

## **'GLOCALISATION' AND URBAN LANDSCAPE TRANSFORMATIONS - Built Heritage and Innovative Design versus non-competitive morphologies – the case of Athens 2004.**

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### **1. Introduction: Transforming urban landscapes to address globalization and intercity-competition**

In the last decade or so, a growing number of studies with different scientific concerns appear to converge in that the dynamics of urban networks have been strongly affected by late twentieth century economic globalization (see for instance, Castells, 1989 and 1993, King., 1990, Sachar, 1990, Sassen, 1994 and 2001, Amin and Thrift, 1995, Duffy 1995, Savitch, 1996, Hall, 1998, Short, et al. 1999): More than ever markets appear to transcend the borders and interests of nation states while the ability of individual countries to direct their internal economies and shape the manner in which they interacted with external structures, has declined accordingly. These changes reshape urban networks and rearrange the distribution of opportunities and income in cities, regardless of the cities' degree of participation in the global economy. As Shaw (2001) states, all cities in almost every nation have been affected to a greater or lesser degree. Changes involve *a) urban networks and the hierarchies of cities*, and *b) spatial organization and morphology within individual cities* (Shaw, 2001, Sassen, 2001). In this context, Kantor have termed post-industrial cities 'captives' of a highly competitive economic environment in which traditional factors (e.g. geography, physical infrastructure) that once affected the location of new business to a specific place, matter less than ever (Kantor 1987). Due to the capacity of capital to switch locations, all cities - with the exception of 'global cities' (Sassen, 2001) having sufficient power to mastermind volatility of capital - have become interchangeable entities to be played off one against another forced to compete from positions of comparative weakness for the capital investment (Kantor, 1987).

In this economic milieu, as Boyle and Rogerson (2001) argue, the task of urban governance has increasingly become the creation of urban conditions sufficiently attractive to lure prospective firms; and this has entailed what Cox (1993, 1995) termed *New Urban Politics* (NUP). In order to secure development and growth, 'localities' or individual cities now have to offer even more inducements to capital - whether it is a refashioning of the city's economic attractiveness (e.g. tax abatements, property, transport facilities) or alterations to the city's image through manipulation of its physical form or/and its soft infrastructure (e.g. cultural and leisure amenities) (Boyle and Rogerson, 2001). In this processes, urban design has undertaken for all classes and groups of cities, an important new role as a significant

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means of economic development (Gospodini 2002). Cities are being reshaped and urban landscapes are rapidly transformed to address globalisation and intercity competition. This raises important questions: *What landscape transformations are promoted by the new economic milieu? What are the main components of the emerging new urban landscapes?*

## 2. New cultural and leisure economies and fitted urban landscapes

The new post-industrial economic environment in the last decades has generated '*new urban economies*'<sup>1</sup> among which *cultural and leisure economies* are the most widespread and perhaps the most visible manifestations of economic novelty in cities (McNeill and While, 2001). In the flourishing cultural and leisure economies of the new age, two species of urban space morphology are emerging as competitive edges of cities: *a) built heritage* and *b) innovative design of space*. This is so because both of them are increasingly becoming major urban tourism resources since they both fit into the pursuits of the visitor in the era of new modernity:

- *Built heritage* representing long living survivals from the past, constitutes *counterstructure* to the *ephemerality* of fashions, products, values, etc., rooted in the growing flow of events in time (acceleration of history) that characterises the era of new modernity. As long living survivals, built heritage is also rich in meaning; it can be interpreted again and again - allowing divergent interpretations by individuals in the era of new modernity characterised by 'diversity' and 'individualisation' (see Gospodini 2001).
- *Innovative design of space* by definition contradicting established international design trends and being *avant-garde*, represents *counterstructure* to *familiar urban environment*. Looking at recent history of architecture and urban design, new movements appear to have always produced in their beginning, design schemes - at small scale and large scale, buildings, open spaces, urban areas, or even cities - which being *avant-garde* in their era<sup>2</sup>, constituted '*counterstructures*'<sup>3</sup> to the familiar and thereby, great resources of urban tourism (see Gospodini 2001a): In the last years, following the movement of Deconstruction, the best example supporting this argument is the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain. Such cases of innovative design of space point the emergence of *a new paradigm* concerning the relationship among urban design, urban space morphology and urban tourism: Irrespective of the particular functions and activities accommodated in space, it is *avant-garde design* of both buildings and open spaces that can make *urban space morphology in itself and of itself* a sightseeing, a tourist resource (Gospodini 2001a and 2002).

