

Flagship Projects and Socio-spatial Inequalities. The Case of the Post Refugee Urban Neighbourhood in Kallithea, Attica, Greece

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The issue of flagship projects is becoming more and more timely in the contemporary globalized urban context. The overall transformation of a former decayed urban enclave through a well targeted large-scale intervention is found in many cities around the world. Following the narrative of Bilbao, which is considered to be a success story, many cities attempted to imitate the “Bilbao effect”. Taking into account the international experience on the field, this paper tries to analyze a Greek example, delving into the specificities of time and space. The selected case study could be considered as one of the first flagship or prestige projects in Greece and is strongly associated with the concept of “Athenian Riviera”, a metropolitan coastal zone that is currently under urban regeneration. This prestige project is located inside a former refugee enclave that has until today a significant number of old refugee housing complexes, constructed around 1930. The stark contradiction between the iconic building and the derelict neighboring refugee apartments reflects clearly the impact of site-specific urban interventions; they widen the gap between upgraded and degenerated enclaves inside the city. The presence of vulnerable households in the area raises concerns on future gentrification procedures. Field work combined with literature review is being made so as to adumbrate the crucial issues in the area of study. Photographic documentation and cartographic depiction are used as tools so as to illustrate the physiognomy of the area. The ultimate purpose of the paper is to address the issue of socio-spatial inequalities in the era of globalization, where the implementation of place branding strategies puts aside certain social factors, leading to spatial segregation between degraded and upgraded areas.

Keywords: flagship projects, socio-spatial inequality, Athenian Riviera, refugee areas.

Much has been written about “Bilbao effect” whereby cultural investments and high-quality architecture are boosting economic activity in declined urban areas. The transformative character of this type of urban intervention usually leads to rapid changes in the socio-spatial identity of the city. In this context, the involvement of “starchitects” so as to rebrand an urban area is a well-known phenomenon. From this point of view, the construction of flagship projects is used as a mechanism to attract investors and visitors. This is particularly common in countries that base their economy on tourism. These new tendencies dictate alterations in urban planning policies. Moreover, globalization procedures form new patterns of urban evolution, expressing new priorities and choices in the field of urban planning and design. According to pertinent literature, the

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Abstract

Introduction



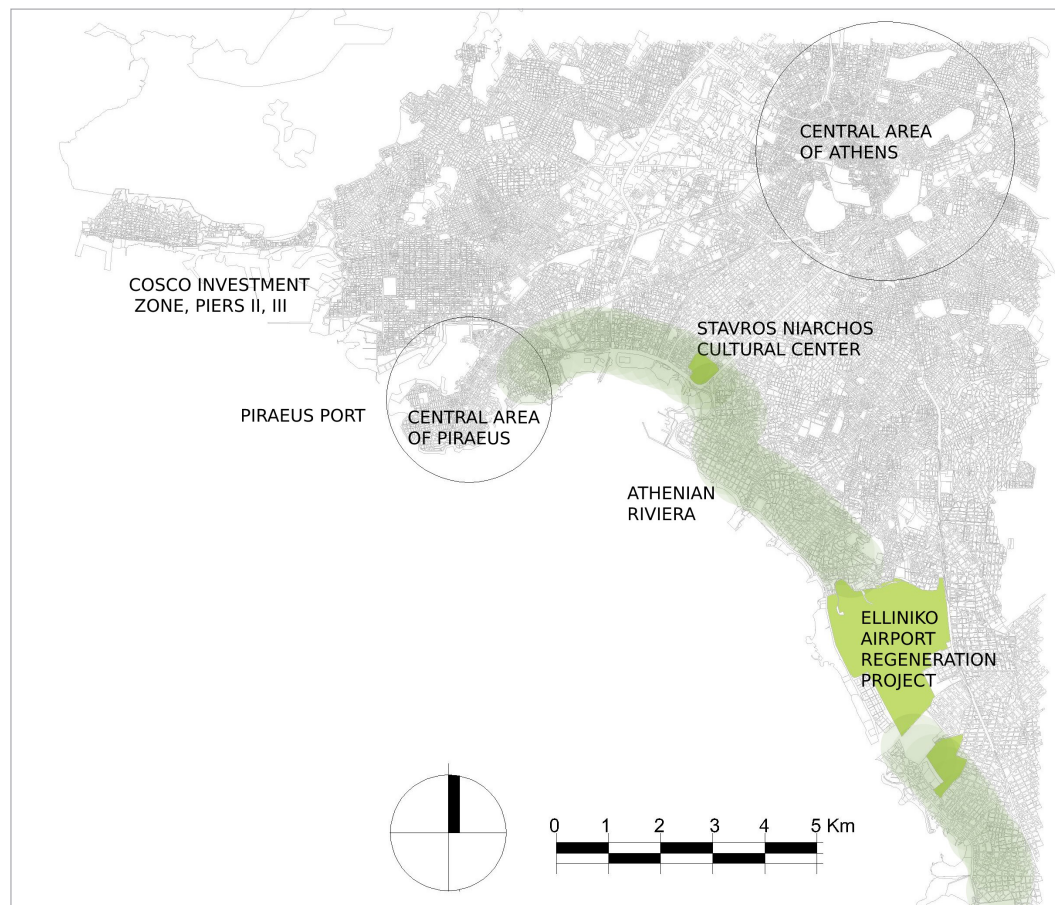
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social side-effects of flagship projects are well recorded in many cases around the world. On account of all these, this paper examines the issue of socio-spatial discrepancies between upscale and blighted urban areas that becomes even wider after the establishment of flagship projects. Delving into a Greek case study, the paper focuses on the impact of such policies on the physiognomy of the contemporary urban fabric, taking into account various socio-cultural specificities.

