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Municipal Housing Policies for Newcomers in Greece

A Multi-Level Perspective on Thessaloniki's REACT Program

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Abstract

Access to adequate housing is a fundamental prerequisite for a good and self-determined life. A country's housing policy is co-determined by several policy levels. International and European documents provide a framework that defines adequate housing and enshrines it as a right. The concrete design of housing policy, however, lies within the competence of the nation states. In this thesis, urban housing policies are examined against the background of the increasingly important role of cities.

This paper deals with the development of urban housing policy in Thessaloniki, Greece since 2015, the year of increased transnational migration. The urban programme REACT (Refugee Assistance Collaboration Thessaloniki) was launched to provide adequate housing for refugee newcomers moving to other EU countries within the framework of the Relocation Programme of the European Union. Though often newcomers remained in Greece for various reasons, and some may end up living in camps, sometimes under inhumane and socially isolated conditions.

REACT is a housing programme co-initiated by municipalities in the Thessaloniki region. It focuses on organising housing for refugee families. However, the programme is also interesting from a housing policy point of view. The only Greek organisation for the construction of social housing (OEK) has been closed since Greece's financial and debt crises. The housing market is characterised by high rates of ownership versus rentals, little new construction and vacancy. Against this background, the establishment of REACT leads to the conclusion that the municipal level might already represent a new way of implementing housing policy.

As a model for a new municipal housing policy, however, REACT differs from the programmes in place other European cities (e.g. Barcelona) in its less participatory approach. Furthermore, the question of sustainability arises, because, despite institutionalization efforts, as well as regional cooperation and a consolidation or transformation of old governance structures, the question remains as to whether REACT can provide long-term guidance for a restructuring of Greek's housing system.

Kurzfassung

Der Zugang zu angemessenem Wohnraum ist eine Grundvoraussetzung für ein gutes und selbstbestimmtes Leben. Die Wohnungspolitik eines Landes wird auf mehreren politischen Ebenen mitbestimmt. Internationale und europäische Dokumente bieten einen Rahmen, der angemessenen Wohnraum definiert und als Recht verankert. Die konkrete Ausgestaltung der Wohnungspolitik liegt jedoch in der Kompetenz der Nationalstaaten. In dieser Arbeit werden städtische Wohnungspolitiken vor dem Hintergrund der immer wichtiger werdenden Rolle der Städte untersucht.

Diese Arbeit befasst sich mit der Entwicklung der städtischen Wohnungspolitik in Thessaloniki, Griechenland seit 2015, dem Jahr zunehmender transnationaler Migration. Das Programm REACT (Refugee Assistance Collaboration Thessaloniki) wurde gestartet, um im Rahmen der Relocation Strategie der Europäischen Union (EU) adäquate Unterkünfte für Geflüchtete bereitzustellen, die in anderen EU-Länder um Asyl ansuchen. Aus verschiedenen Gründen bleiben viele Geflüchtete jedoch in Griechenland. Viele von ihnen leben in Lagern am Stadtrand oder auf Inseln, manchmal unter unmenschlichen und sozial isolierten Bedingungen.

REACT ist ein Programm, das von Gemeinden in der Region Thessaloniki gemeinsam initiiert wurde. Der Schwerpunkt liegt auf der Bereitstellung von Wohnungen für Gefüchtete und ihre Familien. Das Programm ist aber auch wohnungspolitisch interessant. Die einzige griechische Organisation für den Bau von Sozialwohnungen (OEK) ist seit der vergangenen Finanz- und Schuldenkrisen geschlossen. Der Wohnungsmarkt ist gekennzeichnet durch hohe Eigentumsraten, wenig Neubau und Leerstand. Vor diesem Hintergrund besteht Grund zur Annahme, dass REACT als Wohnunsprogramm mehr sein könnte, als eine anlassgegebene Strategie auf Gemeindeebene.

Als Modell für eine neue kommunale Wohnungspolitik unterscheidet sich REACT jedoch von den Programmen anderer europäischer Städte (z.B. Barcelona) durch einen weniger partizipativen Ansatz. Darüber hinaus stellt sich die Frage nach der Nachhaltigkeit, denn trotz Institutionalisierungsbemühungen sowie regionaler Zusammenarbeit und einer Konsolidierung oder Transformation alter Governance-Strukturen stellt sich die Frage, ob REACT eine langfristige Orientierung für eine Umstrukturierung des griechischen Wohnungswesens geben kann.

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Definitions

Refugees, migrants and newcomers

Following the example of the UN Refugee Agency (2018), this work makes a distinction between refugees and migrants. This distinction must be maintained in order to prevent the often-politically motivated confusion of individuals' reasons for movement (i.e. refugees not being legitimate refugees, according to populist message control mechanisms) (ibid.)

It is also important to recognize that both refugees and migrants shape their new environment(s), and thus should not be reduced to their status or migratory history. To indicate that a person or a group of people has moved to another place and has lived there for a short period of time (e.g. up to five years), the word newcomer(s) can be used. Both refugees and migrants can be newcomers ("τι είναι μετανάστης", 2018).

To further differentiate between the statuses of refugee newcomers, the European Observatory on Homelessness (Baptista et al., 2016) and the UN Refugee Agency ("Internally Displaced People", 2018) propose the following distinctions:

1. Asylum applicants are those who have asked for asylum and are waiting to be assessed
2. Refugees are people who have been granted international protection, including refugee status and subsidiary protection (Baptista et al., 2016, p. 7)
3. People whose asylum application has been refused
4. Internally displaced people (IDPs) are individuals who:

> *stay within their own country and remain under the protection of its government, even if that government is the reason for their displacement. They often move to areas where it is difficult for us to deliver humanitarian assistance and as a result, these people are among the most vulnerable in the world ("Internally Displaced People", 2018).*

All four groups mentioned above can be considered newcomers and will be referred to in this work as either newcomers or refugee newcomers based on the specific personal and legal histories of their movements. Other forms of movement that are not based on the UN Geneva Convention will be referred to and explained as necessary (e.g. migrants or migrant newcomers).

Homelessness, shelter and accommodation

For an understanding of this interdisciplinary work, it is crucial to consider fundamental terminological differences in the relevant subject areas. For refugee newcomers arriving in another country, the question of finding shelter - that is, avoiding homelessness - is a central concern. According to AHURI (2018), homelessness is present:

> *when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives. They are considered homeless if their current living arrangement: is in a dwelling that is inadequate and has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable, and does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.*

Because a large number of the refugee newcomers who have arrived in Greece since 2015 have been housed in emergency shelters after their arrival, it's necessary to take a closer look at the definition of shelter. According to UNHCR (2018a), camp structures are not suitable for the creation of decent housing conditions on a permanent basis. In certain situations, and when no alternatives are possible, attempts are made to create such conditions through shelter solutions:

> *A shelter is a habitable covered living space that provides a secure and healthy living environment with privacy and dignity in order to benefit from protection from the elements, space to live and store belongings as well as privacy, comfort and emotional support (UNHCR, 2018b).*

Comparing these definitions, it becomes clear that, although having minimal shelter does not equate to homelessness, the situation in which the individuals find themselves is often similarly inadequate. Documented cases of inhuman conditions (Smith, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017d) demonstrate the failings of some shelter solutions. In such cases, refugee newcomers are de facto homeless because the conditions of the shelter they are offered are neither secure nor healthy, private nor dignified.

Another problematic aspect of shelter solutions is the limitation of social relations. Within camps, residents can hardly establish free access to social institutions or groups they have chosen themselves. This has a significant impact on young children, for example, who have poorer access to kindergartens and schools in camps than those who live in central inner-city housing (Interview B, 2017).

The term accommodation is used as a broad term. It describes short to medium-term situations that refer to the concrete built environment: "*Accommodation is used to refer to buildings or rooms where people live or stay*" (Collins, 2018).

Adequate, affordable housing

In contrast to accommodation, the term housing is used to include additional aspects of shelter and accommodation, such as access to a living space, the affordability of the living space, and the adequacy of the living space. When we speak of housing, we refer to more than just the built environment, as the structure itself is embedded in a social and political framework. In 1997, the UN-Habitat Network defined these aspects of housing as inseparable from adequate shelter (as in, shelter and housing are not synonymous but correlate with one another):

> *Adequate shelter means more than a roof over one's head. It also means adequate privacy; adequate space; physical accessibility; adequate security; security of tenure; structural stability and durability; adequate lighting, heating and ventilation; adequate basic infrastructure, such as water-supply, sanitation and waste-management facilities; suitable environmental quality and health-related factors; adequate and accessible location with regard to work and basic facilities: all of which should be available at an affordable cost. (United Nations, 2000).*

Furthermore, adequate housing should include the following core principles, defined by the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR, 2018):

1. Legal security of tenure (i.e. legal protection against forced eviction)
2. Affordability (household costs should not compromise other basic needs)
3. Habitability (i.e. adequate space, protection from cold, damp, heat etc.)
4. Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure
5. Accessibility (disadvantaged groups should be taken into account)
6. Location (i.e. access to employment option, health-care services etc.)
7. Cultural adequacy (expression of cultural identity should be possible)

The concept of affordable housing is currently being discussed across the European Union, and is thus embedded in different national frameworks. The financial and spatial planning of affordable housing (i.e. rent control, social housing, zoning regulation etc.) will be discussed further in this thesis, in the context of Greece and its homeowner-based real estate market.

Fig. 01: The housing continuum

Source: adapted from „The housing partnership action plan" (2018)

The Housing Partnership Action Plan (2018) describes the frequently used housing continuum. It defines those segments of the housing supply as 'affordable housing', that lie between the two poles of 'emergency housing' and 'market housing'. These are roughly the three segments 'social housing', 'affordable rental housing' and 'affordable home-ownership'. This scheme was very helpful for the further processing of the present thesis.

1 Introduction

1.1 Housing between policy and politics

An investigation of housing policies is not only about the formal implementation of such policies by the political-administrative system. Housing policies do not provide objective answers to problems, but rather, are always embedded in larger societal and political frameworks. In this context, Kadi (n.d.) points out that housing policies cannot be an apolitical issue, and "*that it does not only matter if and at what costs low-income households find housing in a city, but also where*" (Kadi, n.d., 7). Although Kadi (n.d.) refers to questions of gentrification in Central and Western European cities, this differentiation is also of great importance for the present work in the Southern European context.

The question of whether they will obtain housing is even more complex for refugee newcomers in Thessaloniki, but the dimensions of if, at what cost, and where are also crucial in this regard. Since the increased rate of transnational movement that began in 2015, several emergency shelters have been established. As a result of this, many newcomers have been able to find shelter. However, the conditions documented in Greek refugee camps give reason to believe that only minimal housing functions are covered by such shelters, and that the inhabitants' human rights have been violated by the poor shelter conditions (Smith, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017d). In addition, most refugee camps were established far from urban settlements, thereby cutting inhabitants off from central urban infrastructure.

1.1.1 A right to housing (for whom)?

The right to housing is discussed and defined at several levels within international documents. The Human Rights Declaration provides the highest formal definition. It was signed by all 192 UN Member States. The provisions of the Declaration provide a framework that is not legally binding on the Member States (Housing Rights Watch, 2018). It states:

> *Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).*

However, Member States are not obliged to provide housing for the entire population. National peculiarities of housing policy, the housing market, the construction sector, and access systems

to housing prevent such a claim. Although housing policy is interwoven in international (and European) policies, the core competence lies with the nation states (Housing Europe, 2015). Moreover, the Right to Housing (as defined by the UN) should not be confused with a legal obligation of Member States to offer housing for all. Rather, it is defined as follows:

1. Security of tenure: housing is not adequate if its occupants do not have a degree of tenure security which guarantees legal protection against forced evictions, harassment and other threats.
2. Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure: housing is not adequate if its occupants do not have safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, energy for cooking, heating, lighting, food storage or refuse disposal.
3. Affordability: housing is not adequate if its cost threatens or compromises the occupants' enjoyment of other human rights.
4. Habitability: housing is not adequate if it does not guarantee physical safety or provide adequate space, as well as protection against the cold, damp, heat, rain, wind, other threats to health and structural hazards.
5. Accessibility: housing is not adequate if the specific needs of disadvantaged and marginalized groups are not taken into account.
6. Location: housing is not adequate if it is cut off from employment opportunities, health-care services, schools, childcare centres and other social facilities, or if located in polluted or dangerous areas.
7. Cultural adequacy: housing is not adequate if it does not respect and take into account the expression of cultural identity (OHCHR, n.d.).

Not only does the application and enforcement of rights to adequate housing vary from country to country, there are also differences and peculiarities between different groups (women, children, homeless people, slum dwellers, persons with disabilities, displaced persons and migrants, indigenous people). These characteristics can, of course, be applied several times to an individual person or within a family, which requires an intersectional view (OHCHR, n.d.).

International documents and, in particular, the factsheet on Right to Adequate Housing (OHCHR, n.d.) outline the special features of displaced persons and migrants: As they often find themselves in so-called refugee camps after forced flight, which in many cases are unable to provide adequate housing, the application of Rights to Housing is more relevant than ever.

The position of women and young girls is particularly vulnerable since a lack of adequate housing can lead to restrictions of their physical and mental integrity through gender-based violence and sexual exploitation (OHCHR, n.d., 9). But this restriction, partly caused by inad-

equate housing situations, does also affect men and boys. In a recent article, McGinnis (2016) describes the underrepresentation of sexual exploitation of men and young boys in Greek in the media. Because of their precarious financial and housing situations, some people see no other way to survive than to offer sexual favours for money or a meal, according to McGinnis.

While the inhabitants of a refugee camp may be in particularly precarious situations, the situation in urban areas is not necessarily better. Refugees seldom have the same access to housing as domestic persons, and are therefore particularly at risk of having to accept hazardous housing situations. Undocumented and thus so-called illegal refugees or migrants (OHCHR, n. d.) find themselves in an even more extreme position:

> *Irregular or undocumented migrants, including rejected asylum-seekers, are particularly vulnerable to human rights abuses, including violation of their right to adequate housing. Irregular migrants are often homeless, as an inability to pay rent usually results in immediate eviction. Their lack of legal status, and the criminalization of irregular migration in many countries, means that most will be unable or unwilling to challenge discriminatory or otherwise abusive rental practices and seek legal remedies. National housing strategies rarely include migrants, and will practically never include irregular migrants (OHCR, n.d., p. 25).*

This limitations is increasingly being addressed in public discourse. Jointly agreed documents may remain toothless if the various political levels, starting with the nation states, do not commit themselves to a rights-based and social understanding of housing policy. Furthermore, they should not view those affected by homelessness as passive charity recipients, but as holders of a fundamental right to adequate housing. Housing should therefore not be reduced to mere technocratic policies or market-based solutions, as it is a distinct political field (Farha, 2018).

In addition to the aforementioned definition, the so-called New Urban Agenda (NUA) explicitly speaks of *"the right to adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living"* (UN General Assembly, 2016).

1.1.2 Thessaloniki's REACT program

The second half of 2015 was marked by intense transnational movement of Refugees to Europe and within the European continent. Many people braved harrowing physical and psychological ordeals in order to flee their war-torn homelands for safe countries. On the European continent, these movements became particularly visible on the external borders of the European Union. The majority of border crossings took place in Greece, Italy, and Spain (UNHCR, 2017). Greece had already noted that more crossings were taking place in the first half of 2015. When even more people entered the country in the second half of the year, the already-underfunded

reception structures reached their limits. In many of the newly built or adapted camps, adequate housing conditions could not be guaranteed for the many newcomers who were arriving every day (Kalantzakos, 2017). International and state reactions were not able to resolve the emergency situation entirely on their own. The Greek population reacted with great helpfulness and self-organised solidarity movements were formed. Housing projects were implemented in several cities by such initiatives in order to circumvent the inhumane housing conditions in the Greek camps and to offer new residents better living conditions (Kalantzakos, 2017).

Many of the solidarity housing projects tried to implement their approach in existing buildings, such as vacant hotels or other empty buildings. Organizers, together with reesidents tried to organize the newcomers' everyday lives after their arrivals. The substantial advantage to camps was that there were not only the passive recipients of assistance, but could, from the outset, co-design their living environment (Kalantzakos, 2017). However, both the emergency camps and the solidarity housing projects quickly reached their organisational and financial limits. Various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) provided important support to enable the on-going humanitarian mission, and to secure it in the medium term. Greek NGOs, in particular, contributed significant expertise gained from their operations in the previous years of Greece's financial and debt crises (Kalantzakos, 2017).

Municipalities were not always directly involved in the operation of emergency camps, the implementation of solidarity housing projects, or the activities of NGOs. In the first third of 2016, the Accommodation for Relocation programme was launched as a complementary approach to existing strategies. Thessaloniki was the first municipality in Greece to try to establish its own urban strategy for dealing with on-going transnational movement to the city (Interview D, 2017).

Fig. 02: Official logo of the REACT programme
Source: Hellenic League of Human Rights, 2017

As an urban initiative to ensure safe temporary housing, the program was contracted by the European Union and the United Nations. According to this programme, persons and families identified for official transfer to another EU Member State should be given the opportunity to move into an apartment until their transfer. The Accommodation for Relocation programme was later renamed Refugee Assistance Collaboration Thessaloniki (Interview D, 2017).

Due to a lack of solidarity between EU Member States, it quickly became clear that the European Union's relocation strategy led to only a small number of actual transfers, which is why the programme pivoted away from its original goal of organising temporary housing. In 2016 and even more so in 2017, REACT came into its own and contributed to capacity building in refugee assistance, especially as an inter-communal initiative, to provide adequate housing for refugee newcomers (Interview 4, 2017).

1.2 Relevance and research questions

The relevance of the present work and the questions raised by it are determined by the events since 2015. People who fled the war had to struggle with inhumane housing conditions when they arrived in Greece. Camp structures proved to be an option for a short-term shelter, but were not suitable for longer stays. Strategies to provide housing in the city were hardly tested, as the Greek housing market is almost exclusively organised privately. The present paper tries to find out whether new urban approaches in the housing stock lead to an improvement of the living conditions of newcomers and which factors (such as location, affordability) are essential:

a *How can municipal housing strategies that address Thessaloniki's building stock instead of camp structures deal with shortcomings in adequate housing for refugee newcomers?*

The second question relates to housing strategies in Greece as a whole. Financial and debt crises from 2008 onwards have consolidated the housing market in Greece as a private field with less public influence. These characteristics also applied before the crises and Thessaloniki was not exempt from them. This approach worked in good economic times, but precarious housing situations have increased over the last ten years. One reason for this development seems to be the lack of a dedicated social housing authority. There is no public body that actively acts as a builder of housing. This raises the question of whether and how strategies at municipal level can contribute to the re-communalization of housing policy, to execute a right to housing:

b *How does the REACT program foster the formulation and implementation of appropriate housing schemes and act as a facilitator towards meaningful policy change?*

The following chapters will return to the research questions at the end of each chapter. Intermediate conclusions will be drawn in order to reflect first results or answers to research question a und research question b. At the end of the work, the interim results will be collected and reflected upon and serve as the basis for an overall summary.

1.3 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework reflects on the personal relation of the researcher to the topic and his role in the research process. In particular, the choice of the topic in a foreign country context and the treatment of questions concerning newcomers make such a reflection essential.

1.3.1 The researcher's role

Mapping project with unaccompanied minor refugees (2015)

In a study project dealing with service provision for newcomers, I was able to gain experience working with newly arrived people. The project took a transdisciplinary approach. Unaccompanied minor refugees volunteered for the work and shared stories about their home countries, their migration experiences, and their everyday knowledge they had acquired in Austria. The project aimed to map relevant information for refugee newcomers and other interested people. In an open format, people from diverse professional and private backgrounds gathered to share their knowledge about networks of arrival (Angerer, Christopher, Gugg, Paiwand, Rasuli, Uyanik et al., 2015).

As a result, a digital city map features ten categories in three languages. Users can browse through information that might be useful in the short term (such as housing advice), as well as cultural, educational, or spaces free of mandatory consumtion. In the process, everyone stepped out of their comfort zones to learn from one another and find new ways of completing this project. Housing issues were always present, which led to an increased awarness of its importance (website of follow-up project: https://www.newhere.org/).

Intensive urban research workshop (2016)

Another professional link to this thesis' topic of housing and newcomers was my participation in an intensive urban research workshop in Thessaloniki, prior to beginning my thesis project. Choosing the topic, *"Immigrants, heritage and crossings"* (Knierbein et al. 2016), the workshop team did a spatial analysis of Ano Poli (upper town) to answer the following research question: *"How and in what manner do the memories, thoughts, stories and actions of people at the west wall constitute spatial crossings of heritage and solidarity?"* ("A Critical Guilde to Lived Cities, 2016).

During this process, we discovered traces of previous centuries, specifically, Byzantine city walls. Upon closer investigation, they offered a glimpse of the city's immigrant history.

At the beginning of the century, refugees from Asia Minor built small houses ('kastroplicta') directly into the walls. Some remain, either inhabited or abandoned. During our initial research, we were told that some of the houses in the walls are indeed being used as shelter for newcomers. These remains also hinted at a significant amount of restructuring throughout the last decades, which led us to look at such traces even more closely ("A Critical Guide to Lived Cites", 2016).

The second part of this project consisted of semi-structured interviews with either the remaining inhabitants of the houses, or passing individuals. The researchers would ask them a list of basic questions, but leave them enough space for their explanations. During an interview, we would also film the surroundings, and thus establish a connection between the people, their stories, and the spatial configuration of a certain spot (e.g. removed dwellings).

As a third and final part, our group set up a workshop in a busy square in the afternoon. We tried to elicit reactions from passing individuals by confronting them with our earlier findings. By creating intriguing moments for people to share their knowledge, we were able to connect them to the actual space. Reconstructing the 'kastroplicta' in the minds of the people (and by the people) showed us the crossings in time and space that we were looking for. In recent years, and especially since 2015's movements, Thessaloniki and its old walls have become junctions of transnational upheaval once again. The aforementioned workshop helped me understand the city, and ultimately led me to the topic of housing policy in a similar context ("A Critical Guide to Lived Cites", 2016).

