

## **The Area of Metaxourgio in Transition: Dynamics and Actors' Tactics**

### **Introduction**

Metaxourgio gives the impression of being an area in transition. This former labor neighborhood of Athens experiences a new and unprecedented phenomenon: immigrants of every nationality live up the streets and occupy abandoned houses, Chinese merchants make their presence felt, regeneration projects are being designed and implemented, new houses are being built up next to ruins, the largest part of the old worth-saving residential stock is being degraded, the recreation sector invades the area while a big construction company carries out a residential programme quite new for the Greek standards.

Thus, the issue that has to be discussed is whether behind the area's complicated and contradictory image there is evidence for its development. Therefore, the role of the two most important regulators of this evolution process, the state and the private capital, is being examined.

In the first chapter the area's course through the years until nowadays is described. It evolved through three stages: growth, decline and eventually stabilization. The data presented in this unit are based on the bibliography as well as the National Statistical Service of Greece.

In the second chapter the tactics of the state in the area are examined. Thus, the paper focuses on the relevant land use plan and the implementation of an urban design project. With regard to the former, the recorded land uses in 1991 (study of the Municipality of Athens, 1991), on which the land use plan was based, are compared to the ones existing today. The latter were recorded on the basis of a research that took place in March and April 2006, 16 years after the first attempt<sup>†</sup>. With regard to the urban regeneration project, the emphasis is put on the target groups to which it appeals and the project's nature.

The third chapter looks into the tactics of private capital in Metaxourgio. Emphasis is put on big capital activating in the recreation and construction sector and which is also linked to the new model of land and land development. The absence of the old conventional model is due to the fact that it did not fully evolve in the area because of local particularities.

Finally, an effort is made to answer the question set in the paper, with regard to the development potential of Metaxourgio, and to highlight some basic principals of urban planning.

### **Growth – Decline – Stabilization**

The study area, as defined by Article 1 of the Presidential Decree 23.7-19.8.98 (FEK<sup>ii</sup> D/616) "Land uses and special conditions for land development in the area of Metaxourgio" expands from Agiou Konstantinou Str. in the north to Iera Odos in the south and from the railway line Athens – Piraeus in the east to Piraeus Str. in the west. It is adjacent to the Athens historical center in the north, Kolonos in the east, Psiri and Keramikos in the west and Gazi in the south.

The first establishment in the area, which until the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century laid in the outskirts of the city and had a rural character, was the factory of Metaxourgio, that was initially planned to turn to luxurious apartments and to host commercial uses (see also Agrantoni et al., 1995). Gradually the area was incorporated in the capital's productivity zone, setting its basic dichotomy between the "upgraded" urban zones in its eastern part and the folk residence and labor neighborhoods in its western part (Agrantoni et al., 1995:161)

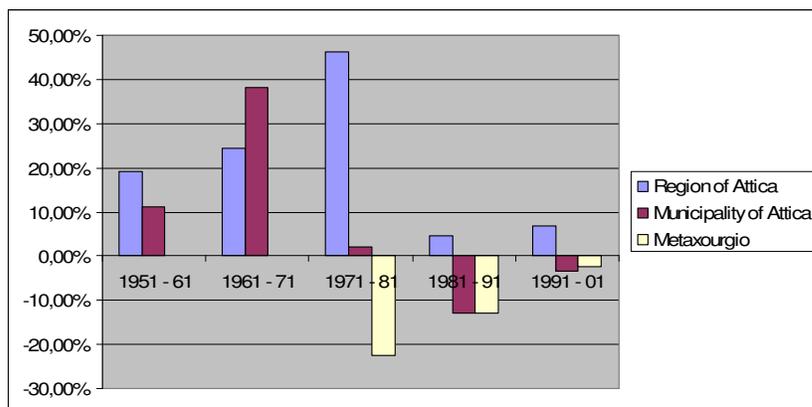
The exponential population growth of Athens (from 44,250 inhabitants in 1875 to 107,251 inhabitants in 1889) and the fact that Metaxourgio started to acquire industrial character, attracted new inhabitants. This trend was not affected by the closure of the factory in 1875. Un-

til the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a folk neighborhood had been created in the area, “with small and humble houses, that housed craftsmen, wage-earners and every type of small businessmen and tradesmen” (Agrantoni et al., 1995:165). The population of Metaxourgio continued to grow during the period after World War I while at the same time the number of productive activities was also increasing, especially coach-building (Municipality of Athens, 1991; Agrantoni et al., 1995).