The selected case study, named Tzitzifies-Kallithea, is an urban agglomeration along the coastal forefront of Attica, near Pireos Avenue. It is right next to Stavros Niarchos Cultural Centre, which is considered to be a flagship project. This coastal area is part of the “Athenian Riviera”, a development concept that tries to regenerate the waterfront of Attica, offering a variety of recreational and commercial uses. The Riviera covers a wide coastal zone, from Pireaus Port to Sounio (see Fig.1). Interest in regenerating the coastal zone, has been expressed since the 1920s. However, due to a variety of historical and socio-political factors this plan was not fulfilled until recently. Moreover, the development of Athenian Riviera is strongly associated with public land seizure, after the debt crisis of 2008 (Hadjimichalis, 2015). Despite the fact that large scale land seizures had sporadically been recorded during the 19th century, it was not until the 1990s that this strategy became popular to policy makers. Especially after the Olympic Games of 2004, this procedure led to mass privatisations following the bail-out agreement of 2010 (ibid). In this context, the former airport of Ellinikon together with other national assets are subject to market driven regeneration process. The significance of the Riviera project, is also mentioned by Bloomberg. According to its relevant report, Athens Riviera is able to help Greece’s tourism industry by almost doubling the tourism revenue (ibid). Taking into consideration all these, the renewal of brownfield sites along the coastal area is described as a key-factor for Greece’s contemporary urban planning policy.

Fig. 1

Nodal points of Athenian Riviera and neighbouring areas, author’s work, source of the background map: National Technical University of Athens, School of Architecture, Laboratory of Geographical Information Systems in Urban and Regional Planning, 2013



One representative example is Stavros Niarchos Cultural Centre, the abovementioned flagship project. It is constructed on a former brownfield site, an abandoned hippodrome. It is a unique example of sustainable architecture and landscape design, offering recreational, educational, cultural facilities and services. However, the proximity to the decaying ex-refugee quarter of Tzitzifies, raises issues of socio-spatial cohesion. The prestige project is located right next to an urban interwar refugee settlement which was constructed in order to house Asia Minor Refugees, after the Asia Minor Catastrophe in 1922. The aging refugee housing reserve and the lack of provision for its refurbishment, raises concerns about the future of the area.

The aim of the paper is to point out the socio-spatial inequalities that emerge after the implementation of a flagship project, taking into account specificities of time and place. The ultimate purpose of the paper is to outline the necessity of acquiring a holistic approach on urban planning, so as to avoid fragmented interventions that only widen the gap between upgraded and degraded areas. All in all, this study tries to designate issues related to severe gentrification procedures that characterize the contemporary identity of the city.

Research includes literature review and field work. As for literature review, it follows two directions. The first one includes literature on the implementation of flagship projects, so as to outline their typical characteristics, while the other comprise literature related to the selected case study. The author has delved into the factors that contribute to the contemporary urban physiognomy of the area of study. The socio-spatial identity of the post-refugee quarters in Greece, is a special chapter in the urban history of the city. From this point of view, findings from author's previous research combined with relevant literature have been taken into account. Furthermore, historical sources, archival material as well as data from the Hellenic Statistical Authority have been studied. In addition, official data published by the Ministry of Economy were included, so as to describe the land prices in the area of study. All the above-mentioned sources offer valuable information so as to adumbrate the contemporary identity of the selected case study. However, there are certain research questions that could not be answered by existing literature. In light of this argument, field work is an essential component of this study.

