is one of the densest areas of the center of Athens with very low percentage of open space. The formal public spaces are related to transport hubs and they are not easily accessible since the car use is intense around them. The minor streets due to their morphology are used frequently as places for play, however this use has been emerged by the demand and it is not planned. Important is the presence of social infrastructure, such as detoxination centers (KETHEA). According to the employees KETHEA, these uses although they are not “desirable uses” for the inhabitants, they are working as an for the drug-use and trafficking and at the same time they increase the resilience of the inhabitants towards these issues. Therefore these uses are considered to be the only social infrastructure of the area and the “anti-gentifiers”. These spots are mainly located on the eastern part (from the axis of Acharnon street). On the Western part that we observe higher concentration of immigrants (according to the demographics most of the immigrants population is below 65 and most of the Greek population is over 65), some public schools are located. However, it has to be mentioned that since the area is lacking cultural activities supporting education, educational uses cannot correspond to the demands and the needs of the existing inhabitants. The only cultural-religious immigrants activities are hidden and informal (taking place in groundfloors, storage spaces or in public space), in opposition to the formal religious place which constitutes the point of reference of the neighborhood the church of Agios Panteleimonas. Generally, it could be said that due to the residential mobility occurring from the early 1990’s, there is a lack in infrastructre which respond to the local demands or which has been adapted to the local demands (schools, child care, playgrounds, public space, health care, services for elderly people, community cultural activities).
CONCLUSIONS

Figure 43_ Conclusive map for the key issues of the neighborhood (Dimitrakou, 2013)
General Conclusions

The N-S boundaries and semi-boundaries are defining 3 sub-areas of the neighborhood, which shift from a city level to a more constrained level. These sub-areas are defining the scope of influence of the activities located there. These boundaries, since they are strong, influence the permeability of the neighborhood and the neighborhood-city relation.

The relational process of abandonment-informal use forms patterns in space and is intertwined to the concentration of the more vulnerable groups.

Boundaries and “formal” spaces are affected but still remain “stable” since they exclude uses and users. Boundaries N-S continuities, E-W disconnection constrain even more the “clusters”
OFFICIAL VISION FOR A “NEW CENTER”

Figure 44. Juxtaposing the official plans and their relation with the area of Agios Panteleimonas (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Official Vision & future projects

The 6th district of Athens constitute the densest area in the center of Athens with several issues concerning urban quality and therefore proposals have been made for the revitalization of these neighborhoods mainly after 2004 as part of the public discourse regarding the “future of the center of Athens”. Most of the proposals, are focusing on public space and on pedestrianization of streets and less in the urban structure as a whole.

In 2007 the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, within the context of the strategic plan for Athens 2014, proposed a set of actions regarding the revitalization of central areas. By using “urban regeneration as a tool for intervening in urban space” 31, the proposed actions developed a rhetoric around “sustainability in many levels (ecological sustainability, urban functionality and promotion urban mobility through alternative means of transportation, the social sustainability and adequate quality of life, management and reorganization of the public open space). The points developed by the official institutions for planning had triggered the discussion for multiple and important issues about the center of Athens, however due to the economic crisis and the political instability in the county, all the strategic plans for the entire county are under review.

The proposal for the area of interest was about: the regeneration of three main squares (Panteleimonas square, Attiki square and Agios Nicolaos square), and the pedestrianization of one axe connecting one of the two squares. The proposal was indented to take into account the social and ethical characteristics and the violent conflicts taking place in the neighborhood, and to promote interaction and promotion of the “neighborhood feeling”. Although the proposal does not look like a key project for a gentrification process, it does not take into consideration the impact of the intervention in middle and low income inhabitants. Moreover, it does not propose any social policy (housing, services) for the most vulnerable groups which face important problems (although this was one of the statements of the strategy for Athens) and express the idea that public space can “bridge” the differences. Interesting point of this effort for regeneration: the role of Police. According to the action plan for the center of Athens, police has an important role in the

The same direction was followed in the competition “Athens X4” organized by the Ministry of Environment and Social Change, Unification of Archeological Sites S.A. and the National Bank. The competition had as main topic the urban block. Therefore, the participants developed ideas on how we can rethink the specific space for revitalizing the living environment, improving the micro-climate, and promoting “environmental sustainability”. Interesting is the part that the selection of the areas was chosen by the participants and not from the Committee of the competition and that two of the selected projects were located in the area of interest and other two in the surrounding areas. The proposals gave inspiring perspectives on the block however, due to the topic, were not able to tackle the realities in the area and scratched only the surface of the issues of the area. The main statement of all these proposals was the “return of the inhabitants in the center” or “the ways that we will keep the inhabitants in the center” instead of.

The most important project for the center of Athens is the pedestrianization of Panepistimiou Street 32, one of the most important axes of the historical center. More specifically is about the European Architectural competition “Re-think Athens” founded by the Onassis Foundation “for the creation of a new city center” and includes interventions along with Panepistimiou street until Omonoia square with one extension towards the northern neighborhoods of the center along with 28thOctovriou Street (known as Patission street). According to the internet site . This project constitutes one of the bigger projects happened the last decade in the center of Athens. The areas of intervention and the areas affected by the implementation of the project face nowadays important multi-layered problems 33 concerning their urban qualities, services and functionality, social structure and segregation and most of them are have lowest land values in the Municipality of the Center of Athens.

To that point it is worth asking if the above mentioned projects highlight tendencies for a the emergence of a gentrification process in the center. According to Smith, the steady decay of the built environment and the urban land in the city centers due to the suburbanisation of the middle and higher incomes (white flight), has as an impact on the devalue real estate and simultaneously to the rent prices. Therefore, these conditions attract lower income groups, which install their families in these areas. This socio-spatial transformation triggers the discussion about abandonment and decay

---

32 The idea for the pedestrianization of Panepistimiou was an idea introduced in the regulatory plan of 1985.
33 For further information look the appendix and the historical-urban analysis made collectively for the project “Fear and loaning in Athens: Shifting perspectives of space”.

95
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Re-think Athens or Fear & Loaning in Athens?

Figure 45. Render of the winning proposal of the competition “Re-think Athens” by OKRA architects (NL)
Figure 46. Contextualizing the proposal. Speculation on the actual use of space. (Dimitrakou, 2013)
of the city center which leads steadily to the redlining of the area. It is the moment when the difference of the “actual capitalized ground rent” given by its present use and the “potential ground rent” reach profitable levels, the “return” of the capital takes place in the city centers simultaneously with the dispossession of the actual inhabitants of the area. In this process the State intervention has a key role since it creates a positive climate through reforms on land policies and urban planning and/or through public space and public infrastructure projects.

These scheme of “creative destruction” analyzed above could be potentially the case for the central neighborhoods of Athens. Since, the official response for safety, urban poverty, social segregation, decline and economic recession, is until now Police surveillance (non of the above projects have realized), Athens center can be potentially the next case. The concept of this big project will undoubtedly have an important impact in the center, since will contribute in the quality of life, in the “image” of the city by proposing a different perspective for the public spaces and the mobility system of the city (environmental sustainability, resilience). This project which is for the moment, the only from the projects presented above, that is going to be realized can work in favor of the revitalization of the center. However the question remains the same: a “new” city center, but for whom? By dislocating “the other”, “the problem” does not mean that. The individual project will take into account the project of “Rethink Athens”.

---

34 Banks consider that investments in these areas are pretty insecure and for this reason do not provide loans to the owners or tenants of improving their properties and their lives.

35 Potential ground rent is the possible higher rent which can be reached under a better and more intense use.

36 The competition is already on the second phase and the final selection is going to be announced. However, from 2013 the preparations start and for this reason Panepistimiou street is going to be inaccessible for cars the following years.

---

OFFICIAL VISION

Historical identity of the center
Connection monuments
Regeneration of public space
Sustainability and mobility

COUNTER-PROPOSAL

“Return” of the inhabitants in the center

where?
under which conditions?
how?

Reinforce local level
Include the existing actors
Redefine living conditions
Counterbalance aftermaths of the “regeneration”
“The contemporary Greek city, lacking any overall planning or vision, expands in all directions. It is materialized through the endless repetition of polykatoikias (apartment building); in essence the realization of the domino house.”

“Strict and precise urban planning regulations, the prevalence of the middle class, and the urgent demand for profit coupled with small scale investment, combined guarantee the homogeneity of the whole and a lack of exceptions to the rule. The generic model of the polykatoikia has proven flexible enough to adjust to all possible conditions, effortlessly excluding any architectural rivals from the discourse.”

*Point Supreme Architects*
Assessing polykatoikia model

Definitions

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

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

Polykatoikia as an economic and political post-war project.

In the 1950’s the effort for economic and social reconstruction of the county started. After World War II and the Civil War, Greece was a country devastated, suffered by incalculable material damage to its infrastructure and its agricultural and industrial activities. In 1951 the Plan for the Future Economic Development of the country has been edited by Varvaresos who supported that industrial production could not be efficient enough for the case of Greece and that the construction domain could be the future direction. More precisely, he declared that the construction domain could boost “Greek-entrepreneurship” provide job opportunities, covering at the same time the housing demands of the people in urban areas. According to his statements, this direction could be the best example for “introducing welfare state practices which take into consideration the poorest classes” fact that “will inflict important damage upon Communist intentions for the Country” (Varvaresos 1951 in Sarrigiannis 2000).

It could be said that the above plan proposed by Varvaresos, reflects the concern about “Communist Threat” that was still existing in Greece. According to economic analysts of that period, the non development of the industrial domain will maintain the dependencies of the country from foreign capital. However, the dominant political power winners of the Civil War, believed that the industrial concentrations should be avoided because of the thread of a revolt. On the contrary, a small scale construction economy could create better circumstances for the control of the population. At the same time the de-regulation of housing through small scale construction companies and capital was covering the lack of welfare state policies regarding housing for the majority of the population. The directions for the economic development and urbanization processes were intertwined to each other. However, in the case of Greece the focus is on the construction domain (housing) that intensified simultaneously the economic and the urbanization process, since the densification of the built environment meant economic expansion and profit.

The above mentioned ideas, with the necessary revisions on the building regulation of the 1930’s in combination with the small land ownership created a fruitful ground for the rapid urbanization and the increase of the population to start and defined the image and form of the Athenian urbanity. Due to the emphasis given to the construction of single buildings, planning was neglected. This fact led to the hyper-exploitation of urban space and into the formation of high density neighborhoods. Housing started to become a main commodity for the people. This is still present in Athens and in every Greek city.

Introducing the system of Polykatoikia.

The urbanization process of the center of Athens and of all the big urban agglomerations in Greece, has been intertwined to the model of polykatoikia. More precisely, within the context of Post-War Greece and the rapid urbanization occurred, this generic multifamily housing typology, product of private initiative provided responses in multiple economic, social and urban issues of that period.

The base for the concept of polykatoikia model has been created in the late 1920’s and the rapid urbanization of the population due to the Minor Asia population exchange. However it was after the 1950’s and the end of the Civil War, when this urbanization model, living model became dominant and defined the urban form and the functioning of the center of Athens. The concept is about a small land owner or single-family house owner who “exchanged” his land with a small inves-

37 From their official internet site http://www.pointsupreme.com/content/research/legitimization.html

38 The state had provided only the legal framework and the building regulations. People event with small capital - or no capital- could “exchange” their property with some apartment and a store and pay back the investor by granting him some apartments.

39 The system of granting and the building regulations of 1955 that allowed higher heights and defined the typology of polykatoikia.

40 After the independency the land owned by the Empire or big landowners or the Orthodox Church had to be redistributed. In the case of Athens, wealthy Greeks or Europeans living abroad started speculating land before even the announcement that Athens would become the Capital of the State. From the end of 19th century until the first decades of 20th century, several reforms had been done by the state in order a redistribution of land to several owners to happen. The subdivision of land meant that more people had their individual piece of land to cultivate (in peripheral cities or in rural areas) or to build their houses. After the War and the introduction of the granting system, people possessing land with the support with a small developer, could “exchange ” land with one or more apartments.

41 Characteristic examples of this process are the areas of Agios Panteleimonas and Patissia on the northern part of the city-center of Athens (area of individual intervention).

42 More precisely the legal framework regarding “horizontal ownership” and the building regulations of that period gave the possibility of f.
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Figure 48: Production of housing: system of antiparochi and the model of polykatoikia, (Dimitrakou, 2013)

Figure 49: Timeline of the building regulations and the social configuration, (Fear and loaning in Athens group, 2012)
tor/developer and received back horizontal property (apartments). A small developer was approaching land owner by proposing an offer (a percentage of the built space). After the negotiation of the two parties, the land was built according to the general building regulations defined by planning bureau and the landowner received a new apartment for his family (upper floor and more privileged apartments), some apartments to sell of rent and probably a ground floor commercial space for installing his small business of for renting. From the other hand the investor was keeping the rest of the built space and he was selling/renting to other owners/tenants. This distribution of built space and ownership was the starting point for a social mixture to occur. More precisely, in one entity, a gradient of owners and tenants was formed fact that led to a certain social mixture or to this “vertical social differentiation”. The urban form and program produced by this typology, roughly defined by the General Building Regulations and the General Masterplan for the city, has been highly criticized since the demand for increased profit for the powerful micro-owners, has led to a very flexible and generic framework which has been frequently reviewed in order to serve these micro-interests.

Regarding the success of this model, it could be said that the state of land property (already fragmented, subdivided and distributed in small private land owners), the small scale and low-budget project, not regulated or organized by the state or the local authorities, the easy direct personal negotiation within the parties involved (an agreement between two equally powerful parties therefore the negotiation and finally the implementation was easier) in combination with a promotion of this model by the state (financial or tax motives, or lack of other proposals) converted polykatoikia model to the most dominant urbanization model.

1. The model of polykatoikia has provided high-profit in both parties involved and became part of a profit-driven, fast urban development. At the same time this model in combination with the further subdivision of ownership has created powerful stakeholders such as multiple private owners and individual developers. Powerful stakeholders and profit-driven development had as result the cultivation of clientelistic approach regarding urban space and at the same time influenced the perception of “public” and “private” (the public started to be defined as the sum of multiple private interests).

2. This model, defined by a generic framework, easily implemented by private initiative, became a very dominant and successful way of production of housing which gave direct responses to the increased housing demands. At the same time polykatoikia model replaced in multiple ways the public realm, since i. state was no longer involved in the process of housing production or in the regulation of the housing market ii. the application of this model boosted construction economy and without any public intervention provided employment to the urbanized population iii. provided an extra-income to landowners since apart from their apartment now they were able to rent part of their property or start-up their small business.

The model of polykatoikia is until today intertwined to the Athenian urbanity, since it constitutes the main building typology and at the same time it is the system through which a multifunctional and socially mixed environment was shaped. However, the city itself is changing dramatically the last decades fact that it is reflected mainly in the functioning and the social configuration of this system and less in its form. “Internal” (i.e. social and residential mobility of the Greek population) and “external” (immigration and economic crisis) social dynamics influence its role and push for the redefinition of the model itself. On the following parts I am going to analyze focus on the functional and social aspects of these model, how this model has steadily collapsed and which are the variables under which we should re-think this system and restore the potentialities of a compact city model emerged though this system.

Social configuration

As it has been analyzed above, the system of production of housing itself and the property subdivision and distribution has lead to a certain social mixture. More precisely, the model of polykatoikia is characterized by vertical social differentiation between owners, mainly located on the more privileged, larger apartments of the higher floors and a variety of tenants on the medium floors with the lower income households or younger singles on the first floor. Besides, before the erection of the multi-family housing block, the piece of land or the small single house, was owned by mainly by bigger families each of them acquired one apartment for living and bequeathing property to their children. This fact reinforced the family networks in the neighborhood scale and influenced the residential mobility of the inhabitants which started becoming intense only after the 1990’s. In fact, the fast and profit-driven post-war development had as result a very dense urban environment lacking in public infrastructure which was decaying quickly. Therefore, younger inhabitants who had the financial means left their properties and moved to the outskirts purchasing “better living quality”.

