

Seventh International Conference on Urban History

Session

Industrial and Modern (Round Table)

Title

Extroversion and urban illustration: planning and urban design in Athens urban growth

Introducing text

In contrast with rational planning of industrial cities, in semi-periphery a different social contract defined the urban contexture by the predominance of spatial self-regulation, while planning was materialized by illustrating forms, mainly on the city centres.

During the post-industrial era, the decline of productive role of cities, leads worldwide to the recession of urban rationalisation, for a strategic planning, focused in a high degree to the urban image mainly of centres, seeking to increase the attractiveness of cities towards the global post-industrial economy.

This global post-industrial urban experience and its approaches helps to a wider understanding of the nature of illustrating urban design of Athens: the tracking across the time of its urban evolution, confirms not only its semi-peripheral contexture, but also that the strategic use of illustrating urban design by the state and the capital, for the increase of attractiveness of cities to the international economy is not a recent practice.

As appears in the attached table, the illustrating urban design in Athens is linked exclusively with the times of economic extroversion that depend from the rising phases of international economy, seeking to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of capital-city in the international market

As the “fund capital” of Greek independence, was the classical heritage, the election of Athens as capital-city was the first step of its planning; classical heritage was the major element, of its urban design which illustrated the national ideology, through the dipole of “classical Greece and European progress”. Thus modern Athens became since then the “common place” between Greece and Western world and this property was permanently embedded to the image of its city core.

So, every time that the rise of international economy creates in Greece expectations of profits, rekindling the economic extroversion, then the illustrating urban design in Athens, achieved by impressive effectiveness by the state and ruling class, undertakes the mission to feature this ideological dipole with a dual target:

- To the abroad, expressing the bonds and the commitment of country to the international economy, creating simultaneously the conditions of attracting investments and its representatives or carriers, seeking for the Greek capital-city, a role in the international economy.
- To Greece, combining different interrelated ideological, legitimising and developmental objectives, accordingly time and place: (a)the proliferation of the predominant national ideology (b)the propagation of the social values of dominant socio-economic components (c)the increase of the Athens' attractiveness for working people, attempting a local illustration and condensation of progress and (d)the direction of development in special urban areas.

The essential similarities of post-industrial planning in Athens -which appears inspired by recent international approaches and practices- with comparative previous experiences of the city, shows that illustrating urban design, keeps to sub serve the same historical needs of economic extroversion, leading as well to a presumption: foretime's modern narratives were promised the convergence of planning of semi-peripheral countries with the rational planning of developed world, but maybe finally the direction of this convergence is in the opposite sense.

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	<i>19th century</i>	<i>End of 19th century to 1922</i>	<i>1922-1940</i>	<i>1950-1965</i>	<i>1965-1990</i>	<i>1990-Today</i>
<i>International circumstances</i>	Rise of international economy.	Rise of nationalisms. Narrowing of the international markets.	International economic crisis Closed national economic systems	Rise of international economy.	International economic crisis Deindustrialisation. Transition to post-industrial era.	Rise of international economy (post-industrial era-globalisation). Collapse of Eastern Coalition.
<i>Economic orientation</i>	Extroversion	Introversion	Introversion	Extroversion	Introversion	Extroversion
<i>National circumstances</i>	National independence and construction of the Greek nation-state.	Extensive wars in the Balkans and Asia Minor.	Defeat in Asia Minor. Flood of Refugees in Greece. Social polarisation.	Post-war ruined and divided Greece in the Western Coalition.	1965-Political instability 1967-Dictatorship 1974-Democratisation 1981-Social democracy	New geopolitical frame offering to Greece political and economic opportunities.
<i>National ideology</i>	Extrovert: "Classical Greece and European progress".	Introvert: The "Great Greece of the five seas and the two continents", as a European power. (Crocking of previous extrovert ideology).	Introvert: Lack of national causes and visions. National reconstitution. (Destruction of the dream of the "Great Greece").	Extrovert: Commitment to the West. Placing the overall identity of Greek people in the West ("Classical Greece and Western progress").	Introvert: Social welfare. State of providence. Decentralisation. Regional development. State economy.	Extrovert: Classical Greece and global progress (modernisation, European convergence, globalisation, multi-trans-culturalism).
<i>State targets</i>	Imposition to the country and projection abroad the national ideology. Need for a capital-city epitomizing the national ideology ("Classical Greece and European progress").	Extension by wars to become a European power. Need to promote the vision of the "Great Greece".	Defence of middle and upper classes by isolating, controlling and incorporating the flood of popular classes.	Need to secure political stability by rapid economic growth, (attracting investments and tourism from abroad and Greek workers). Need for a pole promoting Greece in the West, the West in Greece and the unity of the two.	1965-Need for decentralisation to secure political stability. 1974- Gradual undertaking the role of capital to secure political stability after international economic crisis (state economy).	Regional leading role opportunities (South-eastern Europe and Mediterranean). Need for a global city.
<i>Bourgeoisie</i>	Greek Diaspora, serving the European trade in the Eastern Mediterranean. Need for a national seat, providing national identity, settlement, security and prospects for future extension.	National Bourgeoisie forced to be turned in Greece. Benefits from war economy and great expectations for profits from the territorial extensions.	National Bourgeoisie investing necessarily in Greece turned to Athens where the infrastructures and work force. Need for low and order.	Bourgeoisie, seeking to benefit from international investments. Need for a pole combining the advantages of West and of country for the foreign capital, tourism and Greek workers who then could immigrate abroad.	1965-Need for decentralisation to low the cost of production. 1974-Gradual withdraw of capital after international economic crisis and deindustrialisation.	Expectations for profits from collaboration with global capital and extension to international markets. Land speculation from constructions and urban development in Athens. Need for a global city.
<i>Planning and Urban design</i>	Illustrating urban design to create neoclassical Athens planned by the state, financed by the Diaspora, as a common place between Greece and West. Transformation of Athens to a city serving the international economy. Lack of planning.	Lack of illustrating design. Barren illustrating projects to transform Athens to a great European capital serving the dream of the "Great Greece". Lack of rational planning	Lack of illustrating design. Failure of planning for rational sheltering of refugees.	Illustrating urban design to restore Athens' role as common place between Greece and the West, promoting the "classical heritage and modern progress". Barren planning projects. Lack of rational planning.	Lack of illustrating design. Promotion of planning as a mean of social transformation. Failure of contradictory rational planning programme (decentralisation vs. Athens' rationalisation).	Informal abandon of rational planning programme. Illustrating urban design restoring Athens' role as common place between Greece and the world, promoting the "classical heritage and global progress" (Olympics-Archaeological sites).
<i>Urban growth</i>	Popular layers mainly in periphery of country. Lack of demands for rational urban reforms. Self-regulation, speculation on periphery.	Instable, floating and feeble proletariat incapable to struggle for urban reforms. Total control of the city by the bourgeoisie and middle layers. Heavy speculation on the workers' housing.	Flood of refugees and internal immigrants without choice of immigration abroad. Protection of middle and upper classes housing space. Spatial isolation of refugees-internal immigrants, by promotion of self-housing. Urban problems accumulation.	Promotion of self-regulation, self-financing and self-construction to secure immigrants' attraction and socio-political incorporation. Flood of internal immigrants. Worsening of urban problems and economic dysfunctions.	Self-regulation, illegal and marginal construction, clientalism and land market speculation, worsening the urban crisis. Deindustrialisation, demographic-economic slowdown in Athens.	Land speculation, upgrading of advantageous areas of city, abandon of downgraded urban areas and populations, increase of socio-spatial discrepancies and segregation.