To be more specific, author has made direct observations and participatory observation in the area of study. Author has also conducted 15 semi-structured interviews with some of the residents of the refugee quarter as well as 15 unstructured interviews with the visitors of the Stavros Niarchos Park. Participatory observation included numerous visits to the Stavros Niarchos Park and took place from September 2020 to May 2021. The qualitative method of semi-structured interviews offered significant information for the existing condition of the post-refugee enclave. Nonetheless, the intent of qualitative research is to contribute to comprehending and interpreting. On account of this, the researcher conducted 15 semi-structured interviews with residents of the post-refugee enclave so as to gather information about the following topics:

- _ Contemporary ownership status of the refugee apartments
- _ Inhabitants' opinion on the quality of the urban surroundings in the light of the recent flagship project
- _ Social networks in the microscale of the city
- _ Inhabitants' opinion on the issue of aging refugee housing complexes

The criterion for choosing representative participants for the purposes of this research is the years of residence in the area. All of the participants had been staying more than 10 years in the neighborhood, when the field work was conducted. The socio-economic attributes of participants are presented in the tables below.

As far as the unstructured interviews are concerned, the focal point was the place of residence of the visitors, so as to identify the scope and impact of the flagship project. Furthermore, par-

Methods

Table 2, 3

Age of participants and gender, author's field work

Age	35-45	46-55	56-67	68-75	More than 75 years old
Number of participants	2	3	3	5	2

Gender	Male	Female	Non-binary/ other
Number of participants	8	7	-

Table 4, 5

Educational level and years of residence, author's field work

Educational level	Low Elementary School graduates	High-school	Technical expertise	Tertiary degree
Number of participants	9	2	4	-

Years of residence	10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years
Number of participants	2	5	8

ticipatory observation helped the researcher draw conclusions about the age groups of the visitors, their family status and the way they occupy the available open space of the flagship project.

Data analysis followed the cycle: deconstruction-interpretation-reconstruction. Findings from direct observations have been recorded with the help of original cartographic depiction and photographic documentation. Analyzing the neighborhood around the flagship project, author has recorded the exact location of the existing old refugee housing complexes and their proximity to the prestige project, as well as the land prices in the area and the existing illegal annexes to the refugee buildings. The photos taken during field

work reveal the crucial issue that this paper tries to address; the stark contradiction between upgraded and degraded enclaves. This is undoubtedly a significant issue that challenges socio-spatial cohesion. The paper concludes with planning directions so as to shape a general framework for further regeneration in the area or in other areas that share common socio-spatial attributes (aging housing complexes, presence of brownfields, vulnerable households, proximity to areas of strategic interest, average land prices).

Theoretical Framework

Flagship projects: opportunities and challenges

According to pertinent literature, flagship projects have recently become major models for place marketing and branding (Oyeyoade et.al., 2019). Having strong connections with de-industrialization, flagship projects were first observed in the United Kingdom and the United States of America since the late 1970s and the early 1980s. These projects involved physical renewal of degenerated urban neighborhoods so as to revitalize and rebrand strategic enclaves inside the city. They are also found in literature as "prestige projects" (Granger, 2010). After the 1990s more and more cities of the Global North and the Global South are showing interest in transforming decayed urban quarters with the help of flagship projects (Oyeyoade et.al., 2019). Some of the first recorded flagship projects are Baltimore's Inner Harbor and Boston's Faneuil Hall (ibid).

In this context, the concept of "flagship" put emphasis on certain locations inside the city rather than a wider geographical area. Moreover, it is strongly associated with the ability to counterbalance all the economic ramifications of urban decline, delving into the detrimental factors to sustainable urban development. According to Collantonio and Dixon (2010) there are six approaches on prestige projects that follow different directions. The first approach, the "Property led approach" focuses on mixed-uses strategy in order to offer multiplier effects to local economy, while the second called the "Commerce Driven Approach" emphasizes on business investments so as to boost "underserved markets". The third approach, the "Urban form and design perspective" supports the connection between sustainability and urban design whereas the fourth named "Cultural Industries Approach" uses as a point of reference the creative and cultural media industry with the view to revive a select-ed enclave. The fifth approach, is the "Health and Wellbeing Perspective" that stresses the necessity

for well-designed urban spaces and last but not least, the “Community Based Social Economy Approach” introduces the positive effects that collaborative planning and design may have on urban renewal projects. These dissimilar approaches highlight the disparities on urban renewal strategies that aim at reviving a degraded urban area. According to literature, the late 20th century was characterized by megaprojects, designed so as to enhance the global value of a circumscribed local site (Brenner, 2019). These sites became delinked from their broader socio-spatial context in terms of function and aesthetic (ibid). Moreover, these enclaves included customized built environments so as to facilitate a variety of uses, focusing on entertainment and culture.