Fig. 03: Pocket houses built into Thessaloniki's old city wall
Source: A Critical Guide to Lived Cities, 2016

1.3.2 Multi-level housing research

A study by the Australian Housing and Research Institute (Dodson, de Silva, Dalton & Sinclair, 2017) offers a starting point for grasping current trends in housing policy research. It analyses the relationship between several policy levels in relation to housing issues and links them to economic policy. It is not the specific thematic focus (economic policy) or geographical orientation (Australia) of the study that is relevant for this thesis, but rather the theoretical approach of looking at the topic of housing from a multi-level perspective. According to Dodson (etal., 2017), there has been a significant increase in multi-level literature in relation to economic policy, but this is not yet the case for housing research.

The basic idea of the multi-level approach is to apply an analytical perspective to policy phenomena on several levels of governance as well as several spatial scales. According to Dodson (et al., 2017), this shift reflects overarching changes in the functioning of the political-administrative framework. For example, the establishment of the European Union was a major topic of political research in the 1990s (ibid.) Furthermore, another aspect of restructuring in political-administrative systems is recognized. It refers to the relationship between the state as a regulatory authority and other, market-shaped, logics of regulation:

> *The multi-level governance perspective is also reflective of political and economic restructuring since the 1970s. This restructuring has been typified by a weakening or hollowing of state institutions and a shift towards greater policy influence by non-state actors, including both market actors as well as non-governmental organisations (Dodson et al., 2017, p. 18)*

This assessment is also confirmed from a political science perspective. Josipovic (2017) that the multi-level system gained influence as an analytical framework from the 1990s on because the method of governing changed greatly with the establishment of the European Union, especially in the form of governance. Josipovic (2017) notes that with the introduction of the EU, the state was no longer seen as the unique starting point of political power. Instead, political power became "embedded in other forms of governance" (Josipovic, 2017, p. 11).

Berger & Hahnenkamp (2017) indicate such forms using the example of European austerity policy towards EU Member States, in particular Greece. Austerity policy is not the only legal field, in which the (national) state of Greece has little political power. With the establishment of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), the formulation of so-called Memoranda of Understanding (MoU), and commitments to other agreements outside dedicated EU-law, complex supranational arrangements have been made, which aim to achieve discursive goals, such as 'budgetary discipline' or the 'debt brake'. Citizens are directly affected by EU policies. For

instance, the restructuring of the Greek welfare state shifted the discourse from the important role of the state in providing basic services and infrastructure to the assumed need to restrict individual movement and basic rights in order to gain control over the countries finances. This discoursive shift toward a justification of austerity measures put inhabitats at higher risk of poverty, homelessness and depression (Berger et al., 2017).

1.4 Research design and methodology

The choice of the topic was greatly influenced by personal interest in the subject, in addition to the contemporary relevance of this topic. However, the fact that the subject first crystallized during a stay abroad led me to choose an inductive research approach. Housing policy for refugee newcomers in Thessaloniki was in a state of intense transition at the beginning of my first stay in Greece from February 2017 until June 2018. During these months, relevent housing literature sources were collected and talks with a student colleauge for a potential co-operation started. Because of the ever-changing character of the situation, it seemed necessary to implement the day-to-day policy adaptions into an inductive research design (Bryman, 2004):

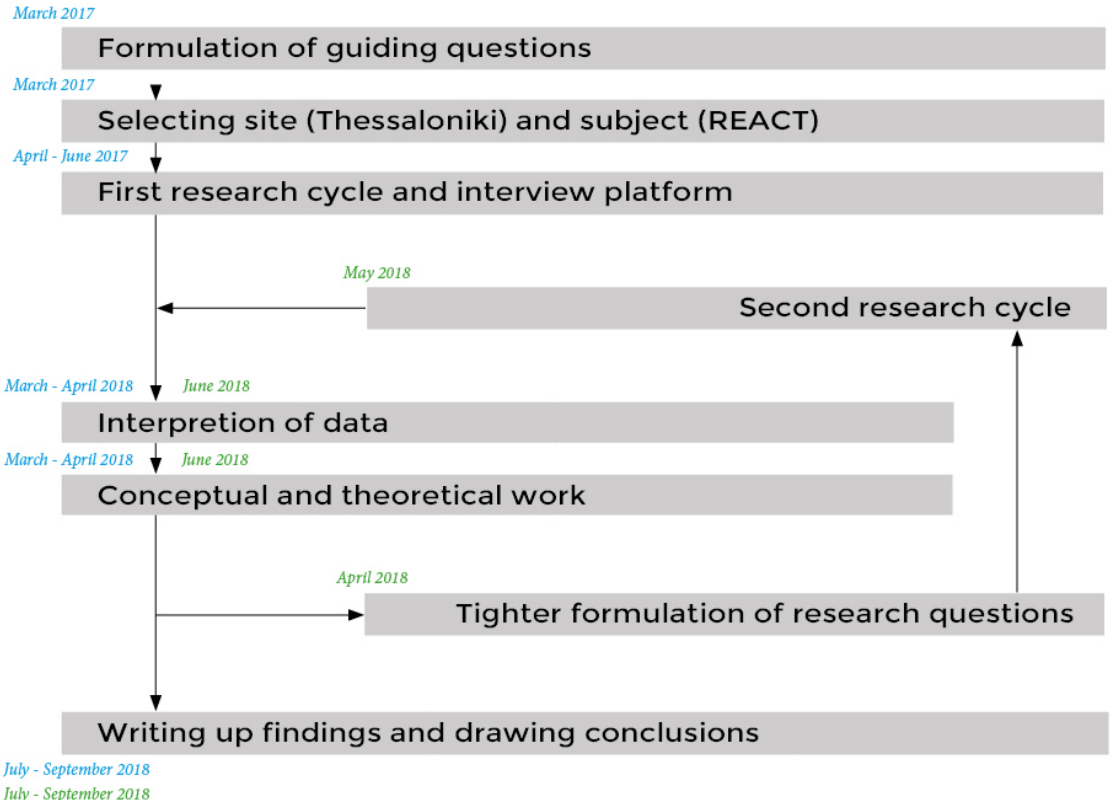


Fig. 04: Inductive research process
Source: adapted from Bryman, A. (2004)

The fundamental scientific-theoretical idea of such an approach is that questions, hypotheses, and theories emerge gradually from the collected empirical research results. Bryman (2004) visualizes these steps as separate but interconnected cycles in the research process. In the present paper, the first cycle began with the formulation of guiding questions based on personal research interest as well as the two broad thematic areas of housing policy and refugee studies.

In a further step, the city of Thessaloniki was defined as the location of the research, and the REACT program was selected as a case-based research interest. In the weeks following the first exchange visit, a co-operation platform with a Greek colleague emerged, which was finally carried out as a joint interview platform. As part of the first cycle, the results of this platform were analysed. Subsequently, the research concept was refined and preparation for the second research cycle began.

The second short-term research stay in Thessaloniki directly followed a previous concretisation of the research questions, based on the results of the first cycle. The second research cycle resulted in new empirical results, which were subsequently analysed. In a subsequent step, these results were used to further refine the concept.

The model of the policy-cycle

A conceptual decision was made throughout the cyclical approach of the research process and was integrated into the process as seperate theoretical layer: the approach of the so-called 'policy-cycle' fits into the research design, as it illustrates and theoretically sharpens the dimensions of the already established cyclic approach of the thesis.

The popular political science model of the 'policy cycle' is an attempt to systematize the course and interplay of political phases. Jann & Wegrich (2007) describe the concept, its shortcomings, and its strengths. On the one hand, the policy-cycle phases are ideal-typical phases, i.e. there will always be deviations from the model that may relativize the overall statement. This is based on a very simplified understanding of representative politics:

> *its appeal as a normative model for ideal-type, rational, evidence-based policy making. In addition, the notion is congruent with a basic democratic understanding of elected politicians taking decisions, which are then carried out by a neutral public service. The rational model therefore also shows some tacit concurrence with the traditional dichotomy of politics and administration, which was so powerful in public administration theory until after World War II (Jann et al., 2007: 44).*

Since the 'policy-cycle' approach cannot represent an ideal-typical sequence of decisions and determinations within the political-administrative system, Jann (et al. 2007: 44) see the ap-

proach as a less-than-strong theoretical model. Much more reference is made to the possibility of using the 'policy-cycle' as a foil to structure the empirical results of research.

In this thesis, the model will mainly be used for this exact reason, in order to complement the already established cyclic research design. The structuring efforts will be supported by critical statements from the overall literature and document review conducted.

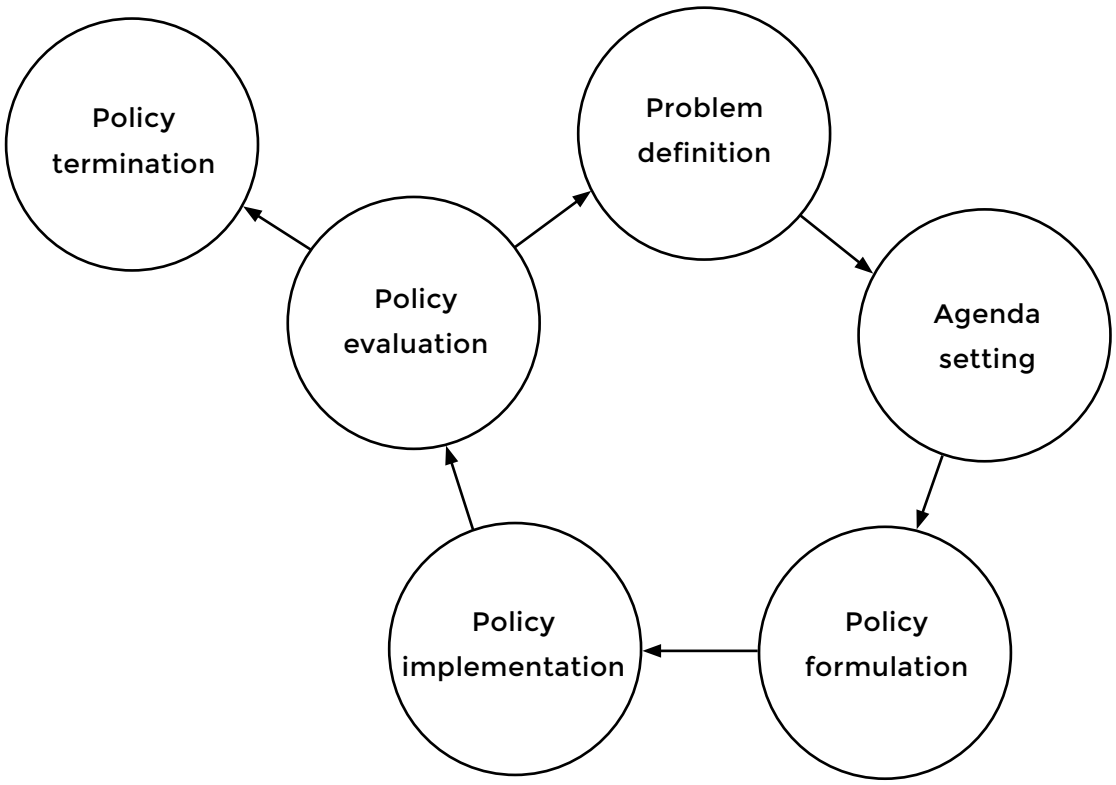


Fig. 05: The policy-cycle model
Source: adapted from Mitrenova (2017), Blum & Schubert (2011), Jann & Wegrich (2009)

The model consists of five equal phases. In the standard case, it is assumed that the problem definition is at the beginning of a cycle. However, it is possible that a policy ties in with a previous one and continues to exist in an adapted way. It is important to mention that this is an ideal-typical model. It may be that a problem is only put on the agenda by unforeseen circumstances (e.g. lack of housing for an increased number of newcomers). The respective policy is then formulated, implemented and evaluated, and possibly also terminated (Jann et al., 2007).

Agenda setting

Jann (et al. 2007: 44) also describes the aspect of 'agenda-setting' as an extensive field of variables that work together to determine why a certain political problem area is recognized as such, and which actors include it in the policy cycle, at which point in time. Agenda-setting variables always depend on a large number of actors who influence agenda-setting through their respective institutional positions, knowledge, and political interests. Representation of a topic or problem area in the media, and the subsequent change in the perception of that problem as either more or less important, also play an important role in the process.

During an analysis of agenda-setting, the following questions are asked: *"What is perceived as a policy problem? How and when does a policy problem get on the government's agenda? And why are other problems excluded from the agenda?"* (Jann et al., 2007: 46).

1.4.1 Interview platform

The decision to cooperate with a Galini Parcharidou, from Aristotle University Thessaloniki, on a joint empirical investigation constituted a major strategic shift in this research process. One goal of this collaboration was to deepen my understanding of the local context as a foreign researcher. However, the main premise of the joint platform was to enhance the quality of research on both sides, as we were both looking at refugee housing, with Parcharidou researching refugee camp design and organization.

The final decision to work together was made in May 2017. Both researchers were still developing their research areas of interest and guiding questions. Yet even before that, in March and April 2017, there was constant communication about the directions of the two investigations. It was clear that the topics were connected. One link was the political decision to continue efforts of providing people from the refugee camps with apartment housing, as well as the question of how to organize such an efforts.

In May 2017 the joint interview platform was set up, and work on an interview questionnaire began. In coordination with Ass. Prof. Dr. Charis Christodoulou (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece), research questions were adjusted until the beginning of June 2017.

Dialogical process

The two research projects are to be understood as entirely independent. However, in select meetings, there was a regular exchange about new political developments, initial results, and problems that were coming up in our respective research work. From this perspective, the

dialogical process should be understood as mutual feedback. More concrete cooperation took place in the formal preparation of the interview guidelines and in the establishment of contacts and appointments for the expert interviews in June 2017.

Throughout this cooperation, attention was paid to maintaining a formal separation between the subject areas of the questionnaires. In the course of the interviews, however, there were deliberate deviations from the prepared questionnaire, especially when experts opened up a particular direction of conversation on their own, which one of the two researchers was then able to discuss in greater detail.

In the present work, questions and answers that pertain exclusively to the current project are cited accordingly as an independent survey done by Gugg (2017) Sections of the questionnaire that were authored entirely by Parcharidou (2017), are listed accordingly as such. Meanwhile, parts of the expert interviews that include dialogical elements are cited as part of a joint survey by Gugg & Parcharidou (2017).

Interview partners

The following interviews took place during the first research cycle, in which experts from various backgrounds, including architecture, politics, urban planning, and the social sciences, provided us with insight and contextual knowledge:

Nr.	Occupation	Name (if public)	Date and time
1	Educational expert at AUTh	Eleni Hontolidou	June 2017
2	Mayor of Thessaloniki	Yiannis Boutaris	June 2017
3	Project implementation at IOM	Romana Mandeganja	June 2017
4	REACT office	undisclosed	June 2017
5	REACT office	undisclosed	June 2017
6	Urban planner and housing expert	Athena Yiannakou	June 2017

Tab. 01: Interview partners 1
Source: author

During the second cycle, the following interviewees were contacted and subsequently took part in interviews. In this cycle, the interviews were not conducted in a joint setting with Galini Parcharidou, though some questions as well as the formatting of the questionnare used during the first cycle were adapted and used again, especially in the case of general questions that were used to compare answers of the two cycles in order to identify policy changes quickly.

Nr.	Occupation	Name (if public)	Date and time
7	Resilient Thessaloniki consultant	Aphrodite Bouikidis	May 2018
8	REACT office	Dimitris Talaiporos	May 2018
9	Private homeowner	undisclosed	May 2018
10	REACT office	undisclosed	May 2018

Tab. 02: Interview partners 2
Source: author

The methodology of the thesis process provide for two essential cycles (preparation, implementation and follow-up of two seperate research exchanges in Thessaloniki). In the first cycle, basic background knowledge was investigated, contacts were made, and an interview platform was set up. The second cycle built on the work, knowledge and progress achieved in the first cycle, in addition to adapting and reusing the methods used in the same, in order to achieve a high degree of comparability.

In contrast to the first cycle, however, the interviews were not conducted in cooperation with Galini Parcharidou. All interviews were organized and executed by the auther of this diploma thesis, though both researchers met frequently between March and June 2018 to discuss the development of their respective theses and exchange additional expert knowledge.

1.4.2 Literature and document analysis

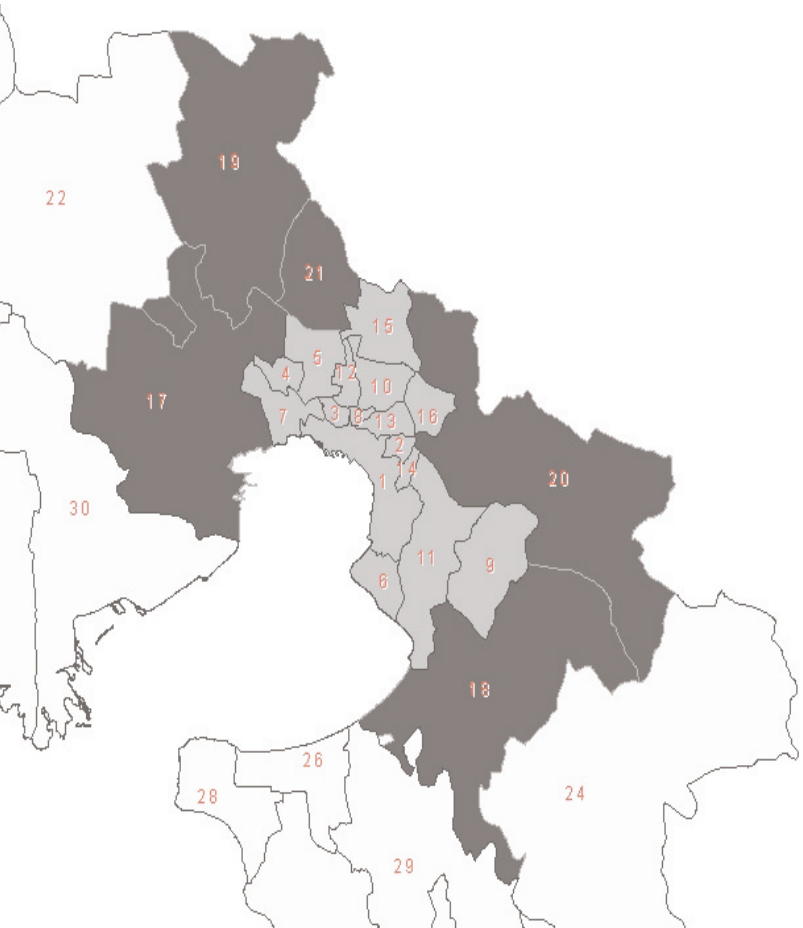
The search for suitable literature was limited due to the language barrier. The focus of the work therefore tends to be on the analysis of documents, reports, theses, presentations, conference contributions and similar sources. Less present are theoretical works on Greek housing policy. Few of the publications were available in English. As a work-around, some publications (especially publications on the internet) had the possibility to use a translation program. This was naturally not possible for books from the Greek library stock. Nevertheless, there was a good compilation of selected publications and many English-language publications and documents.

1.5 Structure and limits of this thesis

This paper is divided into an Introduction (Chapter 1), a Main Part (Chapters 2-4) and a Final Part (Chapters 5-6). In the main section, intermediate summaries provide for a better overview. Limits of the research are discussed in these summaries and in the subsequent conclusions.

N

Conurbation
Peri-Urban Zone
Remaining GTA



Municipality of Thessaloniki (1)
Municipality of Neapoli-Sykies (2)
Municipality of Kalamaria (6)

Map 01: Location Thessaloniki and Greater Thessaloniki Area (GTA)

Sources: Labrianidis et. al. (n.d.) & Resilient City Strategy Thessaloniki (2016)

2 Housing policy in Thessaloniki

This chapter aims to provide an overview of housing policies relevant for the city of Thessaloniki and Greece in general, to shed light on their different levels, and to discuss their application, both in theory and practice, especially regarding the themes related to the thesis topic.

2.1 Multi-thematic aspects of housing

2.1.1 Homelessness and housing rights

According to the Feantsa & Abbé Pierre Foundation (2018), in the current political climate, housing exclusion is intensifying both qualitatively and quantitatively within Europe. The most prominent tendencies to be seen, at present, include a combination of exclusionary state policies in the area of housing, and local policies in the process of displacement from the public sphere. Overall, the homeless population has increased in almost all EU Member States in recent years (Feantsa et al., 2018). Parallel to this trend, the lack of a conceptual and practical separation of the concrete ways of countering this development has increasingly emerged as a factor reinforcing it, with major consequences. *"The terms 'accommodation' and 'housing' are often used without distinction by policy makers. Taking this distinction into account is, however, essential to understand the paradigm shift that a growing number of associations and institutions across Europe are making"* (Feantsa et al., 2018, p. 3).

Another factor that must be considered in an analysis of homelessness, according to Babtista (et al., 2016), is the differentiation between certain population groups. Newcomers are disproportionately affected, as they make up a large part of the homeless population within the EU and, depending on their status, have no or limited access to services for the homeless. As Babtista points out, *"the homeless sector still struggles to clearly define its role and responsibility vis-à-vis homeless migrants, particularly those with no or an uncertain administrative status"* (Babtista et al., 2016, p. 5). On the whole, there is a strict separation between asylum systems, including housing and housing strategies, on the one hand, and the homeless assistance sector, on the other.

However, since 2015, this separation has become increasingly difficult to maintain, particularly due to the increased number new arrivals who have ended up homeless throughout the EU in recent years (Baptista et al., 2016).

2.1.2 Thessaloniki's housing market

Housing stock characteristics

Due to the dominance of the Antiparochi system that prevailed in the post-war period, in combination with the intense urbanization that took place from the 1960s onwards, Thessaloniki has a large segment of housing stock in the Antiparochi-based Polykatoika style (predominant architectural style or building typology). In the municipality of Thessaloniki, about half of the current stock originates from the heydays of the Antiparochi system between 1960 and 1980. In the suburban areas of the peri-urban zone, more than a third originates from the period between 1980 and 2000. A large dominance of Polykatoika type buildings can be identified when walking through the city of Thessaloniki. The predominant style further characterizes and defines the cities open spaces and living spaces to to a large degree (Labrianidis et al., 2010, 18).