## 3. The efforts of cities for place identity and competitive urban landscapes

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<sup>1</sup>As 'new urban economies', McNeill and While (2001) present a fourfold typology *agglomeration economies*, *informational and Knowledge-rich economies*, *technopoles*, *urban leisure economies*.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, Modern Movement and Le Corbusier's Church of Ronchamp, the city of Brasilia; High-tech architecture and the building of Pompidou Centre in Paris, the Lloyd's Building in London; Post-Modernism and the glass-pyramids of the Museum of Louvre, the 'follies' edifices of La Villette in Paris, the Canary Wharf in London's Docklands.

<sup>3</sup> According to Lengkeek (1995), counterstructures when incorporated into everyday reality, lose their specific meaning. Then, the quest for counterstructures goes on a search for new horizons... (Lengkeek, J., 1995, p.31). The same seems to happen with *avant-garde* design; when *avant-garde* trends are established in the design practices, lose their innovative character and thereby, they can not work as counterstructures attracting tourism.

The processes of economic globalisation and European integration have been accompanied by an increasing '*identity crisis*' of cities rooted in two realities: a) mass migrations, legal or illegal, are increasingly transforming European cities into *heterogeneous, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies* (see King 1993, 1995, Hall 1995, Graham 1998) and b) the march to supra-nationality within European Union *blurs national identities* (Castels 1993, Graham 1998). In this context, *place identity* is nowadays becoming an issue of growing importance for people. Examining transformations of urban landscape in relation to the cities struggle for place identity, again *built heritage* and *innovative design of space* appear to constitute critical parameters and major competitive edge of cities:

- As far as *built heritage* is concerned, Castels (1993) believes that under the recent identity-crisis, European cities will be increasingly oriented towards their *local heritage* - built heritage, cultural heritage - because first, the weakening of national identities makes people uncertain about the power holders of their destiny, thus, pushing them into withdrawal either individualistic (neo-liberalism) or collective (neo-nationalism); and second, the consolidation of heterogeneous populations in European cities happens at a period when national identities are most threatened. Similarly, Harvey (1989) believes that the response will be an increase in '*xenophobia*' and the resurgence of reactionary place-bound politics as people search for old certainties and struggle to construct or retain a more stable or bounded place identity. Thus, the protection and enhancement of built heritage appears as one such attempt to fix the meanings of places, while enclosing and defending them.
- As far as *innovative design of space* is concerned, recent research investigating place identity and urban landscape in two European cities – Bilbao, Spain and Thessaloniki, Greece (see Gospodini 2003, Hatziantoniou 2003) – bring evidence that in the sense of place identity by both inhabitants and visitors, built heritage tends to get weaker in contemporary post-modern multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies, while innovative design of space emerges as an effective new means of enhancing place identity. More specifically, innovative design of space appears to work in post-modern multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies in similar ways built heritage did/does mainly in modern culturally bounded and nation-state oriented societies: It may a) add or create distinct or/and unique urban landscape, b) synchronise in space different social/cultural/economic groups by offering a new common terrain for experiencing and familiarising with new forms of space and c) promote tourism/economic development, and thereby, generate new social solidarities among inhabitants grounded on economic prospects (Gospodini 2003).