During the last decades, the advent of flagship projects is connected to the ongoing competition among cities in the era of globalization, where tourist industry plays a predominant role. In this context, multiplication of site-specific public-private partnerships is observed and recorded (Brenner, 2019). Thus, the involvement of the private sector so as to overcome market-driven limitations leads usually to profit oriented projects. The aim is always to rebrand a city or a specific district so as to attract local and foreign investors, redefining urban governance. From this point of view, prestige projects are perceived as a panacea to urban degradation. These urban projects usually reveal the top-down nature of policy agendas as a mere extension of a top-down development logic. In this broader context, the role of architects is very important as in the case of Bilbao (Ponzini, 2010). The famous Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Gehry, is related to the phenomenon called “Bilbao effect” where a post-industrial degenerated city-port became a hub for culture and tourism. On account of this, architectural aesthetics and cultural facilities are described as determinant factors in urban regeneration success stories. There are plenty of cases where the Bilbao story was imitated and adapted (ibid). This narration was implemented in different urban contexts with little reference to place and space as relevant elements. As a consequence, this kind of imitation led inevitably to failures in trying to achieve the Bilbao effect (ibid). Undoubtedly, these site-specific approaches contributed to volatile and contradictory geographies that characterize most of the metropolitan areas around the world.

As for the case of Greece, the narrative of flagship projects is relatively new. In particular, the preparation for the Olympic Games of 2004 inaugurated an era of large-scale projects and infrastructures (new metro stations, highways, large scale building complexes e.t.c.) Prior to this, other mega-events as for example “Thessaloniki: European city of culture in 1997” affected the urban cultural development (Labrianidis and Defner, 2005). According to literature, the New Concert Hall of Thessaloniki constructed around 2000, is the closest approximation to a flagship project (ibid). More than a decade later, the design and construction of Stavros Niarchos Cultural Center opens a new chapter for prestige projects in Greece.

The location of the project at Faliro Bay, within the Athenian Riviera, ascribes special significance as well as the involvement of the well-known architect Renzo Piano. Moreover, the relocation of the National Library and the National Opera within the Stavros Niarchos Cultural Center is perceived as a strategy for attracting tourism investments (Markou, 2015). From this point of view, the regeneration of Faliro Bay, finds analogies with the international experience on flagship projects as met in Barcelona, Baltimore, Bilbao and Glasgow (ibid). However, the scale is smaller and the socio-spatial context different. On account of this, the location of Stavros Niarchos Cultural Center inside the decaying refugee quarter raises concerns on socio-spatial cohesion in the era of globalization. The stark contradiction between iconic architecture and total dereliction could not be overlooked. Certain challenges associated with socio-spatial segregation and exclusion should be handled so as to move forward to a more sustainable urban planning model.

The identity of urban post-refugee neighborhoods in Greece

Since the dawn of the Industrial city and the theoretical approach of the School of Chicago, many efforts have been made to interpret the model of living within the urban context. Early studies on this field have already proved that it is possible to find inside the city patterns of communi-

cation familiar to the ones of rural areas (Young and Willmott, 1957). This means that the sense of homogenous urban experience has given its position to the study of variety and differentiation. Ethnographic research has shown that the quality of social networks in degraded areas was rather high, despite the fact that they may seem indifferent or problematic to an external observer (Stevenson, 2003). As Herbert Gans (1962) had characteristically mentioned, there are “*urban villagers*” within the urban fabric, analyzing the meaning of “*the village inside the city*”. This approach is connected with parts of the city where the inhabitants share common cultural attributes or common socio-economic stratification.

In this respect, during this research emphasis was given on the study of the neighborhood within the refugee quarter of Kallithea, where the flagship project is located. According to literature, most of the refugee enclaves in Attica are associated with this theoretical position since their inhabitants used to share common cultural and socio-economic attributes (Tousi, 2014). Until the 1980s most of the residents were descendants of the Asia Minor refugee population, sharing the common transgenerational trauma of a violent displacement from their homeland. This traumatic experience combined with social exclusion after the first refugee settlement contributed to strong unofficial solidarity networks at neighborhood level. These social networks observed at the micro-scale of the city had also a spatial expression. The intermediate space inside the refugee city blocks functioned as a suitable field for a fruitful social exchange. According to all these, the quality of public space in the refugee urban enclaves was rather different from the prevailing urban forms met in the rest of the city. As described in Renee Hirschon’s book “*Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe: The social life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus*”, the sense of neighborhood played a rather important role in the social life of the urban refugee settlements. In most cases pavements and public urban spaces were used as an extension of domestic space or as a focal point of communication with the social surroundings (Hirschon, 1972).