A study of the socio-spatial housing environment of the municipality of Thessaloniki and the surrounding municipalities by Deprez (et al., 2016) supplements the census data with more concrete figures on the size of housing units. It should be noted that the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) uses a different spatial categorisation than in the aforementioned Geitonies study. Cross-neighbourhood spatial units are also covered, but the structure follows a different categorization: Historical Neighborhoods, City Center, Eastern Neighborhoods, Western Neighborhoods and Suburban Areas. The relatively large living spaces (per unit, not per capita) in the center are obvious, compared to other areas. More than 40% of the housing units are between 70m^2 and 100m^2 in size. Only in suburban areas is this picture surpassed, with almost 60% of housing units having large building typologies (more than 100m^2). A particularly high number of medium sized residences can be found in the Historic neighborhoods. Here, almost half of the housing stock has between 30m^2 and 70m^2 of living space (Deprez et al., 2016, 35).

On average, the centre (~80m^2) and the suburban areas (~125m^2) have the largest housing units. The house prices for purchase and rent vary greatly in this study. While in the Eastern neighbourhoods (especially Kalamaria), it is almost €1300/m^2, it drops to around €800 in the western neighbourhoods. The centre has the highest stock of rentable living space, both as a percentage and in absolute terms. In the centre of the Thessaloniki, residential buildings have, on average, 8 storeys, which results in a high density (both in terms of urban space and in terms of residential units per km^2).

Two figures provide information on the availability of apartments for sale or rent. There is high availability next to the centre, in the municipalities between the centre and Kalamaria, located in the eastern part of the Central Thessaloniki Area. Fewer units are available in the northern and north-western parts, which also have lower prices (Deprez et al., 2016, 35).

2.1.3 Spatial and demographic aspects

The city of Thessaloniki lies in the northern part of Greece. It is part of the Central Macedonia region. Within the region, it is located in the centre of the prefecture of Thessaloniki. The prefecture in turn is divided into two departments, Thessaloniki and Langada. The more or less urbanised southern part within the prefecture (Thessaloniki) is the second largest agglomeration in Greece, after Athens, and is also called the Greater Thessaloniki Area (GTA). The area has a high economic and social significance, both within the GTA, as well as beyond local and national borders (Labrianidis, Hatziprokopiou, Pratsinakis, Vogiatzis, 2011, 11).

This thesis deals, in particular, with a part of the GTA called Thessaloniki Conurbation (CON). More than three quarters of the population of the GTA live within the CON, whose 16 communities are lined up along the Thermaikos Gulf in the southern part of the prefecture. The largest communities (with over 40,000 inhabitants) within the CON are Thessaloniki, Kalamaria, Evosmos, Ambelokipoi, Stravroupoli and Neapolis-Sykies. Between the GTA and the CON lies another zone, the 'peri-urban zone'. It is characterized by tendencies of suburbanization and links to rural communities of the prefecture (Labrianidis et al. 2010, 11).

The three zones represent the geographical scope of this study. Although the concrete investigations were carried out exclusively within the CON, the spatial and thematic context stretches beyond its boundaries, since housing strategies outside both the CON and refugee camps are also illuminated through the analysis of literature for a broader understanding of their contexts. The communities of the three zones, and, in particular, the CON, act independently in their administrative roles. Each of the 16 municipalities has its own decision-making and administrative structures. Although a reform of these structures has often been considered in recent decades, there have been no comprehensive changes to date. Regional administrative structures form the Region of Central Macedonia and the Thessaloniki Prefecture at a lower level (Labrianidis et al. 2010, 11).

Census analysis pre-/post 2008

In the transnational research project 'Geitonies' (Greek for neighbourhood), basic knowledge about interethnic coexistence in an urban context (OEAW, 2018) has been generated for several cities since 2008 by systematically combining existing data sets. Thessaloniki was one of the regions investigated. By using the existing methodology of the case inquiry of neighbourhood integration in the urban area as a source, statements can be made about the years up to 2008.

Since new census data is collected regularly (every 10 years in Greece), it is possible to

make a comparison with the years from 2008 onwards in order to get a demographic and socio-spatial overview of the region as well as a before and after comparison. This comparison places specific focus on changes regarding interethnic coexistence within the GTA.

The sources used in the 'Geitonies' report on Thessaloniki are the National Statistical Service of Greece (NSSG, 2018) , the Population and Housing Census 2001 & 2011, data from the National Centre for Social Research (EKKE, 2018), and a variety of other sources. The authors Labrianidis et al. (2010, p. 13) point out that when analysing data relating to the migrant population, it is important to take into account long periods of becoming an legal citizen, as newly arrived people naturally do not appear in the census data (though foreign citizenship population is regarded as 'migrant population ' in this data). For longer-term studies of urban co-existence (socio-spatial distribution, access to housing, changes in housing situation), however, it is necessary to also think about people who have become citizens as former migrants, without questioning their potential hybrid identity as a Greek citizen. Labrianidis (et al. 2010, 13) names five groups of newcomers in this context in the decades before 2008:

1. 'Soviet Greeks' (referring to Greeks who were born in the former Soviet Union)
2. Albanian refugees and migrants
3. migrants from the EU and other 'western' origins
4. migrants from the former Soviet Union and
5. migrants from other origins ('others')

The authors Labrianidis et al. (2010, p. 14) make a second methodological note with regard to the spatial investigation units, which, in the 2001 Census, were divided into so-called Census tracks. These tracks are, however, unable to graphically represent patterns of migration movements, especially on the neighbourhood level. Such representations therefore do not exist.

Population characteristics 1991–2001

In the decades before the 2008 financial crisis, the population structure of the region did not change on a grand scale. However, population migrations from the peripheral communities of the GTA to communities within the CON were remarkable. These migrations can be traced back to both a rural-urban movement and suburbanisation tendencies. During the same period, the inner-city and the municipality of Thessaloniki remained relatively unchanged in terms of their total population. A particularly high rate of suburbanisation took place in the south-western part of the GTA, where growth rates of 50% - 100% were recorded between 1991

and 2001 (Labrianidis et al. 2010, p. 17). A more detailed analysis of the population structure during this time shows a large increase in the population in the PUZ. The population within the municipality of Thessaloniki decreased during the same period. The PUZ and the remaining GTA were also inhabited by comparatively old residents. The largest number of single households was within the municipality of Thessaloniki, which also housed the best-educated population. The unemployment rate was stable, and was evenly around 10% within all zones. Of particular interest is the housing category, which provides a rough overview of the tenant/owner ratio and the size of living space per person, especially in extreme circumstances where people have less than 15 m2 or more than 40 m2 at their disposal (Labrianidis et al., 2010, 18).

The change in population figures at the municipal level can also be described using the methodology of Functional Urban Areas, which are defined by The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, as urban areas with close economic ties. Accordingly, the current FUA GR002 (the second largest FUA in Greece after Athens) describes the municipality of Thessaloniki as its so-called core zone, in addition to the municipalities most affected by the population increase as the so-called commuting zone, which has high economic integration compared to municipalities outside of it (OECD, 2012).

The densely inhabited inner-city communities tend to have a lower share of residential property. In the period 1991-2001, approximately one third of the population lived in tenancies, two thirds in ownership. There were fewer major differences in the distribution of extreme housing conditions. In more densely inhabited areas, tight housing conditions are therefore lower, but only by a small percentage, than in the suburban and rural parts of the GTA. The distribution of per capita housing between 15m2 and 40m2 is approximately the same across the spatial units (Labrianidis et al. 2010, 18).

2.2 Multi-level housing aspects

2.2.1 International and European level

Neither the United Nations (UN) nor the European Union (EU) have core competences in the policy field of housing provision (Czischke, 2014, p. 333-346), though interest in the conceptualization and realisation of 'adequate' and 'affordable' housing on these levels has increased in recent years (Czischke, 2018). Nevertheless, the two government bodies and their respective Member States have each agreed on common policies, strategies, and documents that either directly or indirectly influence housing policy at the national, regional and local levels (Housing Europe, 2017, p. 38) (EU Urban Agenda, 2017, p. 7) (UN General Assembly, 2016, p. 20). This chapter aims to clarify the role of International and European policy framework(s) as they

relate to the field of housing provision. Relevant overlaps with the topics of this thesis, and, in particular, with the REACT programme, were identified both during the first phase of literature research and in the expert interviews.

Sustainable Urban Development

As Scheibstock (2017) points out, there is no clear generally valid definition of sustainability, sustainable development, or sustainable urban development. The concept of sustainability has been criticized as being too vague since it became popular in the fields of research and practice relevant to development (Scheibstock, 2017). At its core, the concept of sustainability in this context describes

> *A process-oriented approach, aiming to change prevailing models that are exploitive to nature and human resources, while implying that also those in need of better living conditions have to be provided with the possibility to overcome and ameliorate their present livelihoods* (Scheibstock, quoted in Mitlin & Satterthwaite, 1996; Wheeler, 1998).

Sustainable Developement Goals

As a key document in the international community, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development describes strategies for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a total of 169 points. Starting with the adoption of the resolution in 2015, the UN Member States have committed to achieving these goals within 15 years and in 17 fields of action. The ambition of the 2030 Agenda is comprehensively formulated. It aims to meet fundamental development goals, such as ending hunger, achieving gender equality, and improving access to education.

Although the fields of action overlap, point 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), in general, and point 11.1 (Access to Housing), in particular, both relate to issues of housing creation within urban areas. The document originally adopted in 2015 hardly formulated any concrete urban strategies, but did refer to the New Urban Agenda (NUA) that was adopted the following year (United Nations 2015, p1-35).

As Scheibstock (2017) describes, the Sustainable Development Goals have both a global and a universal claim, without, however, addressing concrete local situations, interests, or actor constellations. Although the SDGs outline a global development, there is a lack of comparable data at the regional and urban levels. The New Urban Agenda attempts to close the gap between the abstract-global and the concrete-urban.

Fig. 06: UN SDG logo and SDG goal 11 logo
Source: United Nations (2018)

New Urban Agenda

The New Urban Agenda was put forward during the Habitat III conference in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016, and passed as a resolution by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 2016 (UN Habitat III Secretariat, 2017). The final document was preceded by a broad participation process, in which representatives of various institutions and organisations involved in urban development contributed their expertise. In addition to UN agencies, the nation states and their sub-organisations, and government bodies at both the regional and local levels, a wide-ranging network of experts, and other stakeholders contributed to the formulation (UN General Assembly a, 2016). The NUA is concerned with the rapid urbanization of the earth and attempts to counter related problems such as spatial segregation or slum formation. It interacts closely with the SDG and other development strategies designed at a global level (UN General Assembly b, 2016).

Beyond Objective 11 of the SDGs, the NUA attempts to formulate more concrete strategies for urban development. It *"builds on SDG 11, but addresses a wider range of urbanization and human settlement issues"* (UN Habitat III Secretariat, n.d., p1). One central idea of this document is the application and extension of previous and adjacent documents to the urban context. The aim is to tackle problems within the urban context with strategies at the local decision-making level, in order to reflect the *"traditional roles of local governments in facilitating development and providing services directly to households as well as of overseeing territorial development through local planning, governance and local public financial policies"* (UN Habitat III, n.d., p. 2) The topic of housing is a core concern of the NUA, and is regarded thereby as an interdisciplinary topic with links to areas such as spatial planning, mobility, ecology, and social issues of urban development. Furthermore, the NUA places its focus on the role housing plays in economic development. In particular, policy areas of housing provision and housing finance are connected to the economic processes and capital flows influencing both private households and the public sector. In addition, the NUA explicitly speaks of *"the right to adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living"* (UN General Assembly, 2016, p. 19).

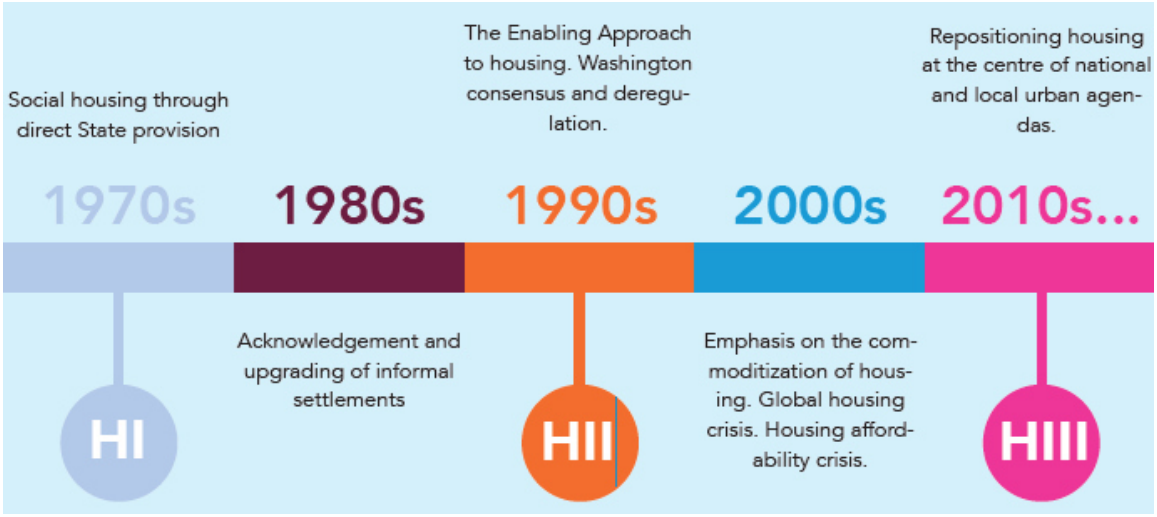


Fig. 07: Milestones in the Global Housing Agenda

Source: UN Habitat (2015)

Urban Agenda for the EU

The EU Urban Agenda, not to be confused with the NUA, is a new political approach at the European Community level, aimed at tackling issues in the urban context. It was adopted as part of the 'Pact of Amsterdam', and formulates three pillars of urban policy in the EU: "*a) better regulation, b) better funding and c) better knowledge*" (Housing Europe Report 2017, p. 28). Several thematic partnerships were formed within the Agenda, including a housing partnership. Due to the EU's limited competence in the field of housing, the partnership is particularly dedicated to determining the possible effects of other EU policy fields on the topic of housing, including analysing legal ways of influencing housing policy at national level through EU strategies (EU Urban Agenda, 2017, p. 1-15).

EU Common Cohesion Policy

Despite the reduced ability of the EU and its political bodies to directly influence Member States' housing policies, European-level strategies and mechanisms do have an impact on the housing sector, specifically through the EU's Common Cohesion Policy (Lakatos, 2015). The current period has a volume of approximately €650 billion. Close to half of the budget is allocated to the European regional development fund (ERDF), which, at the same time, is the most prominent fund in the Common Cohesion Policy for investments in the housing sector (Lakatos, 2015). Because the current programme period, 2014–2020, is still in progress, it

makes more sense to consider the previous period, 2007–2013. The funds cover a wide range of possible grants and loans. Housing relevant projects were mainly financed through the ERDF during 2007–2013. In the current program period, 2014–2020, however, it should be possible to access funding from a combination of different funds (Lakatos, 2015).

There is a decisive focus on low-carbon economy in the context of housing, which accounts for around one-fifth of the budget of the European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF is the umbrella fund of the common cohesion policy and contains all funds shown in Fig. 5). During the last period, some €2 billion was invested in the energy-efficient modernisation of housing through this and other channels of the Common Cohesion Policy (Hamza et al. 2016). By comparison, forecasted spending in this sector has at least doubled in the current period. This intensification of focus on the field of energy efficiency demonstrates how important it is within the EU's Common Cohesion Policy (Lakatos, 2015).

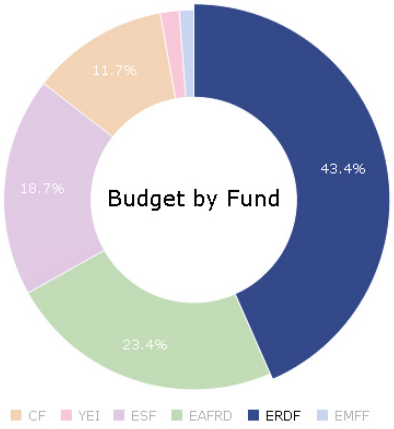


Fig. 08: ESIF financing for period 2007-2013

Source: EU Comission (2015)

At the same time, other objectives, such as social inclusion, urban regeneration, and recreational services will receive relatively little funding. A recent study has found *"that 77% of operational programmes allow investment in housing"* (Lakatos, 2015, p.10). The analysis carried out by Lakatos (2015) found that Greece was above average in its application of Operational Programs in 2015, where 14 of 17 programmes were used in the extended housing sector (Lakatos, 2015, p. 10).

However, not all Member States have equal access to the full range of grants. The current Housing Europe (2017) report states that western European countries have an advantage in accessing the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI), also called the 'Juncker Plan'. EFSI is not to be confused with ESIF. Rather, it constitutes an additional way of drawing investment

by attracting private investors. The western European bias within the EFSI results from strict EU budget rules, which limit access to EFSI. This means that southern European countries, such as Greece, have a difficult time generating potential housing investment through EFSI.

The European regional development fund (ERDF) occupies a prominent position in the current EU budget. In the current period, it has been fed with more than €195 billion, and is thus one of the largest budget items in the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework(Sapała, 2016). Near the end of the last investment period, the European Commission published a report on ERDF investments in the housing sector. The authors (Dodd, Fox, Güntner, Provan, & Tosics, 2013) describe the weaknesses of the period that ended in 2013. They found that since housing is an integrated field both in theory and in practice, it was often not possible to unite the three dimensions of economy, social affairs, and energy sustainability, which is why some projects were carried out rather *"one-dimensionally"* (Dodd et al., 2013, p. 10), often in favour of the energy theme. Although this may have contributed to reducing the energy costs for private households, and thus support affordable housing, the social dimension of housing investment through EDRF has not been developed sufficiently (Dodd et al., 2013).

Siatitsa (2016) describes other aspects that point to the ambivalent role of the European Structural Funds. In the years prior to the global financial crisis in 2008, its application in Greece (specifically in the course of the 2004 Olympic Games) accelerated an already-emerging trend of capital concentration in the residential construction sector, thus accelerating the decline of the model of housing creation and provision that had previously dominated the market, via a small-scale structured building sector. Siatitsa (2016) thus implies that European structural grants can potentially harm national, regional, and local housing policies, rather than benefiting them.

Urbact III Programme

The URBACT III programme for territorial co-operation at the urban level is financed and run via the ERDF fund. The programme has a financial framework of approximately €75 million, co-financed by the Common Cohesion Policy, EU Member States, and URBACT partner cities. The programme description highlights its four main objectives:

1. Capacity for Policy Delivery: To improve the capacity of cities to manage sustainable urban policies and practices in an integrated and participative way.
2. Policy Design: To improve the design of sustainable strategies and action plans in cities.
3. Policy Implementation: To improve the implementation of integrated and sustainable urban strategies and action plans in cities

4. Building and Sharing Knowledge: To ensure that practitioners and decision makers at all levels have increased access to knowledge and share know how on all aspects of sustainable urban development in order to improve urban development policies.
   (European Commission, 2014)

It is therefore important to note that although the EU's Common Cohesion Policy in principle has very little to do with housing policies, it nevertheless comes into contact with them through its Structural Funds and related programmes. The example of the Urbact III Arrival Cities Network is interesting in this context as it contributed to the launch of the REACT programme in the context of Thessaloniki (Interview D, 2017).

Urbact III Arrival Cities

The Arrival City Network sees itself as a trans-European association of cities within the Member States of the European Union. Under the banner of the URBACT III programme, partners exchange their knowledge and experience of implementing good practices in the field of migration management at the urban level (URBACT III Programme, 2016). The network unites a common understanding of migration and its causes:

> *Migration is a fundamental feature of human society. Throughout human history people have migrated from place to place, in pursuit of new opportunities or in flight from danger or hardship. In the modern age, the globalisation of trade, travel and communications have created new dynamics in international migration (URBACT III Programme, 2016, p. 3).*

It recognizes that the perception of, as well the public discourse around migration has intensified and qualitatively changed in recent years, becoming a very emotionally charged topic (ibid.); however, these tendencies can be counteracted with integrated local projects. The URBACT Action Planning Networks applies a two-phase methodology, which is aimed at cities and institutions interested in knowledge exchange and the joint implementation of projects (URBACT III Programme, 2015). The ERDF will provide funding for the organisational framework and local implementation of projects via the URBACT III Programme (2015). Among other advantages, this will allow both local and external experts to be integrated into the process (ibid.). To receive funding, the network must meet the following commitments:

1. To actively take part in transnational exchange and learning activities
2. To produce an Integrated Action Plan

3. To set up and run an URBACT Local Group
4. To ensure communication and dissemination of project results
5. To manage the project and the partnership in a sound way
   (URBACT III Programme, 2015, p. 10)

The city of Thessaloniki has participated in the Network, setting up a platform to be able to comitt to all five goals. The REACT program was directly and indrectly influenced by point 2.

Resilient City Approach

As its name suggests, this relatively young development approach attempts to focus on the resilience of cities. According to the OECD (2017), resilient cities are "cities that have the ability to absorb, recover and prepare for future shocks (economic, environmental, social & institutional). Resilient cities promote sustainable development, well-being and inclusive growth" (OECD, 2017, online). Mitrenova (2017) describes this approach as a partial successor of the development strategies of sustainability that have been dominant over the last decades (ibid.) One major difference is that resilience approaches attempt to create a desired normal state that existed before shocks and disasters (ibid.), whereas sustainability concepts are based on the current state, in order to provide sufficient resources for future generations despite social and economic change (Scheibstock, 2017).

Another difference lies in the specific focus of resilience approaches on urban space, which has been a factor since the popularization of the concept of resilience (Mitrenova, 2017). Concepts of sustainable development, on the other hand, have undergone phases in their development in which cities were seen as unsuitable vehicles of sustainability. It was only with the emergence of Agenda 21 in the 1990s and the subsequent adoption of international documents, resolutions, and declarations that sustainable development took on an urban dimension (Scheibstock, 2017).

The resilience approach has also been criticized for its take on urban development, as Mitrenova (2017) describes: it is not enough to restore an earlier status of an urban social and political condition, if this status may have been the cause of the problem or have been contributing to it. Mitrenova quotes Porter and Davoudi (2012), who see urban resilience as a tool of neo-liberal urban development, and wonder whether it makes sense to return to a 'normal state' *"when what has come to be normalized (over-inflated housing markets, predatory lending practices, gross wealth disparities) is so obviously and profoundly dysfunctional?"* (Porter et al., 2012, 332).

