

Intended and unintended consequences of the 2004 Olympic Games on the sociospatial structure of Athens



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Netzwerk Stadt und Landschaft (NSL):
MAS-Programm Raumplanung

12 OCTOBER 2009

Analytical framework

Contemporary Cityspace Utopias

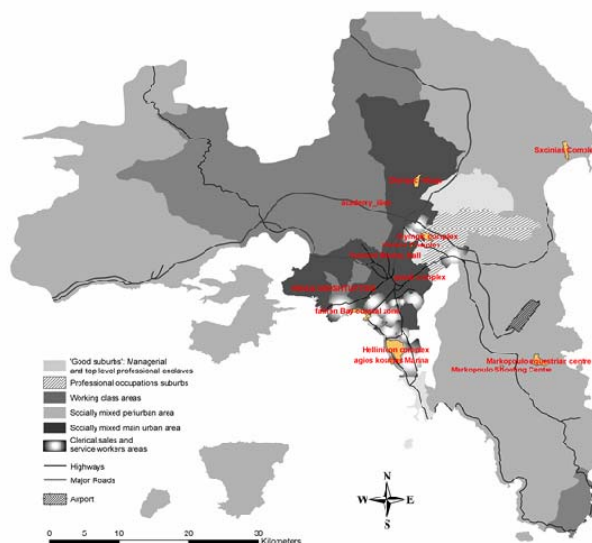
- In the planning discourse we witness the introduction of ideal-typical market relations and cityspace utopias in order to legitimize the new planning mechanisms, instruments and policies
- **Mega-projects foster and enhance these utopia-based neo-liberalisation urban development strategies.**
- **Public space is eroded by privatization and commercialization policies.**

Athens 2004 Olympic games project

- From 'growth management' of urban thickening and sprawl containment to the **'transformation of a "city of living history" into a metropolitan center of 21st century'**
- Main characteristics of Athens and Greek planning System:
- Athens a **Mixed-use, low social segregation cityspace**
- **Weak planning tradition** [minimal intervention-land use planning, building code measures, **ameliorate cleavages**, foster **petty industry, petty property ownership, informal housing practices**
- **Ex-post measures for 'protection' of the environment**

Athens 2004 Olympic games project

Venue dispersal
 Aiming at spreading regeneration benefits city-wide
 Minimizing public opposition



Athens 2004 Olympic games project

- **Outcome:** the reproduction of already existing socio-spatial schemes.
- What is changing with the implementation and re-use of the Olympic venues is
- **the scale of urban landscape**, with the creation of large, commodified and controlled public spaces.
- **'New' arrangement-coalition** in urban development strategy
- **PPPs and emergence of mega-developers**

Athens 2004 Olympic games project

- **Construction sector**
- **Early 1990s severe recession,**
- **By 2002, the 675 construction companies** had been **reduced to 310**, substantial market **concentration**.
- **Outcome:** A small number of Large powerful conglomerates dominate public works and PPPs
- Overcoming of the overinvestment/underconsumption crisis
- The **Olympic project a first wave** and **the re-use of venues the second wave** of increasing profitability