In fact, the sense of neighborhood was of high significance and the bonds between the various households obtained a conscious character over the years so as to combat social exclusion (ibid). In addition, the presence of intermediate open space in each city block facilitated social exchange and interaction. In this way, communication patterns were characterized by the interaction between private and public space in the micro scale of the city. Another important parameter is the fact that until the 1980s, the majority of women worked inside the boundaries of domestic space or in family businesses. The vague division between women’s working and leisure time influenced strongly the quality and stability of social networks inside the refugee quarters (ibid). Solidarity and help among neighbors on daily basis reinforced the existing social networks. Moreover, the strong connection between women and their home ascribed a symbolic value to the sense of neighborhood. This issue has been recorded in previous studies. According to Leontidou (2011) a kind of matrilineal residential pattern is observed in Greek refugee quarters. This phenomenon is associated with a societal system where a married couple resides in proximity to the wife’s parents. Thus, women used to be strongly attached to their house and neighborhood, living near their ancestors and participating all their lives in these social networks.

However, after the 1980s the physiognomy of the refugee neighborhoods has severely changed. The active participation of women in education and employment, establishes new balances inside the residential space, having an important impact on social structures and networks. Inevitably, the interaction between private and public space is now different. The presence of women in other than domestic environments altered the time spent inside the neighborhood, which until then used to function as an introverted system (Tousi, 2014). Taking into consideration the international literature on the field, the distinction between gender leisure time and work has been studied in different national contexts (Le Feuvre, 1994). Recent data conclude

to the fact that women are disproportionately hit by the “work-life conflict” or the so called “spill-over effect” (Davaki, 2016). Especially for Greece, where traditional roles still affect household structure, women are mostly occupied with all types of unpaid work/care provided in domestic space, despite their active involvement in public affairs (Theodoropoulou, 2008). The new balances among paid work, household errands (unpaid care/work) and leisure have affected the quality of traditional social networks inside the refugee settlements. The division between public and private, is now more unambiguous and the value of neighborhood life is not as important as it used to be. This situation affects strongly the use of public space inside the post-refugee settlements.

The exodus of women to the public sphere was relatively synchronous to the abandonment of the refugee apartments. Most of the refugee descendants and their families left the aging refugee apartments so as to seek for better housing facilities in nearby areas. This outflow dates back to the 1990s and is typical for the majority of the refugee quarters (Tousi, 2014). The empty refugee apartments were then rented to new inhabitants, mostly immigrants from Balkan countries and the former USSR that came in Greece around 1995. After 2005, immigrants from Asian countries reside also in the post-refugee neighborhoods (ibid). The inflow of migrants alters former balances in the ex-refugee areas. The derelict refugee houses attract low-income migrants because of the low rents. Until today, some refugee descendants reside in the post-refugee quarters, mostly elderly people. However, the proportion of other cultural groups is rather significant. Thus, former neighborhood networks have been weakened or even extinct. As a result, the use of public space inside the refugee quarters is different than it used to be. These changes on the social identity of the ex-refugee quarters are associated with the preservation state of the refugee housing reserve. Unfortunately, most of the refugee apartments are derelict. These poor housing facilities devalue the quality of life in the area, attenuating social cohesion.

In this socio-spatial urban context, the location of a flagship project next to the former refugee quarter, is bound to evoke major changes in the physiognomy of the area, affecting inevitably the neighboring ex-refugee housing enclave. The future of the old refugee houses in the area is still something of an open question, given the lack of funding, the complex ownership status of the refugee apartments and the impact of the flagship project.

The selected case study: Kallithea

The suburb of Kallithea was inhabited during the 19th century mostly after 1870. It was initially a suburb of the Municipality of Athens. Eminent personages of the late 19th century chose to live in Kallithea, because of its favorable location near the sea. Famous architects like Ernst Ziller designed and built in Kallithea luxury houses and mansions¹. On account of all these, Kallithea was gradually forming its urban physiognomy as a high-income suburb with vivid spiritual life. However, the military operation in Asia Minor that led to the homonymous Catastrophe in 1922 altered the existing balances.

In particular, the Asia Minor Catastrophe led to the establishment of many refugee quarters in urban and rural areas, one of which was located in Kallithea. Given this historic incident, social housing constructions were erected along the waterfront of Kallithea. The increase of the population within the refugee quarter of Kallithea, led to its declaration as an autonomous municipality in 1925 (ibid). The refugees that lived in Kallithea played an important role during the Second World War and the Resistance. Another major demographic flow was recorded during the 1990s. After the Fall of the Soviet Union, many repatriated immigrants came in Kallithea so as to live permanently.