It was not possible to find population data for the first two decades after World War II, but the intensification of the rate of inland immigration and the exponential population growth in greek cities, especially Athens, lead to the estimation that the population of Metaxourgio would have continued to grow. This trend did not alter the inhabitants' laborite social profile. Old inhabitants' testimonies lead to the conclusion that one's motive to establish in the area was the low rents and the vicinity to productive activities. Thus the inflow of new dwellers was related to specific socio-economic classes.

Since the 1970's, the area faces a population decline due to several factors. Diagram 1 shows the population change of Metaxourgio per decade and between 1971 and 2001 as well as the population change of the Municipality of Athens and the Region of Attica between 1951 and 2001.

**Diagram 1: Population change of Metaxourgio, Municipality of Athens and the Region of Attica per decade, between 1951-2001**



**Source: National Statistical Service, 1951-2001; Municipality of Athens, 1991; Avgerinou-Kolonia, 1996 and self-process**

During the period 1951-1961, the population of the Municipality of Athens grew considerably, although more significant was the growth in the other municipalities of the Region of Attica. This fact could be related to the lack of housing in the historical center (Mantouvalou and Balla, 2004) and the self-accommodation practices in the city periphery. In between 1961-1971 the population of the Municipality of Athens grew faster than that of the rest of the Region, due to the intensification of the “quid pro quo”<sup>iii</sup> process. During this period the population of Metaxourgio probably grew but at a smaller pace, due to the limited application of this process, the reasons of which have to be looked into the area's local particularities such as the small building plots, the narrow roads and the possibility of finding ancient ruins, as Metaxourgio is built on “Dimosio Sima”, the eminent Athenians' ancient cemetery (see also Municipality of Athens, 1991:30).

The next decade, the Region's population growth was mainly concentrated in other municipalities rather than in Athens. The population of Metaxourgio was reduced from 15,500 inhabitants to almost 12,000<sup>iv</sup>. The reason for this shrinkage are related to several factors that aggravate the quality of life such as the lack of building renewal, the adverse, for the area, traffic regulations and the increase of the number of car-shops, depots etc. which had found a privileged area to establish (see also Municipality of Athens, 1991).

The population decline trend of Metaxourgio continued during the 1980's, although the phenomenon was more extended and characterized the Municipality of Athens as a whole. In 1991 Metaxourgio had 10,442 inhabitants (National Statistical Service, 1991). The population decrease, in comparison to 1981, would have been even more significant, if it had not been for the programme for the "willing translocation" of muslims originated from Thrace into the area, who amounted to 2,000 – 2,500 people (Municipality of Athens, 1991). Polish of unknown number also established in the area. Although the study of the Municipality of Athens estimated that they had not come to stay, but they were passing by on their way to the USA, during the present project and one year after the affiliation of Poland with the EU, it has become clear that a considerable number of Polish still lives in the area.

The population decrease in Metaxourgio in the 1980's was due to several factors. First, for reasons already mentioned, a long period of population shrinkage, that had already preceded, created a discouraging image of abandonment. When, during the 1980's, the de-industrialization of Attica<sup>v</sup> was intensified, and the number of the enterprises of the secondary sector was decreased from 3,808 in 1980 to 2,132 in 1993 (Newspaper "To Vima", 4.4.1999a), the diminution of the gravity of a repulsive factor for the area's attractiveness not only was not accompanied by interventions for the amelioration of the quality of life but also led to the reduction of work places and further population decrease. What seems that happened and is certified by the number of unused ground floors in 1990 (see also Diagram 2), is the combination of old and new factors responsible for the decrease of the attractiveness of the area, that influenced adversely the problem of abandonment.

