

# URBAN POLICIES AND PLANNING DURING THE GREEK DICTATORSHIP (1967-1974). CONTINUITIES AND RUPTURES IN POST-WAR DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREEK CITY.

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## 1. Abstract

The Greek dictatorship has been a particular form of authoritarian regime. Many scholars question its totalitarian dimension and underline its military and oppressive character and its ideological contradictions. Its ideological premises were mainly shaped by post-war Greek-orthodox nationalism and a vague idea of economic modernization. Expressing certain interests of economic elites as well as the need for political legitimization, the regime appeared as the guarantor of capitalistic growth, promoting the idea of a private-sector-driven economy. The spatial consequences of such a political agenda have been crucial.

The dictatorship influenced in various ways the identity of Greek cities, their built and cultural environment. With the country already going through a phase of unprecedented economic growth and intense urbanization, the major role of the construction sector in economic activity was further promoted. An overproduction of legislative regulations, resulting in the loosening of public control, encouraged the intensification of investments of small and large capital in land and construction. Cities expanded, densities and building heights increased, industrial complexes and huge hotel buildings rose in ecologically sensitive areas of the country. Regarding urban planning, the regime's contradictory ideological background favoured a variety of proposals, from those reflecting a superficial perception of local identity to strictly technocratic ones.

Through an interdisciplinary approach, the research seeks the connections between the socio-economical, political and cultural transformations of the time and the mutations in urban theory and planning. In this context, it approaches the specific dynamics of the urbanisation process and the new trends in urban space production, by using material from the public discourse-media, bibliographic sources and planning projects of that time. The central question regards the continuities and

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discontinuities in urban space production related to the violent political change from a democratic state to an authoritarian regime. Did the conditions for planning and implementing plans change and in what way? What has been the actual role of planners and the scientific community in this context? And, finally, in what ways have the policies of the dictatorship affected the public discourse on the city and planning in particular, after the return of democracy and during the period of democratic consolidation?

These questions refer, on the one hand, to the particularities of the historical and geographical context of Greece in the post-war period. On the other, they provide some key elements for discussing critically the political nature of spatial transformation, an issue highly important today.

## **2. Introduction**

This paper is part of my ongoing PhD research on the crucial, for the Greek urbanisation process, post-war period, focusing on the years of the dictatorial regime, from 1967 to 1974. In the following pages, I will try to give an outline of my research plan and my theoretical and methodological choices. My focus here is on discussing the existing historical/academic knowledge for the period, on presenting the main questions that arise from a critical perspective of our recent history and on proposing a research process for answering these questions. Finally, I will give a brief outline of specific case studies so as to describe how this research framework is applied in certain cases. I should also note that since my research is still in progress, the paper has a “non-finito” character and the conclusions are more likely to be questions open for discussion.

### **2.1 Post war period and the urbanization of Athens: a general context.**

Before moving to the issues described above, I will give in points a general framework of the first post-war urbanization of the Athens area. My emphasis is on the processes and dynamics I consider important for understanding the urban transformations and the planning ideology and practices, during that time.

Despite its ancient history, Athens as an urban system did not have a continuous, “glorious” history in time. The urban complex of Athens is actually a new city, built, mostly, during the 20th century and the post war decades (Biris, 1966). During that time it expanded rapidly, and to some extent uncontrollably, due to massive internal migration for economic and political reasons.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For demographic data, tabulations and mapping of the post war urbanization of Athens see the official source of the National Statistical Service of Greece (NSSG), and the work of research centres like the Center of Planning and Economic Research (CPER), the National Center of Social Research (NSGR) or the Athens Center of Ekistics (ACE). Lila Leontidou gives in her book on the urbanization of Athens a fascinating description of Athens’ changing geographies by combining

This demographic and spatial transformation happened amidst an unprecedented dynamic of economic growth, starting in the early 1950s and lasting for almost two decades, until the international crisis of 1973. An extensive program of public investments in basic infrastructures steamed a particular process of spatial and economic modernization, while new fields for private investments opened in tourism, industrial activities and the service economy. The construction sector and the housing market obtained a central role in this process (Antonopoulou, 1991; Stathakis, 2000; Iordanoglou, 2003). Although the Greek “economic miracle” resulted in an overall rise of economic indicators, it also led to various forms of social and spatial imbalances, expressed in all different scales, from national territory to particular urban areas. As Lila Leontidou notes