¹ Information derived from the official website of the Municipality of Kallithea: <https://web.archive.org/web/20141202222402/http://www.kallithea.gr/Default.aspx?pid=5&la=1>

Results and Discussion

Fig. 6

Initial masterplan of the refugee quarter of Kallithea, source Archive of the Ministry of Social Welfare



Fig. 7

Remnants of the refugee quarter next to the flagship project, author's field work 2020, background map National Technical University of Athens, School of Architecture, Laboratory of Geographical Information Systems



Fig. 8

Contemporary image of the refugee neighborhood that is located next to the flagship project in Kallithea, author's field work 2021



Today, Kallithea has 100.641 inhabitants according to official data from the Hellenic Statistical Authority². It is considered to be the suburb of Athens with the higher residential density. During the postwar period, the built environment was transformed through the flats-for-land system. Today the heterogenous physiognomy of the area consists of derelict refugee housing complexes and contemporary blocks of flats. The collective urban memory of the area could be described as a kaleidoscopic image of historical and socio-political factors. One of the major issues is the urban blight met within the old refugee enclave that is located next to the flagship Project of Stavros Niarchos Cultural Center. This proximity raises issues of socio-spatial cohesion and sustainability.

Discrepancies between upscale and blighted urban areas: Stavros Niarchos Cultural Center and the refugee quarter of Tzitzifies

Stavros Niarchos Cultural Center is a unique example of high-quality architecture and landscape design, supported by donation from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. After its opening to the public, it attracts numerous visitors of all ages, making the area a nodal point for recreation and culture. Its proximity to Athens and Piraeus ascribes a supralocal significance, since it refers to a larger urban scale than the neighboring enclaves. The involvement of the famous architect Renzo Piano transfuses special importance to the project, offering an exceptional example of contemporary sustainable architecture. Renzo Piano's architectural office was selected after winning an international competition so as to design the project in collaboration with other researchers and consultants in 2008. Construction began in 2012 and after five years, in 2017, Stavros Niarchos Cultural Center opened officially its doors to the public. It is important to mention that the project has been nominated with the LEED Platinum Certificate, as it has incorporated a variety of sustainable techniques related to energy consumption, recycling, sustainable mobility and water management.

The project includes the building of the National Library, the Opera building, a large park, a canal and an open area between the two buildings named "Agora". The "Agora" derived elements from the ancient city-state of Athens, where Agora was the focal point of public life and social exchange. In this respect, an area of 40m x 40m offers a suitable field for social interaction among visitors, being combined with a magnificent view to the canal, a café and the Center's bookstore.

Stavros Niarchos Park covers 85% of the total area of the project, offering a wide range of indigenous Mediterranean flora species³. In particular, there are 16 tree species and 161 shrub species, a variety of grasses and bulbs. Besides the Mediterranean gardens, it includes playgrounds and Water Jets, equipped with well-designed urban furniture and installations, stretching over an area of about 21 hectares. The Park also includes an area called the "Great Lawn". It is a nodal point where all paths cross, planted with low-maintenance grass. This area hosts cultural events, screenings and concerts and is also used spontaneously by visitors for either walking or jogging, for team activities (e.g., yoga sessions) and for kids' games (football). The design of all elements is eco-friendly offering an environmental perspective on flagship urban renewal. Building tops offer a great view to the sea, which was the initial concept of the architectural synthesis; to re-define the connection between the dense urban net and the waterfront.

The selected flagship project derives elements from the "Cultural Industries Approach", since it focuses on the cultural experience that the project offers to the visitors. Moreover, elements from the "Urban form and design perspective" and the "Health and Wellbeing Perspective" are observed. According to the theoretical framework of the study, these two approaches put in the forefront the sustainability issue combined with citizens well-being. From this point of view, Stavros Niarchos Cultural Center, is a fine example of a multifunctional open space able to relieve urban stress.

² Source, Archive of Hellenic Statistical Authority: https://web.archive.org/web/20130123125742/http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal/ESYE/BUCKET/General/A1602_SAM01_DT_DC_00_2011_02_F_GR.pdf

³ Selected information derived from the official website of Stavros Niarchos Cultural center available in english at <https://www.snfcc.org/en/snfcc/stavros-niarchos-park>