Athens 2004 Olympic games project

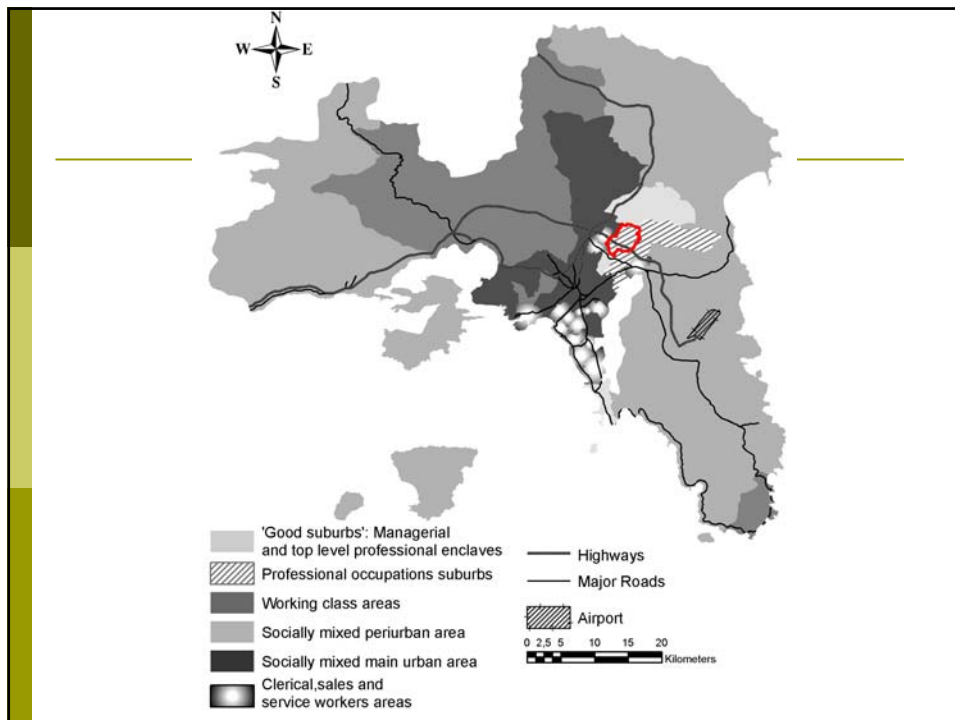
- The **cultural economy** in the last two decades Athens' cultural economy is very **dynamic**.
- Overall **Employment growth**.
 - But
- **No alteration of the small size and the low concentration of ownership.**
- The spatial pattern: emergence of **clusters of small entertainment and art businesses in the city centre and in a number of suburbs citywide**
- **Sectoral composition** changes.
 - but
- **Deindustrialisation has not led to the expansion of artisanal post-fordist structure.**

Athens 2004 Olympic games project

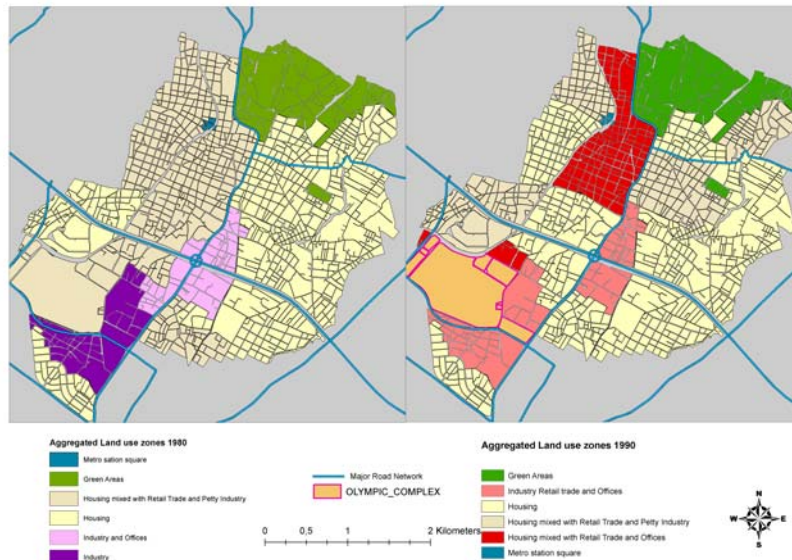
- **Outcome:**
- The Athenian **cultural economy** has a **strong consumption-oriented** character focusing on enhancement of **urban tourism and leisure** activities.
- Gradual 'internationalisation'

Maroussi: From an underdeveloped zone to an attraction pole

- Location of Main Olympic Stadium complex, [redesigned by Calatrava] in a middle-class professional suburb where large empty plots existed and facilitated by the design of new urban highway and suburban railway to connect with the airport.