43 The General Masterplan for the city, defines a palette of different land uses under the same category and therefore results to a high mixture of uses. For example the category of “general housing” (area of intervention) can include apart from housing, commerce and offices, cultural /religious spaces, workshops and crafts, institutions and public services without any restriction in terms of location. That means that every building of polykatoikia is been converted into a multifunctional entity itself.

44 The strong family networks in combination with the high percentage of house ownership had as a result a lower rate of residential mobility in Athens. According to Maloutas (2012), although the social mobility of the children (higher education/ better job), these families decided to stay close to their parents due to the strong family bonds and the solidarity between family members.

45 elderly people preferred to stay in the neighborhood.
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

POLYKATOIKIA MODEL IS AN OPEN/ FLEXIBLE SYSTEM WITHOUT STRICT DEFINITION

Social mixture

Informal housing economy
takes advantage of this flexibility and lack of monitoring.
Result: Overcrowding-informal or non-compatible use of polykatoikia

MULTIFUNCTIONALITY

The building regulation defined morphology - massing (cover, height, building rate street profile)
The system of production of housing had as a result multiple owners & several tenants

Figure 50 How the function and the form of polykatoikia is defined, (Dimitrakou, 2013)

WHY THIS MODEL STEADILY DECAYS?

1. Living quality (profit driven development low living standards)
2. Lack of public investment in neighborhood scale infrastructure
3. Shifts in family models (family as a solidarity network)
4. Decline of local economy (changes in the “cohabitation” living-working model of the past)
5. Lack of strategies regarding re-use/ rehabilitation of this model
6. “Internal” (social & residential mobility of the older inh) and “external” dynamics in space influence the social configuration.

WHY PLANNING CANNOT RESPOND?

1. Top down rigid planning system. Implementation in delay.
2. Jump between scales and “gap” in urban design strategies
3. No framework for evaluation and monitoring.
4. Concern new developments and not reuse/ revitalization
5. Low public investment/ powerful private owners

Propose a “unitary” framework and a tool that can respond to this situation of abandonment.
This period coincided with the important immigration wave entering in Greece after 1989 and the abolishment of the USSR. It was the period that the social vertical differentiation started having ethnical characteristics. A country without any immigration policy, a city without housing policies for more vulnerable social groups, reached to a certain “solution” regarding integration through the model of polykatoikia. More precisely, immigrants started gradually entering the housing market by renting small apartments of even spaces not adequate for housing (ground floors, storage spaces). According to Maloutas, the arrival of new inhabitants had numerous positive effects for the livability of the neighborhoods, (immigrants have replaced the gap left from the previous tenants, maintained the property, developed activities in the neighborhood and replaced the gap in the real estate market).

From the one hand this spatial proximity had a positive impact in the first steps of the social integration of immigrants since they started becoming part of this mixed-entity of polykatoikia. Besides by the repetition of this socially mixed and ethnically diverse entity of polykatoikia in the center of the city, the creation of spatially segregated communities was avoided. However, this “integration” reached and still reaches until a certain level because it is not part of a vision or is not part of an socio-spatial integration framework but it has been emerged. These vulnerable groups having low accessibility to social services, been victims of discrimination and exploitation they remain part of the informal city. Nowadays, where the old family structures are disappearing, the certain “commonality” and the social mixture is dissolving and the model of polykatoikia is abandoned gradually fact that threatens the urban diversity since the socially mixed entities are shaping overcrowded-abandoned clusters. In other words a

Programmatic mixture and density

As it has been analyzed above, the general building regulations and the Masterplan are the two main cores defining the typological, morphological and programmatic characteristics of the polykatoikia model. Therefore the uses and the densities are resulting from a top-down general framework. This framework gives the possibility to owners and tenants to host several uses, sometimes even conflicting to each other, in the same building. Again this repetition of the small mixed-use entity provides a mixture of uses in entire neighborhoods of the city center. Besides, the model of polykatoikia from its first implementation proposed a compact city model, since inhabitants had the freedom and the possibility to develop small scale economic activities in a short distance from their living environment (sometimes even on the ground floor of their house). Although the model of polykatoikia has modernistic roots, the interpretation in local scale provided functional mixture, density and livability in neighborhood scale and short-distance life style in the city scale, in other words ideas promoted the last years as key points for a sustainable city structure. However, it has to be mentioned that the decentralization promoted the last decades and the abandonment and the decay of the urban environment in the center, had as a result the collapse of this model of living.

After the 1990’s and the beginning of the dual process of “abandonment-invasion” this functional mixture was interpreted differently. First of all, ground floor spaces hosting local economic activities were abandoned and provided without any transformation for housing of the more vulnerable groups. At the same time, larger scale economic activities combined with big infrastructural projects, moved to the periphery, became very competitive and absorbed financial and economic interest from the center. Therefore, this small scale mixture and this short distance relation between working and living gradually has been transformed. However, are again the new actors who kept this system alive by installing small businesses in the neighborhood scale.

It could be said that the potentialities are still existing however the programmatic reuse of the built space of the polykatoikia is needed. If we re-think the small entity of polykatoikia as a system which produces social and programmatic mixture as an starting point for social integration, by thinking in a contemporary context (new demands, new actors, new and multiple lifestyles) we can reconfigure the entire areas and reactivate the city center through a systemic approach.
We need a New center!
Let’s displace the existing one and install a brand new
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

**APPROACH**

**CONTEXT RELATED**
reactivating neighborhood

**VISION**

**GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**

**SYSTEMIC**
redefining polykatoikia

**CONTEXTUAL VARIABLES**

**POLYKATOIKIA’S MODEL VARIABLES**

---

Figure 52: Methodological steps of the strategy, (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Method

The following diagrams depict the methodological steps shaped the strategy. More specifically, the project followed a dual approach which tries to tackle the issue of abandonment and “decay” of the neighborhood under a context-related and a systemic point of view. The contextual approach is related to the existing realities, the daily systems and the spatial characteristics and problems of the neighborhood. In other words it takes as variables the results of the neighborhood spatial analysis (boundaries, discontinuities, formal and informal daily systems and abandonment) and aims to the reactivation of the neighborhood through a spatial and programmatic reconfiguration of the program. The systemic approach, address the issue of abandonment of the polykatoikia model by analysing and reconfiguring the system of polykatoikia model. This part is informed by the contextual variables, however it is working mainly as a multi-scalar manual for all the management and the reprogramming of all levels and typologies of abandonment. More precisely, it results in the proposal of three urban planning instruments, which, for the case of the neighborhood, work in combination. However, these instruments, since they are dealing with the polykatoikia model which is the most dominant typology of greek urbanity, they can be applied separately in other neighborhoods of Athens (or even other Greek cities) with simple readjustments and adaptions. Both approaches aim in responding to the same vision (Intergration of the local level/ Active participation of the neighborhood/Improvement of the living conditions with the agency of the inhabitants.) goals and objectives and their combination aims in providing a multiscalar perspectuve of a gradual revitalization process.

The strategic interventions, the instruments and the principles for the design compose an assemblage of spatial interventions and processes which are going to be tested through urban design in a sample of the neighborhood.
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Embody local level

Counteract abandonment

Embody all level

Social integration

Counteract gentrification

GOALS

OBJECTIVES

ACTIONS

Programmatic

AGENCY

CONTEXT VARIABLES

Embody local level

- Ensure and enhance the participation of the community in the transformation processes.

Counteract abandonment

- Re-activate abandoned and unused spaces. (Informal and temporary interventions)

Embody all level

- Develop a methodology for the community on the definition, evaluation, and the abandonment/vacancy.

Social integration

- Provide the possibility for informal and adequate housing for the inhabitants.

Counteract gentrification

- Preserve local scale activities - characterize polykatoikia model.

Empower local level

- Enhance organizational structure of the neighborhood by instituting programs which correspond to the common demand of the inhabitants.

Contextual variables

- Abandonment
- Continuities
- Stakeholders
- Daily system
- Formal informal
- Stable/unstable areas

Figure S3. Contextual: Aims, Strategic actions and their spatial interpretation, (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Spatial/Contextual

After the definition of the approach, the vision the goals and the objectives are defined. Main goal of the project is to counteract the process of abandonment and simultaneously improve living conditions in the neighborhood for all the existing actors affected by having as starting point the socio-spatial integration of the most vulnerable of them. Important is the empowerment of the local level and the engagement of the inhabitants to the process of revitalization.

According to the analysis, key issues for a gradual revitalization process are the management and the programmatic re-activation or reconfiguration of the abandonment. Therefore, the strategic actions are developed in these two directions. By taking as variables the conclusions of the spatial analysis and the potentials or the lacks in the existing urban planning instruments: the creation of a interrelation between the dominant city level activities on the periphery and the contrained and clusterized local level activities in the neighborhood which will improve permeability of the neighborhood and its integration in to the rest of the city.

---

**Spatial/Contextual**

The Strategic Instruments for Socio-Spatial Transformation in Athens

- **Stable Corridors**
  - N-S Continuities
  - Formal / Informal
  - Stable / Unstable Areas

- **Flexible Clusters**
  - Certain flexibility in uses coexisting, in model of living, in time of occupancy, in actors involved
  - Aim: integrate gradually the "informal" uses, reinforce the interaction and achieve integration in local level

- **Gradual Integration**
  - In multiple levels and scales

---

**Existing Planning Framework**

- Regional & Municipal Scale
  - Masterplan, Regulatory plan
  - Vision & Strategic Plan for the Metropolitan Region

**Existing Urban Instruments**

- Zone of Operational Urbanism
- Zone of Land Consolidation
- Zone of Social Interest
- Zone of Special Aid
- Zone of Special Motives
- "Activation" of Building Block

---

*Free translation: Urban instrument launched in 1985 and never applied, which serves the improvement of the living qualities in the scale of a block, the integration (morphological mainly) of the block in the city system. It is a wholistic concept regarding the "block" which varies regarding the 1. morphological characteristics 2. the discontinuities and 3. the demands in a very local level. Does not affects private ownership since is referring mainly to common spaces (or the creation of common facilities)

---

Rethink Athens

Fear & Loathing in Athens

Stable Corridors

3D model of urban transformation in Athens
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

"FLEXIBLE" CLUSTERS

"STABLE" CORRIDOR

FORMAL / INFORMAL
STABLE / FLEXIBLE

N-S CONTINUITY

FEAR & LOANING IN ATHENS

RETURN ATHENS

SPACE

"FLEXIBLE"?

"STABLE"?

Figure 54. Strategic locations and new formations, (Dimitrakou, 2013)
The proposal is about the creation of a “stable” corridor of local economic activities along with Agorakritou street (E-W) which aims in becoming a interaction backbone between the neighborhood and the rest of the center. More specifically, this street can become the connector between the two main public squares of the neighborhood, and the city-level public transport points on the Eastern and Western boundaries of the neighborhood. Besides, this intervention aims on the connection of the local level with a city-level intervention proposed by the competition “Rethink-Athens” but at the same time becoming a point of reference for the inhabitants of the neighborhood (since the axis is the geographical middle). This “stable” in terms of temporality of tenure and programme intervention it is about interventions on public space but mainly about the relation with private built space of the block. The “stable” corridor is combined with the creation of up to four more “flexible” clusters, in the sub-areas of the neighborhood with high levels of abandonment and increased informal activities. A more flexible program (focused on living), system of tenure and mixture of uses which works together with a “stable” area can become the starting point for the spatial and programmatic integration of these sub-areas in the system of the neighborhood first and later in the system of the city. These clusters aim to serve the demand for affordable forms of housing and on temporal use of space and become the areas for the integration of socially vulnerable groups. According to Tesser (Tesser in Van Beckhoven E., Van Kempen R., 2001) the spatial concentration of vulnerable groups is not by definition leading to their ghettoization, on contrary it can work positively for their integration if it is temporal and is supported by actions towards this direction. This concentration can work in favor of the social solidarity networks of a neighborhood and finally for the integration of the local level in the city system. This temporal clustering, aims in recognizing and integrating the informal systems in the neighborhood, becoming the key place for the contact between segregated groups and the rest of the city. However, preconditions for this clustering are: i. mixture in terms of use and social configuration, ii. connectivity and interaction iii. collective management and a certain level of self-organization.

These two directions, one more stable and one more flexible, can propose multiple levels of interaction between the inhabitants of the neighborhood or between the neighborhood as a whole and the rest of the city and produce greater complexity of their daily systems.
“As much as we consider the levels of abandonment and informality emerging in the neighborhood, we can activate these closed system and integrate it the system of the city by introducing multiple levels of interaction between the city and the neighborhood scale.”
Abandonment constitutes a process related to private/individual interest a decision which influence the several layers and scales of the neighborhood and affects multiple actors. The research on the process of abandonment of the polykatoikia model has shown that:

The vacancy in the smaller scale (building block) and the abandonment of the polykatoikia model shapes patterns in space and expands affecting the neighborhood and to a certain extent the city-center.

Framework for activation of polykatoikia system

According to the research regarding the center of Athens, the city faces multiple and gradual socio-economic and spatial transformations with one of the main aspects the dual process of abandonment of the socio-spatial model of polykatoikia and the “arrival” of new actors in combination with the informalization of urban space. Under these processes, it is observed that central neighborhoods are becoming even more constrained and shape a closed non-interactive system within the system of the city center. Within this context, the governmental response concerning the “revitalization” of the center is not recognizing these processes and as being very top-down and detached from the realities in the city center, it cannot provide responses on these issues. Through a blind-eyes approach the only result will be the displacement of the “problem” in other areas of the city and not a response to the roots of these issues. Therefore, the key issue is to recognize the existing conditions and actors, assess the potentialities and the threats and set a framework for the reactivation of the neighborhood. As much as we consider the levels of abandonment and informality emerging in the neighborhood, we can activate these closed system and integrate it the system of the city by introducing multiple levels of interaction between the city and the neighborhood scale. An urban regeneration process which recognizes the social condition, improves and integrates the local demands, can gradually expand by addressing to “new groups” demands for space in the city. To conclude, “the return of the inhabitants in the center” cannot be done by displacement of eradication but only if we rethink, reconfigure and expand the capacities and the urban qualities of the center.

As it has been analyzed above, the key issue for the reactivation of the residential neighborhoods of the center of Athens is the issue of abandonment in combination with the “decline” of polykatoikia model. Therefore, if we want to tackle with inhabitation in the center we should rethink on the existing system of living (polykatoikia) and the reasons why this model decays (abandonment). According to the result of the research, this system is out-dated and at the same time not flexible to respond to the emerging spatial demands (different lifestyles, family composition, short-stay) at the same time since is a deregulated system of housing (small private owners managing their property) the management of the abandonment, the rehabilitation and the monitoring of the system is highly complex. Therefore, in order to re-activate this model and reinforce its existing potentialities (social and programmatic mixture) we have to rethink the issues of tenure, program and its temporality, the management and the issue of maintenance and monitoring. More precisely, in a more flexible use of space, with high mixture of programs, with a more collective system of rehabilitation, management and monitoring we can activate some areas to a certain extent, reorganize and integrate the informal activities, improve the living qualities, restore their integration within the system of the city, increase neighborhood’s capacities and open them up to other groups.