As illustrated in picture 9, Park's main pedestrian axes are aligned with city's roads at the northern side of the project, so as to offer a kind of urban continuity. Other facilities as the swimming pool are located near the existing neighborhood in order to better serve citizens' needs. As observed during field work and according to the unstructured interviews, the Park attracts visitors from other Municipalities apart from Kallithea, mostly from Piraeus Greater Region, Nea Smyrni, Greater Athens Region and Palaio Faliro. Visitors cover a wide range from elderly people to families with children and young adults. Elderly people usually use the place for walking, while families with children are mostly found in the playgrounds, the water jet and in the Great Lawn. The Esplanade on the left of the park connects the project to the sea and has routes for bikes that are mostly used by young adults. According to all these, this prestige project could be described as a milestone for urban interventions as far as the Greek urban context is concerned. Its design combined with the facilities that it offers, attach high importance to the project compared to all previous efforts. As mentioned above, the northern part of the project is efficiently connected to the rest of the city. Furthermore, the southern part of the project is a part of the wider regeneration project that is under construction along the coastal zone (see Fig. 10). However, the project is not connected with the urban enclave that hosts old refugee housing complexes at the western part of the project. As depicted in map 11, this former refugee quarter has the lowest land prices in the area while the eastern part of the city has significantly higher prices. This observation opens dialogue on the issue of socio-spatial cohesion after the implementation of a flagship project.

As illustrated in maps 12 and 13, the northwest side of the project is right next to the former refugee enclave that suffers from dereliction. As fieldwork revealed the perimeter of the flagship project is not open to this part of the city as it is to the northern part (see Fig. 9). The majority of the refugee houses have many illegal extensions, some of them are observed on building tops, some of them are found as horizontal ground floor annexes (Fig.13 and Fig. 14 and 15). Today, many of these apartments are abandoned or host vulnerable households, mostly immigrants from Asian countries and elderly people.

This discrepancy between the Stavros Niarchos Cultural Center and the degenerated refugee enclave is more than obvious even to an indifferent observer (see Fig.14,15). According to the opinion of the participants, this differentiation widens the gap between upscale and blighted enclaves. The descendants of the refugee population, seem very attached to their neighborhood, being unwilling to move elsewhere. On the other hand, the participants that are not descendants of the refugee population seemed more flexible. They stated, however, that a potential regeneration project should at least preserve some of the old refugee houses, keeping their initial use. The lack of urban furniture inside the refugee enclave is a major issue for all the participants. Moreover, the perilous extensions on building tops raise skepticism for the majority of neighbors. Additionally, poor housing facilities are described by all participants, mentioning energy poverty as a crucial

Fig. 9

Stavros Niarchos Park, the connection between the park and the city, author's field work, 2020

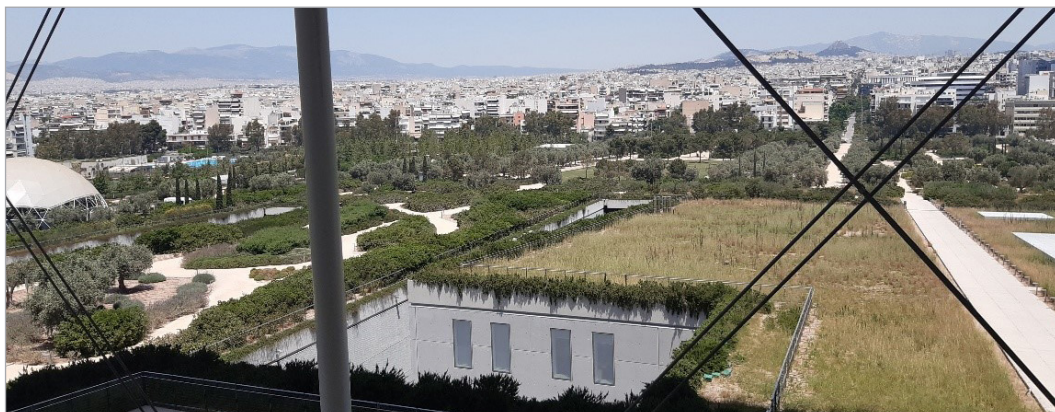




Fig. 10, 11

Contemporary image of the area in front of Stavros Niarchos Cultural Center, further regeneration plans and prices of land in the area, author's field work 2021