In the 1990's the population of the Municipality of Athens continued to reduce while that of primarily the northern and secondarily the southern suburbs started to grow (see also the research of the Consumers Institute in the Newspaper "Kiriakatiki Eleftherotipia", 7.1.2001). However, the population in Metaxourgio was stabilized, as according to the census of 2001 the area had 10,188 inhabitants (National Statistical Service, 2001). This stabilization is due to the fact that although old Athenians continued to retreat to the suburbs, newcomers established in the area, mainly foreign immigrants but also dwellers of high socio-economic classes. The former chose to come due to the cheap rents and the proximity to "meeting points" for social and economic (i.e. find a job) reasons, such as Omonia Square, as well as to areas around which productive activities are concentrated, such as Metaxourgio itself and Eleonas. The latter, having been orientated to consumption and having had in mind that new infrastructure and regeneration projects would probably be implemented in the area, as it had been expressed by political players during the period before the Olympic Games (see also Newspaper "I Kathimerini", 13.1.2002, 9.3.2002, 4.5.2002, 26. 1.2003), did seek an alternative and differentiated way of life.

Data reveal that in between 1991 and 2001, the population of immigrants in Metaxourgio grew from 898 persons to 3,651, an increase of 306.57% (National Statistical Service, 1991 & 2001). At the same time, the population of those defined as "executives of the public and private sector" increased from 29 to 199 persons (ibid). Their absolute number still remains small, but their increase is high.

The population counterbalance was of great importance for the neighborhood's support at every level (economic, social etc.) If the immigrants had not come, the fate of Metaxourgio would have been the expansion of abandonment and the transformation to a "no man's land". Nonetheless, this stabilization came without the interference of the state and during a period that no strategic guidelines were expressed and no specific actions were set for the area's future.

### **Tactics of the state in Metaxourgio**

Since the mid-1990's, the pressures, with regard to political choices, for the "modernization" of the greek society have been intensified (Mantouvalou and Mpala, 2004). This trend, in relation to the desires and needs created by the undertaking of the organization of the Olympic Games of 2004, brought several changes to the urban policy's goals and priorities. According

to Vaiou, Mantouvalou and Mavridou (2004), "...one can probably speak about a passage from the 'old type' (urban) planning to emblematic (and selective) interventions (from planning to project)..." (Vaiou, Mantouvalou and Mavridou, 2004:16). The "old type" planning was accompanied by all the weaknesses of rational comprehensive planning, on which it was based (see also Friedmann, 1973; Aravantinos, 1997; Evaggelidou, 2004). However, the emblematic interventions have weaknesses, as they focus on the promotion of an area's competitiveness through the promotion of its "image" (see also Pagonis, 2004).

In Metaxourgio, both of these models exist and their weaknesses have been brought out. The former has been expressed through the designation of the area's land use plan and the latter through the implementation of an urban regeneration project.

***Rational comprehensive planning: Presidential Decree 23.7-19.8.1998 (FEK D/616)  
"Land uses and special conditions for land development in Metaxourgio"***

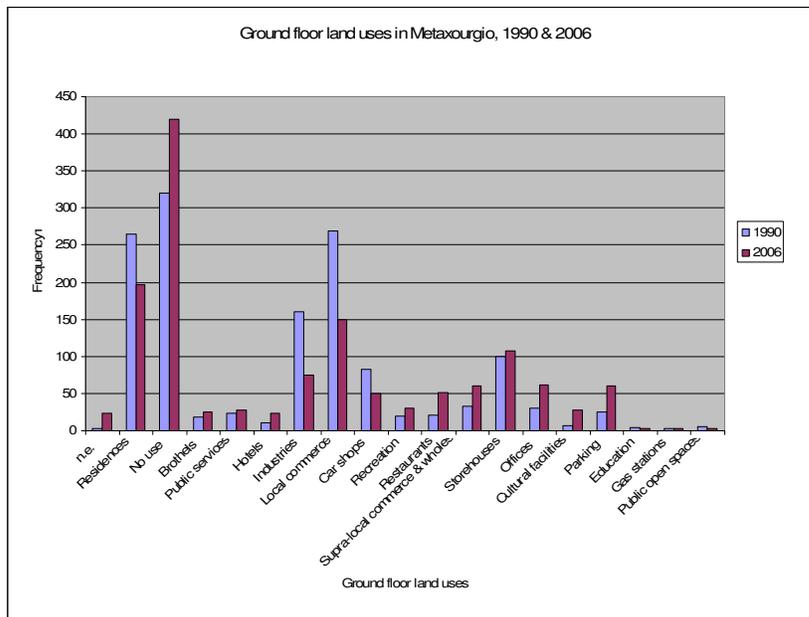
The study carried out in 1991 on behalf of the Municipality of Athens was used as an input to the Presidential Decree 23.7 – 19.8.1998 (FEK D/616) "Land uses and special conditions for land development in Metaxourgio". This Presidential Decree was issued in a period during which the relative Presidential Decrees for Psiri and Gazi had already been issued and were in favor of the development of recreational uses in these areas. The Presidential Decree of Metaxourgio differentiates from the abovementioned as it constrains and in several cases forbids the development of recreational uses, being rather in favor of the development of housing. For instance, on Iera Odos Str., which is the axis that divides Metaxourgio from Gazi, it forces the creation of a strict boundary: in the side of Gazi the establishment of night clubs is allowed, but in the side of Metaxourgio "...land uses related to housing, as defined by article 3, par. 2A of the Presidential Decree of the 23.7.8.1985 (FEK D/391)...." are only allowed (Article 2).

