

# Editorial: Ekistics-related Research in Greece: Planning Strategies / Policies and Politics

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The present issue is the third and final part of a series of special issues under the theme 'Ekistics-Related Research in Greece'. Having looked critically at the legacy of C.A. Doxiadis and ekistics, the science of human settlements (Part 1), and examined planning principles in discussions related to ekistics and other theories, such as Space Syntax and Complexity (Part 2), it is timely to turn our attention to the application of theory, which often depends on the problems and solutions related to the implantation of plans, designs and policies concerning human settlements. Accordingly, the present issue focuses on Planning Strategies / Policies and Politics (Part 3) and examines problematic implementation outcomes and lesser studied concerns. The issue includes scholarly articles by academics and independent researchers, in addition to analyses by government officials and experts operating locally in Greece and transnationally from locations in the US, the UK, and the EU. The contributors bring to the fore controversies over the design outcomes of planning and urbanism, as well as environmental issues, often addressing evident policy failures caused by either governmental or other factors which are commonly disregarded or insufficiently discussed. The analyses presented identify the key challenges that must be addressed to overcome such issues and examine a range of propositions and strategies conceived to provide feasible solutions for a sustainable human habitat.

The current three special issues are dedicated to my dear godfather Panayis Psomopoulos, an architect and planner who collaborated closely with C. A. Doxiadis. Panayis' continuous efforts and total commitment to the continuation of the ekistics legacy kept the ekistics flame alive and growing worldwide for almost 35 years. It is to him that we owe the predecessor of the present *Ekistics and the New Habitat*, the previous journal *Ekistics: the science of the problems of human settlements*, which reflected the preservation and further development of his lifelong work and of C. A. Doxiadis' legacy.

The present special issue begins with Alexios Antypas' examination of the structural limitations currently hindering the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and key developments in its history. Antypas (2022) argues that more suitable forums for negotiation and improved arrangements for governing climate change mitigation should be found. This is followed by Vassilis Evmolpidis's contribution that introduces the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF), an initiative of the European Union (EU) for the economic and social development of the six Western Balkan countries which are not already EU members. Evmolpidis (2022) analyses the population and urbanization patterns of these six Western Balkan countries and finds that rail transportation - through the implementation of high-speed lines - is playing a crucial role in the creation of a new megalopolis in south-eastern Europe. Hercules Moskoff and Vasileios Fragkos' contribution focuses on the role and structure of the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection (GSVIP) which was established in Greece for the protection of unaccompanied minors entering the country. Moskoff and Fragkos (2022) emphasize the urgent need to face numerous challenges in this area and calls for immediate action. The study demonstrates that the evolution and sustained improvement of the structures and strategies of all agencies involved is required to ensure the rescue of child-victims of war or migration who are not only in danger but also highly susceptible to human trafficking. In their contribution, Panagiotis Passas, Georgia Karageorgou and Nikos Michos assess the growing prominence of participatory approaches in urban planning. While acknowledging their potential for democratic decision-making, Passas et al (2002) indicate the need to navigate self-selection biases and other participation-related issues. Proposed solutions, including steering committees with external experts, inclusive meetings, and user-friendly information access are also discussed. Hellenist Gonda Van Steen then focuses readers' attention on the brothers Constantinos and Spyridon Doxiadis, whose vision and praxis reveals how their powerful teams expanded the meaning of "physical planning", thereby shaping an era, a landscape, and a demographic. Van Steen (2002) focuses on a long-overlooked but influential family and demonstrates how it was also a potent vector of design, and an influential factor in policies linked to social and biological engineering.

Finally, Panos Dragonas provides a review of *Builders, housewives and the construction of modern Athens* (3rd (revised) edition 2022) by Ioanna Theocharopoulou. The book, with a Forward by Kenneth Frampton, emphasizes the role of the protagonists at the center of the "repressed history" of modern Athens; those who have been consistently blamed, by both architectural historians and the public, for producing 'ugly' buildings and being the reason for all urban ills. Theocharopoulou offers a fresh perspective on this non-planned intervention and the merits of the *polykatoikia*, arguing that they constitute a uniquely modern manifestation of urban development, and a spontaneous evolution of society.

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