“Greece developed not through the organic transformation of indigenous productive forces, but from the penetration of capitalism of developed countries. This produces a polarization of its economy expressed in the national territory and intensified in the last 50 years. [...] We witness in Greece a process of economic polarisation which is the exact opposite of the process of rationalization observed in the West.” (Leontidou, 1977)

Important characteristics of Greece’s particular modernization process have been the co-existence of a “modern”, “formal” economic sector with a “traditional”, “informal” one: the first, represented symbolically by large scale capital investments in public infrastructure, industry or energy production, while the second by a highly dispersed, small scale, private entrepreneurialism. These two “economies” developed over time a variety of interrelations and along with the administrative role of the capital city, explain Athens’ strong attraction to new populations. It is not my intention to describe the structure of Greek post-war capitalism at this point, though its understanding is a precondition for discussing the state’s spatial policies. I am referring instead to the crucial differences of Greek regional and urban structures from the cities of western or northern Europe. In the case of modern Athens the role of informal economies, of small scale land ownership and small construction capital has been decisive.

The rapid urbanization of Athens (and secondly Thessaloniki) has been a significant, though neglected by traditional economic research, factor of the “Greek economic miracle”. According to recent research, its role in boosting the Greek economy, by channelling small and medium size capital in a chain market that involved from construction-materials industries to small time contractors, technicians, workers etc, has been crucial (Stathakis, 2000). In Greece, like in many countries of the “south”, urbanization did not come as a consequence of the concentration of economic activity, but, rather reversely, through the concentration of people and capital it created the conditions for economic growth. This particular nature of the Greek post-

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statistical with qualitative data and by emphasizing on strategies of allocation, and social and economic segregation (Leontidou, 1990).

war “urbanization without industrialization” is a key in understanding the state’s spatial interventions and policies over time (Leontidou, 1990).

Under the pressuring needs of this social, economic and spatial transformation, a “planning ideology” gradually gained support, initially among technocrats, then in certain political circles and eventually in public administration (Vasenhoven, 1995). Special reference should be made to Konstantinos Doxiadis and his pioneering work on the post-war reconstruction programs from 1945 to 1951. These programs, though, were policies dealing with a state of emergency (Vasenhoven, 1995). Again, it was in the 1960s that this “planning ideology” was recognised as an element of official policy making. The Centre of Planning and Economic Research (CPER) was established in 1959, and in 1964 its objectives widened so as to include the preparation of short, medium and long-term development plans, regional plans etc.<sup>3</sup> Around the same time academic institutions like the Laboratory for Urban Planning Research in the National Technical University of Athens launched their first regional development proposals (Vasenhoven, 1995).

The possible futures of the growing region of Athens became a serious issue among specialists from the late 1940s, when Constantinos Biris and Doxiadis presented their first proposals. In 1959 Professor Prokopis Vasileiadis was assigned to elaborate the Regulatory Plan of Athens and in 1960 Doxiadis presented his first plan for Athens implementing thus his theory of “Ecumenopolis” (Technical Chamber of Greece, 1974). In 1964 the American firm Wilbur Smith and Associates was invited by the government to elaborate a Transport Plan for Athens (Sarigiannis, 2010; Mitaraki and Basoukea, 2001). An active society of planners, many of whom were transferring their knowledge and experiences from abroad, was growing, promoting the idea of a systematic regulation of urban space to administrative circles and the public. Numerous plans for cities around the country were presented from 1960 until 1967, and issues of urban development and planning increasingly found their ways to the technical press and the public media.<sup>4</sup> This public debate had its “symbolic moment” in the 5th National Conference of Greek Architects under the title “The Problems of the Greater Athens’ Area”, where the alternative and sometimes opposing scientific and political proposals were presented (AGA, 1974).<sup>5</sup> The conference took place in Athens in the winter of 1966 just one year before the coup.