For addressing the above issues three main urban planning instruments are proposed:

α. Social Tenure
β. Temporary use
γ. Collective Private Rehabilitation

These instruments are providing a “holistic” method regarding the issue of abandonment and vacancy in multiple scales of and they are responding to the following issues: program and mixture of uses, tenancy patterns, possible stakeholders and actors. These instruments are proposing a systemic approach concerning the process of abandonment, however they have been designed for responding the demands of the neighborhood’s context.
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

- Empower local level
  - Goals: Empower local level
  - Objectives: Encourage participation of the community in the transformation processes
  - Actions: Management, Programmatic
  - AGENCY: NGOs, Municipality

- Counteract abandonment
  - Goals: Counteract abandonment and vacant spaces
  - Objectives: Functional and morphological reconfiguration of the built environment
  - Actions: Programmatic
  - AGENCY: NGOs, Municipality

- Embetterment of everyday life
  - Goals: Embetterment of everyday life
  - Objectives: Counteract gentrification
  - Actions: Programmatic
  - AGENCY: NGOs, Municipality

- Social Integration
  - Goals: Social integration
  - Objectives: Counteract social exclusion (all the inhabitants of the neighborhood have the same right)
  - Actions: Programmatic
  - AGENCY: NGOs, Municipality

- Counteract gentrification
  - Goals: Counteract gentrification
  - Objectives: Re-shape the social configuration of polykatoikia model
  - Actions: Programmatic
  - AGENCY: NGOs, Municipality

- Figures 55_Systemic: Aims, Strategic actions and their spatial interpretation, (Dimitrakou, 2013)

Figure 55_Systemic: Aims, Strategic actions and their spatial interpretation, (Dimitrakou, 2013)
After the definition of the approach, the vision the goals and the objectives are defined. Main goal of the project is to counteract the process of abandonment and simultaneously improve living conditions in the neighborhood for all the existing actors affected by having as starting point the socio-spatial integration of the most vulnerable of them. Important is the empowerment of the local level and the engagement of the inhabitants to the process of revitalization.

According to my hypothesis, the redefinition and the reactivation of the model of polykatoikia is a key issue for a gradual revitalization process of the center. Therefore, my aim is to rethink the most dominant element of the athenian urbanity (polykatoikia) which defines the urban form, the functioning of the city and certain models of inhabitation and . By recognizing the potentials of the existing system (social and programmatic mixture which declines but it is still existing) and the reconfiguring the model of inhabitation, the project aims in provoking responses regarding the reason why people would like to live in the center and how this transformation can be planned and implemented with the agency of the inhabitants.

As it has been analysed above, key issues for a gradual revitalization process are: the management and the programmatic re-activation or reconfiguration of the abandonment in the polykatoikia model. Therefore, the strategic actions are developed in these two directions. By taking as variables the conclusions of the urban analysis and research on the polykatoikia model, the potentials or the gaps in the existing urban planning instruments, I propose the creation of three planning instruments which are tackling the issue of abandonment in all scales and types and aim in the reuse and reactivation of these spaces. Important element of the proposal is to structure a multi-actor process which will enable local authorities and inhabitants to manage under a collective vision the issue of abandonment. The three instruments for the issue of abandonment follow the same logic however they are: 1. addressing different types of abandonment 2. serving different type of demands and programs 3. forming different stakeholder-actor formations and relations between them 4. defining different type of incentives, rights and responsibilities for each case 5. having a short, mid and long-term impact accordingly.
Planning instruments
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Figure 58, Social Tenure: Concept, (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Social Value of Urban Land & the right to affordable space

According to Henri Lefebvre can be understood the city as a set of economic, political and social processes taking place inside or outside the boundaries of the urban, their interrelations. Therefore, city can be perceived as a cultural and political product of the ‘collective’. Through the perspective of urban space cannot be seen only as a sum of individual private micro-interest but as the space which has a certain social value and satisfies as well social needs. Therefore, all actors and stakeholders having interest but mainly using and experiencing the urban space have equal common rights and responsibilities upon space.

According to Hess, neighborhood commons “incorporate both urban and rural commons where people living in close proximity come together to strengthen, manage, preserve, or protect a local resource” (Hess, 2008 in D. Matisoff, D. Noonan 2012). According to Hess’s list the neighborhood common can incorporate several spaces and programs and systems emerging within the context of the neighborhood such as brownfields, home owner associations, housing and homelessness, urban enclosure local security issues, noise pollution, community activities. Therefore anything that threatens one of these aspects of the neighborhood threatens at the same time the common resources and the common interest. For these reasons although the property rights are fundamental and important rights of the contemporary societies are becoming less powerful and negotiable when they are seen through the perspective of the new commons.

The claim and reuse of abandoned and vacant urban space constitute a key issue for the urban activation of the neighborhood. Through this process both parties involved can satisfy their demand in a shorter or longer period. The possession of property rights is threatened whenever one of these aspects of the neighborhood is threatened. To that point it has to be mentioned that stakeholders abandoned their properties, maintain their right to property how-ever since abandonment affects the community as a whole they have certain responsibilities towards the collective. The longer a property stays vacant the same period it can be used to serve the social needs of the neighborhood.

Proposal: Reuse of abandoned and vacant property in favor of the local community demands. Claim the space and right of use without affecting the property rights. Negotiate between owners (cooperative or private owners or municipality), community (CBO) and interested individual users (collective of tenants) and about the possible program and the possible spatial transformations if is needed. Important is the role of the local authorities since they can provide accountability to the processes and have at the same time a double role. 1. back-up member who can secure the landowners about their property rights 2. stakeholder who can become part of the process and provide social infrastructure (mainly affordable housing) to inhabitants with limited access to affordable and adequate space. The specific instrument is addressing mainly abandoned spaces owned by the Municipality or privately-owned spaces which have been abandoned, without any maintenance for a long period (more than 5 years) and aims in covering local demands in social/public infrastructure.

The official urban policies and the existing urban in...
### AGENCY PROCESS

#### MUNICIPALITY

- **INSTRUMENT**
  - Community
  - Social Groups

- **STAKEHOLDERS**
  - Private Owner
  - NGOs
  - Indivudual
  - C.B.O

- **TYPE**

- **PROGRAM**

- **URBAN PRINCIPLES**

---

**Figure 32** Social Tenure Flexible programmatic motives, (Dimitrakou, 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTRUMENT</th>
<th>STAKEHOLDERS</th>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>URBAN PRINCIPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MUNICIPALITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>COMMUNITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>PRIVATE OWNER</strong></td>
<td><strong>SOCIAL GROUPS</strong></td>
<td><strong>SHARED HOUSING WORK SPACE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSTRUMENT</strong></td>
<td><strong>STAKEHOLDERS</strong></td>
<td><strong>TYPE</strong></td>
<td><strong>PROGRAM</strong></td>
<td><strong>URBAN PRINCIPLES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>PRIVATE OWNER</strong></td>
<td><strong>SOCIAL GROUPS</strong></td>
<td><strong>MUNICIPALITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>PRIVATE OWNER</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>PRIVATE OWNER</strong></td>
<td><strong>SOCIAL GROUPS</strong></td>
<td><strong>MUNICIPALITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>PRIVATE OWNER</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>PRIVATE OWNER</strong></td>
<td><strong>SOCIAL GROUPS</strong></td>
<td><strong>MUNICIPALITY</strong></td>
<td><strong>PRIVATE OWNER</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **60-100M²**
- **1140-1900M²**

- vacant > 5 years
- vacant > 2 years

---

**Figure 32** Social Tenure Flexible programmatic motives, (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Function

The instrument of social tenure is about the activation and reuse mainly of Municipal property or long term vacancy. Regarding the typological characteristics of this type of vacancy, most of the buildings under this status are listed buildings owned by the Municipality or other public organizations and in some cases by private owners, who were not able to demolish and redevelop their property according to the model of polykatoikia and since the building could not respond to their demands (shifts in family models, financial issues, complex property issues) left their properties without use/users. Besides, the instruments is referring to any Municipal abandoned property, such as apartments, or entire multistorey buildings. As it has been analysed above the instruments proposes the programs and the way that this properties can be reused. Therefore, after a taxonomy of these spaces, their spatial characteristics and their condition the aim was to propose a mixture of programs that can be hosted in these typologies and can respond to the local demands of the neighborhood (assessment of the daily systems). Parallel education, programs, small units of "social housing" for homeless combined with small workshops, cultural projects combined with children activities and health care combined with psychological support programs existing in the center.

The instrument aims in the densification of the program and for this reason is proposing the reuse of empty plots and "wedges" for the creation of open common spaces managed and maintained by the inhabitants. The urban principles proposed, are a set of recommendation regarding the location and the density of these new programs. These principles have been design by taking into account the daily system and the radius of everydaylife activities of the inhabitants.

Process

On the left diagram (top), the main process is presented and following to that a possible differentiation of this process in case that the space to be reused is privately owned. In both cases the first step is the mapping of the abandonment in a local level by a local workgroup (inhabitants, community, specialists such as architects, urbanist) and the definition of the needs in space (C.B.O). After forming a specific demand C.B.O can form a preliminary proposal for the reuse of the spaces and negotiate it with the municipality. In case that the demand is related to communal spaces, after negotiation and agreement with the Municipality and the evaluation of the proposal by the Planning Bureau (National level), the CBO acquires the space and manages it temporary or distributes through a management initiative to possible users (cooperative, NGO, CBO). In case that the abandoned property is private, the role of the Municipality is to become the mediator between owners and users. Finally, in case that the local demand is related to public or social infrastructure on Municipal property, the CBO can negotiate with the local authorities and structure a vision, however the implementation and the monitoring of the space is done by the Municipality or the Public organization using the space.

Designing the "process map" through with this instrument can be activated, and the roles of different parties involved constitute an important element of the proposal. The aim of this part is to make clear the level of participation the rights and the responsibilities, give multiple possibilities for claiming the spaces and at the same time assure the accountability (multiactor approach with the guidance and coordination of public authorities).
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation
**PROCESS**

**NEGOITIATION**

- **step1**
  - Negotiation & agreement
  - Possibilities for use: Public, Welfare, Education, Social Services, Green Facilities

- **step2**
  - Negotiation of the public & Private rights & responsibilities
  - Possible transformations
  - Time of occupancy

- **step3**
  - Negotiation & agreement
  - Rights & responsibilities
  - Possible transformations
  - Time of occupancy

**IMPLEMENTATION**

- **step1**
  - Negotiation of the public
  - Intervention by the Municipality

- **step2**
  - Municipality Local Committee
  - Negotiation & agreement
  - Private owners

- **step3**
  - C.B.O acquire space from the Municipality
  - Community management
  - Committee manages the distribution

- **step4**
  - Evaluation
  - Maintenance - Utility Costs

**POST-EVALUATION**

- Evaluation
- Maintenance - Utility Costs

**INTER-EVALUATION**

---

*Figure 60: Social Tenure: Agency, Process and Incentives (Dimitrakou, 2013)*
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Figure 61. Temporary Use: Concept, (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Instrument β - Temporary Use

The instrument of temporal use is addressing vacancy of privately owned spaces, such as apartments and ground floor spaces and proposes a set of programs that can be hosted temporarily, a possible mixture of uses which corresponds to the local demands and the daily systems of the neighborhood, in other words possible new programs that can be introduced in each typology of abandonment. Moreover, the instrument proposes a set of rules for the clusterization of temporal activities, their radius of influence according to the daily systems of the users and the balanced mixture between city-level programs and more local uses. The specific instrument is based on the logic of the first instrument, however it is related to privately owned smaller spaces which due to the crisis in the housing market and the redlining, cannot be sold or rented easily and therefore they stay vacant for some years.

Common Rights and responsibilities

As it has been analyzed in the theoretical perspective, the urban commons can be a set of local material and immaterial resources in which all inhabitants have a common stake and an equal right and obligation to benefit, to contribute and to sustain it. Therefore, abandonment and vacancy constitute a gradual processes which influence the material and immaterial resources of the neighborhood and affects individuals and the community as a whole. Therefore they should be tackled under a collective perspective and through the engagement of the individual inhabitant and the community. At the same time abandoned space constitute a common urban resource for the neighborhood and the city itself. Therefore, temporary use of space can be used in a more informal way for a shorter period aims in the recognition and the integration of these demands on the daily system of the city, not by strictly formalizing it but by defining it. During periods of crisis, when public urban interventions are decreasing, the means for affordable space in the city are limited, informal uses are booming and the real estate market is frozen, temporary use of space can provide solutions for covering the demands on space, for re-activating areas and local economies. At the same time, it can highlight the potentialities for inclusive participatory strategies upon urban space and resources which can respond to local demands through a certain freedom for self-organization.

Community engagement is key issue to achieve and implement proposals regarding vacant property. This gradual reuse and rehabilitation of the vacant urban property could be achieved under a social accord between the actors which will allow a better control in a local level. The formation of informal and formal neighborhood partnerships and cooperatives to assist the revitalization process is needed. Through a collaborative participation framework, community can work with the municipal authorities to develop a vision, to track and monitor the progress and engage in the meanwhile fellow residents. list of priority properties, meet regularly with all relevant city departments.

a. Mapping the availability on space
b. Mapping levels of abandonment and vacancy and overcrowded spaces and identifying existing tenure patterns.
c. Assessing the demand in space, in program and the possible agents

d. Communicating between parties (stakeholders and actors) about the possibilities the rights the responsibilities and the benefits

e. Providing the temporal contract and monitor the system of the temporary used spaces
f. Organizing the system of occupancy in order to prevent long term vacancy.

Engagement-Participation-Cooperation
Function

The instrument of temporary use is about the activation and reuse of vacant private property of the polykatoikia buildings. Regarding the typological characteristics of this type of vacancy, it is about apartments or multi-storey apartment buildings which are abandoned or not absorbed by the real estate market. The aim of this instrument is to create the possibility for affordable space in the neighborhood. Regarding the programmatic mixture, the focus has been given to housing (since the housing issue has been a major problem in Athens center from the beginning of the economic crisis). However, the concept is to create the conditions for mixture of uses, therefore possibilities for economic “start-ups” has been proposed (workshops, commerce) Important is the possibility given for more collective forms of housing in entirely abandoned buildings. In this cases the temporary use can be organized as a collective project which has the “responsibility” in introducing community or neighborhood activities in its body such as collective kitchen, or cultural projects. Since the programming is related to the daily systems observed in the neighborhood, emphasis was given to child-care spots combined with parallel education projects, in other words spaces which will enable one of the most constrained groups (immigrant women) to expand their activities in the neighborhood. The instrument aims in the densification of the program and for this reason is proposing the reuse of larger abandoned entities (such as warehouses) as spaces for local economic activities (workshops, small production, indoor markets etc). The urban principles proposed, are a set of recommendation regarding the clusterization of temporal use and the relation between local activities and city-level activities. The objective is to empower the “cluster” and integrate it in the system of the neighborhood and of the city, therefore issues of connectivity, accessibility and mixture of city level projects combined with local activities is important.