An important point of the Presidential Decree is that being in line with the Presidential Decree 84/84, banishes from Metaxourgio the manufacturing activities. More specifically, it allows the establishment of occupational installations of low nuisance "...if all their facilities are covered and they do not create any environmental nuisance..." (Article 2). At the same time, it is noted that "...the land uses specified for the area according to the Presidential Decree 84/84 (FEK A/33) are allowed to establish if the relative activities are up to 15 HP and 50 KW..." (Article 2). However, car-shops and motorcycle-shops of every type and even bicycle-shops are exempted<sup>vi</sup>. In 1990 these uses almost prevailed in the area (see Diagram 2).

Moreover, the Presidential Decree provided for the detachment of the non-allowed activities within a 36-month period starting from the date it was issued. This deadline being expired, the enterprises considered to provoke a nuisance were forced to close. Until March 2002 decisions for the closure of 59 enterprises in the car industry had been issued. This number is considered to be rather high, taking into consideration that according to representatives of the Small and Medium Sized Industries Chamber, the General Association of Professional Manufacturers and Traders of Greece and the United Federation of Small Automobile, Machinery and Motorcycle Repairers, 300 occupational installations of every type were operating in the area (see also Newspaper "I Kathimerini", 22.3.2002). In addition, the Presidential Decree did not provide for relocation areas or reimbursement for the owners (ibid.), leaving them and the employees hanging in doubt.

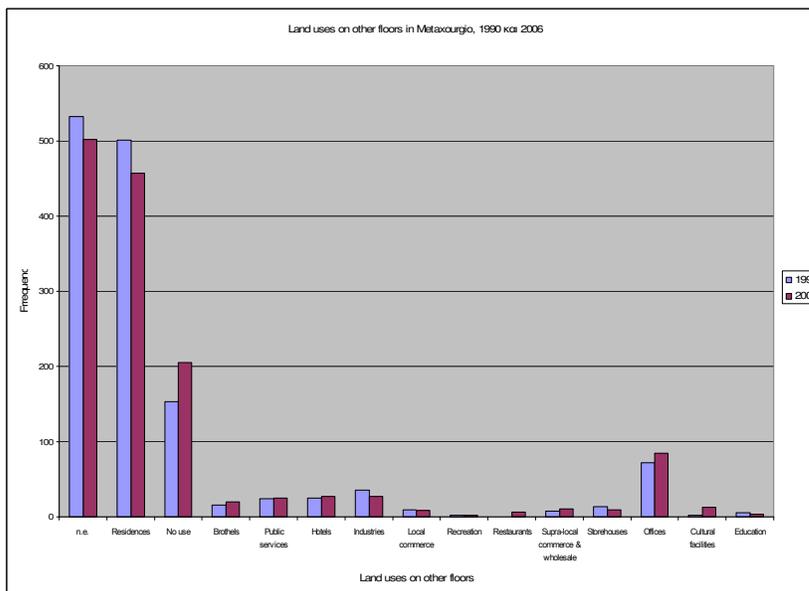
Finally, eight years after the issue of the Presidential Decree, the situation in Metaxourgio, with regard to land uses, is the one shown in Diagrams 2 and 3.