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<sup>3</sup> The CPER was established by Prime Minister and iconic leader of the Right Konstantinos Karamanlis. Karamanlis invited Professor Andreas Papandreou, from Berkeley California, to be the first President and Scientific Director of the Center. [http://www.kepe.gr/EN\\_Pages/home.htm](http://www.kepe.gr/EN_Pages/home.htm).

<sup>4</sup> For a presentation of this public discourse as well as some of the development proposals of the time see the 1977 Annual Review of *Architecture in Greece*, in the chapter City and Regional Planning in Greece - a historical survey.

<sup>5</sup> D. Filippidis makes a distinction between a “rightwing” and a “leftwing” planning ideology. The first constructs “ideal models of modernization and national development with a gigantic capital city as the symbol of progress and dynamism”, while the second, “isolated from the centers of political power”, either totally denies central planning or introduces alternative perspectives with an emphasis on decentralization, spatial justice, reorganization of production activity and redistribution of resources. The first is politically dominant through the 50s and the 60s and between 1967-1974, while the second appears in a coincidence with the periods of social movement and claims in the mid ‘40s

This intensive activity of the planning community was perfectly reflecting the general context of the time both in Greece and abroad. On the social field, the rise of the newly urbanised populations and the consequent changes in the production structure, consumption patterns and social expectations coincides with a wave of social, political and cultural radicalization. This wave made a dynamic appearance in the urban public sphere from the early 1960s, pushing for progressive reforms of political and economic life, and consequently leading to the destabilisation of the traditional political system.<sup>6</sup> It was interrupted in many ways by the coup in 1967, to return as a historical factor in 1973, and during the years of the democratic consolidation (Hatzivasiliou, Rigos and Seferiades, 2008) But when discussing the conditions that allowed the establishment of a planning community and ideology in Greece in the first post war decades, we should also consider seriously the international context. Modernization as “Europeanization” has been a dominant political and technocratic conception in Greece throughout the 20th century and this had a serious impact on the ideology and the practice of urban planning. It has been noted that Greek planning has been a systematic import of ideology, methods and practices, from the context of the “advanced West capitalism”, to a social and geographic formation that has been the outcome of highly differentiated historical processes (Leontidou, 1990; Vaiou, Mantouvalou and Mavridou, 2000).

This condition created over time a particular status which has been described as a clear disparity between theory and practice, between the produced plans and the actual spatial transformations (Filippidis, 1990). The post-war urbanization of Athens has been a characteristic example of this “not planned” spatial growth. Despite the intensity of the city’s growth and despite the highly elaborated proposals for a city master-plan even from the early 1960s, the first (and last) Regulatory Plan of Athens was established only in 1985. This mismatch would consequently lead us to a problematic concerning the actual role of the central state and the local authorities in the building of the Modern Greek city. And as I am not keen in adopting the popular simplistic concepts of the “absent or weak or incapable state”, I propose that we should look for the alternative political and economic mechanisms that were introduced to handle urban growth.

## **2.2 “What for?” Some thoughts on the objectives of this particular research.**

The aim of this short introduction is to highlight the complexity and the multiple implications of post war socio-spatial transformations in a country of the European

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and the mid ‘60s (Filippidis, 1990, p. 16). Although this distinction may be schematic, it describes a range of approaches characteristic of the scientific and ideological discourse of the time. This range of approaches was fully exposed in the 1966 Conference, in the form of highly elaborated proposals, a proof in all of the dynamism of the planning community at the time.

<sup>6</sup> It would be impossible to describe this progressive pluralistic social movement and the violent reaction of the coup without referring to the structure of political power and political representation that was inherited from the past and crystallised after World War II and the civil war that followed. A political state that has been described as a “cachectic democracy” (Nikolakopoulos, 2003) characterised by the systematic violation of political rights and a permanent status of institutional crisis (Alivizatos, 1986).

south like Greece, with a focus on its capital city, Athens. The main question of my research is what has been the role of the violent institutional change in this process and what have been the consequences from the implementation of the authoritarian regime to urban politics and planning, of the time. This question sets a theoretical challenge, since the thematic opens up equally to theories originating from various disciplines. It requires a conception of space as a field of social, political and economic relations with historical, ideological and aesthetical dimensions and not just as a technical construction. Additionally it refers to major discourses, like the spatial dynamics of modernisation in the countries of the “periphery”, or the spatial politics of the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century. Therefore, I am following an interdisciplinary approach, drawing material and methodological tools from social, economic and political sciences and of course geography, urban history and theory of urban planning. I prefer the term “spatial politics” than the term “planning” as it highlights the profoundly political character of the post war urbanization of Athens and is in accordance with the fact that the city grew besides the norms of official planning.