Process

On the diagram (p.134-135), the main process is presented. In the temporary use instrument the process has similarities to the process analysed above. The first step is the mapping of the abandonment in a local level by a local workgroup (inhabitants, community, specialists such as architects, urbanist) and the definition of the needs in space (C.B.O). After forming a specific demand C.B.O can form a preliminary proposal for the reuse of the spaces and adress to the Municipal authorities. If the properties are abandoned or vacant for more than 5 years, the Municipality takes the role of the mediator between the community the “collective” of future tenants and the private owners who form a cooperative for negotiating their rights and their responsibilities. At this moment all the parties involved reach to an agreement regarding the rights and the responsibilities of each party and form a vision. In this case, a non-profit corporation between them can be founded which will enable them to act as a whole and operate efficiently. After the definition of the vision, the parties with the aid of a workgroup of “specialist” define possible program and spatial transformations needed in private or public space. After the evaluation and the approval of the plan from the Planning bureau the implementation can start. In case of public interventions needed, Municipality and Public organizations (ex. transport company) are responsible for the execution and the financing of the project. Regarding the temporary use of private apartments, the creation of a Community Management Committee is proposed. In this committee, members of the CBO or and NGOs can create a system for redistributing space to future tenants and monitor the process of abandonment and update neighborhood “database” regarding the empty spaces. Since the concept of temporary use is base on the concept of social accord between the actors, incentives are considerably important part of the proposal. More in detail, this instrument aims in the control of abandonment the regulation of squatting, therefore it can contribute on regulating the functioning of the city and the process of informalization by the municipal authorities and the local community by simply activating abandonment under a specific framework. Moreover, future tenants, inhabitants demanding for affordable space in the city, can satisfy their demands and gradually integrate their activities in the neighborhood by becoming part of this reactivation process. Besides, out of this process, owners can assure the maintenance of their property, avoiding at the same time agency fees. Besides, the can be profited from the long-term spatial quality that the neighborhood will gradually gain and the plusvalue created. Finally, the community as a whole, can influence the revitalization process by participating, negotiating and being part of the monitoring framework.
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

**AGENCY**

**CB.O**

**MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE**

community management
local workgroup
innovation lab
innovative feasibility

**OWNERS COOPERATIVE**

**TENANTS COLLECTIVE**

NGOs

**INDIVIDUAL OWNERS/USERS**

**PLANNING BUREAU**

P. TRANSPORT COMPANY (optional)

---

Figure 63, Temporary use: Agency, Process and incentives (Dimtsikou, 2013)
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Figure 64, C.P.R: Concept, [Dimitrakou, 2013]

* collective private rehabilitation
Instrument γ - PCR*

Regarding the issue of rehabilitation of the abandoned and vacant properties, a self-managed corporation between owners, tenants, municipal authorities and contractors (who can be the users) can be organized. By reconfiguring the process of Collective Private Development model (developed by Hein de Haan) into a Collective Private Rehabilitation process through which owners, possible tenants they can organize and manage a rehabilitation of urban space by merging properties and decreasing the costs. According to the concept of Hein de Haan, the costs of the construction can be decreased per 50% when the future users skip the developer and manage collectively the project. This concept does not mean that the future users have to live in a collective way after the implementation of the process, but they have to organize themselves in collective way for negotiating with the Municipal authorities, the architect the contractor and achieve their goal. This group, after have their individual space and privacy, however they have in common some facilities, or they decide in common for the rights and the responsibilities over the space. Therefore, future inhabitants are considered as individuals, with specific demands on spaces and quality and financial means, but at the same time part of a collective project which aims in the common “benefit”.

As it has been analyzed above, polykatoikia constitute a post-war typology, which responds to certain living models and family structures. As Rapoport (1969) has analyzed, housing settlement system is influenced by family relations, existing social networks, social roles and working patterns and since the profile of the existing actors in the center of Athens have gradually change, the reconfiguration of the model seems important. However, within the context of Athens-in-crisis demolition and redevelopment seems impossible or even “utopic” the proposal focus on the reuse of the existing space. Besides, since the building stock of the center built mainly after the WWII, still can be used reuse and therefore its redevelopment, is economically more feasible. The instrument of PCR (Private Collective Redevelopment) defines the way that the building stock of polykatoikia can be updated and transformed for serving the actual demands on space, but with less cost (50%less) and with lower financial risk (distributed risk, small investment), with a regulated result which responds to the local urban regulations and preconditions.

The instrument of CPR proposed is a simple strategic participatory tool for a socially aware, progressive renewal of the built environment, which is addressing to the demands of the actors and can be updated by them and readapted. Important element of the proposal is that the actors in space can become stakeholders or partners of this “revitalization” and contribute according to their means in the process. Therefore, a new level of interaction is defined between the users and a specific agreement on rights and responsibilities and a wider concensus between the parties involved, facts which aim in reintroducing a level of “collectiveness” or a new “common” between the inhabitants. Important is the public engagement in the process which first of all can evaluate and negotiate and “regulate” the spatial results and consequences but mainly adds accountability to the process. Collective Private Redevelopment, propose a personalized and at the same time collective perspective in intervening in private property. The system of antiparochi, the most dominant and one of the few production of housing processes in Greece, based on the individual small private initiative, apart from its positive results analysed above, had as a result an individualistic-clientelistic approach of the users in urban space. This fact, in combination with social transfor- mations (family structures, economic profile) occurred in the meanwhile, had as a result the loss of collectiveness or of collective responsibility on urban space out of the private sphere and to that extent to the perception about inhabitants role in the city. PCR, does not focus on the collective living but it is about a collective project, a result of common practices where inhabitants can act as independent individuals always being part of the “collective”. Furthermore, the specific instrument propose an alternative to a totally deregulated process of production of housing, which “produced” an almost deregulated urban form (see analysis on the polykatoikia model on top). More precisely, by involving local authorities in the process as a partner or as a coordinator and introduce levels of evaluation from the planning bureau (national level) and the technical chamber urban quality can be redefined and regulated independantly from the of the budget of each project.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTRUMENT</th>
<th>STAKEHOLDERS</th>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>URBAN PRINCIPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 49: C.P.A. - Possible programmatic mixure. (Drinakis, 2013)
The instrument of CPR is about the reconfiguration and the rehabilitation of polykatoikia building which will allow the reuse and the building stock. The specific instrument is referring to vacant private property or in non-functional spaces of the polykatoikia buildings and it is about apartments or multi-storey apartment buildings which are abandoned or not absorbed by the real estate market or about apartments that they are probably in use but they are not able to respond to the demands of the users, or for spaces that they are not designed to be used as residential spaces (see overcrowded ground and underground spaces). The main aim of this instrument is to create the possibility to update and reuse the existing building stock and at the same time addressing the conditions of inhabitation in the centre. The specific instrument is proposing a system of redevelopment which can be implemented with less means even during a period of economic crisis. More precisely, it provides the possibility for redevelopment with lower cost and financial risk which is resulting from a collective management and decision making instead from a decrease on quality.

Although, key element of the specific instrument is related to the process itself and the actors involved, spatial and programmatic transformations constitute crucial points which define the conditions and the means that redevelopment can take place. Programmatically, the concept is to evaluate and maintain the conditions for programmatic mixture existing in the model of polykatoikia, provide spatial and programmatic definition of space, introduce or reintroduce spatial quality and flexibility in the articulation of spaces, prescript the spatial relations between “public” and “private” and introduce or increase the percentage of shared spaces and facilities for the scale of the apartment till the scale of the building entity or even the entire block.

The urban principles proposed, are a set of recommendation regarding the spatial transformations in the scale of the block. Aim is to open-up the block, reprogram and reuse all the spaces of the block and introduce a permeable relation between private or shared and public.

Process

On the diagram (p.130-131), the main process is presented. It is necessary to say, that all processes presented have similarities in the way that they are unfolding. Therefore, CPR instrument follows the same pattern of Activation- Negotiation- Implementation - Post Evaluation. The first step is the mapping of the abandonment in a local level by a local workgroup (inhabitants, community, specialists such as architects, urbanist) and the definition of the needs in space (C.B.O). After forming a specific demand a cooperative of tenants with the support of the C.B.O can form a preliminary de-
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

**AGENCY**

- **C.B.O.**
- **MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE**
  - Community members
  - Local endgroup
  - Management.
- **OWNERS COOPERATIVE**
- **TENANTS COLLECTIVE**
- **NGOs**
- **INDIVIDUAL OWNERS/USER**
- **PLANNING BUREAU**
  - **P. TRANSPORT COMPANY** (optional)

**PROCESS**

**ACTIVATION**

**NEGOTIATION**

**MANAGEMENT STAKEHOLDERS**

**INSTRUMENTS**

**TYPE**

- **PROGRAM**
- **URBAN PRINCIPLES**
- **LEVEL**
  - **-3.00**

**LOCAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES**

- **NEVER MERGE**
- **REHABILITATION**
- **COOPERATIVE TENANTS**
- **COOPERATIVE OWNERS**
- **COMMITEE**
- **WORKSHOPS**
- **REUSE**
- **60-100M²**
- **1140-1900M²**
- **+**

**MUNICIPALITY**

- **ORGANIZATION OF PLANNING**
- **PROTECTION OF ATHENS**
- **BACK UP PARTNER**
- **FUNDING OR FISHING**
- **IMPLEMENTATION**
- **+**

**COSTS**

- **MUNICIPALITY**
- **PRIVATE OWNERS**
- **COMMUNITY**
- **600-1000 M²**
- **25-40 M²**

**COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE**

- **TENANTS COLLECTIVE**
- **INTER-EVALUATION**
- **COOPERATIVES**
- **COMMITEE**
- **“EXPERTS”**
- **MUNICIPALITY**
- **COOPERATIVE OWNERS**
- **OWNERS COOPERATIVE**
- **INDIVIDUAL OWNERS/USER**
- **PLANNING BUREAU**
- **P. TRANSPORT COMPANY** (optional)

**SPLITTED**

- **SHARED FLAT**
- **300-600 M²**
- **INDEPENDANT ROOMS**
- **PRACTICING**
- **SHARED TERRACE**
- **OPEN% CONVERTED**
- **(dance lessons, music, workshop)**
- **ACTIVITIES**
- **WHOLESALE**
- **WORKSPACE**
- **MORPHOLOGY PROGRAM**
- **PUBLIC SPACE**
- **VEHICLE ACCESSIBILITY**
- **LOCAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES**
- **city MAX USERS - RADIUS OF ACTIVITIES**
- **temporal housing)**
- **community activities with**
- **(i.e. social infrastructure and neighborhood level program mixture of local temporal & permeability of the cluster accesibility to the cluster...**

**Residential Density=400-600 ihn/ha. Census 2001, Athens Center, 6th district**

**Figure 66. C.P.R. - Agency, Process and incentives (Dimitrakou, 2013)**
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

BLIND WALLS
Vertical circulation leading to the rooftop which is transformed into a green terrace.

"WEDGES"
Defined entrance towards the back yard. Transitional space.

PILOTIS
The main concept is to create openings towards the back side by opening up the groundfloor spaces. By keeping the existing structural system and creating permeable (permanent or stable) openings the back side can be activated.

ROOFTOP
This space can be reused and managed in common and they can host out-door recreational activities, small kitchen gardens. The merging of terraces between buildings can be applied.

MAIN BODY
Merging of apartments of the same building horizontally and vertically can be done. The only precondition is the creation of a percentage of spaces that could be shared.

Figure 67_ C.P.R. : Urban principles (Dimtrakou, 2013)
Instrument γ - Principles
Reconfiguring the block

Important part of the instrument of CPR is a set of rules for the transformations and new interventions that can be applied in the minimum unit of the building block. Before presenting the principles for the reconfiguration of polykatoikia, it is necessary to understand which are the characteristics of the built environment (urban scale) and of the housing typologies (architectural scale) which are either “outdated” or not functional and which are the existing potentials. As it has been analysed previously, polykatoikia constitutes the most dominant housing typology in Athens and finally this specific system of production of housing, emerged through the agreement between small land owner and a small developer, has defined urban form and perceptions about urban space relations between “public” and “private” or even tactics in space. More precisely, this fast-track, low quality profit-driven deregulated in terms of form and footprint housing production characterized by fragmented ownership, had forged a certain individualistic-clientelistic perception about space which says that urban space is defined by the ramification of multiple small private interests and that anything that skips out of the boundaries of each private sphere is not defined and is becoming less important. Therefore, gradually after the WWII, people aiming on the hyper-exploitation of land and the maximization of their individual profit started losing their “commonalities” and to a certain extent their awareness regarding the “public”, the “shared” and the “common”. The last decades this perception has even intensified and the “obsolesce” toward these notions is even more obvious.

Based on these observations, it could be said that the lack of quality in urban space in general but in the polykatoikia unit can be related to the loss or the lack of “common”, spatially or not. Therefore, in order to reverse this concept and redirect the interest on the common rights and responsibilities over urban space, the proposal aims in redefining the levels of privacy, the levels of sharing and redefine the spatial and programmatic relations between “private” and “public” through a set of principles. These principles have been developed and tested in a given building block of the neighbourhood of intervention (Agios Panteleimonas), which constitutes one of the three main block typologies in Athens centre and one of the most difficult to intervene due to its high density (85% cover) and geometry.

The concept is to use some elements existing almost in every block such as “blind walls”, small “wedges” between the buildings, empty plots, rooftops and open-up the block and create a transition from “public” (street level) to “private” (building) and then to “common” (back-side) and reactivate the spaces that are shared but they are not in use (back side, rooftops). Key element for the reactivation of these spaces is a spatial and programmatic definition which will allow finally the use of space and determine inhabitants’ “stake”/“responsibility” and aims in a gradual transformation in the perception of these spaces.
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Figure 68. Conclusions: Building-Block relations, (Dimtrakou, 2013)
Instrument γ - Principles
Reconfiguring polykatoikia

As it has been analysed above polykatoikia, apart from the fact that it is “outdated” due to the socio-economic transformations and the changes in the family structures, is a typology with low spatial and architectural quality. At the same time the repetition and reproduction of polykatoikia entities has shaped finally a low quality, dense urban tissue. In order to be able to address the issue of inhabitation and of reuse of the building stock, it is necessary to reconfigure polykatoikia itself.

After the research on the daily systems and the changes in the profile and the spatial demands of the inhabitants in the centre, the existing typologies and their impact in the building and to a certain extent to the entire block and by aiming again on the redefinition of the levels of privacy and the relation between “public”, “private” and “common” (see above) a set of principles were proposed. These principles were tested in three main typologies of polykatoikia (square, long and corner building) and three “new” types were proposed. These reconfigured typologies constitute flexible prototypes or abstract models which shows which are the elements and the spatial relations which can change in order to achieve a more varied result able to correspond in the actual demands.

In the following pages these three typologies are presented. In this models the most important element is not the absolute definition of the function of each space but mainly the relation between spaces and the levels of “spaces in common”. From a more collective/shared living (typology γ) or a more complex and varied typological mixture and merge (typology β), to a typology closer to existing model of polykatoikia where some small gestures such as the merge or the creation of small private open spaces or the introduction of small shared facilities in the “body” of polykatoikia the aim is to introduce ii. levels of interaction between the block (private) and the city (public) ii. levels of interaction between users (private apartments and common/shared facilities).

![Typologies of Polykatoikia](image)
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation
Typology γ: square polykatoikia

**Before**
- 10% Shared - 90% Private (from which 35-40% less active)

**After**
- 65% Shared - 45% Private
- 50% Shared - 50% Private (from which 20-25% less active)

*Figure 70.* (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

- Proposed typologies
- Existing structure
- Original typology

- Shared terrace
- Private unit: private space + private facilities + transitional space
- Private space: singles / couples / families
- Added structural elements: stairs, steps, ramps
- Steps: seats; transition to the backyard / urban furniture
- Transformation of the not-in-use mezzanine
- Open up; connection street level-back yard
- Permeability: removable panels (day/night)
- Level difference: steps-seats

Apartment entrances, limited shared or common space
Typology β: long polykatoikia

BEFORE
10% Shared - 90% Private (from which 35-40% less active)

AFTER
30% Shared - 70% Private (from which 35-40% less active)

+shared per apartment
20% Shared - 80% Private (from which 35-40% less active)

Figure 71, (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Inversion: activate the back-side by locating private units in the front.