2.2.2 National and regional policies

Land-for-construction exchange (Αντιπαροχή)

Over an extended post-war period, the Greek construction and housing sector was dominated by the principle of land-for-construction exchange. Generations of households (in most cases, synonymous with the family as a core element of the housing sector) were able to access housing through this dominant model of housing construction. The background to this peculiarly Greek and southern European model was the need to create sufficient living space for a growing population. Legally, the system was first established in 1929, and lasted (in modified forms and with small amendments to the law) until the new millennium. In retrospect, 2008 represented a turning point, for since then, new framework conditions have been in place that have de facto brought the land-for-construction exchange to a standstill (Moraitis, 2017, p. 3).

Although the legal basis for Antiparochi was already established in the 1920s, it was only after the end of the Greek civil war in 1949 that it was used throughout the country: since landowners were often not able to build on their own land, they decided to outsource the development. In return for the use of the land, however, no sums of money flowed, but landowners secured a share of the living space realised on their land (Moraitis, 2017, p.4). In most cases *"the land owner would keep a part of the flats thus constructed (20%-30% during the 60s and the 70s, up to 40% during the 80s, nowadays (sic!) around 50% or even 60%), while the contractor would acquire ownership of the rest as the agreed reward for the work rendered"* (Moriatis, 2017, p. 4).

European sovereign debt crisis

Moraitis (2017, p. 4) describes a real boom in the construction sector until the debt crisis in 2010, which was based on several factors, which intertwined and strengthened each other. Bank loans were usually linked to land procurement and interest rates were very low following Greece's accession to the EU. In 2004, the construction boom was further strengthened by the Olympic Games in Athens. Since 2010, when the world financial crisis of 2008 overlapped with the so-called debt crisis, it has become increasingly difficult to buy land via the banks because of measures that were put in place for the population (auctions for land were made more difficult for poorer groups), among other factors (Moraitis, 2017, p. 4).

To Kalamas (2013), the main difference between debt crisis and previous crises lies in the fact that the construction boom created sufficient housing space until 2010 and made it available to the population. Since the European sovereign debt crisis, this housing space has continued to exist, but access to it has been made more difficult by economic factors (such as

household debt). Kalamas (2013) therefore speaks of a crisis in home access systems, in contrast to crises in earlier times, when there was simply no built housing available.
Furthermore, in the small-scale and family-oriented construction sector, much less was spent on land acquisition during the crisis. Moraitis (2017, p. 5) sums up this trends as follows:

> *From December 2005, when the residential loan volume featured an increase of 33.5%, during the still on-going post-Olympic Games building boom, it gradually dropped to -0.3% in 2010 and continued diminishing by a yearly rate of roughly -3.3% each year afterwards. In other words, after 2010 Greek households have shown themselves reluctant to invest in real property, a tendency coupled with the strong reservations of the banks regarding the granting of new credits and the resulting lack of liquidity in the market (Moriatis, 2017, p. 5).*

Moraitis (2017, p. 6) also describes the difficult and conflict-laden political negotiation attempts between the so-called troika (EU, IMF, ECB) and the Greek state. In addition to the many other cuts in the austerity policy that followed the crisis (often referred to as reforms), a restriction of the protection of primary dwelling was also called for. Greek policies resisted this, knowing full well that residential property was an essential element of local social policy; since 2016, there has been easier access to primary dwellings. Before that, they had been protected from foreclosure by the so-called Katselis Act since the outbreak of the crisis in 2010. Debtors whose entire property was worth less than €200,000 had the opportunity to prevent such enforcement after appealing to the courts. Though since autumn 2016, despite strict conditions, the first foreclosures have taken place, as further noted by Moraitis (2017, p. 6).

Kalamas (2018) only partly shares the assessment that housing is an essential part of the welfare state. Although households in Greece do a have high dependency on residential property, at the same time, there is an above-average number of middle class households. A middle-class household has a great advantage in the housing market due to the small-scale interweaving of the construction sector (with Antiparochi as its background), credit privileges for the purchase of land, and the general preference of residential property. State housing developers no longer exist. Until a few years ago, social housing was accessible only to a small group of people based on specific specifications. The removal of this social grid harms vulnerable people, who would be dependent on some sort of social housing or affordable rents. In their case, housing policy clearly falls short, says Kalamas (2018). And unlike for homeownership, there are no tax benefits for renting an apartment. In the wake of the financial crisis in 2008 and the debt crisis in 2010, households with property were thus able to survive better than individuals (possibly without a family network) or households without property.

Siatitsa (2016) argues that since 2010, the real estate sector has changed or been restructured more drastically, to the detriment of lower and middle-income households. Siatitsa (2016) describes:

> *three main fields of policy intervention within the fiscal adjustment programs directly or indirectly related to housing: (1) income and real estate property over-taxation as a key approach to increasing public revenues, (2) the management of private debt, both towards banks and the public sector, which targeted real estate assets as a main source for debt repayment, and (3) the "modernization" of the real estate sector, starting with public assets, but also targeting the private sector (Siatitsa, 2016).*

A major problem for households was therefore a high level of over-indebtedness, stimulated by the increased tax burden on immovable property. Siatitsa (2016) sees a discursive imbalance in the analysis and communication of Greek debt problems in this context. Members of the troika speak in their documents about Greek households as *"income-poor, but asset-rich"* (read in Siatitsa, 2016 via European Central Bank, 2013), which contributed to a relativization of the financial pressure of households. In combination with over-taxation, there were also extreme punitive measures, such as for late payment of electricity bills (Siatitsa, 2016).

It is not only in Greece that one can observe the interrelationships between debt regimes in the context of financing models for immovable property. García-Lamarca & Kaika (2016, p. 313) analysed these links in Spain and examined their biopolitical dimensions. Although there are significant differences in Greece in terms of property owner's continued protection from evictions in contrast to the situation in Spain.

Still, the high ownership rates and the increasing amount of debt on the basis of mortgages, as well as the similar production methods of housing (in southern European countries) mean that it is possible to draw certain conclusions from their Spanish study. Since 2008 and 2010, austerity policy measures have contributed to an increasing restriction of welfare state arrangements (García-Lamarca et al. 2016, p. 316). Understood as a private *"asset-based welfare"* system (Crouch 2009; Smith & Searle 2010; quoted in García-Lamarca et al. 2016, p. 316), high household ownership rates further obscure the view of stricter disciplinary measures in the context of credit and repayment logic.

The danger for households to internalize their everyday security in the areas of health or pension via property as a reserve, and thereby to act in a neoliberal sense as an investor in their own well being exists in the global context as far as it does in the Southern European and Greek (García-Lamarca et al, 2015, p. 317):

> *As long as real estate was booming, housing prices rose and employment was stable, it seemed to be a win-win model. But as inflation and interest rates crept up, mass unemployment hit and housing prices plummeted, the disciplinary and punitive dimension of mortgage contracts was revealed. As non-performing mortgage debt became officially classified as junk, people holding this debt also became classified as 'rubbish' or 'scum' (García-Lamarca et al. 2016, p. 317)*

The example of Spain also illustrates the effect that drastically relaxing the security of owners against evictions would have had: in the uncertain macroeconomic climate since 2008 and with the associated fall in prices for immovable property, evictions often do not lead to debtors being released from their financial burden. Since property is less valuable on the market, debtors may remain in the banks' debt despite losing their property, and continue to have to repay instalments if the market value of the property was established during earlier, more economically stable times (García-Lamarca et al., 2016, p. 316).

Greek households find themselves in the difficult situation of being made jointly responsible for the crisis (as a bad investors in their own security, they did not live up to their responsibility to repay loans) and of being victims of the effects of the crisis (increases in their tax burden and reductions to the state safety net). In a discursive way, this further increased the pressure on private households, although the causes of the crisis years were the failure of international credit practices and a burst real estate bubble (Sachs 2018). A discursive framing was carried out that saw the Greek state and its citizens cast as the sole perpetrators of the 2010 debt crisis, due to poor budgetary policies and a loose lifestyle. With this and subsequent political decisions by international and European institutions that allowed the banking sector in Greece to succumb, the situation was further exacerbated, as Sachs (2018) describes:

> *Greece suffered a catastrophic collapse of bank lending that in turn crushed the private sector. The series of bailouts did almost nothing to revive Greece's bank lending. Indeed, the ECB effectively closed the banking sector in June-July 2015 around the time of the referendum, in what looked to me like a punitive attack by European governments and institutions on Greece's negotiating position that called for long-term debt relief (Sachs, 2018).*

The crises effect on families and individuals were two-fold. On the one hand, although relatively safe from evictions. debt-burdening kept increasing among Greek households. On the other hand, neither market mechanisms, non-existing social housing nor any measures by the economic troika could deal with the rising issue of vulnerability and homelessness in the context of housing. Newcomers and their families had to deal with even higher risks (Siatitsa, 2016).

Welfare-state arrangements and the familiy

At the national level, the Greek housing system is defined as a mix of housing production through private, small-scale construction and a focus on indirect state influence on housing production. This indirect focus is described by Dagkouli (n.d.) as a state *"choice of non-policy"* (Dagkouli n.d., after Economou, 1987, 2003 and Siatsia 2014), whereby this passive position of the Greek state in the context of housing provision can certainly be regarded as constituting national housing policy.

In many ways, housing policy today is closely linked to refugee movements at the beginning of the 20th century. In Greece, families and individuals fleeing from Asia Minor at the time were able to take advantage of the land provided by the state as a kind of emergency policy or, in many cases, released freely and without extensive regulatory intervention. On these properties it was possible to build without much capital against the background of minimal land and development costs. The Greek state's approach of pursuing housing policy through *"non-policy"* (Dagkouli n.d., after Economou, 1987, 2003 and Siatitsa 2014) created housing for some of the new arrivals. However, this did not completely answer the housing question.

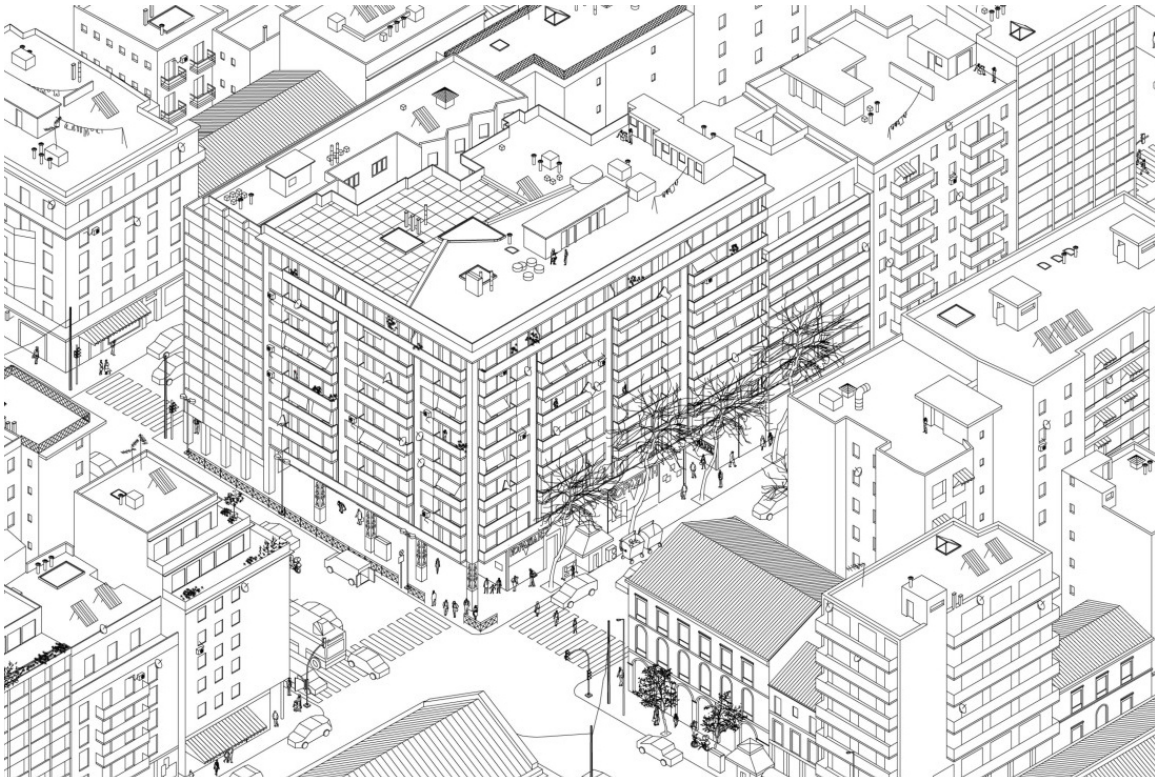


Fig. 09: Schematic view of inner-city built-environment and public space in Thessaloniki
Source: unknown (n.d.)

As the governing body, the Committee for the reinstatement of the refugees coordinated the allocation of housing and land, but this meant, for example, that in Athens only 21.7% of the new population could find permanent shelter, while the rest had no government intervention and built on it, stayed in existing housing, or suffered homelessness. The partial stabilization of the pre-war situation was ensured by a law that prevented the expropriation and destruction of informally built housing while it was inhabited (Dagkouli n.d.).

Subsequently though, "during the WWII housing issue disappeared from the social policy agenda and it was mentioned only to formal political discussions as a controversial tool of promoting economic growth" (Allen et al., 2004). In the post-war period from 1947 to 1949, there was financial support from the Marshal Plan, but its financial input was relatively lower than in other European states, as it was temporarily frozen by the Americans for corrupt use within the still unstable post-war order. Since 1949, the input was generally reduced, which led to a reduction in new construction rates throughout Greece due to a lack of capital:

> *thus only 100.000 dwellings were constructed during the 1950s that could not cover the current need. Furthermore, after the wars, there was a major housing crisis for the internal immigrants that arrived to Athens but also for the local people that remained homeless because of the catastrophes caused by the wars (Mantouvalou, 1985).*

In the post-war years of 1950 - 1960, however, according to Dagkouli (n.d.), the foundations were laid for the family-centered organization of the welfare state, which included essential and stable intersections with urban development and housing policy. There were several laws that directly influenced it. The most important of these is the law passed in 1955 to legalize previously illegal settlements. During these years, monetary policy changes surrounding the devaluation of the national currency 'drahma' resulted in a minimum level of private construction activity remaining (ibid.).

The deregulation of building heights and other structural factors from the 1960s onwards led to increased construction, not only, but especially in city centres. Many of the family-centered small building-businesses that drove this development were first or second-generation immigrants from the Asia Minor crisis. As a result, a part of the urbanisation processes of the 1960s that should not be underestimated was directly or indirectly attributable to earlier construction by refugee families. In that sense, first and second generation newcomer families were a constituting factor of post-war urbanization processes (ibid.). Within these processes *"tax exemptions with big impact in housing was applied for intra-family money transfers, dowry and parental donations"* (Dagkouli n.d., after Maloutas, 2008).

At the end of the post-war housing system, and in particular during the successive crises

since 2008, these mechanisms are more present than ever within families, thus framing a new welfare-arrangement that, although differing, has clear path-dependencies to former times:

> *the contemporary goal of every household is not its economic progress but the preservation of the current living circumstances by attempting to moderate expenses, to show solidarity with deprived families, to cohabit and even to receive support from charity organizations. Accordingly, the provision for housing, care and social protection is mainly a family commitment, rendering family as the main shock absorber of socio-economic turbulence (Dagkouli, n.d., after Arundel & Ronald 2015, Martin 2015, Moreno & Mari-Klose 2013, Naldini & Jurado 2013).*

Throughout the second half of the 20th century, as Dagkouli (n.d.) highlights, specific characteristics of housing production and consumption in Greece can be described. These characteristics are define periods of 10-20 years. Dagkouli (n.d.) formulates this by using the example of post-war Athens. Though always dependend on a local context, to a certain degree this can also be used to describe post-war housing practices, strategies and policies in Thessaloniki.

Dagkouli (n.d.) often refers to Maloutas (2008), who wrote extensively about housing practices, strategies and policies. Both outline a housing system defined by a strong top-down approach by the Greek state on a national level . When looking at the case of Thessaloniki, it is useful to consider this framework and continue further investigate factors on a municipal level.

Fig. 10: Housing production and practices in the post-war Athens, Greece

Source: adapted from Dagkouli (n.d.)

2.2.3 Municipal and neighbourhood policies

Cities for adequate housing

In their document *"Municipalist Declaration of Local Governments for the Right to Housing and the Right to the City"* (Cities for adequate housing, 2018), the cities of Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Durban, Eyyübiye, Lisbon, London, Mexico City, Montreal, Montevideo, New York, Paris, San Antonio de Areco and Seol as well as the metropolitan regions Barcelona Metropolitan Area, Greater Manchester and the Plaine Commune Grand Paris, agreed on a political declaration of intent for the sustainable design of housing policy (Cities for Adequate Housing, 2018). Other organisations have since joined the network: Right-2CityGPGlobal (Platform for the Right to the City), Leilani Farha (UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing), Observatori DESC (Economic, social and cultural rights), Housing Europe, and the Habitat International Coalition (ibid.) Five objectives were formulated:

1. More powers to better regulate the real estate market
2. More funds to improve our public housing stocks
3. More tools to co-produce public-private community-driven alternative housing
4. Urban planning that combines adequate housing with quality, inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods
5. Municipalist cooperation in residential strategies
   (Cities for Adequate Housing, 2018, p. 1-4)

The network's content is based on the UN definition of adequate housing (see Introduction).

Urban Local Group and Local Action Plan

The Urban Local Group (not to be confused with the aforementioned Urban Working Group) was partly involved in the initial set-up of the urban housing programme in 2016. During this time, a local group of stakeholders formed (REACT, 2017a), aware of the worsening situation. Initiated by the municipality of Thessaloniki, their goal was *"to coordinate as a city, create a Local Network and produce a Local Action Plan"* (REACT, 2017b, p.2).

The original group consisted of representatives from the municipal administration, other regional and local decision-making structures, various NGOs, and other groups (REACT, 2017b). In the beginning, the Urban Local Group was primarily interested in meeting the basic needs of newcoers by providing: Local networking, accommodation in local hotels, family

support, and sponsorship for the most vulnerable groups (REACT, 2017a). The set-up was supported by the Arrival City Network of the the URBACT programme. This is an EU sub-programme for regional development and is largely financed by the ERDF. In its third version, URBACT III is dedicated to the exchange of knowledge and practical experience between different decision-makers at the city and community levels in order to implement urban policy that fosters a common cohesion strategy (European Comission, 2014). It seeks to *"enable exchange and learning between elected officials, officers and other city stakeholders; contributing to the improved planning and implementation of integrated urban approaches in European cities"* (ibid).

In its latest form, URBACT III ran from September 2015 to May 2018, with the Portuguese city of Amadora as its lead partner. Other members of the Arrival City Network are Val-de-Marne (France), Oldenburg (Germany), Dresden (Germany), Riga (Latvia), Vantaa (Finland), Patras (Greece), Messina (Italy) and Roquetas de Mar (Spain). The network aims to exchange good practices (TU Dresden, 2018). In the concrete case of Thessaloniki, activities, workshops and meetings helped to facilitate the creation of a Local Action Plan, which was a core element of a multi-stakeholder approach to providing housing. The core of the local approach was the provision of living space in the existing buildings. Furthermore, the declared goal was to incorporate related policy and practice areas into the design of the LAP (REACT 2017a).

The REACT programme partly resulting from the LAP was first implemented from May 2016 to December 2017 (REACT, 2017b). At the beginning of 2018, it was extended by the stakeholders. In addition to the Local Action Plan, the URBACT III Platform exchange initiative produced another plan, focusing in particular on integration measures for new arrivals. Its aim was to formulate priorities for the integration of these groups (especially vulnerable groups) at policy the level, and on the basis of fundamental rights (Munthess, 2018, 2):

> *The inhabitants of the City, including new arrivals, have the right to access services on an equal basis and have access to timely information in forms and languages they can understand. Therefore, transparency and regular communication regarding services, structures, assistance and also integration prospects as well as the possibility to raise concerns and complaints are highly valued aspects of this Plan (Munthess, 2018 2).*

The initiative thus recognizes the provision of housing as a central factor for the successful handling of integration priorities. In general, the Local Integration Plan is formulated via a matrix of priorities, goals, objectives, actions, and resolved problems. Regular data surveys, field studies and interviews serve as a basis for monitoring the plan *(Munthess, 2018, 2).*

2.3 Intermediate conclusions A

a Research question a

Vulnerable people are more likely to be affected by homelessness, and homelessness increases the previously existing state of vulnerability. Accordingly, refugees belong to a risk group. Refugees often have limited access to housing. Due to their insecure residence status until the asylum decision is issued, access to rentable housing, for example, is sometimes blocked. In most cases, refugee camps add to such precarious situation by creating conditions that are similar to homelessness.

This problem is addressed at several levels of European housing policy. In many cases, however, they are toothless compared to national competences in housing policy. In the specific case of Thessaloniki, however, such policies have led to the launch of the REACT program. On the one hand, the Arrival Cities Network (financed by the Common Cohesion Policy of the EU) established a working group in 2015, which was jointly responsible for the preparatory work on REACT. On the other hand, Thessaloniki offers a suitable building stock for using vacant apartments.

The dominant development model 'Antiparochi' created housing in the post-war period. Today, the increased vacancy in the city serves as the basis for REACT. Additionally, family networks play an important role in the production of housing. Throughout the 20th century these family networks have contributed to a relatively high level of housing security. Newcomer families were, in many but not all cases, also able to link into these networks or create new branches themselves through self-promotion of land, self-building, patrimony and other mechanisms. In contrast, since 2008, a ceasura has taken place.

The post-war housing arrangement is not as stable as it used to be. Vulnerability is on the rise. This affects recent newcomers in particular, because mentioned self-help-mechanisms can not be utilized as effective anymore. In the Thessaloniki region, and especially in the city of Thessaloniki, building land is scarce and regulations have changed. New networks of solidarity, such as housing squats, coorporate housing charity projects, state-, or european led housing projects or other housing initiatives have been able compensated for such changes to a certain degree.