**Diagram 2: Ground floor land uses in Metaxourgio in 1990 and 2006.**



Source: Municipality of Athens, 1991; Research in the area, 2006

**Diagram 3: Land uses on the other floors in Metaxourgio in 1990 and 2006**



Source: Municipality of Athens, 1991; Research in the area, 2006

As it can be seen from Diagram 2, during the period between 1990 and 2006, the frequency of appearance of non-used ground floors has been increased. At the same time, housing and manufacturing activities, including car-shops as well as local retail commerce have been decreased. In general, this fact shows the de-stabilization of a system that was gradually turning to stabilization a decade ago.

On the other hand, the frequency of appearance of recreational uses, restaurants and similar establishments, commerce and wholesale trade, depots, offices, cultural spaces and parking has been increased. This increase in land uses such as recreation, restaurants, offices and culture is related to qualitative changes. The old recreational uses were coffee shops while

the recent ones are bars and clubs. Accordingly, in the past there were small taverns and kiosks while the recent establishments are postmodern ethnic restaurants that appeal in general to higher socio-economic classes and do not attract the largest part of the local population. It is interesting to note that parking areas have been multiplied, a fact that demonstrates the supralocal character of the new land uses and at the same time the establishment of new dwellers of a higher economic status with more than one and more expensive cars and the economic resources to buy land or parking lots.

The conclusions emerging from Diagram 3 are more or less the same. However, emphasis must be put on the ground floor land uses for two reasons: first, because of the large number of one-storey buildings, meant for housing or offices, as well as empty plots that were encountered during the research (532 or 38,08% of the total in 1990 and 502 or 35,93% of the total in 2006); second, because only the predominant use of all the other floors together was recorded in 1990, which affected of course the methodological choices during the research in 2006. A more detailed record per storey would probably bring out interesting clues about the changes in the area, such as the transformation of the upper floors of industrial buildings to offices and the establishment of higher socio-economic classes on their penthouses, which have a view to the Acropolis.

The provisions of the Presidential Decree, although they were meant to ameliorate the quality of life in Metaxourgio and to prevent the dwellers from leaving the area, did not fulfill their goal. Under the appearance of "environmental purification", the Presidential Decree led to further abandonment and change of the area's social structure, through the "invasion" of new land uses which, due to their character and the entailing increased use of car, are not more environmental friendly, even in strictly environmental terms. Moreover, the study of the Municipality of Athens (1991) which had been carried out seven years before the issue of the Presidential Decree, meant to retain the old dwellers, facing all migrants as *passers-by* (i.e. non permanent dwellers) who should not be taken into consideration in the planning process (see also Municipality of Athens, 1991). The establishment of a large number of migrants, in the meantime, for reasons that were repulsive for old dwellers but created favorable conditions for them (cheap rents, easy access to work), creates new needs that are not in line with what has been planned up to now.

### **Selective interventions: Avdi and Dourouti Squares**

The regeneration of the adjacent squares Avdi and Dourouti had been planned by the Municipality of Athens during the period before the Olympic Games. The relevant departments of the Municipality assumed the responsibility to carry out all the stages of the study and the construction. The project began in 2000 and was completed in 2002 (see also CCCB, [www.urban.cccb.org], accessed on 10.6.2006). At the same time, the Unification of Archaeological Sites of Athens Ltd dealt with the refurbishment (i.e. painting) of the forefront of the buildings around the two squares.

Into the dossier that was sent in with the application to an international architectural contest<sup>vii</sup>, it is stressed that the project was an answer to the constant demands of the Metaxourgio Neighborhood Committee for the provision of equipment in the empty spaces (ibid.). However, a more careful reading of the texts reveals that the Municipality of Athens has a different point of view for the target groups that those interventions that will "revive" the "downgraded" 3<sup>rd</sup> Municipal Apartment – to which the largest part of Metaxourgio belongs – will appeal to. In the texts it is noted that "improvements" as the ones made in Gazi, have led to the increase of visitors in the area and in general "...to the amelioration of the area's image in the citizens' eyes..." (ibid.). Thus, with regard to target-groups, a dichotomy between visitors and dwellers is being brought out, the former being a stronger pole than the latter. Several marginalized groups also form part of the second pole, such as illegal migrants, who are thought to be generally dangerous (ibid.). In this framework, the dwellers and illegal migrants are placed in what Pagonis (2004) call the "rear side of the city" (Pagonis, 2004), along with their history, their practices and their problems.