Open up: connection street level-back yard
Elevated corridor leads to the common spaces (mainly for residents of the building)

Steps: connection of the ground floor with the elevated corridor.

private boxes not concentrated in one side of the building

proposed typologies

existing structure

existing entrance
Typology δ: corner polykatoikia

**BEFORE**
- 10% Shared - 90% Private (from which 35-40% less active)
  - Rooftop terrace - common create level differences for the possibility for multiple uses
  - Terrace shared between 2 units
  - Collective workshop for the building or commerce
  - Shared facilities for the building or small "show case" and 2nd entrance to the ground floor
  - Plateau: transitional space/ buffer zone

**AFTER**
- 25% Shared - 75% Private (from which 35-40% less active)
  - 12-15% Shared - 85-88% Private

**SHARED SPACES IN TOTAL (per building)**

**BEFORE**
- 10% Shared - 90% Private (from which 35-40% less active)

**AFTER**
- 25% Shared - 75% Private (from which 35-40% less active)
  + Shared between 2 apartments
- 12-15% Shared - 85-88% Private

*Figure 72. (Dimtrakou, 2013)*
COLLECTIVE & LEVELS OF PRIVACY

MERGING & SHARING

SPACE IN COMMON & PRIVACY
**SHARED SPACES IN TOTAL (per building)**

**BEFORE**
- 10% Shared - 90% Private (from which 35-40% less active)
- **AFTER**
  - 65% Shared - 45% Private
  - +shared per apartment
  - 50% Shared - 50% Private (from which 20-25% less active)

**SHARED SPACES IN TOTAL (per building)**

**BEFORE**
- 10% Shared - 90% Private (from which 35-40% less active)
- **AFTER**
  - 30% Shared - 70% Private (from which 35-40% less active)
  - +shared per apartment
  - 20% Shared - 80% Private (from which 35-40% less active)

**SHARED SPACES IN TOTAL (per building)**

**BEFORE**
- 10% Shared - 90% Private (from which 35-40% less active)
- **AFTER**
  - 25% Shared - 75% Private (from which 35-40% less active)
  - +shared between 2 apartments
  - 12-15% Shared - 85-88% Private
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Figure 73: Scrap Collector in Agios Panteleimonas, (K. Saloniki, 2012)
Evaluation
Figure 7.4. Main conclusions of the analysis and the criteria of the "contextual" approach (Dimitraikou, 2013)
The strategy regarding the neighborhood of Agios Panteleimonas has been based on a twofold approach. From the one hand a “contextual” perspective, which is recognizing, evaluating and reconfiguring the existing characteristics actors and their daily systems in a local level and on the other hand a “systemic” approach related the redefinition of a model of habitation (polykatoikia model). Aim of the project is to provide a wholistic strategy regarding the “regeneration” of the neighborhood. Therefore, it is important to define how and in which specific locations the proposed three instruments can be applied, if and how the instruments can be activated simultaneously and how flexible. Based on the results of the “diagnosis” (criteria) and the contextual approach, strategic locations/ possible programs/ flexibility in tenure had been highlighted and in the following diagrams the
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Figure 75: Strategic locations and programs and interventions - Contextual (Dimtrakou, 2013)

- Expansion of the weekly market at the main corridor
- Vertical intervention: Reuse abandoned and vacant spaces for housing/collective activity
- Reuse the abandoned mall for scrap processing
Strategic instruments for socio-spatial transformation in Athens

horizontal intervention: Corridor for processing and commerce

Urban Farming
Figure 76. Strategic locations and possible instruments' combinations - Contextual and Systemic (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

Figure 77. Section on the block: spatial transformations (Dimitrakou, 2013)

Figure 78. Section on the block: spatial transformations programs & daily systems-instruments (Dimitrakou, 2013)
Strategic instruments for socio-spatial transformation in Athens

Instrument α: Abandoned listed building, owned by the Municipality converted half into a "second chance school" (parallel education for adults) and half into a child care.

Instrument β: Empty plot acquired by the CBO and converted and used temporarily for outdoor activities.

Instrument γ: Rehabilitation & reprogramming of multi-storey buildings. Spatial reconfiguration (i.e. merging) for the creation of new typologies.

Instrument β & γ: Reuse of spaces never in use i.e. roof tops, and connect them vertically with the ground floor and the main entrance.

Instrument α & γ: In case that Municipality owns space in the rehabilitated block, social infrastructure programs can be introduced.

Instrument α: In case that Municipality owns space in the rehabilitated block, social infrastructure programs can be introduced.

Instrument β: Temporary use of ground floor spaces for the starting-up of small local businesses i.e. cooperative of farmers can temporarily acquire the space and sell directly their products.

Instrument γ: "Permeable" block. Open-up the ground floor introduce "flexible" programs / common spaces for the building.

Instrument γ: Shared or common spaces is necessary part of the rehabilitation. Minimum shared space: larger terrace shared between two apartments.
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation
References
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation


KARADIMITRIOU N., MALOUTAS, T., 2001, Vertical Social Differentiation in Athens, Greece. EUROPean Urban and Regional STUDies.


MALOUTAS T., (2007). Segregation, Social Polarization and Immigration in Athens during the 1990s: Theoretical Expectations and
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation.


Appendix I
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

*Thomas Maloutas is an Architect-Geographer, Director of the National Center for Social Research
Interview with Thomas Maloutas* - Athens, 31/10/2012

In our study trip in Athens, we have visited most of the neighborhoods of the center. We have observed that areas having more or less the same social characteristics, similar urban morphology form totally different perspectives towards the “other”. For instance, in Agios Panteleimonas at 12.00 in comparison to Metaxourgio in the afternoon, both immigrants’ neighborhood beaten by the economic crisis, we experience much more tension or fear. Could you explain us how these two different perception might result.

What you feel in Agios Panteleimonas is more the effect of this extreme right presence which has destroyed this social tissue. Metaxourgio used to be many decades ago a more bourgeois area but this is a very old story and everybody who belonged in a higher social standing has left the area long time ago. While in Agios Panteleimonas and in the broader Patissia and Kypseli neighborhoods, the shifts of population are more recent. Therefore, you still have inhabitants who remember or fantasize a very different past which is imaginary for many of those. But, its true such neighborhoods as Agios Panteleimonas have absorbed many immigrants because of the types of housing. More precisely, antiparochi system was one of the reasons why living around the city center was deteriorating rapidly in housing conditions, so these typologies and areas were available and affordable for immigrants. Only during the 1960 you had how many thousands building that were built in this “peri-urban” and the population of the Municipality of the center rise from half a million 3/4 of a million so it’s a 50% rise within a decade with no improvement of infra with cars multiplying rapidly with air pollution. So you had the ingredients for declining conditions of living in the center. At the same time you had a very specific model of polykatoikia model which was higher floor with nice views, retire apartments with nice verandas, and big apartments and as you moved down, smaller apartments were smaller. The ones on top where meant to be inhabited either by the original landowners (who provided his land for this building operations) or by the investor or to be sold to someone who wanted to go and live there. The others, the smaller apartments, they were designed smaller because they were meant to be put on the privet rent market. As the city grew very dense in those areas it was especially those lower floors which had the most deteriorating conditions (the sun never reach them, they became much more noisy because of the contact the street level and dirtier). For this reason, during 1970 and 80s a large proportion of these apartments were even abandoned, nobody used them. When the immigrants came in the early 1990s, for privat owners this was like manna from the sky. Because, immigrants were people who were ready to live in those deteriorated apartments housing because they couldn’t go elsewhere. To that point, we have to say that Greece it’s the only European country with zero social rented housing. For someone from Holland this can be outlandish! There is not even one apartment. So immigrants, who were at the same time without papers, they were “illegal” they couldn’t anyway claim social housing, but even if they were legal there was no social housing to claim, so it was a no way situation. Therefore they were inevitably drown in this “peri-urban” housing stock left unused. Part of this stock was in areas as Agios Panteleimonas and the rest in areas as Kypseli, Pagkrati. All around the city center mainly on the north and western side but also a bit on the east as in Ampelokipoi. If you go today in Ampelokipoi, you can see a “forest” of polykatoikias, if you had been there on 1945 there was none. The first building with 5-storeys was built in 1949 and Athens had in 1950 had only a thousand buildings of 5-storeys or higher, in the next 30 years 35 thousands a such buildings were constructed. So, the whole physical support of the city, the whole built environment changed dramatically and this affected very much the ways social classes were distributed in the city. This deterioration of the conditions of living in the center has gradually pushed the higher social strata to the periphery, to specific areas of the periphery. In the beginning, in the North-East then South-East and then even outside the boundaries of Attica region. The void created by this gradual suburbanization of middle and upper-middle social strata was filled by the sudden influx of immigrants. Albanians in the beginning and in the process others. So you must have this pattern of change in mind if you want to interpretate what is happening now. And people in Ag. Panteleimonas are probably people that they had been left behind, either because they have never been able to move to the suburbs. These were people who didn’t choose to do this at a time when they could sell their apartment and buy something in the periphery for almost the same price. When they lost that possibility, it was then when their property value in the city was always decreasing while prices in the periphery were increasing. So, if they lost the train at that moment the train was gone. They should have much more money from else where they could exchange what they had for living in the suburbs so if they were not high economic profile it was lost as an opportunity, so they were left behind. Others, were too old to move, and if you are over 45-50 you have a family you have your connections and all that you usually don’t move. So those who were left behind have “suffered” all this process of gradual decline of the area and at some point have been “forced” let’s say, to live with “others” that they were not accustomed to do so, since Athens was a very homogeneous ethnically city. Therefore, it was a change and a sudden change and sometimes it worked sometimes it didn’t. In the beginning it worked much more that when the crisis has surfaced. Because when the immigrants came in the early 90’s, they found Greece and Athens in an upward movement, growing economy and they were also at the right place at the right moment. Even if it was not Greece that asked people to come, like happened in countries like The Netherlands or France in the early post-war years, when fordist industry going on and the demand for labor was high, this was not the case of Southern Europe. It was mainly related to problems in immigrants’ origin countries that expulse them and brought them here. When they arrived here in the labor market they found niches especially in “problematic” family businesses, the small family businesses for which immigrants had been again manna from the sky because they were very cheap labor. Very cheap labor and the small family businesses rarely needed rocket scientist, it was mainly unskilled work that they needed. And you saw that people that even people with high skills came to Greece, had been forced to do very unskilled jobs. But they could survive and they could find a niche
of this short in the labor market and they also found, women especially, a niche in the labor market due to the deficiencies of our welfare state which is residual. Greek welfare state was based on the traditional role of women in the family. So cheap women’s labor domestically replaced young-Greek women’s domestic labor who were liberated in this way to work in the official labor. At the same way they found also a niche on the housing market because of this surplus deteriorated apartments in the abandoned in lower floors of polykatoikia, in these areas of the outer part of the central municipality. In the beginning the conditions were there for a non-conflictual integration of the first big wave of immigration to Athens. Then there was this event of the Olympic Games which was a boost for sometime the construction economy and this was also jobs for skilled workers and specially Albanians had the profile of construction workers so they fitted the process. After 2005 decline has started slowly in the beginning and in 2008 it was the free fall that has started. At the same time the profile of immigrant groups have changed. It was no more people from Balkan or and from East European countries coming to Greece, having a certain level of qualification even though it was not used here properly they did much lower job than they could have done according to their competences. The new wave of immigrants coming from war zones, Middle-East Afghanistan are much less qualified, much more demographically imbalanced, they are much more males than females, the Pakistanis for instance are 98% male and 2% female, Albanians where 45% female and 55% male, so there was an equilibrium. It is obvious that this imbalance creates problems in all respects. So at a moment that Greece was entering in a period of crisis the profile of immigrants become even more difficult to integrate in Greek society. Plus, you have all these political decisions, such as signing the Dublin II treaty which entrapped people in Greece, so the potential European solidarity for integrating properly and respecting their human rights, was minimized. So the situation has deteriorated in any possible sense and you see that graphically in the graph.

Regarding the second immigration wave, do people have as their final destination Greece and Athens, do they want finally to stay in the city?

Look, we are not discovering the world with immigration in Athens, these things had happened elsewhere much earlier than we started discovering them. Immigrants in the beginning, in most case, have in mind to return back to their countries. So most of the people coming to Greece, had come with the intention of working a bit here and going back, or going somewhere else to work and go back to their original place. Those who come to Athens, more than those who go to Patras for instance, have in a greater percentage the will to survive a bit here, making some money here and going back. What comes after in some years, in immigrant stories, is that your life is a little bit set where you live. If you have kids, starting going to school, they make friends, they speak the local language better that their mother tongue and when you want at some point to go back you have new attachments and your kids don’t want to go back. There are many Albanians in Greece that their kids do not speak Albanian, their social network is here, they see Greece as their place. Even though many Greeks do want them to feel or they don’t find it legitimate that they feel Greek. So the intention of the immigrant is something that is changing and it’s changing rapidly, it’s not something written in stone.

So many people come and finally stayed. Isn’t it?

Yes, this was the story of the 1990’s. Immigrants arrived in Greece without expecting to find ways to survive and prosper, in fact they did. Not probably the perfect opportunity for them but they were ok, so they decided to stay. As me move in time and as we approach crisis, in a country where unemployment is to 25% and especially young unemployment (and immigrants are mostly young), is over 50% there is not much chance that you can find solutions here.

As I understood, job and family networks set a preliminary framework for the integration of immigrants in Greek or any society. Loss or lack of job opportunities, due to the crisis and no possibility for founding a family, due to the ethno-cultural differences or the unbalanced gender distribution, create difficulties and leads to further marginalization isn’t it? Which is the state response to these issues.

Yes, this is the best way to get marginalized, to be potential victim of networks of the “underworld”, to start doing illegitimate things in order to survive. From the other side as an organized society, Greek society keep its eyes closed to these eventualities. It’s then that people start getting furious because of the high criminality rates and the state respond with “zero tolerance”. Because it’s much less costly to have a police state than a welfare state.

I don’t think that I agree, if we set it in a long term plan.

At least in a short term. Moreover, political decisions in Greece are based on the short term period of re-election. So you can advertise how you can put immigrants in concentration camps and you don’t give a damn for what will happen in five years. The former minister of “citizens Protection”, what a youthingism [...] introduced the operation Xenios-Zeus - which is about arresting immigrants and sending to jail or back to their countries which is a contradiction in terms. What kind of hospitality is this! So this is one of the responses to the issues.

We have experience abandonment not only in empty spaces but the lack of attachment with the city center. The residential use introduced again in the center can be a response to this so called “urban decay”. However, my question is “housing but for whom”? There is a discussion about the return of inhabitants in the center, even though people are living in the center. Therefore I was wondering, under which terms and conditions people will “return” in the center, in a model of living that they have denied. Which is your opinion and how this can happen in a city in crisis?
Basically this is a very good question, because this is a slogan: "Bringing residents back to the city". This is problematic in two accounts. First of all the historical center (Omonoia) was never a residential place, so bringing back people to the center does not stand. The other thing is that, when we say bringing back people to the center in order to do what? There are people in the center. It’s not the people that they would like to see in the center. So it is like saying that we want an exchange of population, have the good middle-class families to populate the center and do away with marginal population that we don’t want to see them. Because, in Athens we have concentration of poor population and culturally "problematic" groups in Zefhi for example where we have concentration of “travelers” of Roma, where you have criminality etc, but who gives a damn. Since they are not in the “vitrine spaces” of the city, where investments and all that are expected. They can rot there and nobody cares, they not send their kids to school, they can kill each other and nobody cares. And there is a third thing is that when we say “bring people back” we imagine that we are in another city, in another urbanization context. Because, the “back to the city movement” is part of the urban history of the anglo-american cities, where in the period of industrialization the elites decided to leave the center and go to the suburbs. That’s why you have the Burgess model in urban geography, where the further away you go from the center the higher the standing of the inhabitants. At some point because of demographic and economic changes, and because of the processes of industrialization - deindustrialization, the decline of former industrial areas near the center and the potential of redevelopment and gentrification, we can talk for a "back to the city" movement by specific types of new inhabitants (young, yuppies, bobos). This is something that has created a big industry: building industry and cultural industry boomed along with the regeneration of the anglo-american city. However, Athens or Rome or Paris... nobody has abandoned the center of Paris, since it was always the place for the higher social strata. In Athens, there was this belated suburbanization but not according to the anglo-american model, it was a different thing. So, “bringing back people to the center” has no contextual relation to Athens. It’s a Utopia and it’s only a legitimating of chasing people that we don’t want to see in the streets of the center.