#### **4. Using built heritage and innovative design of space for 'glocalising' urban landscapes**

On the basis of their great potentials in developing new cultural and leisure economies and creating/enhancing the sense of place identity, both *built heritage* and *innovative design of space* have been principal concerns in all major spatial interventions aiming to improve the city's landscape and image in the last decade or so. This is clearly manifested by the strategic plans of cities<sup>4</sup> that have hosted major international events (e.g. Olympic Games, World Expo, Cultural Capital of Europe).

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<sup>4</sup> See for instance a) the strategic plan of Barcelona for Olympic Games 1992 in CEC 1992, Trullen 1996, Busquets 1998, b) the strategic plan of Thessaloniki for Cultural Capital of Europe 1997 in OCCE 1997 and c) the strategic plan of Seville in CEC 1992.

In such plans, the larger spatial interventions and the greater investments involve the enhancement of the city's built heritage (urban conservation, renewal, revitalisation, pedestrian street networks connecting historical monuments) and new building developments based on avant-garde design schemes. **Combining built heritage and innovative design of space and promoting them as the two central themes in urban landscape transformations generates a new species of landscape for the 21<sup>st</sup> century-city dominated by two extremities: a) that of built heritage with rather local references and b) that of innovative design of space having more universal or global references.** In this respect, the new urban landscapes emerging under the forces of economic globalisation may be termed as '**glocalised**'.

## 5. Developing Athens 'for' Olympic Games 2004; a chance and a challenge

Regarding urban system in Greece, Athens is by the far the most important city characterized by concentration of a variety of economic sectors and activities, high-level public administration, business services, and population of about 4 million in the greater area – Attica (see Petrakos and Economou 1999). However, considering European urban network as a global urban system, Athens ranks low. According to different studies and classifications<sup>5</sup> of European cities, Athens represents **a peripheral larger city with low-level influence on the region**. The city exhibits all spatial disadvantages of larger cities in the periphery (geographical or/and economic) of Europe (e.g. unplanned urban extensions, lack or obsolescent infrastructure, environmental pollution) caused by rapid and unregulated economic and physical growth experienced in the '50s, '60's and 70's due to extensive rural immigration (CEC 1992).

Following international experience in the '90s on how hosting international big events may be used by cities as a catalyst to overcome their disadvantages, improve urban space qualities, enhance the city's image and upgrade the city in the hierarchies of the global urban system, Olympic Games 2004 has been a chance and a challenge for Athens. Although not explicitly stated either by the state or the formal organizational committee for Olympic Games 2004, points of view<sup>6</sup> converge that the strategy underlying both Athens's candidacy and the city's preparation for the Olympics 2004 was to enhance the city's development prospects, upgrade the city in the hierarchies of the European and global urban network, and finally put Athens on the map as a major metropolitan centre in southeast Europe. This is also supported by the fact that as high as 95% of the projects to be developed for Olympics 2004 are not temporary but permanent structures to be re-designed, re-constructed and re-used<sup>7</sup> after 2004. Due to the permanence of the new structures and developments, there will no doubt be an impact to the city's development prospects. However, it is difficult to foresee and estimate this impact since unlike the case of Barcelona and other cities, there has been no strategic plan for Athens

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<sup>5</sup> See CEC 1992, RECLUS/DATAR in Verhill, et al 1995.

<sup>6</sup> see a number of articles in *Architects* n.39, 2003, a special issue on Olympic Games 2004 (written in Greek).

<sup>7</sup> First, all athletic installations will be permanent constructions to become the future athletic infrastructure of the city authorized by municipalities, central governments and athletic associations. Second, new physical infrastructure such as road infrastructure, and re-construction and renewal works will no doubt remain and of course improve function and image of urban space. Third, new building developments such as for instance, the residential quarter for the athletes is planned to become social housing estate and the building complexes for media and journalists is planned to be converted into office buildings for Ministry of Education, Police Headquarters and student halls (*Vema*, newspaper 15-08-2003).