Maroussi: From an underdeveloped zone to an attraction pole



Maroussi: From an underdeveloped zone to an attraction pole



Building Main Use 1999

Building Main Use 2007





Banks, Telecommunications, Insurance



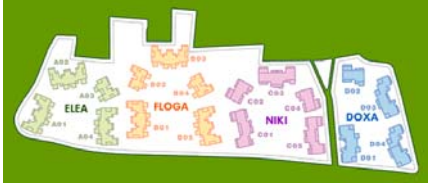
Multiplex cinemas, Malls








Ex "press village"
241 apartments
approx. 50000 sq meters of housing

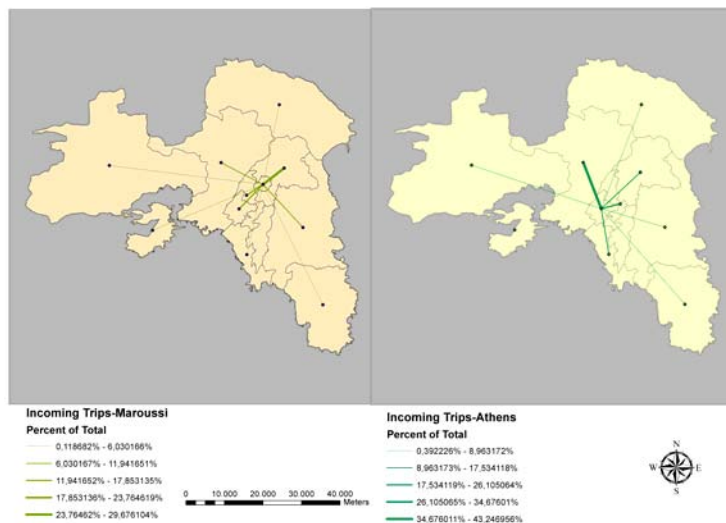


ILIDA: GATED COMMUNITY
"A NEW WAY OF LIFE"



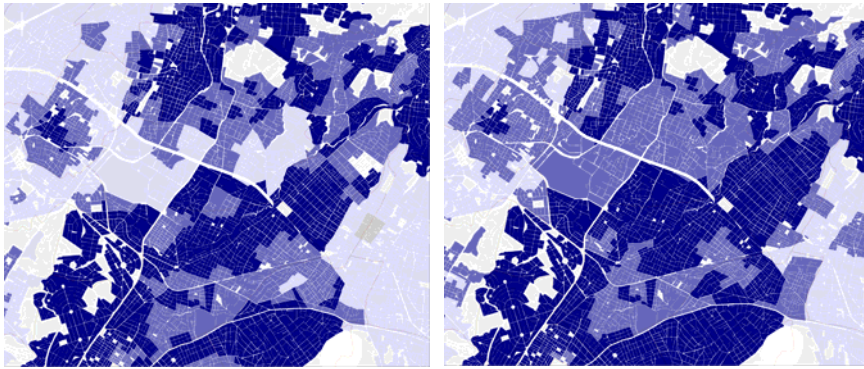
Maroussi: From an underdeveloped zone to an attraction pole

- The second major attraction pole



Maroussi From a 'dead zone' to an attraction pole

- Socio-occupational structure changes



ESeC 1 & 2 (1991)

ESeC 1 & 2 (2001)

Impact of Olympics mega-project

- **Outcome:** an idiosyncratic 'gentrification' : The (re)development, through the Olympic and post-Olympic mega-projects, has created a segregated area based, at the start, primarily on consumption and leisure.
- Here 'gentrification' affects both the socio-professional composition of the residents and mainly the creation of the new business centre and of the 'festival market place' of multiplex cinemas shopping malls etc.

Research questions

- What happens when the neo-liberal urban planning doctrine (Olympic Games as part of competitive city strategy) is applied in a city with:
 - a) weak planning,
 - b) political and business elite with relatively low coherence and weak leadership,
 - c) dominance of small-medium businesses (compared to the European level),
 - d) already urban structure with mixed-use.

There are three main effects:

- a) exclusively consumption-oriented cultural economy (absence of high-technologies, neo-artisanal activities and multinational's headquarters),
 - b) low degree of internationalization,
 - c) policies and investments rather follow than lead urban (re)development.
- All this leads to reshaping of the governing coalition of Greek property capitalism (large construction Co, banks), reproducing though a low position in European urban hierarchy and in the new international division of labour.