Who is going to populate the center under this conditions, these typologies, this built environment was the main reason why people left from the center. So why they will return back?

Normally the clientele for these kind of things exist in all cities. Not married, not willing to be client in this suburban bliss. At the same time living in the suburbs makes working for both husband and wife more difficult, especially in a city where you have without facilities public transport. So it’s mainly people, young couples, or bachelors who would not wish to live in the suburbs where there is no social life, there is nothing. So, there are people who would be interested in residence near the center but there is not enough demand as there is in Madrid or Barcelona, for re-habilitating to the tastes of a “high demand with would make it worthwhile to invest in regeneration. Because we don’t have a substantial amount of corporate elite in Athens. With the term "corporate elite" I mean foreign big corporations that have their important offices in Athens and their young well paid employees, working a lot of hours in the center, they are not willing to commute everyday to the suburbs. So we don’t have this stratum and this demand in the housing market.

So what about the gentrification processes of the last decade in Athens? How is it takes place, and how it differs from models in other European or American cities?

In the areas of the center you can observe one more gentle gentrification process it s not even a building gentrification, it’s an apartment gentrification. It happens piece by piece is not a huge operation of gentrification that you tire down 4 blocks and then this spreads around. It’s more a process of embourgement where higher profile areas expand slowly to neighboring areas. Gentrification needs a leap, it’s not continuous. You need to bombard socially and physical sometimes the spaces that belong to “the other” to the class other ethnic other. This in a very patchwork social and ethnic situation as in Athens does not happen with napalm bombs, is more fragmented.

Is this related to the ownership patterns and the fragmented ownership?

Yes that’s true. In a building you can have sometimes 40 owners and single apartments that belong divided in three owners. In the sub-area of Omonoia, called Gerani you have something like 4000 owners in a block, which is something impossible to deal with. So all these things put some stops in processes of gentrification.

In Agios Panteleimonas and Kypseli neighborhoods, in areas very dense, with high levels of abandonment, close to the historic center, where this social bombardment, that you were referring to needed for a gentrification process to start or to evolve, is already there. However, I was wondering, if there is finally any interest for investing in these areas.

Extreme right does not create the right conditions for capital, at least capital of some size to be invested. But this was always structural problem in Athens and in all big cities that’s why big merchant banks and big construction companies never invested in housing. For a period they were intentionally obstructed to do so, and then the structure of the housing and land market made it impossible for big companies to be interested. It’s the complete opposite with Spain - Madrid and Portugal- Lisbon.
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation

*Hein de Haan is an Architect*
Interview with Hein de Haan* - Amsterdam, 15/04/2013

Which are the steps and how the economic crisis of 2008 influenced the model of CPD?

First an association of people having the same demand. After the negotiation with the municipality and the urban rules defined, a back-up contract (with housing corporation or local authorities) is used to be signed. So if any member decided to quit the process, the back-up partner was buying the property and. Due to the crisis, the back-up partner has been replaced by a waiting list, so the risk is balanced out. The rest of the process remained more or less the same. After the creation of the waiting list, money are lent (In Vijsburg we went for a cooperative bank) mainly for financing lower incomes.

So, which is for you one the most crucial moments of this process of Collective Private Development.

One of the most important moments it is the first step and the negotiation between the local authorities and the private initiative. A clear demand a vision and of course some more experienced members in the group, are needed. From the 26 groups expressed interest only 4 “survived”.

I was wondering if people interested in this kind of operation are considered an exceptional group which wants to distinguish itself and if finally this model can result into a gated community?

The origins of the model and the general concept is not related to gated communities or is not referring only in wealthy participants. It can have several expressions and it can be activated from lower income participants. The model propose a certain level of interaction and participation of the future users, and finally it is less costly due to this collective approach. Of course, this does not mean that the model can result into a gated community, however each initiative demanding land from the local authorities, has to have a concrete statement and a demand and has accept agree and respect the rules that the planning bureau and the local authorities define.

How the programmatic and finally the social mixture is achieved?

First of all, since participants, apart from the collective costs, can decrease their individual costs by choosing for example to have a working space on the ground floor (working space on the ground floor is 25% less pricy that the residential use of the ground floor). Besides, since participants can directly decide on the space they need and we are not talking about a house coming from a list, people can choose for smaller spaces which have equal quality with the rest apartments while they can use the common facilities equally. So, the social mixture is not planned but it results by the flexibility of the model. In the past when housing corporations were the back-up partner, some of the apartments were converted into social housing.

The CPD incorporates in each project a percentage of common facilities which are shared equally between the users, how they are financed?

It depends, sometimes they are commercial, for instance the little restaurant here in Vrijburcht the little cafe-restaurant, after negotiation, has been rented and managed by a privat interest. In other cases the housing corporations finance partly some common facilities such as a child care or a crest. However in both cases some facilities are financed, maintained and used collectively, such as our greenhouse in Vrijburcht.

What about the abuse of this model for speculative development. How the model secures from this kind of approaches.

First of all, most of the participants are attached with the project, since they participate in all the levels and phases from the first negotiation with the Municipality, till the discussion with the architect and the contractor. The efficiency of the project is related to the contribution and participation of each member under the collective. Secondly every participant is not allowed to have more than one property, he can only demand for larger space but not for property.

Which is the critical number or owners, so the model of CPD is valid, and which is the maximum number of participants, after which the complexity of the process increases dramatically?

The model is efficient when we are talking 40-50 owners. As much the number of participants increase the total costs can decrease even more. However, the interested participants, future owners and neighbors have to talk intensively and define demands and visions and of course a time frame of this operation. Therefore, when the participants increase, the communication between the parties is the most important thing, if it fails all the project stops.

As far as I know you are responsible for Urban Resort initiative. Tell us some information about it. Are there similarities to the anti-kraak system?

In the city of Amsterdam there is plenty of vacant space not used, office buildings or former public buildings. It is about bigger complexes, privately owned. At the same time there is a high demand on affordable space for in the city (artists, people who want to start up a business, people need housing, people that they are willing to live in a more collective way). Urban resort is trying to bridge the offer on space with the demand and respond to social, cultural needs. Urban resort foundation is negotiating between the owners and the possible users regarding the type of tenure the period and the rent. This negotiation process gives a certain freedom to the user to transform the space who from his side is in charge of paying a affordable rent as well the utility costs. From the other side, anti-kraak system is a more rigid system, the anti-kraak is in charge of securing the owner that their property won’t change or won’t be damaged. At the same time, anti-kraak is a profit organization, which is not that economic profitable for the owners who are “securing” their property from squatting with a smaller profit.
Appendix II
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation
**Theory of Urbanism**

**Right to the city: Housing & land policies as an alternative to neoliberal urbanization**

Testing practical applications of “Right to the City” from Lefebvre, in contemporary urban policies.

Course AR3U022, Theory of Urbanism
MSc Urbanism, Delft University of Technology
Ifigeneia Dimitrakou
4193393 _ifdimi@gmail.com
17 January, 2013

Abstract – Nowadays, urban poverty, social polarization-fragmentation and informalization constitute urban phenomena and processes intensified within the context of crisis and the shift towards neoliberal urbanization, threatening the social and environmental sustainability of numerous cities globally. Under this spectrum, urban planners and researchers about cities, supporting that this process of political and economic restructuring in cities is negatively affecting the urban everyday life, attempt to provide progressive responses to this perceived disenfranchisement in cities. One popular trend has been a fascination with the idea of the ‘right to the city’ - a theoretical concept developed by the urban sociologist H. Lefebvre - as a counter-approach towards neoliberal urbanism. The aim of the following paper is to reflect on the notion of the “right to the city”, and examine how this theoretical set of principles can have a practical application or can influence the contemporary housing and urban policies regarding urban poverty and social marginalization. In first place, a review on the ideas of H. Lefebvre and the contemporary analysis on Lefebvre’s work about the fundamental human right to the city, is made. Secondly, the paper analyzes the practical implementation of this concept through policies, strategies and legal framework proposed the last decade in Latin America as “counter-policies” to neoliberalism. Conclusions are made about the successful or not interpretation and implementation of a theoretical framework in practice. Besides reflections have been made upon the way to rethink generally the aspects of urban crisis and point out the potentials highlighted through the concept of the “right to the city”.

Key words – right to the city, socio-spatial segregation urban poverty, urban crisis

Introduction
The informalization processes occurring in the several agglomerations in crisis, can be seen as a manifestation of urban poverty. Although socio-spatial inequalities and conflicts were always intertwined to urbanity, the last decades due to the economic and urban crisis, these processes has been intensified. Within this context of crisis, questions such as “who has the right to the city?”; ”who has the right to use urban space in order to fulfill his demands?”, ”who has the right to participate in the urban processes and shape cities future use?”; regarding the rights of inhabitants and their level of engagement with the city, emerge.

In the last decade, the notion of the “right to the city”, a theoretical concept first elaborated by H. Lefebvre which is going to be analyzed in the following chapters, has inspired public and academic dis-course about cities and citizenship, legislatory reforms and social movements globally. At the same time, agencies and international coalitions are also exploring the potential of the “right to the city” as a way to rethink about urban poverty and social marginalization and provide alternatives towards neoliberal urbanization processes. To that point, it has to be mentioned that “the right to the city”, being an oeuvre of the Marxist philosopher and urban sociologist Henri Lefebvre, constitutes a theoretical and ideological background and for this reason its implementations or its interpretations in practice seems challenging since it opens up a new perspective in rethinking about cities development.

The following review focuses in the correlations between theory (“right to the city”) and practice (urban policies). More precisely, analysis and definitions regarding the theory of the “right to the city”, though a literature review on the writings of Henri Lefebvre and on contemporary perspectives on his work. Since the main objective is to test the correlations between theory and practice of urbanism and understand if and how this theoretical concept of the “right to the city” can be the starting point for urban policies and reforms which address the issues of socio-spatial segregation, the case study of Caracas-Venezuela urban policies has been selected. Caracas-Venezuela, facing an important urban housing crisis, urban poverty and socio-spatial segregation problems, the last decade due to the socialist political agenda, emerge as the key zone to test alternatives to neoliberalism and therefore a review on the urban policies and the legislative reforms under the perspective of the “right to the city” can inform us about the possible, successful or not, implementations of theory in practice. Therefore, in the following chapters of the paper after the review on the notion of the right to the city and an introduction in the urban context of Caracas, the legal framework and the policies of the Bolivarian Project, regarding housing crisis, urban poverty, human rights and socio-spatial segregation will be examined and the linkages between theory and practice are going to be traced.

The aim of the paper, is to reflect on the “right to the city”,
Redefining abandonment through inhabitation
understand and answer if, how and why a theoretical concept can influence and contribute in the academic research and the practice regarding urban development and trigger questions or even provide conclusions regarding the ways that all the inhabitants can be actively part of the city, shape the city according to their demands and decide on the future development and image of the city. Moreover, a critical review on theories about the "right to the city" and on contemporary urban policies and programs, their successful or failed correlation to theory and ideology, could be possibly the base upon i. we can discuss and redefine the notions of inhabitance, participation civil and human rights during crisis and post-crisis periods and ii. think about future strategies on complex issues of urban poverty, socio-spatial segregation resulting from a wider/global political and socio-economic con-text. Since the "marginal" or the "segregated" or the "others" are part - or precondition- of the urbanization-internalization processes taking place within the context that urban crisis forms, correlations could be made between different socio-economic contexts. Therefore, the following paper after the general con-clusions, aims in providing general recommendations that will become part of my for the graduation design project contributing in its relevance.

Definitions on the "right to the city"

In the late 1960’s, the French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre in his book Le droit a la ville, developed an ideological framework for rethinking the socio-economic and spatial relations emerged in the cities and redefining the power relations which form the urban space. His aim was to challenge explicitly and directly the social and spatial relations emerged in the city within the context of capitalist societies and to propose alternative modes regarding the production of urban space and the shaping of urban life. Lefebvre argues that city constitutes a collective “oeuvre” of all the inhabitants and the users of a city. People can be part of the city and reshape its future, by inhabiting actively, by participating in public life and by appropriating space in the city. According to Lefebvre, the right to the city is contributed to and can be claimed by all the people inhabiting the city independently from their nationality or ethnicity or sex and it could be said that it is earned by living the everyday life in the space of the city. He declares that the right to the city, “should modify, concretize and make more practical the rights of the citizen as an urban dweller (citadin) and user of multiple services. It would affirm, on the one hand, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in the urban area; it would also cover the right to the use of the center, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck into ghettos (for workers, immigrants, the ‘marginal’ and even for the ‘privileged’)” (Lefebvre 1991 in Purcell, 2002, p. 102).

Therefore, he proposes an socially-inclusive concept which stands out of the notion of ‘citizenship’, which is associated with a national political community, and incorporated all individuals who contribute and shape the everyday life of the city. Moreover, inhabitants have a central role in multiple scales of the decision making related to the production of space and therefore as political subjects can be involved in decisions taken by public or private institutions in local, municipal or regional level.

The right to the city according to Lefebvre is highly connected to: i. the right to participation -which is related to the accessibility in all levels of decision-making upon urbanization processes- ii. the right to appropriation which refers to the right to access, occupy and use urban space or create new space that fulfills people demands and necessities of everyday life. More specifically, since according to H. Lefebvre, all inhabitants have the “right to the city”, all individuals are considered as part of the decision making in issues related to urban life. To that point it has to be mentioned that Lefebvre, imagines that a central and direct role of the inhabitants in decision-making through which will allow them to form a majority voice and will enable them to confront the current regime in which capital and state elites control the decisions over the production of space. Regarding the right to appropriate, Lefebvre by proposing a model according to which inhabitants are able to occupy, use and shape urban space and contribute in the production of it. According to Purcell (2002) with this principle Lefebvre is challenging the right to property one of the cores of the capitalist class relations since it opposes to “capital’s ability to valorize urban space” and establishes “a clear priority for the use value of urban residents over the exchange value interests of capitalist firms” (Purcell, 2002 p. 103).

The “right to the city” as it was expressed by Lefebvre is a “unitary vision” (Marcuse, 2010), that it is not related to an existing urbanity but it is referring to a “new city” that could fulfill all the fundamentally common interests and desires of the inhabitants. The right to the city is linking separate rights (right to housing, right to education, right to employment, right to express freely, right to participate and being represented in the decision making) under a single right that encompasses them all, thus it is an idea that brings together individuals with different priorities but with fundamentally common interests.