Nonetheless, recent newcomers have mainly been accommodated within refugee camps, so called 'hospitality structures'. The wording suggests decend housing conditions, but inadequacy of housing persists. Further, newcomers that were able to access adequate housing through rent have low level of security of tenure, either because of their status-instability, short rental contracts or both. Homeownership in most cases is not an option.

b Research question b

The economic upheavals of the crisis years since 2008 have led to the withdrawal of the state from the housing supply, or merely intensified this trend. The state has partly been replaced by transnational crisis-based financing programmes. One example of this is the Resilient Thessaloniki Strategy, which is intended to serve as an impulse for future development by largely private initiators.

However, this strategy hardly has the potential to replace state-led or urban housing policies. In the specific case of the Resilient Thessaloniki Strategy, the issue of housing supply is hardly addressed. In order for transnationally initiated strategies to develop a local effect, a combination of policies at different levels is required. In particular, the urban level could use external impulses for administrative reforms in the field of housing.

A distinct perspective on urban housing is important for such reforms, because it not only informs housing policy knowlege in general, but also how and where housing production and housing networks could be done going forward. Spatial characteristics of the built environment of Thessaloniki suggest that bodies involved in housing production could tackle a variety of issues at the same time when locating their efforts in dense urban situations. Vulnerability and homelessness increase when ill-located camps serve as a replacement for integrated housing options. Efforts should combine economic factors of producion with efforts of "soft" policies regarding better access to education, better access to infrastructure and better access to neighborhood participation. Thessaloniki's existing housing stock serves well for such goals, potentially linking post-war central apartment housing with integrated municipal policies.

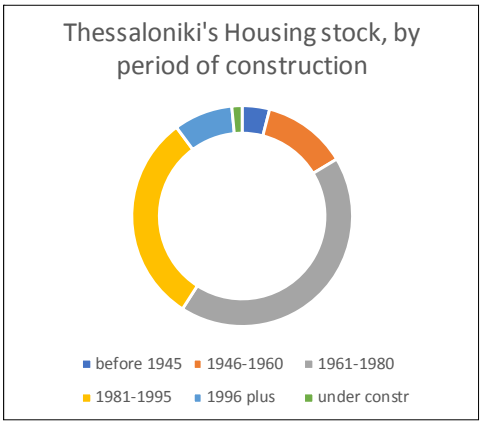
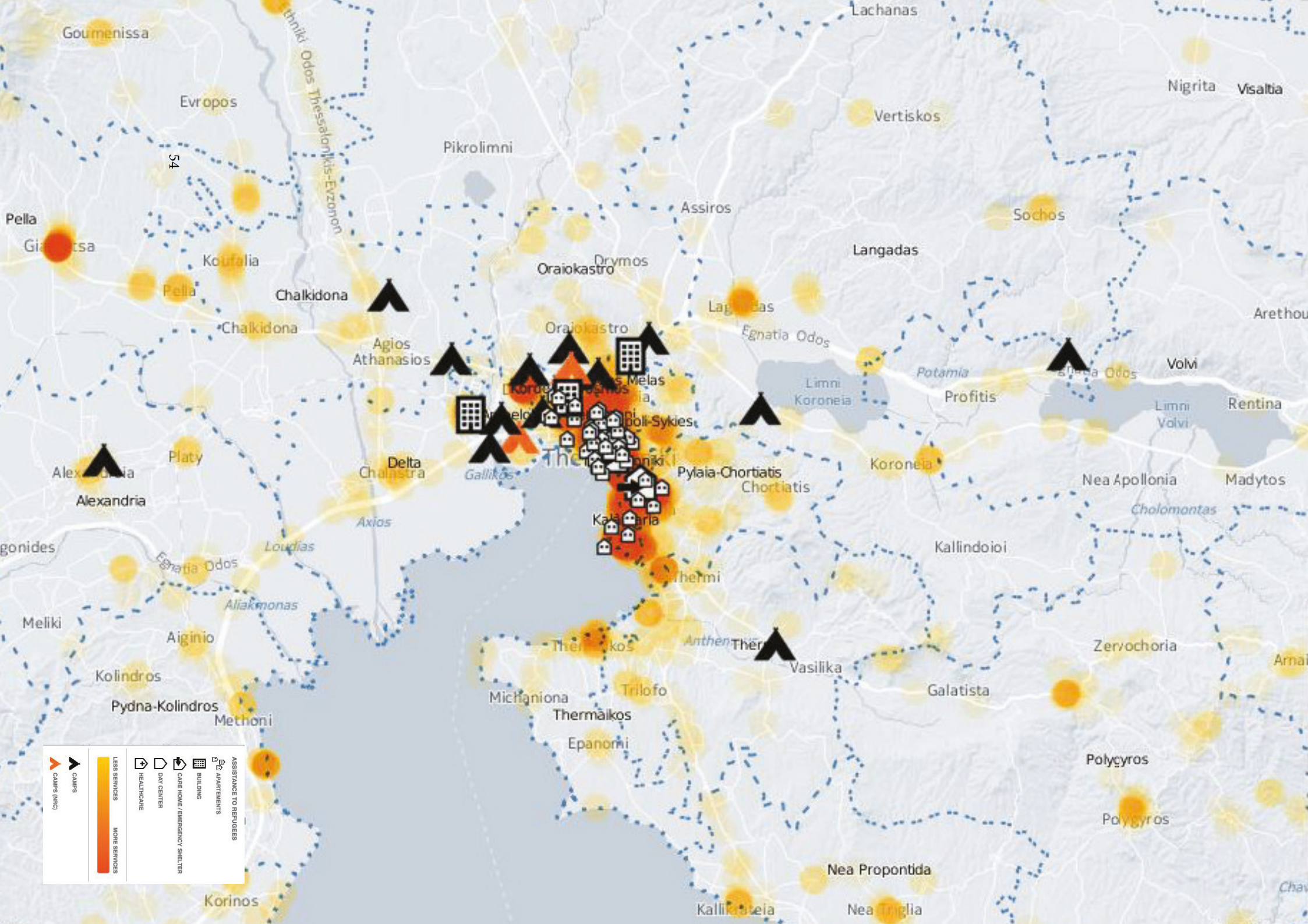


Fig. 11: Thessaloniki's housing stock, by period of construction

Source: Dagkouli (n.d.)


Gournenissa
Evropos
Pella
Koufalia
Chalkidona
Pikrolimni
Lachanas
Nigrita
Visaltia
Vertiskos
Assiros
Sochos
Langadas
Drymos
Oraiokastro
Agios Athanasios
Melas
Volvi
Profitis
Rentina
Limni Koroneia
Limni Volvi
Potamia
Egnatia Odos
Thessaloniki-Evzonoi Odos
Delta
Chalastra
Pylaia-Chortiatis
Chortiatis
Koroneia
Nea Apollonia
Madytos
Cholomontas
Kallindoioi
Alexandria
Platy
Axios
Loudias
Aliakmonas
Meliki
Aiginio
Kolindros
Pydna-Kolindros
Methoni
Vasilika
Zervochoria
Galatista
Trilofo
Thermaikos
Epanomi
Polygyros
Nea Propontida
Korinos
CAMPS
CAMPS (NRC)
LESS SERVICES
MORE SERVICES
HEALTHCARE
DAY CENTER
CARE HOME / EMERGENCY SHELTER
BUILDING
APARTEMENTS
ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES

3 Transnational mobility since 2015

As Kränzle (2016) argues, the so-called 'refugee-crisis' is defined by a persistent temporariness. The transnational movement of humans fleeing from war-torn countries and their stay in a variety of housing formats have become normal in countries all over the world. As seen in the responses to the movements in late 2015, national state's responses have been defined by the notion of a temporary crisis situation. Ultimately, such responses should shift to a more integrated approach, in order to be ready for continuing geopolitical instabilities (ibid.)

In a subsequent deal with Turkey, the European Union paid large sums of money to the Turkish government to outsource camp housing provisions, border patrol, and humanitarian aid (Kränzle, 2016). Because it is not 100% clear if the deal will continue to exist in the future (Turkey has threatened to cancel it several times), there is an imperative for the European community, Greece and other involved parties to execute the aforementioned shift from short-term solutions to integrated responses.

In the field of housing distribution, housing schemes using existing stock could be crucial to the ability of such long-term responses to succeed.

3.1 Thessaloniki's history as an 'Arrival City'

Hatziprokopiou (n.d.) describes the history of Thessaloniki as a complex history of migration. Simplifying interpretations of these past periods are thus rejected. For Hatziprokopiou (n.d., read in Baldwin-Edwards et al., 2008) such interpretations are wrong, because:

> *it is negligible of a long history of population movements, 'forced' or 'voluntary', within and beyond the country's shifting borders, and of a legacy of multiethnic coexistence that marked Greece's passage to modernity. Nowhere in the country may this history be more explicitly traceble than in Thessalonica, a major port city at the crossroads between East and West (Hatziprokopiou, n.d., 195).*

Since the beginning of the 20th century, these multi-ethnic constellations have been regularly tested within Greece. The fall of the Ottoman Empire and the following war decades of the First and Second World War did not exactly increase the young nation's cosmopolitan self-image (Hatziprokopiou, n.d.).

Defensive assessments are omnipresent in debates about migration. They equate 'cosmopolitanism' with 'multiculturalism' by picking out negative aspects of migration movements and placing them in an isolated and questionable and racicst context (Hatziprokopiou, n.d.).

Map 02: Location of camps, hotel housing and apartment housing for refugees in the GTA

Source: NRC (2016)

3.1.1 Cosmopolitan trajectories

Thessaloniki has been inhabited in the past centuries by a multitude of people, ethnicities and religions, mostly as peaceful coexistence. In the 15th century, the city called Salonika developed into a city with a Jewish majority, why Salonika was also called *"Mother of Israel"* (Hatziprokopiou, n.d., 196). Shortly before the end of the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire carried out a census, which was followed by consequent censuses:

> *85,000 people, more than half of whom were Jewish; the second one (1902) registered about 126,000 inhabitants, of whom Jewish people comprised nearly half; by the time of the first Greek vensu (1913), their share in a total population of nearly 158,000 had declined to 39 per cent, followed by 29 per cent Muslims, 25.3 per cent Greek Orthodox, and the rest comprising Bulgarians, Armenians, Western Europeans and various others (Hatziprokopiou, n.d., 196).*

In the period before industrialization, residents of all various backgrounds and religions lived together in the city. Social and spatial divisions and segregation were nevertheless present, and until the turn of the century were defined mainly by religious affiliation. Around the turn of the century these categories shifted, because religion as a spatial characteristic lost importance. The emerging class society increasingly divided urban space according to class, with the working class in the first decades of the 21st century living mainly in the densely built city centre (Hatziprokopiou, n.d.).

In the following decades from 1910 onwards, there were increasingly major upheavals. 1917 marked the year of a great fire, which the now Greek government used as a starting point for spatial restructuring of the built city, often to the disadvantage of poorer population groups. Many of the people made homeless by the fire were Jewish, who were thus negatively affected by spatial restructuring efforts (Hatziprokopiou, n.d.). Later during the 20th century, Thessaloniki's cosmopolitan trajectory came to a violent halt:

> *Thessalonica's pluralism ended under German occupation, with about 50.000 Jewish people, one fifth of the urban population, being deported. As was the case elsewhere, upon liberation, a debate over the fate of Jewish property stimulated anti-Jewish feelings; but even if the authorities were in principle keen on restoring Jewish property, housing shortages became an argument in favor of property takeovers (Hatziprokopiou, n.d.).*

This sad connection between National Socialist and its Greek accomplices rule with the 'housing policy' of the time shows that housing can never be views separate from a political framework, as former property of the Jewish community was used without compensation (Hatziprokopiou, n.d.).

3.1.2 Housing newcomers in the past

After the end of the First World War, there was a large population exchange between present-day Greece and present-day Turkey. Muslim population fled to Turkey. Hundreds of thousands of Christian Orthodox people came to Greece. The reason for this was the Greco-Turkish War between 1919-1922. As a result, housing became scarce in Thessaloniki, as more than half of the population were refugee newcomers after the migration movements, who needed housing (Hatziprokopiou, n.d.). During this period, the city developed informally into the north, west and east of the region. Free access to building land served as the basis for urban development. This was initiated because otherwise the rapid population growth would not have been possible to cope with (Hatziprokopiou, n.d.).

This trend intensified in the 1960s and 1970s, when population growth was accompanied by enormous economic growth. During this time, a dominant model of urban development was established. Antiparochi was applied to areas that had been acquired at favourable prices. As a result, multi-storey apartment buildings were built, which ensured that many people had an apartment for several decades. However, these transactions carried out by private companies within the framework of Antiparochi also led to environmental pollution and the lack of green spaces in the city. In any case, they had a formative influence on Thessaloniki's cityscape. Apartment houses in the Polykatoika-style (with up to 9 floors) are still an architectural constant today (Hatziprokopiou, n.d.).

At the beginning of the 1990s there were new large-scale migratory movements. Labour migrants from Albania and former Soviet Greek minorities migrated or fled to Thessaloniki. Some of them settled down according to patterns of past movements:

> *The geographic distribution of immigrants across the city not only reflects, but also reproduces, the traditional social map, i.e. the division between a relatively prosperous south-east and a somehow less privileged north-west. Principally driven by the housing market (home prices and rents), and to a lesser extent as a result of additional factors such as job location or social networks, immigrants are generally more often housed in the western parts of the Conurbation (Hatziprokopiou, n.d., read in Hatziprokopiou, 2006).*

The topic is taken up again in Chapter 4 of the interview analysis, as the Mayor of Thessaloniki deals with this epoch of migration movements and describes the associated housing policies.

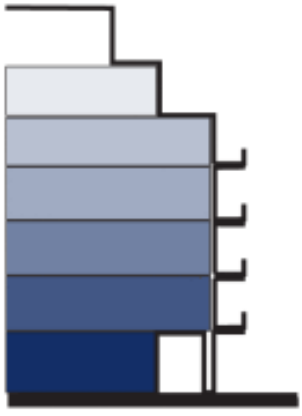


Fig. 12: Cross-section of Polykatoika-style building
Source: author (2018)

3.2 European and national asylum policies

3.2.1 The Dublin regulation and its flaws

The European asylum system, its legal foundations, national legal situations, and the position of individuals and families applying for asylum have been widely discussed in private, political and media discourse since 2015. The basis of the asylum system were and are the Dublin I, Dublin II and, currently, Dublin III regulations. The basic idea behind the establishment of a shared asylum system based on the Geneva Refugee Convention and a principle guideline of European solidarity between the Member States was the outlook of a joint handling of asylum applications and an approximate parity of beneficiaries who can be housed in the respective Member States (European Asylum Support Office, 2018).

In practice, however, this aspiration has diminished. The humanitarian objective of being able to process the applications quickly in favour of the applicants has in recent years been subjected to doubts mentioned by some Member States about intentions of asylum seekers. Consequently they tried to lobby for a prevention of multiple asylum applications and the selection of a country by personal preferences (both behaviours being very negatively connoted in the media discourse as 'Asylum Shopping', although the word has been falesly framed by nationalist propaganda and xenophobic media content)(European Asylum Support Office, 2018). Moore (2013, 362) also critiques the discursive and downgrading of asylum seekers in this context, which seems especially apparent in times of increased transnational mobility:

> *It is perhaps at moments when this extraterritorial identity is articulated most ambiguously that discourses surrounding the supposed 'abuse' of the asylum system, become most powerful, speaking to potential political antagonisms organized around the idea that asylum seekers could be delivered from an abject status to a cosmopolitan subject position via 'our' hospitality. As such, 'asylum shopping' threatens to radically disrupt the order of things, short circuiting our own aspirations to privilege in security and access to global mobility (Moore, 2013, 362).*

An essential part of the law, in force since 1997 (Dublin I), lies in the Member States' different frameworks with regard to the evaluation of applications and the application or non-application of Dublin grounds for remaining in the each country (European Asylum Support Office, 2018). Despite harmonisation measures, states have quite a bit of room to manoeuvre in terms of shaping the asylum process according to the principle of sovereignty (as long as the process complies with the Geneva Convention and other common conventions)(ibid.). Several studies make pessimistic statements about convergence towards a single system. Brekke (2017, 5), on the other hand, argues that there will be increased convergence in the coming years.

What undermines the functioning of the common system, however, is the states' different interpretations of the Dublin criteria for deciding how to proceed with when people arrive. While criteria such as family reunification are hardly applied by any member state (except Greece), so-called 'take-back' criteria are most frequently applied. The first Member State onto which an asylum seeker sets their foot is considered to be responsible for the registration and further treatment of the individual case. Thus, there is a high rate of returns from landlocked states (states without EU external borders) to states on the edge of the EU. Naturally, these are a few peripheral states, including Greece, Italy, and Spain (Asylum Information Database, 2017, 3).

Dublin Regulation Criteria

The Dublin Regulation states that the criteria for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application are to be applied in the following order (Fratzke 2015: 5):

1. Family unity. The first three criteria for determining responsibility (Articles 8 through 11 in Dublin III; Articles 6 through 8 in Dublin II) prioritise family unity and the welfare of unaccompanied minors. Asylum seekers who have family members with recognised refugee status or who are in the process of applying for asylum will have their claims determined in the state where their nuclear family members are located. Where an unaccompanied minor has family present in another Member State, that Member State will be responsible for examining the claim (but only when in the best interests of the minor).
2. Legal residence or visas. In cases where no family is present, asylum seekers with a valid (or recently expired) residence document or visa will have their claims assessed by the Member State that issued it (Articles 12 and 14 in Dublin III; Article 9 in Dublin II).
3. Illegal entry. If none of the above criteria applies, applicants without residence documents or family present who have illegally transited through another Member State when entering the territory of the European Union are the responsibility of the first Member State in which they arrived (Article 13 in Dublin III; Article 10 in Dublin II).
4. Place of application. Where none of the criteria applies, responsibility lies with the first Member State in which the applicant filed a claim of asylum (Article 13 in Dublin II).

The Dublin system was able to fill a gap that existed until the late 1990s by clearly allocating responsibilities for asylum procedures. At that time, there were mainly bilateral negotiations on responsibility, but these had to be re-initiated on a case-by-case basis outside a common European framework. With Dublin and the gradual introduction of support mechanisms for Member States (such as the EURODAC registration database), the number of Dublin requests

has increased rapidly since 2008. However, since many of the requests were so-called take-back requests ("illegal entry" and jurisdiction of the country of entry) and other criteria were ignored, a reform of Dublin III is increasingly being considered (Fratzke, 2015, 5-6).

3.2.2 The EU-Turkey refugee deal

Since the so-called 'EU-Turkey refugee real" was established in March 2016, it has been propagated by representatives of relevant EU institutions as a milestone in European refugee policy. However, Carrera, den Hertog & Stefan (2017) argue that the same institutions are afraid to see the deal as a product of their own policies. The background is a lawsuit filed by two asylum seekers in Greece against the deal before the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU). In the indictment, they invoked a violation of the so-called non-refoulement requirement, the ban on collective expulsion, and the assumption that Turkey was a safe third country. The proceedings also revealed a fundamental disagreement between the representatives of the plaintiffs and the EU institutions regarding the legal position of the deal. None of the institutions sees the EU-Turkey-Refugee deal as their own work (Carrera et al., 2017)

Although the plaintiffs presented several indications that this was the case (such as conference documents with the logos of the institutions), the court initially sided with the EU institutions. Carrera (et al., 2017) assume that the strategy of the EU Council, European Commission and other institutions was to protect the deal from possible judicial (ECtHR) and political (European Parliament) control. Instead of finding a common position of all relevant EU institutions and negotiating as the EU with third countries such as Turkey, the deal was merely a statement of political will. Carrera (et al. 2017) assumes that this approach is not only difficult to reconcile with the legal and political practices of the EU, but that it will also damage the EU's common asylum policy, which has already been in difficult straits for many years:

> *The EU-Turkey Refugee Deal challenges these Treaty-based standards. It constitutes a form of crisis-led governance that falls outside and challenges the EU Treaty framework. The Statement can therefore be read as an attempt to reverse 'Lisbonisation' of EU migration policies and a far-reaching step backwards to intergovernmental logics of European cooperation which escape the rules and procedures laid down in the Treaties and inter-institutional arrangements. Claiming that it was in fact the Member States which agreed on the Statement in their capacity as 'independent international law actors' also results in excluding the involvement of the Court of Justice in Luxembourg in scrutinising the deal's compliance with EU refugee rights commitments and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Carrera et al., 2017, 8).*

Heck et al. (2017) argue that the EU-Turkey-Refugee Statement is also part of a 'border regime'. In this interpretation, nations act as active geopolitical players with far-reaching consequences

for newcomers. The term channels a deeper understanding of how borders work, according to Heck et al. (2017: 10). For example, Syrian refugees had a special status in Turkey. Even before the increased migration flows in the summer of 2015, Syrians were experiencing increasingly difficult living conditions in Turkey. The background of this was the abolition of a relatively liberal refugee policy towards Syrians. However, when Turkey began to face increasing political and military conflict with Kurds on its own territory in the years before 2015, the guest-status of the Syrian refugees was increasingly restricted, including the increased probability of total border closures. Turkey also has existing disagreements with EU decision-makers regarding the recognition of newcomers as refugees (ibid.):

> *The Turkish state's refugee and asylum policy has been another item producing constant tension with the EU. Turkey is a signatory to the UN's 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol, but it has maintained the geographical limitation clause of the Convention. It therefore only accepts applicants coming from Europe - the borders of which are defined by the European Council - as "convention refugees" (Heck et al. 2015, 41).*

For the present work these points are relevant geopolitical background, and for fleeing people everyday reality. Employees of the REACT program expressed concerns in interviews about how carelessly human lives are played out in this context, especially when newcomers (have to) stay in transit zones close to the border, for example on Greek islands. In addition, the low predictability of the needed number of housing units created uncertainty for the municipality, as the situation remained difficult throughout 2016 and beyond. UNHCR has had to regularly adjust data about new arrivals in the area of Thessaloniki (Interview 4, 2017)(Interview 6, 2018).

3.2.3 EU relocation scheme at a crossroads

The EU relocation scheme was seen as one of the policy responses to the so-called refugee crisis of 2015, with a fixed distribution key for the relocation of vulnerable refugees from Greece and Italy to other Member States. The approach, applied outside the Dublin regulation, was intended to signal European solidarity and prevent particularly vulnerable persons from being in danger in so-called 'hotspots', which were mainly located on Greek islands (European Commission (2017, 1).