Concerning the handling of historical time, the analysis uses the notion of continuities and discontinuities, which I find appropriate for deconstructing the popular and simplistic perception of the dictatorship as a “parenthesis” in our modern history. It is also a schema that allows correlations between different periods of recent history and thus introduces historical research as a critical tool for the understanding of contemporary and future possibilities (Hobsbawm, 1997). We could also see in this perception of history an implementation of the theoretical and methodological idea of genealogy that would translate here to a genealogy of post war spatial politics and planning ideologies.

In this context, I mention four reasons why I find the study of the dictatorial regime’s urban politics, still fruitful for a contemporary discussion, in a “greek context”, but probably in a comparative perspective as well:

- The first one being that it, obviously, highlights the socio-political parameters and thus the complexity of spatial politics and urban planning in particular. The coup d’etat has been arguably the most violent political rupture in the second half of the 20th century. A comparative approach of the authoritarian versus the democratic state offers an ideal context for the evaluation of the role of the central state in the production of urban space. What makes the story even more interesting is the contradictory evaluations of the period of the junta concerning urban and environmental issues.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The idea that the period of the Junta has been a “catastrophic” one, considering urban environment and the identity of Greek cities and natural landscapes throughout the country, is widely accepted and commonly expressed by the majority of professionals, academics and the public. At the same time, the opposite argument is commonly expressed by those nostalgic for the era and some ultra conservative social groups. The slogan “the Junta constructed roads and brought electricity to every village of the country”, has been as famous as the one praising the “law and order ideal of the colonels”. But we can also trace much more sophisticated “disagreements”, which are right to the point of this study. Like, whether the period between 1967-1974 has been a “productive” one, concerning the reformation of the legislative framework and planning proposals (Filippidis, 1990), or not.

- Secondly, urban space as a material, social and economic field, still carries distinctive and in many cases binding elements of the regime's policies. Extensive urban areas in Athens and elsewhere have been constructed or transformed during the period of the Greek dictatorship, or due to legislative regulations proposed at the time. Certain legislative arrangements, even today, are rooted in the dictatorial period.
- In connection to the above, it is interesting to evaluate if and how the specific politics of the period of the junta have affected the wave of reformations that followed, in the period of the democratic consolidation and even later.
- Lastly, there is a theoretical and political aspect that surpasses the boundaries of the specific historical geographical context and is becoming highly important today, once again: it concerns the technocratic ideal of governance and its interrelations with different forms of political authoritarianism.<sup>8</sup>

In this direction, in my research I have been working on questions like the following:

- What have been the ideological background and the hegemonic complex of principles and ideas of the regime? In what ways has this background affected specific policies, especially the ones concerning spatial and urban planning?
- How did the constitutional change affect the process of designing and implementing spatial policies?
- What has been the scientific and political personnel involved in this process during the years of the dictatorship and under what conditions and terms have they executed their work?
- What kind of public consciousness and public dialogue around the issues of the city and spatial policies has been constructed?
- Finally, what have been the continuities and discontinuities in the field of urban policies, considering the preceding period and the one that followed immediately after, during the years of the democratic consolidation?

Another reason for working on this thematic, one that I consider really important, is a clear historiographic interest. I could even describe it as a sense of "historiographic duty", as there is hardly any attempt of documenting historical information for the period. Very little research has been done on certain policies, on the process of producing and implementing spatial planning, on the specific political and scientific actors involved. There is minimum academic work and relevant literature, with the exception of dispersed references in general studies for the Modern Greek city.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Greek historians and political scientists (among others Konstantinos Tsoukalas, Ilias Nikolakopoulos and Christina Koulouri) have pointed out that this lack of historical knowledge for the junta is a general phenomenon and that the

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<sup>8</sup> We could examine, for example, how the heterogeneous works on reactionary modernism (Herf, 1993), totalitarianism, "Bureaucratic Authoritarianism" (O' Donnel, 1977), "Authoritarian Statism" (Poulantzas, 1980) find meeting points with the problematic of the democratic deficit in "neoliberal times" (Harvey, 2005).