According to Harvey the right to the city “it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city” (Harvey, 2008 p.315). Since city can be perceived, as the socio-economic and physical interrelations be-tween individuals, developed within the context of urbanity, the right to the city is referring to a common right that can be claimed and exercised in collective way. Therefore, reshaping the urbanization processes and to that extent our lives, depends upon a collective power. Although, the priorities can remain different, this unitary vision, that ad-
dressing the complexity of a system in a holistic way, can be the ideological/political background for this collective power to emerge. Individuals, by understanding the city as a field of conflicting powers, can collectively take control over the urbanization processes and rethink on the nature of the city. According to Lefebvre the right to the city encompasses the notion of conflict since “it does not abolish confrontations and struggles. On contrary!” (Lefebvre, 1973 in: Sangla 2010 p.103). Thus, although a part of the society has already all these above mentioned rights, there is that invisible/deprived/marginal that needs to obtain them through collective empowerment. To that point the right to the city propose the restructuring of the power relations over the production of space and the displacement of capitalistic forces (translated into neoliberal forces nowadays), through conflict/opposition. To sum up, Henri Lefebvre understood the city as a set of economic, political and social processes taken place inside or outside the boundaries of the urban, their interrelations. Therefore, city can be perceived as a cultural and political product of the collective. Through the idea of the right to the city, Lefebvre proposed a “unitary” common perspective for envisioning the city as a collective space of inhabitants’ desires, which could be achieved through collective practices, democratic participation, active presence in space. However, it has to be mentioned that the theoretical oeuvre of Lefebvre remain a abstract scheme and framework since it is not determining the ways that these concepts should be embedded in societies and cities.

To that point it is worth asking how this abstract project of Lefebvre can be translated into spatial strategies. How the “right to the city” can be implemented, or how it can inspire policies regarding socio-spatial segregation. Which is the role of the governance and planning within this context? And how policies and strategies can create a framework for all these notions to be applied in everyday practice? Can finally the above analyzed principles provide responses in urban problems such as socio-spatial segregation or they remain theories?

Examining the “Right to the city” in practice

Since Venezuela's urban policies of the last decades are promoted as “counter-efforts” to tackle with “the consequences of neoliberal urbanization of the past”, and the notion of the “right to the city” constitute according to the government the core of these reforms, a critical literature review on the policies and programs of this last period, their successful or not interpretation of theory and ideology, seems indispensable. In the following parts, after an analysis on the urban context and the reforms and policies implemented in Caracas, Venezuela under the perspective of the notion of the “right to the city”, conclusions will be presented regarding i. the interpretation of theory into practice and ii. the success in responding to urban issues such as socio-spatial segregation and urban poverty. In the last part, recommendations will be made regarding the potentials and the weaknesses of this theory-practice interrelation and questions for further research on the topic.

Socio-economic context in Venezuela.

Venezuela, an oil rich country of 25 million people and it is considered to be one of the most urbanized countries in Latin America with about 90% of the population inhabiting urban areas, facing an important housing crisis. The urbanization informalization processes of 20th century in Venezuela are intertwined to the political economy of the country and more precisely to the oil-history of Venezuela. Thus, an overview of the socio-economic and political shifts of Venezuela is necessary for understanding the existing urban and housing patterns and the proposed alter-natives upon these issues. Until the first decade of 20th century, Zene-uelas’s economy was based in agricultural production, however after World War I, Venezuela was introduced into the global oil market. The rise of oil industry economic-social and to that extent urban patterns transformed dramatically. More precisely, according to Fuentes, the dominance of oil-production led steadily to the shrinkage of other productive domains of the economy with a simultaneous rise of “parasitic” class which became dominant by exploiting state resources” (Fuentes, 2012). Oil production emerged a supportive service domain fact that intensified even more the urbanization process, since rural population migrated to Caracas and to other big cities, purchasing a better life and formed, at the same time, the popular classes and the informal part of the city.

The periods of 1950’s - 1960’s, was the period of modernization of the Capital, when the high state revenues made possible big infrastructure projects to be implemented. However, these projects concerned only the formal core of the city, extruding or ignoring the informalization processes emerged and intensified on the outskirts by the natural increase of the population and the urban migration. During that period, some large-scale Modernist projects for massive housing were constructed on the outskirts. However, even in these projects squatting became the common practice for the appropriation of land/shelter, since housing projects as part of a social housing-integration policy, was not provided for the masses of migrants arrived in the city.

In 1976, some years after the oil crisis, the nationalization of the oil industry, organized by Perez administration happened. This program based on the hypothesis that rising oil prices would increase state revenues, was never completed since oil income de-creased sharply in late 1970’s. During that period, foreign banks, provided loans to make up the shortfall so that Venezuela’s development program could proceed on schedule however, until late 1970’s of four years a five-fold increase of the public dept happened, fact that led to the economic
Within the boundaries of the Metropolitan area, the informal and formal city coexist in close proximity and oppose to each other though their physical and socio-economic structure. Barrios of center and periphery, constitute places with important issues of accessibility to primary services, of quality of space and of connectivity, threaten by social deterioriation and exclusion. Caracas depicts the typical characteristics of the late twentieth century Latin American cities, such as large inequalities and contrasting urban development within the boundaries of the Metropolitan area. According to Harms (Harms: in Aleman 2008) the informalization of the Caracas can be explained by: i. the topography of the city which restricted access to urban land. ii. the modernization process of 20th century according to North American principles (ex. suburbanization, decentralization and new centralities and social spatial segregation) iii. the global city model which highlighted the demand for office buildings instead of housing projects, and which had as a result the increase of the land values in the center. 

As it has been mentioned above, informal settlements started growing during the 1950’s and expanded massively mainly after 1970’s. Nowadays, it is estimated that more than the 50% of the population of the city lives in slums. However, the official policies started looking on the issue of arbitrary constructions, only during the 1990’s, after the Sectoral Plan of 1994. According to this plan, central and peripheral Barrio Zones were incorporated to the Urban Structure of Caracas, thus it was the first time in planning history of Venezuela that informal city is mapped and taken into account. The specific plan constitute the starting point for the “slum upgrading projects” (Housing policy Section II, Articles 6 and 7 and 8), under the guidance of World Bank, to emerge. Nevertheless, these projects as well the plan, by focusing only on some physical aspects of the uneven development between formal and informal city, seemed unable to provide answers to urban poverty and socio-spatial fragmentation.

In 1999, Hugo Chávez, pushed for radical re-forms, starting from a constitutional reform towards a participatory democracy, which aimed on balancing the aftermaths of neoliberal policies of the past (corruption, poverty, social exclusion). The New Constitution of 1999, by including the right to the city, the right for decent housing, the right to participation in democratic processes and in decision-making of the cities as constitutional rights, brought into the public discourse the most marginalized parts of the Venezualian society and converted them into political sub-jects. Emphasis is given to the participation of inhabitants in the decision-taking, since popular participation for development in the municipalities was promoted, a framework in which the local planning councils can act as a mediator between inhabitants and public institutions, was defined and several types of association were encouraged. This bottom-up approach was perceived as the way to empower people to form community organization, based on solidarity and mutual responsibility, for participating, ex-
ecting, evaluating and controlling urban and social projects. Important is the fact that in the new constitution housing is described as an undeniable human right as a significant public good, perceived as part of the general social and economic context in Venezuela. The constitution, by overpassing the clichés of informality, self-aid and philanthropy, gave room for the margins of society to develop their selves equally. In 2001, a set of strategies in national and municipal level was introduced by the Government. Mission Housing Venezuela. In 2002, a Presidential Decree 1666, introduced more reforms towards the same direction. More specifically, policies concerning land tenure regularization and tenure allocation were introduced. Land tenure regularization has been in the past policies the starting point for upgrading programs. However, until 2002 the state provided a semi-legal document that approved the ownership upon the built space and not upon land. The new reform proposed the land tenure regularization as part of a social policy. In fact, the decree gave the possibility to the inhabitants of arbitrary shelters installed in squatted land, to have a title to the land.

Regarding the implementation of the legal-ization process, a framework for the creation of Urban Land Committees (CTU) was provided. These committees constitute an instrument for the implementation of the legalization process and they were formed by 100 to 200 families that live in the same area, which could elect, through democratic procedures, community representatives. The committees have the role of mediator for the request and the acquisition of land titles and the editing of a “barrio charter,” which describes the history of each barrio and the community’s rules and principles. The formation of the Land Committees had as result the emergence of smaller more specialized committees dealing with the public facilities, the safety and some cultural projects of the community.

However, the Urban Land Committees have evolved to do much more than just measure land and process title claims. The technical office encourages them to write In addition, land committees have begun to form sub-committees that deal with public utility companies, such as water and electricity supply, sewage and garbage disposal, the organization of cultural events, the management of security concerns, the initiation of neighborhood improvement projects, and other issues. Most importantly, though, the CTUs empower communities in an unprecedented way, giving them a real sense of ownership over their habitat. Through these neighborhood initiatives, the inhabitants of the barrios were recognized as equal members of the society. It could be said that the anonymous squatters became legal and formal parts of the city having the same rights and obligations.

The success of the Urban Land Committees, led to the decision for the enhancement of a new neighborhood initiatives for Participation Centers for the Transformation of Habitat, for health and education amenities which were aiming primarily on the improvement of neighborhood social amenities. These initiatives and associations, based on the principles of self-organization and of communal solidarity, were introduced as a tool for enhancing the active participation of the inhabitants in issues related to the everyday life practices of the community. The main mission of PCTH is to identify which are the demands of the community in services or in urban projects. Therefore, it could be said that these association, larger that the Committees, are responsible more for organizing a neighborhood strategy and defining general guidelines, than for the implementation of neighborhood projects.

In 2009 and 2011 radical policies for the re-distribution of land and the control over the land prices were proposed through the Urban land Law of 2009 and the Law for the Regulation and Control of Leased Housing of 2011. According the first, the appropriation of the unused urban land in favor of the public good, it is proposed. More precisely, de-teriorated land, characterized as un-habitable, or vacant land within the urban boundaries, has to be sold to the state for serving social demands. The Government declared that the specific regulation is aiming on putting an end to the large land ownership in the city core. Concerning the regulation regarding the control of the leases, it has to be mentioned that it is a result of a proposal made directly by the tenants movement in Caracas. This law has a significant importance because apart from providing a certain control over speculation over prices, it is a result of direct participation of people on the top-down decision making and it reflects the ambition, expressed through the Constitution of 1999, for popular participation and social justice. It could be said that it denotes the importance of social movements on the process of planning and decision-making. Within the context of an important housing crisis, housing policies for the existing environment without proposals for new housing projects would seem as an incomplete strategy which tents to scratch over the surface of the main problem: the shortage of housing. According to Aleman (2008) “the annual average number of homes constructed during the first four years of the Chavez presidency (1999-2003) was 34,228, compared to 37,018 for the second Perez government (1989-1993) and 33,754 during the second Caldera government (1994-1998).” However, it has to be mentioned that from 1999 until 2004 (with a pick in 2002 and the massive strikes), the political scene of Venezuela was vulnerable and pretty unstable, due to the opposition movements toward the socialist regime. For these reason, the numbers cannot be totally valid.

The annual aim of the government concerning the shortage of housing, was to provide 150,000 houses every year, financed mainly from the oil in-dustry state revenues. Nevertheless, according to Reuters around 500,000 new houses were built until 2011 and the announcement of the New Housing Mission 2011-2017, fact that approves a certain inca-pability of the state to fulfill the aims of the Mission. In 2011 a new Housing Mission was introduced by Chavez according to which, 200,000 in 2012 and 300,000 each year until 2017 are going to...
be provided as part of the social security plan through which the State will reach the goal of 2.000.000 new houses. A Positive is the fact that according to the statistics the implementation and finally the execution of the seems more successful, since the short-term goals are more or less achieved.

Conclusions

Conclusions about Right to the city concept

As it has been analyzed in the first part of the paper, the theoretical concept of the “right to the city” constitute a holistic approach about the production, the use and the governance of urban space. Lefebvre by developing a critique on the status quo of that period, tries to rescript the way that we perceive the city processes, the actors participating in them. However, it has to be highlighted that since Lefebvre defines modes and does not proposed certain spatial solutions, direct spatial interpretations of his work cannot be done.

Evaluating the practical implementation of the “right to the city”.

As it has been analyzed above, Venezuela the last decades constitutes a field of experimentation for a counter-neoliberal/socialist project applied in multiple levels of governance and in multiple scales of the society. Within this context, the democratization of the state and to that extend the democratization of the city is tested. Though the adoption and the interpretation of the revolutionary concepts of urban critical theory, radical urban policies are emerging. However, it is worth to be question if these proposals are finally is the way to change our cities by changing ourselves or if they are just generic statements related to populist dialectics. Firstly, in the case of Venezuela, the vision for an egalitarian society based on social justice, is purchased. For this reason inclusive and multi-actor approaches are introduced. Instead of keeping a bind-eyes approach that perpetuates the hypocrisy of the “formal”, the policy-makers gave voice but mainly physical and immaterial space to the most marginalized parts of the society, to exist and to develop equally in the city. By accepting, recognizing the importance, engaging and empowering the “informal” the governance tried to tackle with multiple realities co-existing in the city and to break the circle. By transferring decision making and power to the in-habitants of barrios, a breakthrough on the structures of the marginalization happened.

One of the main notions reflected in all the above mentioned policies and regulations, is the par-ticipation of the individu-als through committees, as-sociations and initiatives are not allowed or recom-mended but it constitutes a indispensable instrument for the organization, the implementation and the evaluation of the policies and the project concerning the city. The aim is to achieve engagement by con-verting inhabitants to political subjects that can de-velop ideas, reflect on the city, discuss, clash and ne-gotiate.

Concerning the right for adequate housing, efforts had been made for mapping the existing situ-ation, for the legalization processes, for the im-provement of barrios and for the crea-tion of new houses. The final projects regarding new housing programs, seem not able to cover the demands for shelter directly. Therefore, it could be said that these more ambitious, more demanding projects is the weakest point of the policies concerning housing crisis in Venezuela, since a radical change in the pace of production or the percentage of new houses per year provided by the state, is increased but it still fluctuates according to the circumstances - natural disasters/ elections/ fluctuations on the oil prices/ global circumstances and events. Since the informal city concerns more that the 50% of the population of Ca-racas, the results cannot be directly visible and the "eradication of poverty" in barrios is a socio-economic process. However, the proposals still show an inten-tion, which is a multileveled approach towards the democratization of housing that proposes i. the in-crease the participation of the state budget for houses ii. regularization of free market aspects could in rents and land prices. Besides, an interesting part of the housing social programs is that they are not envisioned as mono-functional clusters that serve just the housing de-mands but as multifunctional self-managed communities that can serve their multiple demands within the boundaries of their neighborhood.

The notion of the right to the city, as being a “unitary idea”, in the case of Venezuela worked as the link between different demands and backgrounds, as the tool to bring different groups in a discussion about urban space. At the same time this notion worked as a frame for all the crucial issues of the city and became one understandable concept for the urbanity of 21st century in Venezuela. It can be said that the right to the city introduced a new dialectic upon urban issue and became the common ground for communication, it became an ideology that defined everyday life.

Recommendations

As it has been mentioned above one of the aims of this theoretical review is to find correlations between right to the city theory and urban practices, trace alternatives which counter-balance socio-spatial segregation through housing policies and rethink how these phenomena, processes and actions on urban development can be introduced in a different socio-economic and political context. Can finally the “right to the city” become the framework through which we think, design and evaluate our proposals/solutions regarding issues of social segregation?