following 2004. Moreover, unlike most international experience of cities taking advantage of big international events for re-vitalizing large declined urban areas, Athens did not choose such a strategy. Although there were declined areas in the geographical centre of the city (e.g. Eleones), new development and redevelopment projects for Olympics 2004 were scattered all over Athens without a focus – except perhaps the historical centre of the city. This allows someone to assume that **an underlying objective of such a strategy might be to promote a multi-nucleus urban regeneration and development.**

## 6. Athens landscape transformations for 2004

Turning onto the city's landscape transformation, the selected '*scattered model*' of regeneration and development allows us to conceive of Athens 2004 as a picture of **a collage-city**: The large surface – the background - of this collage consists of a mosaic of a neo-classical street plan curved on a big mass of morphologically heterogeneous but mainly Modern, small-sized buildings that more often than not are poorly designed, constructed and preserved. This is so since for many decades, urban design in Greek cities has been confined to small-scaled, fragmentary and soft interventions: On the one hand, development of private land has been regulated by the state mainly through building legislation and the master plan of the area controlling only land uses, building densities and the shape of the street system. This kind of minimalism in state along with land division into small properties, have entailed the fact that the physical form of urban space - the architecture of the city – has been a product of a step-by-step development and literally a property-by-property design of space. On the other hand, shortage and dispersal of public land in the city-centres confined also public projects to small-scaled design schemes (see Gospodini 2001b). Such a kind of landscape mosaic, characterizing most Greek cities, will be overlapped in Athens by **an evenly scattered net of new formal episodes** – new building schemes as well as reconstructed ones. In this framework, two questions are raised: *Will this net of new formal episodes be strong enough to radically shift the picture of Athens? And if yes, what will dominate Athens's landscape-collage in 2004?*

To answer the above questions and draw the new emerging landscape of Athens, we attempted an analysis and classification of all projects<sup>8</sup> – realized, been under construction, or planned - by all different authorities<sup>9</sup> involved in the city's preparation for this major international event: a) the Committee for Olympic Games 2004, b) Ministry of Culture, c) Ministry of Environment, Planning and Public Works, c) Municipality of Athens, d) Prefecture of Athens and Pireaus, Technical Chamber of Greece, National Organisation for Tourism, Organisation for the Spatial Integration of historical sites of Athens – to mention the most important ones. The list of all projects is presented in Appendix. The list has been shortened by those projects that are located outside the city in the greater Attica area. The list presents

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<sup>8</sup> The list of projects was shortened by those projects that are located outside the city of Athens in the greater area of Attica.

<sup>9</sup> Different categories of projects are constructed under the supervision of different authorities. For instance, athletic installations are supervised and constructed by Ministry of Environment, Planning and Public Works and mainly by Ministry of Culture - the General Secretary of Athletics. Most projects concerning urban conservation and the creation of a network intergrading historical sites of Athens are progressed by the Organisation for the Spatial Integration of Archaeological Sites. Most projects of transport infrastructure are constructed by Ministry of Environment, Planning and Public Works. Projects concerning renewal and refurbishing of public open spaces, facades renovation on major streets, are operated by Ministry of Environment, Planning and Public Works and Municipality of Athens.

the title and short description of the project, the amount of investment and the main authority supervising the project. In respect to the previous argument that built heritage and innovative design of space are major contributors and competitive edges of cities in contemporary urban landscape transformations, Athens's projects were classified in the following main categories:

- a) projects related to built heritage,*
- b) projects based on innovative design of space.* As such, were considered projects that had been the design outcome of international or national architectural and urban design competitions.
- c) 'non-competitive' projects – i.e., all other projects* either improving function of urban space (e.g. projects of transport infrastructure) or/and tidying and embellishing urban space (e.g. refurbishing public open spaces, tidying and renovating building facades on major streets, etc.).

Some special projects, like for instance Attico Metro, appear to fall into two different categories; in the category of innovative design projects as far as the metro stations are concerned and in the category of non-competitive projects for all other parts of the project. In such cases, the amount of investment has respectively distributed in two categories.