This fact affects the nature of the project. First, the intervention is limited to the “aesthetic upgrading” of the squares, with the imposition of a top-down design and style. In this framework, issues, such as the amelioration of the conditions of housing for the migrants, who were living in the abandoned buildings around the squares, were not examined, while in order to make an impression, the width of the actual public space was restricted (e.g. enclosed green space). In addition, the intervention did not take into account the history of the space, which leads to the decomposition of the area's historical and cultural continuity (see also Knox, 2005) and entails the emergence of several objective problems, that are difficult to be solved. More specifically, this area was not meant to be used as a public space, as until the 1990's, it hosted laborers' houses. As a result, some buildings' forefronts look into the other side, “denying” their linkage to the squares, while the position and layout of roads and buildings do not encourage the pedestrians' movement through the squares. The decision made by the Municipality of Athens to restore the factory of Metaxourgio, in order to accommodate the Municipal Art Center, is headed towards the same direction of decomposition of the area's continuity (see also GEK, [www.gek.gr], accessed on 25.5.2006).

The project does not upgrade dwellers' life, as it does not attract them. In this framework, it does not serve even the most fundamental principals of public urban spaces such as the reproduction of the dwellers' social relations and their appeasement. To the point that the critical mass of land uses has not been created yet<sup>viii</sup>, a fact that would assure the attraction - at least - of visitors, the squares remain empty for the largest part of the day.

## **Tactics of the real estate market in Metaxourgio**

The model of land and land development followed after World War II in Greece has been characterized, unlike the rest of Europe, by the important role of small proprietorship, the relative autonomy from the big capital and the reduced participation of social capital in the several fields of state policy, in a framework of consolidated relations between the state and the economic and social environment (Mantouvalou and Mpalla, 2004; Delladetsimas, 2004). Since the end of the 1990's, under the general command for modernization and the needs created by the complexity and size of the constructive projects funded by the Community Support Frameworks or in view of the Olympic Games, significant changes took part in the scale and operation of enterprises of the construction sector, in the legislative framework of the real estate market and the role of the state and local self-governance in relation to real estate development (Mantouvalou and Mpala, 2004). These changes, quite innovative for the greek standards, brought a new model of land and land development, which starting from the real estate management of properties meant to host commercial or professional uses, has gradually stepped into the concentration of unified estates, the finding of institutional investors and the construction and final sale or let of the estate (see also Delladetsimas, 2004:54-57).

In Metaxourgio, the conventional model of land and land development was not fully applied, due to local particularities already mentioned in the first chapter. The new model is expressed through the operation of big night clubs. An important twist that probably marks the expansion of the big capital's activities beyond the estates that are meant to host commercial or professional uses, is the construction of a block of luxurious apartments in the center of Metaxourgio.

### **Night clubs in Metaxourgio**

The athenian night life is very popular and is advertised in every tourist guide of the city. However, the operation of the night clubs is often illegal and improper<sup>ix</sup>. This status fosters an attitude of disregard to the built environment and the dwellers.

Two of the most important recreation poles of Athens are situated in Psiri and Gazi, areas that are adjacent to Metaxourgio. The increased demand and the “saturation”, as many peo-

ple define it, in these areas with regard to night clubs (see also Newspaper "I Kathimerini", 4.12.2004) lead gradually to their expansion in neighboring areas.

In Metaxourgio, the development of night clubs is specifically intense in the parts located either on the axes of Piraeus Str. and Iera Odos Str. or near them. A characteristic example is the plot surrounded by Keramikos Str., Mikalis Str., Agisilaou Str. and Iera Odos Str., where the well known night clubs "VOX" and "Iera Odos" are situated.

Both of them operate in a zone where residences were only allowed to be developed, according to the Presidential Decree 23.7 – 19.8.1998 (FEK D/616). The former operates without a license and has been already forced to close once in the past – of course always in the end of the winter season – while the latter operates according to a license issued on the basis of a special ministerial decision, signed by the Secretary General of the Ministry of the Environment, Spatial Planning and Public Works in 1997 (Newspaper "Eleftherotipia", 2.4.2006).