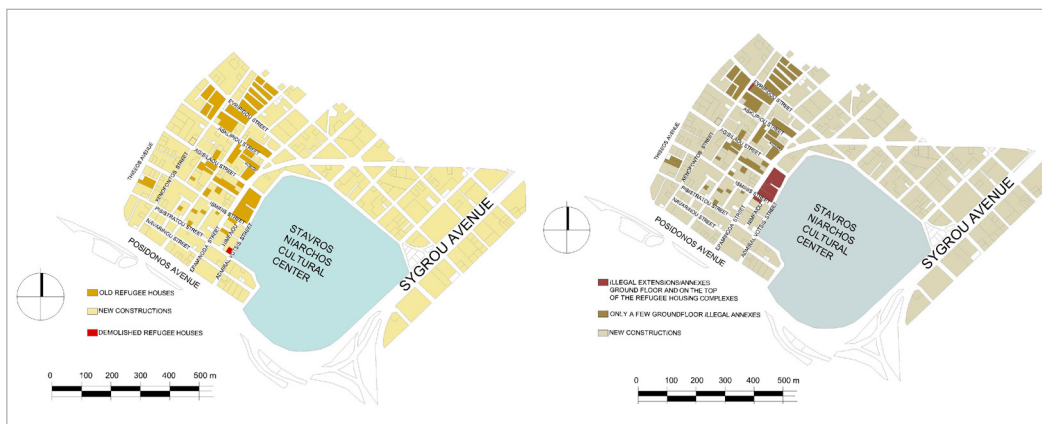


Fig. 12, 13

Old refugee housing complexes and illegal extensions on refugee apartments, author's field work



Fig. 14, 15

Contemporary images of derelict refugee housing complexes located right next to the flagship project, illegal extensions, ground floor and on building tops, author's field work 2021

factor. Summarizing their perspective on the quality of urban environment, the majority recognizes the favorable location of the neighborhood owed to the proximity to the flagship project and the waterfront. Nevertheless, they all claimed that the neighborhood needs major improvements, referring not only to the aging refugee housing stock, but also to the design of the urban space. They are afraid though that an urban regeneration might set in motion gentrification procedures. This approach validates pertinent theoretical positions in the field, that focus on vulnerable households which are usually strongly affected by urban planning policies (Watson, 2009).

The refugee houses that are falling apart, the lack of urban furniture and vegetation combined with the absence of grounds, raises concerns for the future of the area. Given the fact that the Stavros Niarchos Cultural Center is going to further develop so as to incorporate a neighboring archaeological site

at the south-eastern part, next to the Esplanade, this paper attempts to suggest a general framework so as to also include the refugee enclave to the future renewal of the area. As presented in the following chapter, there are certain steps that should be followed so as to clarify the complex situation inside the refugee enclave, facilitating a kind of homogenous approach to the renewal of the area.

As described in the previous chapters there are certain specificities in the area of study that could

Conclusions

not be overlooked. The proximity of the flagship project to the post-refugee quarter is a significant issue that needs addressing, taking into account the presence of vulnerable households. The crushing discrepancy between the high-quality architecture of the Stavros Niarchos Cultural Center and the derelict refugee housing complexes is a major element that needs further investigation so as to ameliorate the negative factors that hinder further development in the area. Considering that Stavros Niarchos Cultural Center is going to be expanded incorporating an important archaeological site located at the eastern part of the complex, this paper concludes to general directions so as to further link the flagship project to its urban surroundings (see Table 14).

Table 14

General Planning
Directions so as to link
the flagship project
to the existing urban
surroundings

Built environment	Record the exact number of abandoned refugee apartments
	Identify the ownership status of abandoned refugee apartments
	Record and depict all the illegal annexes to the existing refugee complexes
	Evaluate the static efficiency of the refugee complexes and the existing illegal annexes
	Explore possible cooperation with the Municipality so as to support the preservation of some of the old refugee houses
	Explore different refurbishment scenarios (including possible small-scale demolitions), estimating possible costs/risks
Urban space	Depict scattered pedestrian routes so as to link them to the Stavros Niarchos Park
	Equip public space with the appropriate urban furniture, efficiently designed
	Mapping of small common intermediate spaces in each city block in order to connect them with Stavros Niarchos Park
	Reinforce sustainable mobility in the area, using Stavros Niarchos Park as a point of reference/nodal point
	Use the same concept of design as found in Stavros Niarchos Cultural Center in case of a wider regeneration inside the refugee enclave, so as to achieve a homogenous outcome
Local Community/residents	Participatory design, understand residents' perspective on the issue of the aging refugee apartments
	Depict which refugee apartments are rental and which are inhabited by the owners
	Assure community's involvement in decision making so as to reach consensus

Taking into account all the abovementioned pieces of information, it is very important to counterbalance socio-spatial inequalities after the establishment of a flagship project. Built environment, urban space and local community should be considered as categories of equal significance for future research in this area or in areas that share common socio-spatial attributes. In this specific case study, the flagship project is selectively connected with parts of the existing urban fabric, putting aside the decaying refugee enclave.

These contradictory images of the city reveal the impact of fragmented urban policies that are far from being sustainable in terms of socio-spatial cohesion. To achieve a holistic approach to urban regeneration, certain steps should be followed so as to take into account the specificities of the surrounding area, looking in depth the crucial factors. As in the case of Kallithea, there is lots of room for further improvement so as to smoothly unite the flagship project to the contemporary urban net, considering the history of the area as a major factor that influences the tangible and intangible heritage of the city.

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