<sup>9</sup> Again, particularly interesting information is provided in the work of Lila Leontidou (Leontidou, 1990), and that of Dimitris Filippidis (Filippidis, 1990)

period of the dictatorship is, from a historiographic point of view, one of the darkest periods of our recent history. According to Christina Koulouri:

“Up to this time, the approach of the dictatorship is attempted through two main roads: Through the published testimonies of people who lived during that time and were involved in the resistance against the regime, or by political scientists in a perspective of comparative analysis with the regimes of Latin America and southern Europe. Historians have not dealt with the period... and we should also examine what this seven years period passed over to the following one”. (Ta Nea, 22/04/2005)

An important part of knowledge for the period is in the form of public history. The period is still present in collective memory, as broad social groups had an immediate experience of it. This consciousness, of course, is fragmented according to a range of different experiences and backgrounds: from the “silent masses” in rural and urban areas of the country for example, to the technocrats who collaborated with the regime and those who participated in the resistance, were arrested, tortured and exiled. The experiences of these people are an extremely rich but also “vulnerable”, non-documented source of public history.

The lack of systematic knowledge has been a great burden but at the same time a challenging condition for the process of my research, as it has led me to various sources of primary material, like the state’s archives, the public press or interviews with the “protagonists”: planners, academics and members of the state’s apparatus. The collection and documentation of this material constitutes a first goal of my research project.

### **3. Building an approach: between historiography and theory.**

The aspects mentioned in the previous chapter describe a perspective that stands between a historical analysis and a theoretical approach of urban transformations and politics. The research is organised in four sections:

a. In the first section, the socio-economic framework of post war urbanisation is examined in relation to a corresponding system of political and technical mechanisms. The material for this study comes from bibliographic sources.<sup>10</sup> I keep two important outcomes from this section. The first refers to the particularities of the urbanization process of the city of Athens as opposed to a dominant north-western example. As mentioned in the introduction, significant elements of this particularity have been the dispersion of small scale land ownership, small construction capital and the co-existence of “modern” and “pre-capitalistic” forms of housing production.

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<sup>10</sup> A number of researchers in the late 1970s and early 1980s contributed largely in documenting the process of this cumulative, spontaneous development of the Greek city and introducing a theoretical perspective on the geographies of Greek capitalism. Particularly helpful in my study has been the work of D. Emmanouil, D. Economou, C. Hadjimichalis, M. Mavridou, M. Mantouvalou, D. Vaiou.

The first dominated by private building activity under the mechanism of “antiparochi” and the architectural form of the multi storey block of flats (Papamichos, 2000), and the second expressed in the extended areas of illegal housing (Leontidou, 1990). The second outcome is the need for a distinction, between the actually implemented urban policies and the rise of a planning ideology in circles of academics, technocrats and some members of the political system (Vaiou, Mantouvalou and Mavridou, 2000). In the first category we should include political tools that had an immediate and organic role in urban development, like the tax system, the general building regulations, the introduction of financing mechanisms in the house market, the political handling of informal activities like illegal housing, programs of public or social housing etc. If we wish to examine the consequences of the Greek dictatorship in the urbanization process we definitely need to turn to this category. “Official” planning, on the other hand, although it seemed to express the dominant post-war discourse of modernization or even a possibility for redistributive policies, remained an external factor to this process, as it was not connected with economic and social interests of certain groups.