In addition, both of them operate in former multi-storey industrial buildings, i.e. buildings that are closely related to the area's historical character. The lack of a license for "VOX" means that any alteration in its morphological elements is illegal. As far as the night club "Iera Odos" is concerned, whose metal roof is being underpinned and the inside layout is being redesigned (license no 196/2006), the building has been expanded beyond Megaron Str. (compared to the block's layout of 1990) and has been unified with two smaller industrial buildings on the other side of the road. Therefore, there is a total change in the morphology of the building and the initial plot.

The number of abandoned buildings in Metaxourgio and the expansion trend of more profitable uses, such as recreation and culture, within a "loose" framework with regard to land uses and conditions of land development, may lead to "museumification" and "eradication" – to use Ashworth's terms – of built heritage (Ashworth, 1988 in Gospodini, 2002). As far as the preservation of the area's social structure is concerned, the statement of the owner of "VOX" and "Iera Odos" is very illustrative, as he says that "cultural centers" (as he calls the night clubs) are factors that lead to the "upgrading" of the areas where they establish. More specifically, he says in an interview: "When we first came here with Alkistis, there were only brothels and...Kurds. While today the area is full of nice restaurants and cultural centers" (Newspaper "Eleftherotipia", 19.10.2004).

### **Block of luxurious houses in Metaxourgio**

During the end of the 1990's a big construction company which, in the framework of the restructuring of the building sector and its commissure with the financial sector, has expanded its activities in the real estate market, bought two separate plots in the block that lies between Millerou Str., Leonidou Str. Marathonos Str. and Germanikou Str. The depots that used to be there were demolished and the plot was rented to someone who uses it as parking, renting parking lots\*. In the spring of 2006, the company proclaimed an international architectural contest for the design of a block of houses and shops in Metaxourgio. The budget of the project amounts to 5,000,000 Euro.

The project is of great importance, as it marks the evolvement of the big construction capital in order to encompass activities relevant to housing. At the same time forebodes a series of changes in the area, with regard to the new social character it promotes. According to the call for tenders "...the designers have to respond to the need to affiliate the block with the area's character as it is now or as it will turn to be in the future..." (GEK, [www.gek.gr], accessed on 25.5.2006), that is more or less the same with the character of Psiri and Gazi, two neighboring areas that could be characterized being already "refined" (Delladetsimas, 2004:53). In this framework the call for tenders defines the identity of the block's dweller, who will be a person creative and active, probably an artist seeking an alternative way of lodging in the center of Athens, closely related to novelty and quality (GEK, [www.gek.gr], accessed on 25.5.2006).

With regard to the economic activities developing in the area, the construction of the block of houses will indeed displace the transit center of Chinese shops (selling shoes and garments) that have appeared during the last years on Keramikou Str. The commercial shops that are planned to be constructed on Millerou Str. and Leonidou Str., given their place and their estimated value (either for sale or for rent<sup>xi</sup>), will probably attract land uses that are relative to the new character the company hopes the area will acquire.

Moreover, according to the call for tenders, the "...unimaginative design proposals..." are being discouraged in favor of a "...proposal of refreshing types of housing of a particular character..." (ibid.). However, this guidance, which is quite vague and general, may lead to the defeaturing of the area's architectural character, taking into consideration that except from the obligation to conserve a "listed" forefront, the building will be constructed in line to the provisions of the General Construction Code. This element has to be considered in relation to the position of the building in the center of the area, its vicinity to the old factory of Metaxourgio as well as its big size.

An observation related to the significance of the project that refers to the change of activities of the big capital and the changes that it may bring to the area, relates to its pilot character. As noted, the project "...is a chance for the conception of a new strategy and a new design proposal for the incorporation of big housing units in the historical center of a modern city..." (ibid.). The project's successful implementation, which based on the experience gained by the implementation of smaller projects in Psiri and Gazi, is more than possible, will lead to the increase of the big capital's interest for the area as well as the promotion of similar solutions.

### **Conclusions and suggestions**

Metaxourgio went through several evolution phases. Decline and population decrease of the 1970's and 1980's was followed by stabilization during the 1990's, which was due to the establishment of immigrants. However, at the same time, high socio-economic classes appear in the area during this decade, although the number of such dwellers remains restricted in absolute figures.