Despite declarations of intent by states, the program's objectives were not achieved. In total, more than 95,000 people were supposed to be taken in by other countries. In reality, according to figures from the European Commission (2017, 1), less than a third of them (less than 25,000) had left Greece since 2015.

Several countries, including Austria, showed no effort of European solidarity, by refusing to host relocation candidates from Greece at all, not living up to legal commitments set by the EU (European Commission, 2018).

Member State	Relocated from Italy	Relocated from Greece	Total	Legal commitment
Austria	15	0	15	1,953
Belgium	361	698	1,059	3,812
Bulgaria	0	50	50	1,302
Croatia	18	60	78	968
Cyprus	47	96	143	320
Czech Republic	0	12	12	2,691
Estonia	0	141	141	329
Finland	779	1,201	1,980	2,078
France	377	4,322	4,699	19,714
Germany	3,972	5,197	9,169	27,536
Hungary	0	0	0	1,294
Ireland	0	646	646	600
Latvia	27	294	321	481
Liechtenstein	0	10	10	
Lithuania	29	355	384	671
Luxembourg	211	271	482	557
Malta	67	101	168	131
Netherlands	842	1,709	2,551	5,947
Norway	816	693	1,509	
Poland	0	0	0	6,182
Portugal	315	1,192	1,507	2,951
Romania	45	683	728	4,180
Slovakia	0	16	16	902
Slovenia	60	172	232	567
Spain	205	1,096	1,301	9,323
Sweden	1,202	1,619	2,851	3,766
Switzerland	877	574	1,421	
TOTAL	**10,265**	**21,238**	**31,503**	**98,255**

Fig. 13: Relocations carried out by member states and associated countries 2015 - 2017

Source: European Comission (2018)

3.2.4 Vulnerability in the current framework

Vulnerability within the Dublin System

Greece's role as a asylum receiving country was in need of reform even before the first years of the financial crisis in 2008, and before the current reforms of Dublin III. Several international and European institutions have shown the poor coordination of Greece's national asylum system, which has negative impacts on people newly arriving. In addition, there have been doubts about the conformity to human rights laws when it comes to the residence and accommodation of refugees (Fratzke, 2015). These doubts went so far that in 2008 and 2009 several countries temporarily stopped Dublin transfers to Greece. Prior to this, EC had already urged member states to make greater use of Dublin criteria other than the repatriation clause. In 2011, there was finally a highly relevant court ruling (M.S.S. v. Belgium and Greece) by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) (ibid.)

It was found that Belgium should not have carried out a transfer to Greece because of the repatriation clause since human rights standards were not respected in Greece. This and further judgments of the European judiciary eventually led to the implementation of paragraphs in the Dublin III Regulation, which prevent repatriations if human rights cannot be respected in the recipient country. In theory, this mechanism was intended to affect all Member States within Dublin III, but in practice, it was mainly Greece that was affected. Other countries, such as Italy or Bulgaria, continued to receive repatriated asylum seekers, despite the countries poor economic conditions and possible human rights violations (Fratzke 2015, 11).

The increased and unilateral use of repatriation clauses and a *"blind eye"* (Fratzke, 2015, 11) approach in assessing human rights compliance in recipient states has, since the application of Dublin, led to the increased vulnerability of newcomers. Fratzke (2015, 17) cites the separation of families in the course of the asylum process as another reason for vulnerability. Fratze (2015, 18) further explains that Member States often lack the administrative know-how to make decisions about legal repatriation or to implement them. On the other hand, there are Member States that have circumvented these legal provisions by arguing that no infringement proceedings have yet been initiated against states other than Greece.

Nevertheless, according to Fratzke (2015, 18) *"the ECtHR's Grand Chamber ruled in late 2014 that Member States' must obtain specific assurances prior to the transfer of a family with children, including appropriate reception conditions and the ability to remain together."* Another source of vulnerability is the prolonged period between newcomers' arrival and a decision on their individual asylum status. The Dublin regulation delays this period since authorities may wait months or even years for a Dublin request to be processed, as Fratzke describes:

> *Application of the Dublin procedures will, unavoidably, delay the review of an asylum applicant's claim. Even in successful cases, delaying access to protection has a cost for receiving communities, including delayed integration and lost human capital. The longer it takes to determine an application's status, the more time passes before those who are eventually recognised can access language courses or other integration support, or fully enter the labour force, raising the potential for long-term dependency and marginalisation* (Fratzke, 2015, 18)

A report by the European Greens (Masouridou & Kyprioti, 2018) underlines the above-mentioned points of analysis and expresses additional criticism, both of the so-called refugee-deal and of the Greek-Turkish border regime and its shifts and effects in recent years. A de facto detention of arriving newcomers, which contradicts European human rights, has been identified as an essential point of criticism in connection with this. In conjunction with the refugee deal, so-called hotspots should ensure the systematic handling of repatriations. Instead, according to the authors (Masaridiou et al., 2018, p.5), the individual rights of newcomers in the hotspots are systematically violated, above all by de facto detention. A so-called soft-law approach, such as the refugee-deal, undermines the European legislative process from the point of view of the European Greens. Furthermore, the rights of newcomers are violated when they are stuck in hotspots. Without a majority in Parliament, the European Green Party represents an opposing viewpoint to the supporters of the policy decisions of recent years. In their view (Masouridou et al. 2018), these policies (refugee-deal, hotspots) should by no means serve as the basis of a future formulation of a common European asylum policy.

In practice, however, the extra-parliamentary statement of the refugee deal (both without the involvement of the European Parliament and without the involvement of the national parliaments) has had a de-facto legislative effect, since it continuously and consistently influences European asylum policy and the Greek-Turkish border regime. Moreover, it undermines the existing EU asylum policy, which has been legitimised by parliament. The EU relocation programme should have transferred 160,000 people to safe countries since 2015. According to Masouridou (et al. 2018), around 65,000 people were to be transferred from Greece to other EU countries, but only one-third actually were (it is telling though how even the European Green Party uses terminology like 'burden sharing' and 'burden dumping' to describe the lack of willingness of states to provide asylum, ultimately implying that some member states view the Geneva Convention and people applying for asylum as nothing more than a 'burden'):

> *The EU relocation scheme of September 2015, which meant to relocate a total of 160,000 asylum seekers within the EU, was officially concluded, on schedule, in September 2017. However, of the targeted 66,400 asylum seekers that were to be relocated from Greece to other EU countries, only 21,994 were effectively transferred to other EU Member States. UNHCR therefore called for*

> *the relocation scheme to be extended beyond the deadline of 26 September 2017. Yet, quite the opposite was the case. In the aftermath of the EU-Turkey statement, the Relocation Decisions were implicitly amended to the effect that the criterion of entrance to the EU prior to 20 March 2016 was added. As a result, refugees – such as Syrians – were arbitrarily excluded from the relocation scheme. Thus, a scheme designed for a degree of 'burden sharing' among Member States was overrun by a policy of 'burden dumping' on Greece (Masouridou et al, 2018, p. 8).*

For vulnerable people, the refugee-deal and the Greek-Turkish border regime, including the hotspot approach, represent a particularly difficult situation. Masouridou (et al. 2018, 25) concludes from the study results that the rights of these persons have been and are being violated. Due to opaque, inefficient, and partly inadequate methods of determining vulnerability, detection rates are far below the actual number of vulnerable persons (vulnerability can be caused by age, illness, gender, mental state, sexual orientation or other factors, as well as by the danger of conviction in the home country due to political and/or personal discrimination due to these factors)(ibid.)

The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and the Reception Identification Service (RIS) are responsible for determining vulnerability. In practice, however, according to Masaridou (et al. 2018: 25), there are massive shortcomings in their cooperation and thus in detection:

> *In practice, the EASO staff that conducts the first instance examination is also directly involved in the identification of vulnerability - a procedure which is not prescribed by Greek law, but by EASO's internal procedures, which leave the assessment of vulnerability to the discretion of the EASO staff. No clear framework regulates this joint procedure between domestic and EASO staff; their respective roles and competences are not clearly defined (Masouridou, 2018, 21).*

According to Masaridou (et al. 2018: 22), the actual assessments by RIS or EASO do not involve the use of sufficiently suitable methods or any method at all. In cases in which persons were examined for their vulnerability, a study by the European Greens (Masaridou et al. 2018, 22) found a total of 33 negative assessments out of 40 investigations, which, according to the experts of the study, should have been considered vulnerable.

This means, that vulnerable refugees do often not receive the status as such, and are thus being put at a high risk. Newcomers could also not get adequate access to juridical procedures because of the notoriously understaffed and ill-located courts responsible for the handling of request from so-called hotspots (ibid).

3.3 Intermediate conclusions B

a Research question a

Thessaloniki has a long history of migration. Especially the peaceful co-existence of different religions shaped this history. In the field of housing policy, a look into the past is helpful, because in several historical times many migrants had to be provided with housing. The rapid urbanisation of the post-war years in the early 1990s served as a basis for the relatively smooth integration of people from Albania and the former Soviet Union.

Although there were tendencies towards social segregation, the existing high-density housing system was able to contribute to the accommodation of them. The city therefore has experience in organising such processes. In the current emergency situation, these experiences should be channelled in order to help refugees from the often dangerous and inhumane situations in "hospitality structures" (camps).

Map 03: Location of hotspots (in white) and competent courts (in black)

Source: Masaridou et al. (2018)

b Research question b

The flawed EU Dublin regulation and the EU Relocation strategy were indirectly and partly responsible for start of REACT. In 2015 and 2016 newcomers could still be reunited with their families via Dublin III, for instance. Later during the year 2016, such transfers were made harder to achieve due to the failure of the EU Relocation Strategy. Member states lacked a basic understanding of European solidarity, and thus brought the strategy to an end. Refugees in Thessaloniki waiting for an asylum decision and people with an 'official' asylum status still live in camps and apartments in the city (Interview C, 2017).

They should be able to access programs like REACT, which has already had an influence on the role of the city as a provider of housing. Though in a different form than being a builder or a dedicated provider of social housing, though the management of rentals the city could potentially develop a contemporary version of an municipal housing policy. In order for such a development to be sustainable, financing has to be taken care of. Also, project partners, have to share a common committment to institutional reform.

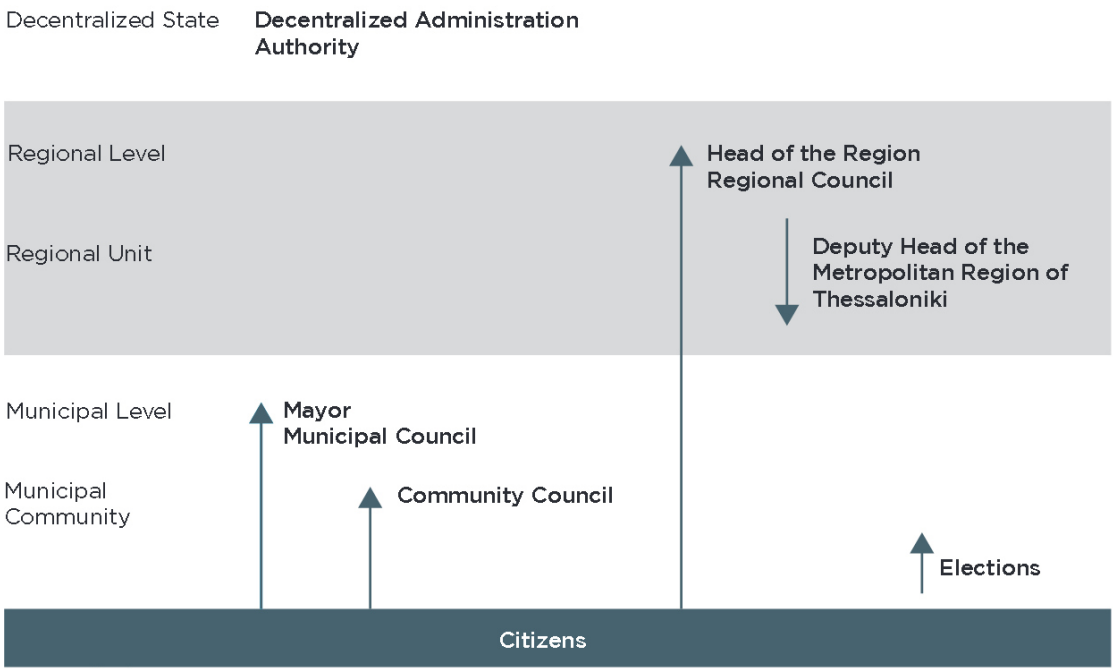


Fig. 14: Governance Structure of Thessaloniki, Greece

Source: Resilient City Thessaloniki Strategy (2016)

4 The REACT program and its development

The main idea of REACT is to find apartments suitable for newcomers. Although the city has vacant stock that could be accessed, it is hard to convince owners to allow their property to be used for this purpose. Among other reasons, they fear that organizations will not pay the rent or are reluctant to give away their home for a period as short as the financing scheme's one-year duration (Deprez et al. 2016). Within these neighbourhoods, the typical multi-storey apartment buildings are characteristic of the built environment.

A political decision to close camps was taken by the Greek government early in 2017 ("Greek Forum of Refugees" 2017). According to the minister of migration policy, Yiannis Mouzalas, the majority of camps will be closed in 2018, and people will be moved to apartments in cooperation with municipalities and NGOs ("Greek Forum of Refugees" 2017). Though later in 2018, it became clear the Greek government did, as on expert assumed, only pay lip service to such plans. Contrary to the plans, a number of four camps was reopened in June 2016 (Infomigrants, 2018).

In the city of Thessaloniki, a variety of housing responses were initiated following the events of 2015. These have been both private initiatives, as well as efforts by UNHCR. Renting hotels was seen as an intermediate strategy to house a large number of people in one place (Deprez et. al. 2016). In November 2016, over 900 people were accommodated in such facilities, which were run directly by the UNHCR. A second approach is to cooperate with municipalities and NGOs and fund them to find apartments suitable for newcomers. Several organizations were involved in the provision of apartments (and still were in 2018). For instance, PRAKSIS is an NGO that helps vulnerable groups with medical and social support. They manage the apartments themselves (Deprez et. al. 2016). The municipality of Thessaloniki had also been active in establishing its own approach

> *to contribute to the overall effort of addressing the refugee crisis in Greece, by identifying and establishing 888 accommodation places in private apartments / collective centres and host families, by providing basic support services (including apartment maintenance, interpretation and accompaniment services, legal and psychosocial services and referrals to medical assistance and schools) to the accommodated asylum seekers and relocation candidates (REACT, 2017b)*

REACT program in 2016 and continues throughout 2018. This thesis seeks to investigate how it operates as well as how it has changed its mode of operation from the first program period to the second and later periods.

4.1 Initial set-up of REACT (2016-2017)

Agenda setting process

During the first interview cycle, one interviewee (Interview A, 2017) pointed out that even before the signing of the first PPA in March 2016, a group within or close to the city administration was exchanging information on the possibility of refugee newcomers being housed in flats. The exchange was informal (ibid.) The background was the idea of placing people and families in an environment where they would have increased autonomy in their daily lives. Within this administration-related information group, the opinion prevailed that accommodation in hotels would be better than in refugee camps, but still not ideal for those affected. The informal exchange also addressed the organisation of furniture and food, but was overall limited to a few housing units (Interview A, 2017).

According to one expert (Interview D, 2017) in the extended circle of program managers, REACT was officially launched in 2016. Their first contract with the UNHCR was signed at the end of May. AProject Partnership Agreement (PPA) was signed at the end of May 2015. In contrast to other municipalities, from the outset, Thessaloniki pursued an approach that saw the municipality as the main partner. At the time of the first PPA, Thessaloniki was the only municipality that attempted to implement the programme on its own initiative. After Thessaloniki, Athens and other municipalities started programmes, but tended to outsource them or work with private partners. Athens, for example, outsourced the programme to its own urban development company. Thessaloniki's first staff member was hired in July 2016 (ibid.)

Even in the first phase of implementation, attempts were made to design a process that would involve several project partners. A regional network was formed with the neighbouring communities of Napoli/Sykies and Kalamaria. In addition, NGOs were called in to provide psychosocial support for future residents. In the language of the network, refugee newcomers were referred to as People of Concern (POCs). In addition to psychosocial support (through ARSIS, PRAKSIS), important cornerstones of the programme included leisure activities for children (through the YMCA), while other NGOs helped residents with legal questions (Greek Council of Refugees, Helenic League of Human Rights)(Interview D, 2017).

The highest political level of Thessaloniki maintains a clear position on the humane treatment of refugee newcomers: in one interview, the current mayor, Yiannis Boutaris, confirmed this, stating, "*We are against camps!*" (Interview B, 2017) as a brief summary of his position. Thus, in 2017, the city government adopted the clear position of directing housing strategies for refugees towards permanent housing in apartments. Agenda-setting was therefore carried out by the city government, in the sense that the need for humane housing was

addressed directly. Boutaris (ibid.) mentions small political wars between the politicians of different communities. Some mayors and their political parties chose a strategy of populism towards newcomers. The manifestation of this sentiment led to the adequate equipment of camps such as Diavata to being partially halted, for example.

Only gradually did the situation in the Thessaloniki region stabilize. The mayor of Thessaloniki advocated for the implementation of strategies such as the later REACT program. In our interview, he referred to the difficult situation of the first few months of autumn 2015, when newcomers were often homeless (Interview B, 2017).

Funding by the European Union

First, in autumn 2015, Greece did not have a suitable body to implement programmes such as the Relocation for Accommodation Programme (which later became REACT in Thessaloniki). As a result, the UNHCR helped out as the city's lead partner. Normally, according to one interviewee (Interview 4, 2017), the UNHCR does not act in this way if the region is within a member state of the European Union. However, in this case, the refugee organisation of the United Nations acted as a start-up aid and facilitated short-term and medium-term solutions for the provision of adequate housing (ibid.)

The core business of the housing programmes is 100% financed by the European Union. Funding is provided by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). ECHO enables the European Union to *"respond to disasters of exceptional scale within the European Union"* (European Commission, 2018). The legal basis for implementation is Council Regulation (EU) 2016/369:

> *According to the legislation, the decision to activate such emergency support within the European Union can be taken by the Council following a proposal made by the Commission. The first activation took place on 16 March 2016 for the current influx of refugees and migrants into the European Union. It is proposed to distribute a total of €700 million in different tranches between 2016 & 2018 (European Commission, 2018).*

Accommodation for Relocation

It is important to note that REACT was originally launched as a Relocation for Accommodation program. Accommodation in individual flats in the urban environment was therefore only intended as temporary accommodation as an alternative to other forms (such as camps). In autumn 2015, the UNHCR launched or continued humanitarian projects as part of the re-

sponse to transnational movements. The basis for these efforts was the formal agreement of the EU Member States on a common strategy for relocation within the EU. The aim was to relocate people within the framework of intra-European agreements to other countries in order to assist Greece in its humanitarian efforts (Interview D, 2017).

In practice, the Accommodation for Relocation program was initiated specifically for temporary accommodation in apartments, hotels, and host families. Several municipalities were partners in the implementation. Special target groups were unaccompanied minors and vulnerable groups (UNHCR C, 2017). In its local execution, the program can be understood as a preliminary stage of the REACT program, whereby both programs were closely intertwined right from the start. Nevertheless, separate programmes with their own contracts have been and continue to be implemented at other locations (Interview D, 2017) UNHCR had mandate for a total of 20,000 places in apartments or with host families in Greece by the end of 2016 (ibid.)

Referrals of beneficiaries by UNHCR

The implementing partners have no formal influence on the selection of newcomers for the housing programme. It is done exclusively by UNHCR. An official document reads as follows:

> *Beneficiaries are referred to partners by UNHCR based on a strictly defined procedure. UNHCR has also the responsibility of the initial combination of beneficiaries' placement while it also organizes their transportation to the apartments. UNHCR and the partner are in close collaboration for coordinating this initial process and are from then on always in contact to address any issue arising during the beneficiaries' stay under their responsibility (UNHCR, 2017).*

First adoptions of the program

It quickly became apparent that many newcomers were not eligible to be relocation candidates. The original set-up had to be adapted. Arriving newcomers were eligible for relocation until March 2016, but not afterwards. Two central reasons for them to stay in Greece were family reunification and vulnerability (Interview D, 2017). After March 2016, the political situation in Europe became increasingly restrictive in terms of the implementation of an EU-wide relocation programme. These circumstances led to the concrete adaptation of the Accommodation for Relocation programme in Thessaloniki. Refugees and families applying for asylum in Greece were also gradually considered for a place (ibid.)

Dual role of the NGO's

NGOs have had a dual role since the beginning: on the one hand, they were involved as project partners in the future REACT programme, on the other hand, individual NGOs signed their own PPAs with the UNHCR in order to be able to provide housing and places in host families themselves. Personnel for health, mental, and legal support as well as back office and other positions will be provided to the NGOs for their by REACT and vice versa (Interview D, 2017).

A person close to REACT remarked in the interviews that it was a conscious strategic decision by the community to bring NGOs on board despite their, what at first sight appears to be, competing position. A joint approach with NGOs as a public consortium or equal project partners under the leadership of the municipality was finally considered more sustainable than a strictly separate approach (ibid, 2018).

NGOs were able to be much more flexible in their search for housing: they were able to pay commissions to real estate agencies. Due to several factors, such agencies are very present in Thessaloniki. Since there is (no longer) any social housing construction, and there has been increased fluctuation in property and rental housing offers since 2010, agencies have become central players in the search for real estate (Interview D, 2018). The only social housing entity, OEK, was shut down in the wake of the memorandum, which gave agencies more market share: "*The organisation constructed and sold houses and apartments in subsidised rates (50% of their commercial value) to low-income households, while it offered rent and loan subsidies as well*" (Karagianni, 2013, as read in Potsiou et al., 2010).

Despite REACT's cooperation with NGOs in some areas, organizations such as ARSIS and PRAKSIS have been quasi-competitors in the search for apartments. In addition, these NGOs have pursued a different strategy by also renting entire houses (Interview D, 2017).

Open call for apartment rental

One of the interviewees mentioned the bureaucracy within the municipal administration as an obstacle to the programmes rapid implementation. However, according to the experts (Interview D, 2017), the increased administrative effort was necessary in order to be able to consider important details when allocating housing.