b. In the second section, I approach the different historical and political interpretations of the coup, and the recent literature on the regime’s ideological characteristics, political practices and relations with the pre-existing social, political and economic system. This study allows for the urban politics to be evaluated as a part of a broader political program and social context. Furthermore, it has been important, from a theoretical and methodological point of view, as it introduces the possible frameworks for a comparative analysis of the Greek case. For example, would it be a justifiable choice to compare the Greek junta with the European totalitarian regimes rooted in mid-war fascism? For those regimes, by the way, there is a rich academic literature and ongoing research, concerning spatial policies, urban planning and architecture.<sup>11</sup> However, the analysis of the junta’s policies and ideology have shown that it has been a particular form of authoritarian regime, with a military and oppressive character on the one hand, but bearing more differences than resemblances to fascism, on the other.<sup>12</sup> Most notably, it lacked a structural relation with the Greek society, in the form of a political party, a labour organization or an organised youth sector, all characteristic elements of fascist regimes. And although the colonels defined the coup as a “National Revolution”, they never expressed the will for a radical social and economic change. Instead, the faith in the “primal role of the private economic sector” and the “principle of free competition” were repeatedly expressed in public speeches and programmatic documents.<sup>13</sup> The regime appeared as a guarantor of the “proper function” or even the “modernization” of certain fields

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<sup>11</sup> For a comprehensive analysis and literature on urban development projects and unimplemented planning proposals in the case of fascist Rome, see the recent work of Federico Caprotti (Caprotti, 2007) and Aristotelis Kallis (Kallis, A., 2011).

<sup>12</sup> For a review of the theoretical and historical interpretations of the Greek regime see (Sakellariopoulos, 1998)

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, the introduction in the Program for the economic development of Greece, 1968-1972 (Ministry of Coordination, 1968).

of the Greek capitalist economy. It adjusted rapidly to the basic economic principles all post war governments had followed (Iordanoglou, 2003), it “adopted the European perspective” of the country (Pesmazoglou, 1999) it maintained the basic structure of public administration (Meletopoulos, 2000), it reproduced the organic relation of the state with the economic elites and further introduced a paternalistic clientelism as the dominant form of relation with the middle and lower classes (Sotiropoulos, 1999). It did so in a violently imposed context of “silence, order and security”, of hysterical anticommunism, of persecutions and censorship. The regime attempted to impose total control in the public sphere, including the media, the universities, the trade unions, the structures of local representation. And while the state apparatus continued its legislative, judicial and executive work, these basic functions were isolated from participation or public control mechanisms.

c. Although telegraphic this description implies some answers to the main question of this paper on the continuities and discontinuities of spatial politics of the dictatorship. And along with the idea of the parallel contexts of actually implemented spatial tools and official planning ideology, it has provided me with certain logic for the third, and main, section of my research. This third section approaches the policies of the regime that were immediately related to the production and regulation of urban space.

Additionally to the limited relevant literature, I have been using three main sources of primary material:

- Relevant articles from selected editions of the technical press (“The Newsletter of the Technical Chamber of Greece”, “Architectural Issues”), the economic press (“Economic Postman”) and the daily press (“To Vima”). Especially for the “Economic Postman” -a significant edition on economic, technical, and administrative issues, with a continuous history over the post war decades- I have made a systematic documentation over the complete digitised archive for the period from 1965 to 1975. The outcome of this work is a register of almost 600 articles, in chronological order and organised in 4 thematics (Urban planning, Economic and Regional Planning, Housing Market, General technical issues).

- Archives of various branches of public administration (like the Technical Services of the Municipality of Athens or the Ministry of Public Works), the proceedings from the meetings of the Consulting Committee of the Junta (in the Central Library of the Greek Parliament), and material from the private Archives of Konstantinos Doxiadis.

- A series of semi-structured interviews with people that held a significant role in planning and policy making around the period of the dictatorship (members of research institutes (3), academics (3), professionals working in the private sector (2), members of the Ministry of Public Works (1), the Office for the Regulatory Plan of Athens (1) and the Ministry of Coordination (1).