The policies followed by the state were related to the implementation of a land use plan and to selective regeneration interventions. The land use plan reflects the weakness to understand the city's mechanisms and to react in time to the state of fluidity. Thus, it rather intensified than dealt with the area's problems and contributed to the destabilization of a system that seemed to be heading towards stabilization after all. The selective interventions deal only with the area's "image", without actually solving substantial issues and reproduce a main aesthetic style, which interrupts the area's historical and cultural continuity.

The big capital is also headed towards this direction, that Ashworth calls "museumification" and "eradication" (Ashworth, 1988 in Gospodini, 2002), activating in the sectors of recreation and construction and making a dynamic appearance in the area.

Therefore, the area's future seems to be already specified. However, according to Vaiou and Hatzimichalis (1997) "...the assignment of one and only identity, i.e. "in" and "out" (or "we" and "them") may lead to a series of special cases and may reproduce (geographical and social) exclusions..." (Vaiou and Hatzimichalis, 1997:27, 28).

Thus, the urban planning principals that have to be taken into consideration in the future are the following:

- The safeguarding of the area's social multiplicity, diversity and heterogeneity of values and way of life of the several groups of dwellers.
- The simultaneous strengthening of cohesion and the society's ability to act in an organized way, i.e. what Anderson calls "sympatry" (see in Lapkin, 1982).

Chrysostomos Makrakis – Karachalios, The Area of Metaxourgio in Transition; Dynamics and Actors' Tactics, 42<sup>nd</sup> ISoCaRP Congress 2006

- The provision of guarantees that every solution will be socially just, i.e. that it will incorporate the redistributive dimension for what we call “end products” and at the same time that it will facilitate the inhabitants' participation in the planning process, on equal terms.
- Urban design must go beyond “surface appearance” to foster routine encounters, the “... sense of belonging, affection, hospitality, vitality and historical and cultural continuity ...” (Montgomery, 1998 in Knox, 2005: 2).

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### Statistical Data

Statistical Data were provided by the National Statistical Service of Greece

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<sup>i</sup> Land uses were recorded a year before the completion of the study.

<sup>ii</sup> FEK is the greek abbreviation for the Newspaper of the Government.

<sup>iii</sup> The "quid pro quo" process is prevalent in Greece as a method for land development. The land-owner co-operates with a contractor, who assumes the responsibility to develop it and pays the owner by giving him/her a percentage of the built area.

<sup>iv</sup> The estimation of the population of Metaxourgio for 1981 is based on the elaboration of data provided by the National Statistical Service, in the framework of a study of the Municipality of Athens (1991).

<sup>v</sup> The reasons for this decrease is the crisis in manufacture in general and the related branches and the application of the Presidential Decree 84/84 (FEK A/33) which forbade the establishment of any industry and depot within the boundaries of the mainland of the Prefecture of Athens and the islands of Salamina and Egina (Article 2), as well as the expansion of the existing ones (Article 4), in appearance of environmental purification and the population decrease of Attica (see also Newspaper "To Vima", 4.4.1999a and 4.4.1999b, as well as the goals set in the Athens Master Plan in Law 1515/1985).

<sup>vi</sup> In some areas within Metaxourgio the development of these land uses has been allowed, a characteristic example being Konstantinoupoleos Str., where a significant number of them used and continues to exist, although they are now fewer in comparison to 1990. However, these exceptions do not alter the general spirit of the Presidential Decree.

<sup>vii</sup> European Prize for Urban Public Space (see also CCCB, [www.urban.cccb.org], accessed on 10.6.2006).

<sup>viii</sup> According to the research, most of the buildings around the squares are still empty.

<sup>ix</sup> During controls made by the Directorate of Health of the Prefecture of Athens in 40 night clubs between 25 November 2005 and 23 January 2006, 2 were operating without a license, 5 had more seats

than the number set in the relevant legislation and in 4 the land use was different than the one stated in their license (Newspaper "Eleftherotipia, 18.2.2006).

<sup>x</sup> From a conversation with a construction company's executive, 20.6.2006

<sup>xi</sup> This value has not been finalized yet as it will depend on the construction cost and the prices of similar land uses in the area until the completion of the project (from a discussion with a company's executive, 20.6.2006).