As critical parameters in the analysis were considered *a) total amount of investment in each category of projects* and *b) the number of projects in each category.*

The results of the analysis are presented in Table 1 as well as Figs. 1-4. According to these results, investments in innovative design projects reach a percentage as high as 54.64% of total investment whereas for built heritage projects, this is only 4.98%. However, adding the two, the percentage of investment in competitive projects is 59.62 whilst for non-competitive projects, it is 40.38. Similarly, total number of projects is 18 for built heritage, 23 for innovative design and 18 for all other projects. By adding numbers of built heritage and innovative design, it appears that total number of competitive projects (41) is more than double than that of non-competitive projects (18). These figures point the prevalence of competitive projects versus the non-competitive ones. And differences would be yet more striking, if decision making processes about projects included in the city's preparation plan were not that highly influenced by politics. More specifically, in the category of non-competitive projects (see table in Appendix) are included all new projects of transport infrastructure. Such projects always require high investments but they are mostly favoured by all political parties and governments – whether local or central – due to anticipated political benefits.

Project category	Total number of projects	Total investment (in million Euros)	Percentage of total investment
BH projects	18	122.80	4.98%
ID projects	23	1.347.08	54.64%
NC - all other projects	18	995.53	40.38%
<b>Competitive projects: (BH + ID) projects</b>	18+23=41	1.469.88	59,62%
<b>Total sum</b>	59	2.465.41	100%

**Table 1:** Preparing Athens for Olympic Games 2004 and transforming the city's landscape: Classification of projects and investments.

**Table Interpretations:** **BH** = Projects enhancing built heritage  
**ID** = Projects based on innovative design of space (avant-garde development and redevelopments schemes concerning buildings and open spaces)  
**NC** = Non-competitive projects in terms of landscape transformations (i.e.. transport infrastructure, tidying and embellishing open spaces, façade renovation on central streets, etc)  
In **the total number of projects**, some special projects (e.g. Attico Metro) were counted in two categories (e.g. ID and NC).

## 7. Conclusions

In the light of the analysis, it may be argued that Athens, although not clearly stated in any formal paper, appears to *follow the international paradigm* and focus investments on both innovative design projects and built heritage. From this point of view, it is expected that Olympic Games 2004 will work as a catalyst for the city to transform its landscape towards a *'glocalised' physiognomy*. However, the choice of *an even distribution of projects all over the city* and thereby, the selected *'scattered model' of urban regeneration and development* still creates an ambiguity about the scale of positive effect. International experience points that *a double focus* – on both competitive projects in terms of urban landscape and spatial aggregation of these projects in a special area – may intensify positive effects in relation to landscape transformations, improvement of the city's image, enhancing development prospects and upgrading the city's status in the hierarchies of global urban system. In 1992, Barcelona set a successful paradigm. Will Athens in 2004 set another?