A theoretical concept such as the right to the city can
have multiple interpretations according to the context refer-
ring to. However, it could be said that within the field of ur-
banism, a theoretical concept such as “the right to the city”
can constitute a framework through which we perceive and
design the cities and define who are the actors and who can
potentially become agent in urban processes. In other words,
it can become the spectrum under which we can tackle sever-
al urban issues such as marginalization, socio-spatial segrega-
and informalization through multiple levels of planning
and decision making but not the direct response. Through this
approach main urban issues (informalization and socio-spatial
segregation) can be identified and the importance and the
qualities-potentialities of more vulnerable social groups are
recognized as actors or even agents, are taken into account
and become part of strategies. Theory and abstract theoreti-
cal structures describe a holistic view and therefore it cannot
be translated and applied directly since they doom to stay in-
complete.
Therefore, it could be said that kind of ap-proach within the
context of urban crisis, can give a holistic view on socio-spatial
issues and become even the platform of negotiation between
more and less powerful actors in space. By empowering lo-
calities, through participation and negotiation and with the
“formal”, we can rescript these socio-spatial issues of the cities
and rethink our role in these processes. Is the concept of the
he right to the city according to Harvey “the right to change
ourselves by changing the city.” (Harvey, 2008 p.315).

References

(Albo, 2006, Alemán, 2008, Bohmer, 2009, Brillembourg Al-
Harvey, 2012, Kanishka Goonewardena, 2008, Lefebvre, 1968,
Mark Weisbrot, 2012, Neuwirth, 2006, Robertson, 2011, Rob-
ertson, 2012b, Robertson, 2012a, Sangla, 2010, Saskia, 2005,
Saskia, 2011, Sugranyes, 2010)
ALBO, G. 2006. The Unexpected Revolution: Venezuela Con-
fronts Neoliberalism International Development Week. Ed-
monton, Alberta: University of Alberta.
ALEMÁN, A. A. 2008. Urban Upgrading Intervention and Bar-
rio Integration in Caracas, Venezuela PhD Dissertation, Dort-
mund University of Technology
Available: http://venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/4690 [Ac-
cessed 20/11/2012].
BRILLEMBOURG ALFREDO, K. F., HUBERT KLUMPNER Inform-
al City: Caracas Case, Munich, Berlin, London, New York, Prestel
BROWN, A. 2010. The ‘Right to the City’: from Paris 1968 to Rio
2010.
www.hic-al.org/documento.cfm?id_documento=1275 [Ac-
cessed 1/12/2012].

HARVEY, D. 2009. Social Justice and the City, Athens, London,
The University of Georgia Press.
HARVEY, D. 2012. Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the
KANISHKA GOONEWARDENA, S. K., RICHARD MILGROM,
CHRISTIAN SCHMID 2008. Space, Difference, Everyday life:
Reading Henri Lefebvre. In: KANISHKA GOONEWARDENA, S.
K., RICHARD MILGROM, CHRISTIAN SCHMID (ed.). New York:
Routledge.
WEISBROT, J. J. 2012. Venezuela’s Economic Recovery: Is it Sus-
tainable? : Center for Economic and Policy Research- Washin-
ton.
ROBERTSON, E. 2011. Venezuela’s Housing Mission Constructs
Almost 100,000 Homes in First Seven Months. Available: http://
ROBERTSON, E. 2012a. Tenant Activists to Help Set Rent Lev-
news/7509 [Accessed 10/12/2012].
ROBERTSON, E. 2012b. Venezuela’s Housing Program Achieves
96% of 2011 Construction Goal. Available: http://venezuela-
SANGLA, S. 2010. Politique et espace chez Henri Lefebvre. PhD in
Philosophy Universite Paris VIII - Vincennes Saint-Denis.
SASSEN, S. 2005. Fragmented Urban Topographies and Their
Underlying Interconnections. In: ALFREDO BRILLEMBOURG, K.
F., HUBERT KLUMPNER (ed.) Informal City: Caracas Case Mu-
SASSEN, S. 2011. The Global City And The Global Slum Avail-
able: http://www.forbes.com/sites/megacities/2011/03/22/
the-global-city-and-the-global-slum/#more-33 [Accessed
18/11/2012].
SUGRANYES, M. (ed.) 2010. Cities for all: Proposals and Expe-
rience towards the Right to the City, Santiago, Chile: Habitat
International Coalition.
Societal & academic relevance

Societal relevance

"In Greece while tourists are generally welcome, migrants and asylum seekers face an increasingly hostile environment in which they risk detention in inhuman and degrading conditions, destitution, and xenophobic violence" Human Rights Watch, 2012

Within the context of an hierarchical divided European space, the weakest nations-members are forced by the financial market to restrict the “problematic” welfare state, in order to continue being part of the market. Thus, Europe enters to a stage of neoliberalism, in which the sharp cuts in the public sector lead to a generalized uncertainty that takes several social, political and spatial expressions. From fear and aggression to tolerance and solidarity: an important part of the societies-in-crisis struggling in this condition either by trying to “reclaim” their rights to the city or by finding alternative solutions.

Athens constitutes one of the most obvious examples that depicts spatially the above mentioned crisis’s aftermaths/conflicts/oppositions. Greece and especially Athens, as facing its 5th year of economic recession (Eurostat, 2012) constitutes an arena where the process of crisis is unfolding through several aspects of everyday life and that extent through multiple layers of the city. Although, Athens’ urban decay it is not totally and only connected with the financial crisis -it is a result of a process, a subsequence of events and decisions during the last decades that formed the fruitful ground for the actual “de-cay”-, I could be said that Athens could constitute the starting point of an wider recession in European space, or a field where neoliberal policies are been tested. Therefore, urban issues expressed through the Athenian urban landscape, could be potentially be intensified in other cities of Europe (especially PIIGS countries).

Besides, an explosive mixture of austerity measurement (abolishment of the welfare state and of any social backbone), unemployment, poverty (and the rise of homeless), immigration flows (and lack of integration policies), and extreme right ideologies, has led to a social polarization that threatens the social coherence, not only of one neighborhood but of the entire city even of the entire country. The everyday violation of human rights and the humanitarian crisis that the city of Athens faces, have triggered an international discourse in United Nations, Human Rights Observatory, International Amnesty fact that highlights the importance of the situation.

Academic relevance

Concerning the academic relevance of this Research-Design Project, the project aims to trigger or be part of the discussion about:
1. the role of the planners in crisis condition,
2. the alternatives and radical strategies emerging within this context (can they propose a new mode of urban life and coexistence),
3. the small interventions with a large impact strategies (questioning on top down planning)
4. the re-evaluation of the urban policies under the scope of human rights and the rights to the city.

Moreover, the research part of the project aims: to unpack the urban crisis in Athens, To understand and present the specialties of the Mediterranean-cities urbanity, to highlight how a phenomenically non-planned complex urbanization process works and how the production of space forms tactics, everyday life practices and perceptions. Important is apart from understanding the context is to propose alternative solutions, which take into account the restrictions imposed by crisis but widen our horizons regarding basic questions of this science such us how people live in the cities of crisis and if they could potentially change the way they perceive themselves in this process? Finally, as Marcuse and Van Kempen (2000) state city is a field of social and spatial division, however within the context of neoliberalism this tendency is intensified. Therefore, it is important to be able to understand the realities developing in the urban environment and intervene, take a position and make statements.
Reflection

Research and Design relation

The project “Conflicting realities of the invisibles: redefining in Athens” is an individual project which has been developed within the context of the studio Urban Asymmetries- ExploreLab and the collective project under the title “Fear and loaning in Athens: shifting perspectives of space” and concerns a research & design project about Athens in crisis and more precisely about the process of abandonment of the city-center. A collective research on the specific context of Athens based on the general problematic of the studio was the starting point for identifying the tendencies on urban space. A multi-disciplinary historical analysis through a timeline of the evolution of Athens, a preliminary urban analysis regarding the production of space and the existing realities in the center, in-situ observations and interviews with academics in Greece, formed the first part of the research and helped us to identify which are key issues which led to the urban crisis in Athens and which are the main tendencies on space today. From the one side, urban decay, the abandonment of the city center, the rise of informality and of the fear of “other” and from the other side the blinded –eyes approach of the official plans for the “urban regeneration” of the center and the “return of the inhabitants” in it, are the main trends pointed out. Within this context, the individual problem statement is focused on the issue of a dual process taking place in the center – that of abandonment/arrival of new actors in space- and the inability of the official urban regeneration plans for the center to respond to these issues and to the existing realities. Therefore, my hypothesis developed on the idea that the recognition and the engagement of the existing actors and a multi-scalar redefinition of the polykatoikia model are the key issues for the revitalization of the city centre and the social integration of the existing actors. In the same line the main aim (and research questions has been developed. The main aims of the project is to counteract urban decay by addressing two main issues of “abandonment” and “fear of other” through a duplex and reciprocal process of urban regeneration and socio-spatial integration by rethinking and reconfiguring the model of polykatoikia with the agency of the existing actors. The main aim and the related research questions, were addressed by a second phase of research, where the theoretical and the analytical framework were set. The theoretical framework was developed in two directions: 1. urban theories regarding social segregation (Marcuse, Van Kempen), ghettoization (Wacquant) which defined the perspective of the analytical framework (in other words the theoretical background for organizing the analytical framework and setting the variables of the research & design 2. theoretical urban concepts which in first place defined my general approach over the project and later informed the strategy and they were about i. the “right to the city” - H. Lefebvre, D. Harvey, P. Marcuse, and the new urban commons (Ostrom, Hess, Harvey). The analytical framework was related to the context analysis and included: 1. bibliographic research on the production of space in Athens and the role of polykatoikia model on Athens urbanization, on historical evolution of the city, a critical review on the planning projects of the past and the future visions regarding the center, the existing planning framework and the mismatches between the levels of planning, 2. interviews with researchers and academics regarding future projects for the center (Tournikiotis, Mantouvalou), the evolution and aspect of polykatoikia model on the Athenian urbanity (Maloutas), the immigrants’ urban realities in Athens and their tactics and their aspect on space (Vaiou) 3. gathering and analysis of demographics for understanding the social characteristics of the site of intervention 3. mapping of context the abandonment, the daily systems and the living patterns, the existing stakeholders/actors their influence and their presence in space, the morphological and the formal/informal programmatic characteristics of the site and 5. comparative research of the typological characteristics and varieties of the build environment. Both analytical and theoretical frameworks have been approach by case studies. The R&D process was not linear, therefore the findings of the analytical framework informed and transformed the theoretical framework and at the same time the research on urban theories set and reset the variables of the analytical framework. Even during the phase of the proposal, the theoretical and the analytical framework were filled in. More precisely, complementary to the theory regarding the right to the city and the concept of the commons the concept of the social value of land and the “use-value” were bind together to support the approach of the project and case studies regarding temporary use of space (based on the last research (2013) of the group “Urban Catalyst”) and the Collective Private Development projects (Hein de Haan) were examined to support the strategy. To conclude, during the project research process and design had worked together in a relational way therefore research defined a base for the design and the design itself had risen questions which informed, redirected and reconfigured the research.

Theme of the studio & subject and location of the individual project

The theme of the studio of Urban Asymmetries- ExploreLab was about the impact of the economic crisis in the physical space of Athens. As it has been mentioned above the main statements of the collective research of “Fear and loaning in Athens: shifting perspectives of space” were: the urban “decay” of the center, abandonment and the shifts in the social configuration of the city center, the social segregation of some groups in the center, the rise of informality and of the fear of “other”. My individual project is focusing mainly on two of these aspects of crisis and my contribution is that I try to approach all these aspects in a relational way. More specifically, I address the issue of abandonment, however I approach it as

1 Polykatoikia is the multi-storey apartment building and since the 1950’s is the most dominant building typology of Greek urbanity. Apart from typology, the term polykatoikia, connotes a system of production of housing, a compact model of urban living and a mixed social configuration.
relational process which incorporates the shifts in the social mixture of the city, the rise of informality and consequently the rise of fear of other. Therefore, I developed an individual perspective over the conclusive statements of the studio project by finding and focusing on the correlations between the conclusions. As a second step I took into account the site of the collective analysis, which was a sample of Athens center and I chose one entity, the neighborhood of Agios Panteleimonas, which depicts these aspects on space and their possible correlation. More specifically, the neighborhood is experiencing by the process of abandonment-arrival of new actors since the late 1980’s. (the neighborhood due to the proximity to the central train station constitute the first accommodation for a lot of immigrants). Agios Panteleimonas is one of the most characteristic examples of post-war urbanization in Athens and therefore, the evolution the deformation, the existing potentials of the polykatoikia model can be tested. Furthermore, the area depicts a variety in building typologies and therefore these process of abandonment takes multiple forms (from plots, and listed buildings to apartments and ground floors) and shapes patterns in multiple scales. Moreover, due to the high concentration of immigrants and due to the violent conflicts between “indigenous” and “immigrants” the official-mainstream narratives are developed around the terms of “no-go area” and “ghetto” fact that make it even more interesting for addressing socio-spatial segregation. The proposal aims in counteracting the process of abandonment by managing and reconfiguring the model of polykatoikia with the agency of the inhabitants. Therefore, the project is referring to asymmetrical relations developed in physical space (vacancy/overcrowding of vulnerable groups) in social space (official and formal structures/ informal practices and tactics, “visible” and “invisible” inhabitants), which tend to be intensified due to the economic crisis and due to the top-down official planning framework and propose a system for counteracting this asymmetry.

Methodical line of approach of the studio & methodology of the individual project

The studio Urban Asymmetries-ExploreLab had a specific methodology regarding the research of the project “Fear and loaning in Athens: Shifting perspectives of space”. After structuring the general problematic concerning the aftermaths of the economic crisis in the physical space of Athens the group structured a methodological approach. According to the, city was not considered as stable product but mainly an assemblage of multiple layers which influence one another and shape the physical space of the city. As a first step, this juxtaposition of different layers (economy, politics, legal framework, global influences, planning framework) organized on a timeline, (timeline as an analytical method) and a preliminary problem statement was defined. After the study trip, which included site visiting, interviews with academics, and mapping and after defining the theoretical framework of the project the group defined a sample in the city for further research on the actual conditions and the problems of the city-center of Athens. The second phase the urban research, included bibliographic research, gathering of data (demographics), mapping of the specific location and concluded in some statements for the existing conditions in Athens-center and the. For the research of the individual project, a similar methodology was followed, in first place a tendencies identified in the collective research and a problem statement an hypothesis and subsequently the main aims and research questions have been structured. After a preliminary research on Athens center a location within the area of the collective research has been selected. As it has been analyzed above, I structured the analytical (urban analysis, data analysis, historical analysis and production of space, interviews), and the theoretical framework which in combination with the analytical framework defined my dual approach towards a strategy. A systemic one and a context related approach over the space is finally bind and shape the strategy for the neighborhood.

Individual project & wider social context relations

As it has been above analyzed, the general problematic of the studio and of my individual project, is about the aftermaths of the economic crisis on space and its relation with urban crisis in Athens. Since, economic crisis is threatening more and more European societies and mainly the countries of the South, the research and the proposal of alternative solutions and perspectives for the cities are becoming more and more valid today. Particularly, in a period that the “public” is becoming more constrained and the “welfare system” of the western societies collapse, urban planning has to provide these alternatives which will be able to solve spatial problems and satisfy people’s demands even with the minimum public investment. My individual proposal, is taking into account these facts, aims in a gradual reactivation of urban space through socio-spatial integration of the existing actors, and is proposing instruments which will enable to a spatial reuse of the existing building stock (abandoned properties, reprogramming instead of demolishing) and to a reconfiguration of existing models (polykatoikia model) instead of focusing on big projects/big investments with high risk which 1. is almost impossible to be attracted in periods of economic instability and crisis 2. have an exclusive approach on space and instead of approaching the “problem” (social segregation, poverty, violence), they displace it in other areas. To conclude the approach of the project and especially the instruments that I propose highlight the importance of the social value of urban land, of the right to the city but at the same time of our responsibility to this “collective project”, to our neighborhood common to our shared space. At the same time instruments incorporate on the notion of “social accord” and consensus between the interested parties and aims in balancing the asymmetrical and uneven socio-spatial relations emerging in cities and intensified during crisis periods.