The municipality of Thessaloniki attached great importance not only to the exact definition of the demand side, but also the supply side: Although the UNHCR set precise indicators for the minimum standards of housing, the municipality was of the opinion that the economic and spatial circumstances of housing providers should also be carefully considered. In particular, they wanted to avoid too high a concentration of ownership among wealthy individuals or

companies that could use the program for their financial interest (Interview D, 2017). In order to achieve a high degree of transparency and fairness in the allocation of funds, an open call for offers and an urban advertising offensive were conducted. All of the city's residents had the opportunity to apply to rent out their vacant apartments or act as host families. Furthermore, the municipality organised events where potential landlords and host families could invite new arrivals to their homes to get to know each other. Some of these encounters ended in a tenancy agreement via REACT or a stay in a hosting familie's place (ibid.)

Ensuring legality and safety

In order to be considered as a landlord, some hurdles had to be overcome. In contrast to camp structures, which can ideally be adapted to the latest security standards either during the construction of a new camp or when the living environment is adapted, apartments have to be inspected in a time-consuming manner (Interivew D, 2017).

Applications for rentals received through the municipality are subject to this procedure. Landlords are required to have the residence checked for basic habitation by an expert. They need an exact electrical plan by an electrician (to ensure that there is a power supply for appliances. Also, they must have certificates confirming the safety of their appliances, as well as a confirmation of the ability to heat and cool the residence (which is relevant in Southern Europe in the summer months, compared to Central or Western European countries)(ibid.).

Such time-consuming inspections were necessary in almost all cases. For example, few apartments in Thessaloniki have energy certificates. To apply for participation in REACT, owners first had to pay for the certificates themselves (Interview D, 2017).

Choosing a location for apartments

In the first year, an official consensus was formed that individual apartments should not be distributed in only a few places in the city, but rather scattered throughout the entire urban area. It was thought that better integration could be achieved by dividing such residences into several places. The idea was to create relationships between old and new residents, in contrast to camp structures outside the urban area. In the interviews, however, it became evident that the strategy was also deliberately designed to defuse tensions among long-term Thessaloniki residents "worried" about a high number of new arrivals in their neighbourhoods. There was a wait-and-see mood in this regard, contributed to by media reports that highlighted the conditions in the camps. Sometimes, instead of solidarity, such images were causing xenophobia (Interview D, 2017).

Fast-track application

Obstacles such as the strict bureaucratic requirements made it necessary to adapt the landlord application procedure. Citizens should not be deterred by the many requirements. The so-called *"fast-track application"* (Interview D, 2017) saw a committee visit the flat before the owner applied for any certificates, in order to determine its general suitability.

> *They have a list of criteria and they visite the apartments and then they decide and they publish their minutes and they share it with the landlord. With the person that applied. And so the fast track approach meant that the committee would visit your house. An you would know whether your apartment was deemed suitable or unsuitable before you went into the trouble of gathering all certificates and invesiting in costly certificates (Interview D, 2018).*

Thus, owners knew immediately whether or not their dwelling would be deemed suitable or not. This also offers incentives for homeowners who want to get a check of their flat (ibid).

4.2 From shelter to accommodation

During our talks, several of the interviewees expressed the view that life in the camp structures was inhumane, problematic, or, at the very least, in need of improvement (Interview A, 2017) (Interview B, 2017)(Interview D, 2017)(Interview E, 2017). Other interviewees expressed the opinion that housing newcomers in camp structures is suitable for the time, until a decision on their asylum status is made, in order to provide them with a stable living situation while they wait. However, this assessment was relativized in the sense that it only applies to modern camp structures with the highest structural standards. The interviewee did acknowledge that there are major deficiencies in some of the other camps (Interview C, 2017).

In the expert interviews, our discussions of the situation in the camps was limited to two camps, Diavata and Serres, both of which are located in the metropolitan region of Thessaloniki. Serres, in particular, is considered to embody best practices in the construction of so-called "hospitality structures" (a euphemistic term for camps). None of the interviewees had first-hand experience with either the conditions or the procedures within other camps, for example, those on islands near the Turkish border. According to media reports, inhumane and in at least three cases fatal conditions prevailed there in 2017 (Smith, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017d).

From an everyday perspective, several of the interviewees agreed that housing residents in urban dwellings would simplify housing newcomers adequately. At the time of the first interviews in 2017, refugee children had restricted access to kindergartens and schools. In Serres, pre-school aged children went to kindergarten in containers inside the camps. School-aged children did not have school in the morning. In the afternoon, they were taken to urban or suburban schools in communities near the camps by bus (Interview C, 2017).

This separation of into morning and afternoon schools is not an ideal solution, but was organisationally necessary, as the nearby schools would not have been able to integrate all the children into a morning class. Formally, the afternoon schools were not schools, but colleges. The army provided the organizational support for this initiative. Young people up to age 15 were able to attend such colleges. Older children had problems finding school or training places, according to an interviewee in the community administration and education sector (Interview A, 2017). If refugees were provided housing in the urban area or in citizens' own homes, the schools would have fewer problems with the admission of new children, since newcomers would be spread out across the city, in different municipalities and different school districts (Interview A, 2017).

Residents in the camps do have the possibility of leaving the structures, but this chance is limited by the camps' isolated locations and poor transport connections. Someone involved in the organisation of the camps spoke explicitly of segregation (Interview C, 2017). Further-

more, this person recognized that this segregation could be perceived as a "ghetto". What they meant, however, was not to throw prejudice at communities living in separate places (as the term has a problematic connotation to use it carelessly). Rather, they were referring to negative consequences for the camps inhabitants, who had to live there (ibid.).

At the time of the first interviews, the camp in Serres had a high percentage of Yazidi residents. According to the interviewee (Interview C, 2017), it made little sense to carry out transfers to flats in the case of this camp, which had a relatively high building standard, since the Yazidi population have a positive view of their proximity to counselling and health facilities within the camp. Yazidi families in Serres-camp would therefore prefer to continue living in temporary accommodation of Serres, especially those who see the prospect of seeking asylum in another country. Furthermore, the Yazidi are considered a particularly vulnerable group, as many of them have been traumatized by events in their home countries and the political persecution of their religion. Therefore, Yazidi residents would hardly consider settling in city dwellings. From the expert's point of view, structures such as Serres, described as modern camps, also offer specific advantages for Yazidis, such as volleyball courts (Interview C, 2017).

A particularly important aspect of the interviews was the combination of housing issues with educational and labour market issues. The interviewees found that transfers to housing would only made sense if they were undertaken in combination with such measures in these areas. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), which is responsible for the implementation of camps, began developing additional programmes to address these issues in mid-2017. At the time of the interviews, however, these measures were not very pronounced. This can be seen as a danger, in that, after a transfer, individuals may find themselves in difficult personal situations due to a lack of language skills and low chances in the labour market. Both of these problems could be alleviated with a support system in their immediate environment (Interview C, 2017).

Healthcare is another topic of interest in the camps. Doctors Without Borders have permanent staff and infrastructure in camps such as Serres, but, in emergencies, patients are transferred to the nearest hospital. Residents in the camp are also transported to other locations for legal reasons, such as for questions that cannot be answered on site, or in the course of their asylum applications. The UNHCR is primarily responsible for transporting residents in these cases, as they are cooperation partners with local staff in camps such as Serres (ibid.).

According to an IOM implementation manager, the greatest limitation for the residents in better-equipped camps such as Serres is their high susceptibility to boredom and the resulting depression among the residents. Since they have freedom of movement outside the structures, but no structured daily routine, many fall into depression. The physical structure of the camps may be high quality. However, if social aspects are not considered, and residents'

self-determination is limited by a lack of offers, such effects cannot be avoided. Having one's own flat in an urban location would be advantageous in this context, since it is perceived as giving meaning to one's life, and would mean breaking away from the everyday life of living in a camp. In addition, better services would be available near apartments (Interview C, 2017).

There are different opinions regarding how long the existing camp structures will be used. Due to the political decision in 2017 to gradually close the camps, more concrete consideration has been given to the possibility of using them again for different purposes, even when instead of closing, four more camps have opened up since mid-2018. The IOM-expert interviewed was of the opinion that the camps could be used as alternative structures after a transition period, if they reached a minimum standard of structural and spatial quality (Interview C, 2017).

Other experts (Interview A, 2017) involved in the daily organisation of residents, on the other hand, thought that previous experience would make it realistic to estimate that camps such as Serres or Diavata could last up to three years as refugee camps. The government's decision to close the camps was either not yet known, or was interpreted as lip service by the minister in question due to political pressure after deaths in the island camps. Realistically, the experts believe that it could take several years to close the camps, maybe even up to 10 years. Due to political uncertainty and the lack of EU-wide quotas for relocation, strategies for urban housing are becoming increasingly important (Interview B, 2017).

Living in apartments close to cities is considered by some interviewees as much more suitable for refugee newcomers in terms of allowing them to integrate swiftly into the host culture (Interview D, 2017) (Interview E, 2017) (Interview F, 2017).Refugee newcomers can thus become more quickly involved in society, form networks, and influence their environment in their daily lives. An example of this is the improved opportunity to quickly learn a language. According to experience, language acquisition is much more difficult in camps, as the residents hardly experience any exchanges with Greek-speaking people in their everyday life. This social aspect seems to be very important in the opinion of the majority of interviewees, and programmes like REACT could help facilitate this process (Interview B, 2018).

4.3 Continuation (2017–2018)

After little more than a year, a second stay in Thessaloniki was carried out as part of the diploma thesis. The aim of this short-term scientific stay was to collect empirical material to assess the development of REACT. The short-term stay from March until May 2018 included another cycle of expert interviews, and scouting of additional sources. Partners within REACT were also interviewed. The REACT office of Kalamaria acted as a main informant. Kalamaria is directly

connected to the municipality of Thessaloniki and is located in the southeast of this municipality. A further focus was on interviewing people within the political-administrative complex in order to obtain answers on the implementation and future changes of Thessaloniki's housing policy.

Redefinition and adaption

Overall, the organisational framework of REACT remained approximately the same from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018. The basis for the financing and implementation was the renewal of the PPA by the existing partner consortium. The main difference is that in the course of the renewed financing period special attention was paid to the extension of the PPA to include integrative education and labour market measures. Housing should be seen as a core prerequisite for a regulated entry into the existing social fabric (Interview G, 2018).

Another change was the modification of some points of cooperation between the partner municipalities. In the last period 2016-2017, for example, the staff was organised centrally via the REACT office in Thessaloniki. In the new period, however, the partner municipalities Kalamaria and Napoli-Sykiez employ their own staff. In addition, regular procurements and inspections of technical and social kind are increasingly being organised directly via these partner municipalities (Interview G, 2018).

These procurements include the cleaning of the apartments, the provision of gas and petroleum, the processing of damage claims in the apartments and more. The cooperation between the partners has therefore been reformed. From a unit organised centrally via the REACT office in Thessaloniki to a more decentralised network of partners within the region. The municipality of Thessaloniki and the central REACT office were often hindered by bureaucratic processes and could not adequately make strategic decisions. This resulted in a division of competencies in the areas of personnel and procurement between partners. The aim was to increase efficiency within the respective partners administrations (Interview G, 2018).

End of the EU relocation strategy

One of the original impulses for establishing an urban housing programme for refugees was the European Union's relocation strategy. At Kalamaria's REACT office, during the period 2017-2018, it is assumed that this strategy failed due to a lack of trans-European solidarity and that the REACT program will therefore also change (Interview G, 2017).

Though the relative high uncertainty among the municipal authorities of Kalamaria as to whether the beneficiaries will remain in the REACT programme after the current period should be mentioned. Relocation was de facto stopped. Nevertheless, there are some EU states

that will allow so-called reunification cases as a reason for relocation within the framework of Dublin. In case newcomers have the prospect of reunification with their family in another EU country, the could be living in REACT flats but still be on the move later (Interview G, 2018).

Apartment scouting and fast track application

The basic procedures in the search for housing have remained the same since the last programming period. However, since the targets for housing units were reached in the first half of 2018, the focus in May 2018 was not on finding housing, but on stabilising bureaucratic and everyday procedures. Although applications continue to be accepted, the active search by the municipality of Kalamaria has been paused. When a new number of beneficiaries is defined, applications that have already been submitted will be considered. These could no longer be processed as a fast-track option in the first half of the year. The municipality was able to save financial resources by pausing the fast track option for owners of apartments (Interview G, 2018).

Like other municipalities and districts in the metropolitan region, Kalamaria has a high density of real estate agencies. In the first year of the program, some of these agencies were still active as partners of REACT. Either were they integrated into the advertising concept or they voluntarily did not take commissions from REACT. Since the legal framework has not changed since 2016-2017, the REACT office in Kalamaria cannot offer any commissions in negotiations with agencies. Unfortunately, the willingness not to charge them has been reduced. As a result, there will be no more cooperation with agencies in the new program period. However, the advertising concept works well, as there are 1-2 applications every week for renting apartments to REACT (Interview G, 2018).

In general, it has been in the interest of agencies to offer large apartment buildings further away from the centres. However, REACT often declines such offers. The lack of services and poor connections to public transport caused the responsible persons to issue restrictions. In central locations, the agencies were less willing to exempt REACT from the payment of commissions (Interview G, 2018).

In-between approach by REACT

When it comes to the concrete distribution of dwellings and later residents in the urban fabric, the municipality of Kalamaria pursues an in-between strategy. On the one hand, one does not want to use houses located too far away from urban services and infrastructure; on the other hand, good locations are often difficult to obtain despite a high vacancy rate. REACT's Kalamaria office is therefore looking for housing options between these two variables. Due to the high

density of the built environment of the city, many locations are still in acceptable proximity of services and easily accessible by public transport (Interview G, 2018).

Another aspect is the distribution within the houses. REACT refers here to regulations at municipal level, which were adopted before 2015. These said that only one apartment should be provided in each house. As the REACT Thessaloniki (Interview D, 2017) office noted, this assumption is no longer realistic, as there would often be the opportunity to rent several apartments in one house. Either because the house owner has all the apartments, or because one owner has several apartments within a house. This means that this rule is no longer applied in practice. As an in-between solution, REACT Kalamaria is now trying to comply with a limit of two apartments (Interview G, 2018). Asked why it could not be 3 or 4, protesting inhabitants were cited as a reson. In one concrete case it was possible to use 5 apartments in one house for REACT through a mediation process, but in other cases the biased and xenophobic campaigns of neigbours prevailed. Thus the 2-flat solution is the current approach, which covers the requirements at present, in particular since there were no new targets numbers issued by UNHCR at the time of the interview (Interview G, 2018).

Apartment-sizes and price ranges

UNHCR imposes restrictions on the search for suitable housing. REACT Kalamaria reports that not much has changed in this respect since 2017 (Interview G, 2017). An apartment may not be smaller than 35m2, and this only in exceptional cases. The minimum size is 35m2. In the programme period 2017-2018, the sizes of the apartments will be divided into price categories, from which only in exceptional cases may be slightly deviated. REACT, as municipal institution, wants pay close attention to the housing market. It is seen as particularly important not to pay excessive prices to owners just to find new apartments (Interview G, 2018). Prices are:

1. Small apartments: 200-300€
2. Standard apartments: 300-400€
3. Large apartment: up to 450€
   (Interview G, 2018)

At the time of the interview, the municipality of Kalamaria was renting a total of 26 apartments. Thus an average overpayment would already have a slight influence on the market, which the municipality wants to avoid. Every apartment must therefore be approved by an suitability committee. It clarifies all questions of suitability on the basis of the UNHCR standards. The second task is not to accept apartments in the upper price segment (Interview G, 2018).

4.4 From accommodation to housing

The REACT programme also faces a challenge due to the unclear state of affairs about the future of European policies regarding newcomers and consequently funding of the REACT programme. As of now, because of the procedural workings of UN and EU funding bodies, the current arrangement only guarantees financial backing for one year at a time. For this reaon, current rentals by the municipalities of Thessaloniki, Kalamaria and Neapolis-Sykiesz do not constitute a stable housing framework (Interview D, 2017).

Although most contracts have been renewed in recent years, every new funding period presents a risk of policy changes on the International or European level. Thus, the current incarnation of the program must be considered an accomodation program, as in offering higher living adequacy than shelter solutions, but do not constitute a comprehensive housing-policy that covers all aspects of the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner's definition of adequate housing. Adequate housing should include legal security of tenure. REACT in its current incarnation can not offer such a security. By itself, it not a sustainable housing program for newcomers (ibid.).

Many interviewees share the wish for a larger role of the municipality in ensuring long-term stabiltity of the housing sector (Interview A, 2017)(Interview D, 2017)(Interview E, 2017). Though it is also acknowledged by one expert, that this means a dramatic shift from the post-war model of housing policy and its according framework:

> *"They must! Greek local authorities must learn to work on housing. Housing was always an issue of the central state. And then it became an issue of the household itself. So we got very much used that the private households finding a way. People buy their own houses. And the state never really since the 1950 bothered with what is called housing policy, which is the heart of every planning policy if you like. Now it is the time that the local authorities should get into that heart and learn." (Interview E, 2017).*

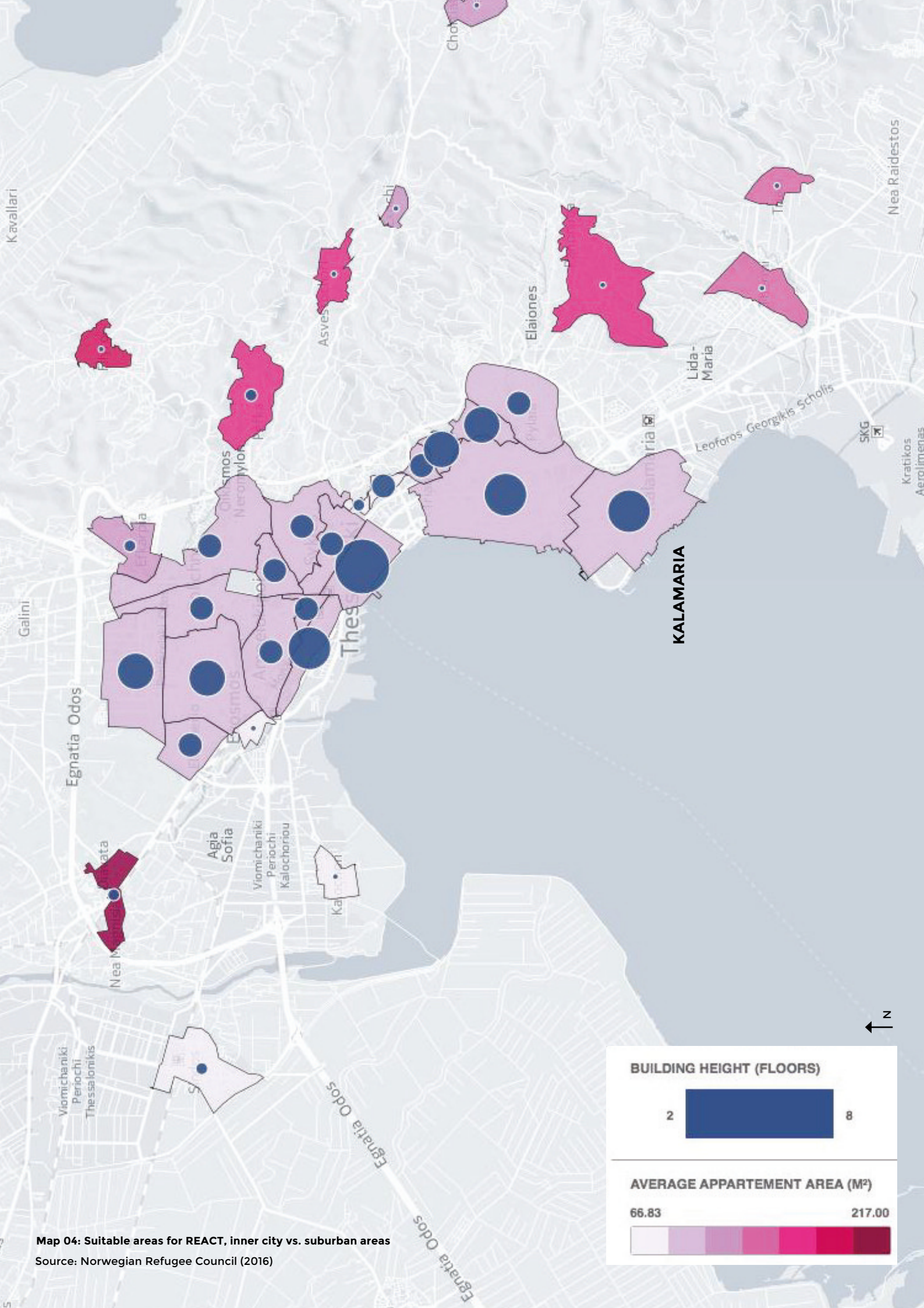
Furthermore, regarding housing for newcomers, the same expert suggests that municipal-level-policy is the right level to tackle housing issues, and rejects the idea that that state-led housing policy could be successful: *"The Greek state should decide to leave this authority to the local authorities. Full stop. There is no reason for OEK or any other body to get involved, because this is a local policy. I strongly believe in local government" (Interview E, 2017).*

Apartment location with potential

Figure 14 shows data collected by the NRC to distinguish basic housing data for the municipality of Thessaloniki. It clearly shows suitability of apartments for REACT in the city center. Here the prices are can be higher, but enough apartments are on the housing market. Eastern neighborhoods share the same tendencies, but have lower monthly rent costs than the center. Best suited would be the western districts, because of their relatively low average price for rent. No option are suburbean areas, mainly because they tend to have higher ground floor sizes, which don't suit the criteria for REACT. Also, access to services is not as good as elsewhere, according to the Norwegian Refugee Council (2016).