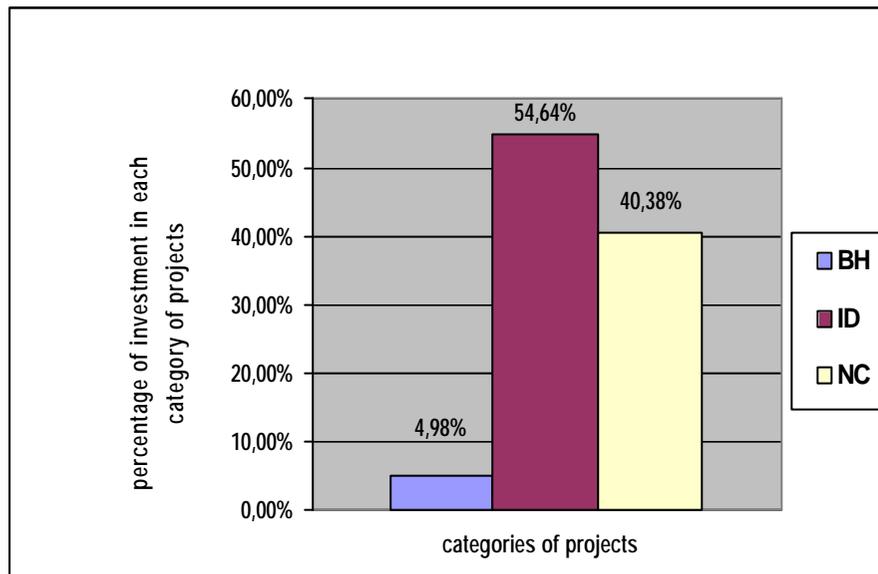


Fig. 1: The percentage of investment in each category of projects: Built heritage, Innovative Design, all other projects

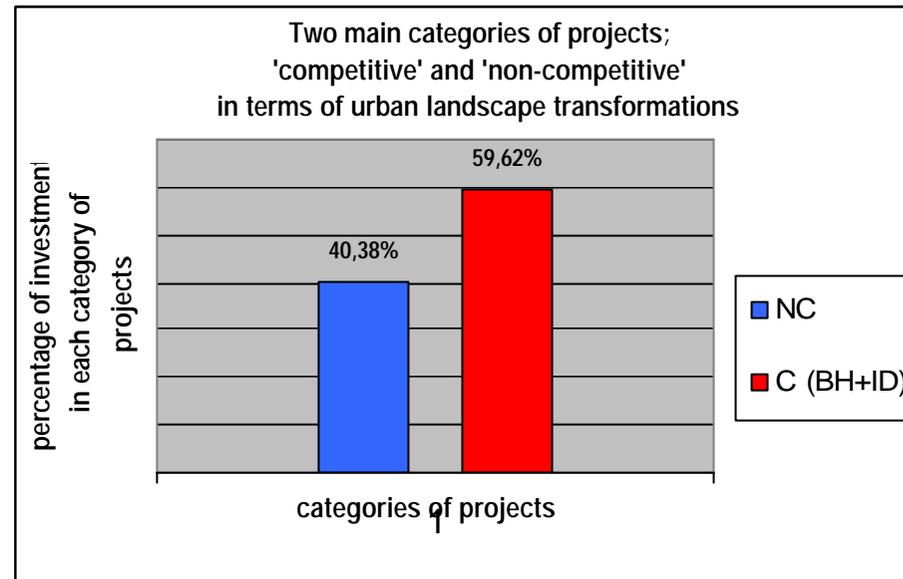


Fig. 2 The percentage of total investment in competitive (Built Heritage and Innovative Design projects) and non-competitive

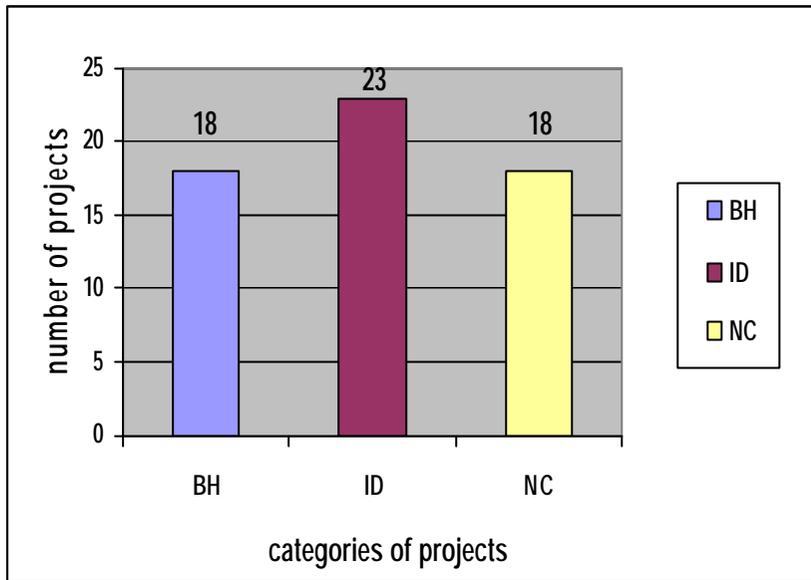


Fig. 3: The number of projects in each category: Built Heritage projects, Innovative Design projects, all other projects