My study up to this point has focused on:

- Reformative attempts concerning the land and construction system and the housing market.
- Specific proposals for the restructuring of the urban area of Athens, with an emphasis on attempts to introduce a representative architecture or urban planning, particular to the period of the regime.
- Changes in the legislative framework of planning, particularly concerning the Regulatory Plan of Athens
- The “active subjects”, people or groups of people that were involved in spatial policy and urban planning. Their experience and evaluation of the period and the conditions under which they performed their work

The facts show that the state apparatus during all seven years of the dictatorship was particularly active in reforming the legislative framework that actually affected the development of the urban area of Athens. Furthermore, the model of speculative urban growth was systematically exported to all regions of the country, particularly in the middle-size peripheral towns and tourist resorts.(Filippidis, 1990). Over the post war period some issues have been particularly decisive for the housing market and the construction economy: the regulation of building heights, the General Regulatory Plan, and the incorporation of peripheral urban areas in the official city plan. Only one year after the coupe the regime introduced the Compulsory Act 395/68 “On buildings’ height and unrestricted construction building”. According to the CA 395/68 the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) increased from 25% to 40% in urban areas around the country, adding more floors to existing buildings and increasing the heights of new constructions. As expected the construction sector was triggered and the private housing market boomed. In 1972, a new General Regulatory Plan was implemented. The implementation of the CA 395/68 has been used as a particular case study of my research as it reflects all the range of issues discussed in this paper.<sup>14</sup>

Equally decisive has been the policy of the regime in the case of informal settlements and illegal housing: In three years only, from 1968 to 1971, about 2.700 ha were integrated in the city plan of Athens, involving more than 150.000 people<sup>15</sup>. Leontidou describes this “legalization” process as a successful instance in the ‘modernization’ and expansion of Greek speculative urban capitalism. A success, of course, that involved the repression of settlers, demolition and arrests (Leontidou, 1990). The expansion of the structured urban market was related to the systematic promotion of credit financing in the housing market and contributed to the rise of a competitive speculative construction sector. Law 1003/71 “On active urban planning”, was another tool for facilitating this construction sector and further

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<sup>14</sup> In what could be called as “the genealogy of the CA 395/68”, I am working in the register of articles and in other archives to document the process from the early appearances of the issue in public discussion - to the formation of certain social pressures - to its official implementation – to an evaluation of its impact.

<sup>15</sup> Data from the common study of the National Statistical Service of Greece (NSSG) and the National Center for Social Research, elaborated and presented by L. Leontidou ( Leontidou, 1990).

attracting the investment of large scale private capital in urban development. Its logic was transferred faithfully in Law 947/79 of the second democratic government.

#### **4. (c) Conclusions**

The building euphoria lasted until 1972. In 1973 and in the context of the international crisis the construction sector collapsed. Around that time the consequences of the construction frenitis were obvious in the urban environments. A renewed interest appeared in the public sphere and the media, on issues of environmental protection, historical identity and quality of life. This turn was later expressed in the progressive Constitution of 1974 and the reformative wave that followed during the first two years of the democratic consolidation. The state's efforts turned to other directions and emphasized on more democratic methods of implementing policies. But the “modernization” of this particular urban capitalism remained the structural dynamic that transformed the Greek city.

As this research is still in progress, the questions of continuities and ruptures in the period of the dictatorship are still open. Up to this point, the analysis of the legislative framework, of the actually implemented policies and the micro-histories of people or social groups involved, reveals the existence of persistent dynamics and processes that cross the boundaries of different political periods.

Indeed the dictatorship continued the ‘modernization’ of the speculative land and construction system, which of course was not a neutral process but a conflictual political one. The most obvious difference in the case of the regime has to do with the loosening of social control that led to a rise of arbitrary practices. The regime introduced an idea of laissez faire to favour all kinds of investment activities, partly as a mean for gaining the necessary legitimisation

Another point has to do with the “scale” and intensity of urban transformation processes. This doesn't simply imply the “natural tendency” of authoritarian regimes towards gigantism (a tendency that had its reflections in the form of proposed development projects for Athens too). It may refer for example to the systematic promotion of large-scale capital investments in an urban economy that was traditionally characterised by small scale and self-financing practices.

Furthermore, the idea that the negative consequences of the dictatorial policies were the outcome of technical and administrative inefficiencies of the government or the state apparatus, although very popular, proves to be misleading: the urban policies of the period should be judged in relation to their actual objectives and social functionalities. But this, of course, is a major challenge in general.

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