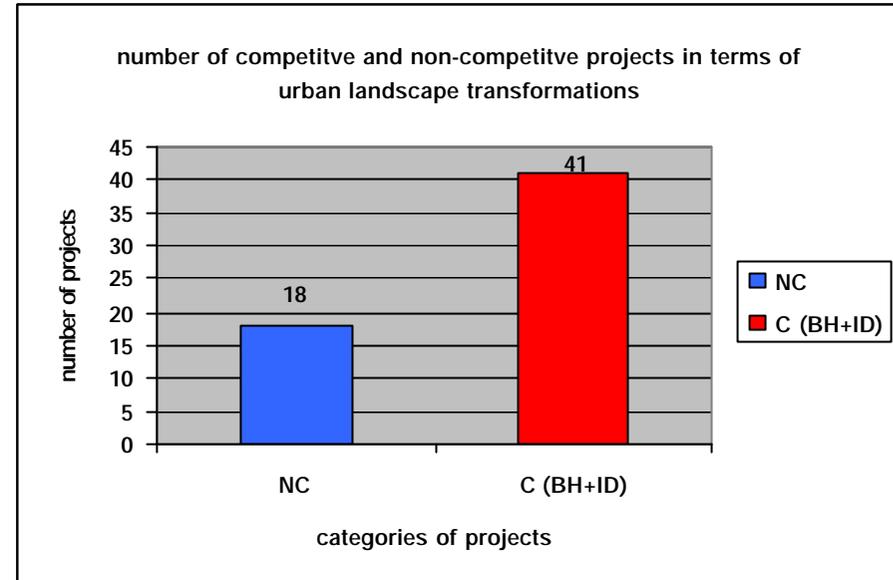


Fig. 4: The number of competitive (Built Heritage and Innovative Design) project and non-competitive projects in terms of urban landscape transformations

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## **APPENDIX**

	PROJECT title	CATEGORY	BUDGET	AUTHORITY
1	IBC International radio/TV centre	∅	123,813,000	Ministry of Culture: General Secretariat of Athletics
2	MPC International press centre	ID	50, 622, 000	ibid
3	Olympic Stadium	ID	15, 050 ,000	ibid
4	Renovation of Olympic Athletic Centre of Athens (Calatrava's project 1)	∅	144,760,000	ibid
5	Redevelopment of public open space surrounding Olympic Athletic Centre of Athens (Calatrava's project 2)	ID	77, 423,000	ibid
6	Olympic stadium for Gymnastics	∅	7, 461,108	ibid
7	Olympic centre for basketball	∅	36 ,797,000	ibid
8	Olympic centre for water sports	∅	15 ,382,000	ibid
9	Galatsi Olympic Stadium	∅	50, 725,000	ibid
10	Liosia Olympic Stadium	∅	69, 051,000	ibid
11	Nikea Olympic Stadium for weight lifting	∅	38,305,589	ibid
12	Peace and Friendship Stadium	ID	18 ,743,000	ibid
13	Panatheneon Stadium	BH/ID	8,600,000	ibid
14	Installations for canoe and kayak slalom	∅	19, 500,000	Ministry of Environment, Planning and Public Works
15	Faliron Bay Waterfront redevelopment	ID	59, 574,468	ibid
16	Olympic centre for beach-volley and taek-won do and redevelopment of the surrounding area	∅	122 ,703,373	ibid
17	Olympic centre of Sailing	NC	99, 309,244	ibid
18	Ellinikon Olympic Centre for Baseball, softball, hockey, handball, fencing.	?D	145, 000,000	ibid
19	Goudi Olympic Building Complex	NC	20,500,000	ibid
20	Olympic Ring Road; East section	NC	95,377,843	ibid
21	Olympic Ring Road; west section	NC	279,970,654	ibid
22	Olympic Ring Road; south section	NC	31,626,964	ibid
23	Extension of Kimi Highroad to Olympic Village, construction of Kifissos road intersection	NC	46, 955,246	ibid
24	Road connection between A. Papandreou highroad and Pireaus Harbour	NC	8 ,500,000	ibid
25	Extensions of Attico Metro	ID/NC	½ 443,316,214 =221,600,000	ibid
26	New system of tramways	∅/NC	½ 233,917,828 = 116,900,000	ibid
27	Roman Forum and Bibliotheca of Adrianos – conservation of buildings and reconstruction of the surrounding open space	??	525,034	Organisation for the spatial integration of historical sites of Athens
28	Acropolis; construction of 3 surfaceshelters	BH	1,819,516	ibid
29	Ceramicos; Fences, footbridges, control points	BH	1,113,298	ibid
30	Filopappou Park; new fences, infrastructure networks, reconstruction of open space to host sculpture exhibitions	BH	3,404,255	ibid
31	Ancient Greek Agora – construction of new fences, entrances, infrastructure networks	BH	1,731,475	ibid
32	Olympeion ; construction of new fences, infrastructure networks, control points	BH	557,594	ibid
33	Open space improvements on Athena Street from Omoneia Square to Lycourgos Street.	? C	200,851	ibid
34	Reconstruction of Dionysiou Areopagitou Street as a pedestrian street.	? C	8,500,000	ibid
35	Reconstruction of Apostole Pavlos Street (section close to Acropolis) as a pedestrian street.	??	8,000,000	ibid
36	Reconstruction of Adrianou Street as a pedestrian street.	NC/??	1,121,000	ibid
37	Reconstruction of Ermou Street (section from Ag. Asomaton to Pireaus Street) as a pedestrian street.	??	3,427,900	ibid
38	Reconstruction of Metropoleos Street	BH	2,201,000	ibid
39	Reconstruction of Pericleous Street	NC	520,000	ibid

	PROJECT title	CATEGORY	BUDGET	AUTHORITY
40	Reconstruction of Colocotroni Street	BH	1,614,063	ibid
41	Reconstruction of pedestrian space of Leka Street and Praxitelous St.	NC	630,120	ibid
42	Reconstruction of Eolou Street	NC	529,932	ibid
43	Reconstruction of pedestrian space and road surface of Appollon St, Venizelou St, Paleologou St, Ipatias St, Patroou St, Pentelis St, Skoufou St, Ipitou St, Voulis St.	NC	635,000	ibid
44	Building facades renovation of buildings in the historical centre.	BH	1,475,000	ibid
45	Building facades renovation in areas surrounding archaeological sites.	BH	1,300,000	ibid
46	Reconstruction of Omonia Square	ID	2,170,000	ibid
47	Reconstruction of Koumoundourou Square	ID	1,848,000	ibid
48	Reconstruction of Syntagma Square	ID	3.,360,000	ibid
49	Reconstruction of Monastiraki Square	ID	2,000,000	ibid
50	Demolishing of advertising panels on the facades of buildings in the historical centre	NC	1,500,00	ibid
51	Reconstruction of Athena Street (section from Lycourgou St to Ermou St).	??	1,770,000	ibid
52	Conservation and renovation of buildings owned by Ministry of Culture	BH	6,000,000	ibid
53	Cultural Park of Keramicos	BH	18,000,000	ibid
54	Building facade renovation (2,000 buildings spread over in 29 streets)	BH/NC	$\frac{1}{2}$ 120,000,000 = 60.000.000	Municipality of Athens
	<b>Total sum</b>			

**Table 2:** The list of projects planned for the preparation of Athens for Olympic Games 2004.

Table interpretations: ID (projects based on innovative design of space),  
BH (projects enhancing built heritahe),  
NC (non-competitive projects – i.e., all other projects concerning new infrastructures,  
tidng and embellishing urban space)