Metropolitan Areas	Average height (floors)	Average size per dwelling (sqm)	Offer for Rent(a.u.)	Offer for Sale (a.u.)	Average price for sale (€/ sqm)	Average price for rent (€/ sqm)
Historical neighborhoods	4	77,75	0,3	1,7	995	5,65
City center	8	80,9	1,0	7,0	1130	8,26
Eastern neighborhoods	4,62	73,01	0,8	4,0	1244	5,33
Western neighborhoods	4,1	78,47	0,1	0,5	820	3,83
Suburban areas	2,25	125,24	0,1	0,8	964	3,73

Fig. 15: Housing data by metropolitan areas in Thessaloniki
Source: Norwegian Refugee Council (2016)



Map 04: Suitable areas for REACT, inner city vs. suburban areas

Source: Norwegian Refugee Council (2016)

4.5 Intermediate conclusions C

a Research question a

The project partners of REACT as well as external experts share the opinion in the conducted interviews that housing strategies in existing buildings offer many advantages over camp structures, especially for the residents. From the point of view of camp managers, camps offer particular advantages if they have a high standard of construction and the residents have a short stay before their onward journey. Both points have proven to be unrealistic in recent years.

Some camps may meet the standard, but there are regular reports of neglected conditions in many other camps, for examples on Greek islands. The EU relocation programme has come to a de facto standstill, which means that camp residents will stay in the region on average for longer. The ability to live in one's own home improves access to education and urban infrastructure, and offers residents the opportunity to regain a certain degree of autonomy and dignity. Therefore, REACT offers unique potential for improving the lifes of refugee newcomers.

b Research question b

According to the interviewees, a great deal of basic knowledge about the housing sector in Thessaloniki could be gathered during the REACT project so far. For example, REACT acts as a quasi competitor to NGOs, to providers of short-term rentals (e.g. AIRBNB) and to landlords of student flats. Despite the lower achievable rents, for example compared to short-term rentals, owners value the community as a partner in renting out their apartments.

In the municipality of Kalamaria there were "only" 26 REACT apartments in mid-2018. However, for a municipality that has not yet built housing and has not been a player in the housing market, this figure is considerable. The success of the strategy will depend on whether it will be possible to ensure a sustainable continuation after the EU funding has ended.

Figuring out which apartments to rent is not only reliant on the availability, size and average rent prices (Figure 14), but also on Access to good infrastructure and services. Figure 15 shows a visualization by NRC that combines data sets of building heigh (floors) as an indicator for density, and connects them with average apartment ground floor areas. Clearly, locations in the suburban areas are less suitable for REACT, since apartments are too large and average building density is too low. Municipalities participating in REACT share a average to very good suitability (light purple areas). Kalamaria, of all Municipalities fits the best, because here REACT can still find suitable apartments on the market, in contrast to other municipalities.

5 Municipal urban strategy Thessaloniki

The main points of this chapter relate to the analysis of the documents collected and the interviews carried out. The second major source of this chapter is an expert interview during the second research cycle with a coordinator of the Resilient Cities office in Thessaloniki. In particular, questions were asked about the integration of REACT into an urban housing strategy. Not only the current state was examined, but also possible future scenarios of policy development (Interview F, 2018). Against the background of an increased relevance of cities as catalysts for urban development in the 21st century, the "Renaissance of Cities", the new role of cities as "Arrival City" or or juxtaposition of the "old" nation state with "new" levels of political decision-making, this work would like to shed light on the contemporary role of cities in housing policy. Due to its position as a southern European city, Thessaloniki has special peculiarities of urban and housing policy development. Nevertheless, an attempt is being made to find out whether a change in the self-image of the city of Thessaloniki as a central actor in urban politics has occurred in the last decade and how these can be described (Author, 2017).

5.1 New municipalism and urban democracy

At certain times in the 20th century, cities played an important role as centres of politics and knowledge. Hebbert (2007: 2) describes the role of cities at the beginning of the last century: "*Against the background of the economic and social upheavals brought about by industrialization, states (or confederations of states) were not the only level of political and creative action. Since states could not control the enormous extent of technological and social transformation alone, cities played a decisive role*". Cities mainly took over policy areas that states could not oversee efficiently enough. Their influence was also gained as a result of the lack of knowledge that state-run politics and administration possessed in relation to the shaping of everyday urban life. In the American context, representatives of cities argued that they:

> *"should have stronger powers and wider discretion precisely because of their ability to apply science directly to public welfare, learning directly from each other. There was an intense international traffic of innovations in housing, fire protection, public health, utilities, highways, transport, waste and park design" (Hebbert 2007: 3).*

The Union Internationale de Villes formed the first international political alliance in the early 20th century, even before the nation states made similar efforts (Ewen & Hebbert 2007: 327-340). With the gradual emergence of national political arrangements, this pioneering achieve-

ment of municipalism receded into the background. Left and right, discourses questioned the relevance of cities as political players (Hebbert 2007). In the course of the century, this weak position was to become even weaker, since the nation states represented the dominant construct on the European continent in the post-war period. Towards the end of the 20th century, a new understanding of municipalism emerged that is closely linked to a new understanding of urban planning and contributes to the fact that cities increasingly play an important role (ibid).

In contrast to the static concept of municipalism defined in the early 20th century as a "*platform for the exchange of knowledge among specialists on a university and bureaucratic level*" (Hebbert 2007: 3), the contemporary construct of New Municipalism takes a more democratic understanding of urban knowledge, urban politics, and urban practices (Caccia 2016). As a catalyst for the popularization of the term New Municipalism, Caccia (ibid.) mentions the political success of so-called citizen platforms in Spain, which are now represented in the country's representative political system (ibid.)

The best-known example is Barcelona en Cumo, an urban citizens' movement that won the municipal elections in Barcelona in 2015 ("De dónde venimos" 2018). The movement is closely linked to social alliances in the post-crisis years starting in 2008. The central role was played by the housing alliance Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (PAH), which opposed evictions due to bad credit. Its central personality, Ada Colau, is a member of Barcelona en Comu and is now the Mayor of Barcelona ("Plataforma de Afectados" 2016).

The success of Barcelona en Comu was particularly interesting for the self-image of the new Municipalism, since *"not only was it capable of eliciting powerful effects, both in political imagination and in reality, but it brought a new level of attention to the issue of alternative local governing in Europe"* ("From Citizen Platforms to" 2016).

5.2 Institutional reform at the local level

The Resilient City Strategy (RCS) was initiated at about the time as the first strategic responses to the transnational movements since 2015 were being developed. The first PPA of REACT was signed in March 2016. At the same time, the first workshops and information events of the resilient city strategy started. Exactly one year later it was passed. Despite its presence in recent years, the topic of migration hardly occupies any place in the main publication. Objective C defines very broad goals and measures under the title "Welcoming Thessaloniki". Medium and long-term housing policy measures are also not found. In general, the document does not include housing topics (Resilient City Strategy, 2017).

In an interview with the Resilient City office coordinator, it became clear that the strategy would like to pay more attention to these issues in the future. A new publication on urban

integration measures was written and published at the time of the meeting. Nevertheless, the gap in the area of housing policy is recognised as such. The interviewee refers to the centralised distribution of competences and the private market as the dominant player in housing policy (Interview F, 2018). The first instance of the strategy was mainly tied to the existing methodologies proposed by the Rockefeller Foundation for the inventory analysis of individual cities. Based on the method of SWOT analysis prominently represented in the planning disciplines, a process leading up to the first publication looked for the following:

> *Key shocks, stresses, but also the strong points of the city, so we did a big stakeholder process to come about with the preliminary assessment of the main areas that we needed to work on for resilience. And then we developed a strategy based on things that were going on in the city, that groups were doing, priority areas, solutions for new things. Housing was not dealt with directly, because it is not something that is within the authority of the municipality it is very much a central government and private sector but it did come up throughout* (Interview F, 2018).

From the coordinator's further statements, it can be concluded that although the topic came onto the urban agenda as an important policy area in 2015, it was not taken up by the RCS. In the future, however, urban fields of action should be thought of more and more as interlinked, and housing issues should therefore also be included in the strategy (Interview F, 2018). This procedure can be described using the mobility topic as an example:

> *So we are focusing more on transit, but how you take into consideration multi-use in the neighbourhood around this nodes? One of the topics that is now coming up is how do we take into account who is living there. Now what is going to happen to the neighbourhood when the metro station opens? So we starting to go into this more. Current housing, future housing. How are households going to be effected? Will they move in or and out of areas? We ask these questions to make sure we can start things either directly or by pushing other stakeholders or other levels of government to ensure that there is policy that facilitates more inclusiveness* (Interview F, 2018).

According to this, the municipality is actively pushing for institutional reform, in order to link urban development. This would help an integrated approach to housing (Interview F, 2018).

REACT and the Resilient City Strategy

Although RCS played a central role in strategic urban development, there were hardly any interfaces with housing. At the beginning of RCS and REACT, both programmes were developed independently. However, the representatives of the two programmes exchange information informally or at their first joint meetings. The interview partner from the RCS office is

currently involved in a more intensive exchange. In 'Urban Working Groups', NGOs, citizens and representatives of the city administration meet to discuss current topics such as migration and housing in workshop formats.These meetings have no direct formal influence on urban policies. Indirectly, however, they provide impulses for urban development. The Urban working group has a direct link with Thessaloniki's operational planning and program development departments (Interview F, 2018).

Unlike REACT, RCS is not directly financed by public donors. There is no fixed budget except for a small post for the staffing of the RCS office. This means that money has to be raised for pilot projects and implementation measures. The project partners are strategically recruited from public, semi-public and private sectors. In 2016 and 2017, attempts were made to tap European funding pools with other cities in the RCS network. International donors of public or private origin can also become partners (Interview F, 2018).

Potential administrative reform

As of May 2017, there have already been some informal discussions about integrating the 'Urban Working Group' into a department or office of the city administration in the future. At the same time, structural changes in the city administration were discussed. At the time of the interview, however, these changes had not progressed so far that a structural organisational reform of the administration could actually take place (Interview F, 2018).

> *and now through the urban working group we are implementing concepts and actions though different centres and organizations in the city, and we are looking to how we can strategically support all of those and then see if there are gaps. So that there are no parallel things going on. It is not nececcarily just the municipality doing this. It has been evolving, but it is great because a lot of different groups add to the strategy and then they get incoorporated into the Urban Working Group and coordinate with each other (Interview F, 2018).*

The organisational chart of the citie's administration shows the current structure. Added are potential areas of reform, such as the transfer of competences or horizontalization of existing structures via external inputs such as the 'Urban Working Group' (Interview F, 2018).

Shift from national to local level

A generalizable shift from national decision-making structures to more locally anchored urban policies cannot yet be ascertained. Nevertheless, there are initial signs. The mayor's office was very active in establishing the later REACT programme. Apart from that, it seeks exchange

with other cities and international organisations. It tries to learn from best practices. At the beginning of the transnational refugee movements to Thessaloniki there was a much-noticed conversion of a factory site into a temporary refugee shelter. The private operators of this hall were later integrated into the 'Urban Working Group' in order to be able to introduce their approach at a later point in time. Networking across administrative boundaries plays a major role. In an interview with RCS, the new role of self-confident mayors is also mentioned. In Thessaloniki, this played a major role in the Agenda Setting (Interview F, 2018).

Lack of data to understand housing

The housing market appears to be recovering in 2018. The RCS office evaluates this development cautiously, because how Thessaloniki really developed in this area is not surveyed. There are, for example, first anecdotal indications of an increased use of apartments for rental via Airbnb. The high rate of private ownership suggests that such a trend could intensify if the local and national economy fully recovers (Interview F, 2018).

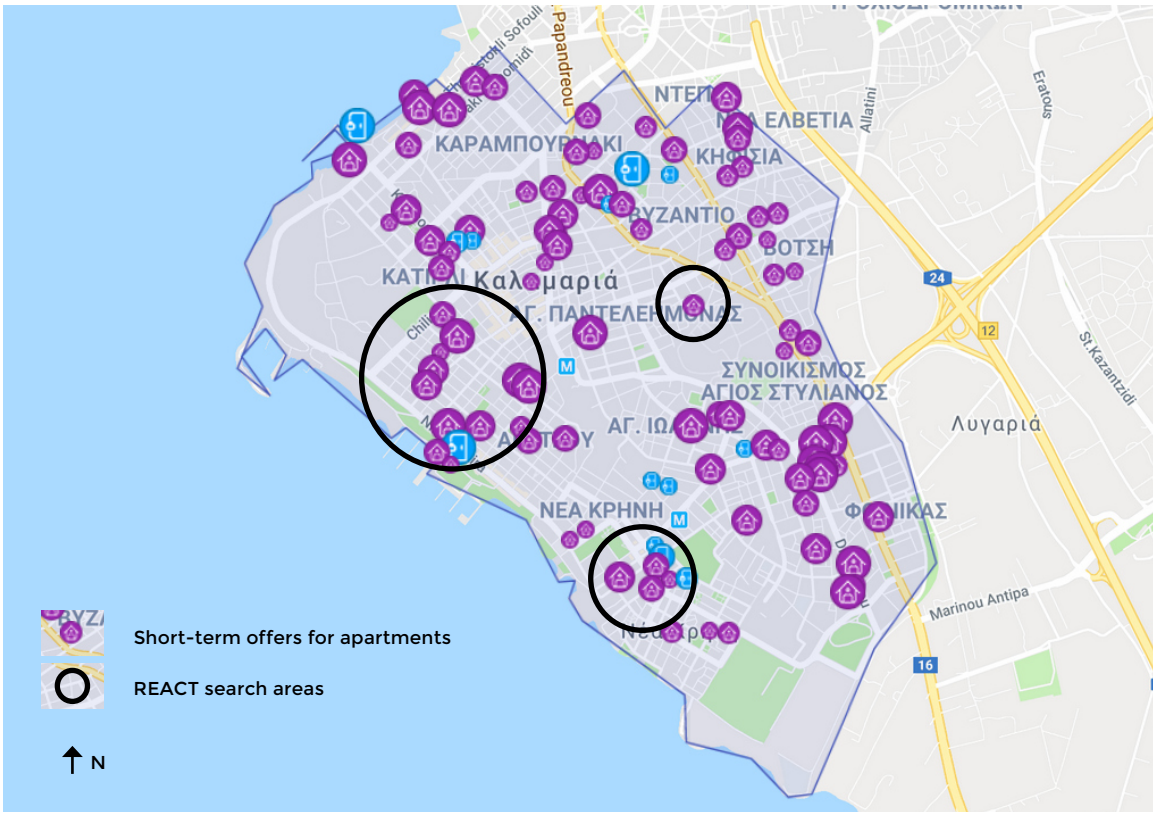
Private landlords would then again consider to a greater extent which form of letting they prefer. Short-term forms such as Airbnb or student housing could compete with programmes such as REACT. However, it is difficult to make generalizable statements because, according to the RCS office, the data basis for this is lacking (Interview F, 2018).

In general terms, the data on housing in the Greek context has been scarce because of a number of reasons. Many publications throughout the post-war era have been published in Greek language. For this thesis, because of language barrier, it was not possible to use such literature without risking to miss importent information about content and context. For online literature in Greek, a translation program was used for several websites. Though retrieved information was only used if deemed safe from loss of content and context, in order to secure the integrity of the thesis findings.

5.3 Implementation barriers

Short-term rentals as competing rental segment

Despite the fact that Thessaloniki has not yet carried out a comprehensive analysis of the short-term rental market, the public has become more sensitive to the issue since the crisis. An analysis currently in progress at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki already shows a correlation between the economic crisis and the increased number of short-term rents. A current news report even describes a dramatic increase since 2016: *"At the beginning of 2016 in Thessaloniki short-term rents were calculated in several dozen, while in 2018 they were more than 2,500, which led to a shortage of real estate for long-term rental. Thessaloniki is the sixth most popular destination in Greece for visitors using the Airbnb platform" (Makthes, 2019).*



Map 05: Short-term rental offers and REACT search areas in Kalamaria
Source: adapted from Airdna (2019)

Fig. 16: Average daily rate, occupancy rate and revenue of short term rentals in Kalamaria
Source: adapted from Airdna (2019)

REACT's Kalamaria Office (Interview G, 2018) mentioned the rise of short-term rental platforms, especially Airbnb, as a problematic factor because of their increased market present. The reason is a perceived or real 'rent gap', as in gap between what a long-term rental contract or medium-term rental contracts can generate in financial terms, and what short-term rentals can generate monthly. REACT can only pay up to 450€ / month. For short-term rentals, as long as there is enough demand, hosts can generate more than that and will still be able access the flat in between (ibid.).

For the last 6 months, the short-term-rental analytics webpage Airdna (2019) lists 600€ as monthly average for the municipality of Thessaloniki. That includes the last winter, where tourism numbers drop significantly. During the holiday season the number increases to almost 900€ on average (ibid.). Though during the same period of time, occupancy rates ranged between 50-70 percent. This is one of the reasons REACT's Kalamaria office still believes that many owners would prefer to rent their homes medium- to longterm (Interview G, 2018).

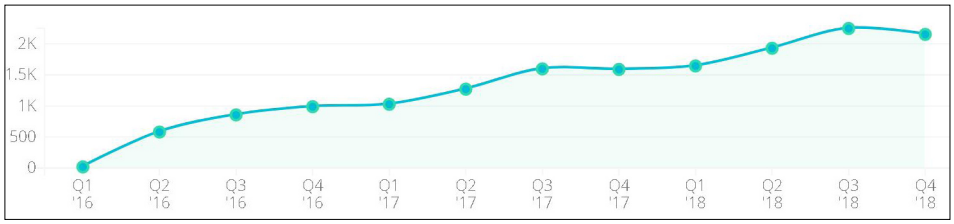


Fig. 17: Short-term rental offers within the boundaries of Thessaloniki
Source: adapted from Airdna (2019)

As another reason, the office lists owner motives such as convenience. Short-term rentals can generate more monthly revenue, but owners must always cater their offers to the next potential costumer. This produces more an increased requirement for constant coordination. When renting from REACT, at least they have a year where all related issues are taken care of:

> *Within REACT it is another case it is long term rental, and also it needs a lot of paper, so somebody who does it has two reasons to rent his apartment to REACT. The first one is to express his solidarity to refugees, and the second one is the long-term case. Municipalities are trustworthy. You can not lose your money if you rent your house to REACT. And also a lot of owners don't live in the city - they live in Athens or nearby cities and don't want to be in Kalamaria often (Interview G, 2018).*

Figure 16 shows the municipality of Kalamaria and current short-term rental offers (Airdna, 2019) within its boundaries. In quantitative terms, it is not a large number of offers. As of March 10th, 2019, Airdna (2019) lists 95 offers for within the boundaries of Kalamaria. Black circles indicate the approximate locations where REACT has intensively been searching for apartments (for security and privacy reasons, the Interviewee did not want to share more detailed information concerning apartment locations.

As the Figure 16 shows, the overlap is minimal. Within the largest search area, only 14 apartments were listed for short-term rental. Within the two smaller search areas mentioned by the interviewee (Interview G, 2018), a combined 5 apartments were listed on short-term rental websites. This is a stark contrast to the northern municipality of Thessaloniki, where more than 2000 offers were listed as of march 2019, which is a significant rise since 2016 (Airdna, 2019).

Fig. 18: Affordable housing within the housing continuum
Source: adapted from Housing Partnership Action Plan (2018)

5.4 Conclusions: REACT as a potential policy facilitator

In the recently published Housing Partnership Action Plan (2018), the Housing Partnership within the framework of the EU's Urban Agenda describes which steps could be taken within the EU in the coming years in order to come closer to ensuring a Right to Housing for all.

For Knierbein et al. (2015, p. 21-24), municipal levels, or more precisely contemporary cities, have an important role in ensuring that urban development processes remain (or regain) qualities that are human, ecological and just. In the context of researching urban welfare and public space, Knierbein et al. (ibid.) encourages public authorities to acknowledge their central role in order to ensure such processes can be facilitated.

> *The various challenges that cities face place a high burden of expectation on their governance. The processes of economic liberalization, privatization and deregulation, and the recent economic crisis have reduced the scope and the capacities of the public authorities for action. The number and range of new stakeholders in urban transformation has increased to include many non-state actors. Taking action would require coordination among these stakeholders, putting in place effective governance for urban change while protecting the common good. The public authorities, in ensuring the delivery of public services, which includes public space, and in maintaining the social and environmental requirements of urban living, are still playing a central role in urban development (Knierbein, et al., 2015, p. 22).*

Thus, if housing is understood as a public service, then housing policy should follow that premise and remain (or become) a field that serves the common good and a right to housing.

Since such a right can only be implemented if affordable housing is guaranteed, the REACT analysis focuses on the corresponding part of the housing continuum (see Fig. 18). REACT operates in the affordable rental housing segment. According to the Housing Partnership Action Plan (2018), the following policy areas are included: Private rental (housing allowances), Social rental, Charity housing, Beneficial foundations, Company housing, Regulated market-housing, Publicly funded private housing, Cooperative housing (ibid.)

The Greek housing framework covers private rentals, as in giving allowances to people who rent their flats. In the context of housing, this would be similar to many countries markets 'subject promotion', where allowances are being distributed directly to the beneficiaries in order to support their housing costs. So-called 'object-promotion' where the state distributes money to the actual production of housing stock is quasi non-existant in Greece in early 2019. Reason is a building economy that is still recovering from crises since 2008 and austerity measures following them.

By co-financing the REACT programme with EU structural funds and emergency funds, publicly funded private housing can be named as the policy area with the most overlaps with REACT. Taking a closer look though, it can be argued, that it is also a special type of 'social rental'. It takes social responsibility to ensure the Right to housing for all. Social aspects in REACT, though, are correlating but different than 'social policy' or 'social housing policy'. In a often used understanding of functions of the welfare-state, these terms refer to a specific model of social policy in the post-war era, in which mainly Greek citizens could access housing benefits in the form of subject-promotion in combination with other social benefits (Dagkouli, n.d.)

As a comparable example in the European context, which represents a combination of the two terms 'social rental' and 'social policy', the Salzburg model "Miet:Garantie" (rent guarantee) can be used. Here, similar to REACT, the municipality concludes a rental contract with the landlord. The city then selects suitable persons or families to be considered as subtenants. These are selected according to social criteria. In the case of the Salzburg example, the apartments are allocated by the municipal housing office. The municipality therefore rents apartments for social purposes ('social rental'), but embeds them in a political-administrative environment ('social policy'). The policy initiative has had to struggle with similar hurdles as REACT does in Thessaloniki, Kalamaria and Neapolis-Sykiez. Landlords prefered uncomplicated solutions, did not want the municipality to interfere with their property, or simply expect more income from short-term rentals such as Airbnb (Salzburger Nachrichten, 2018).

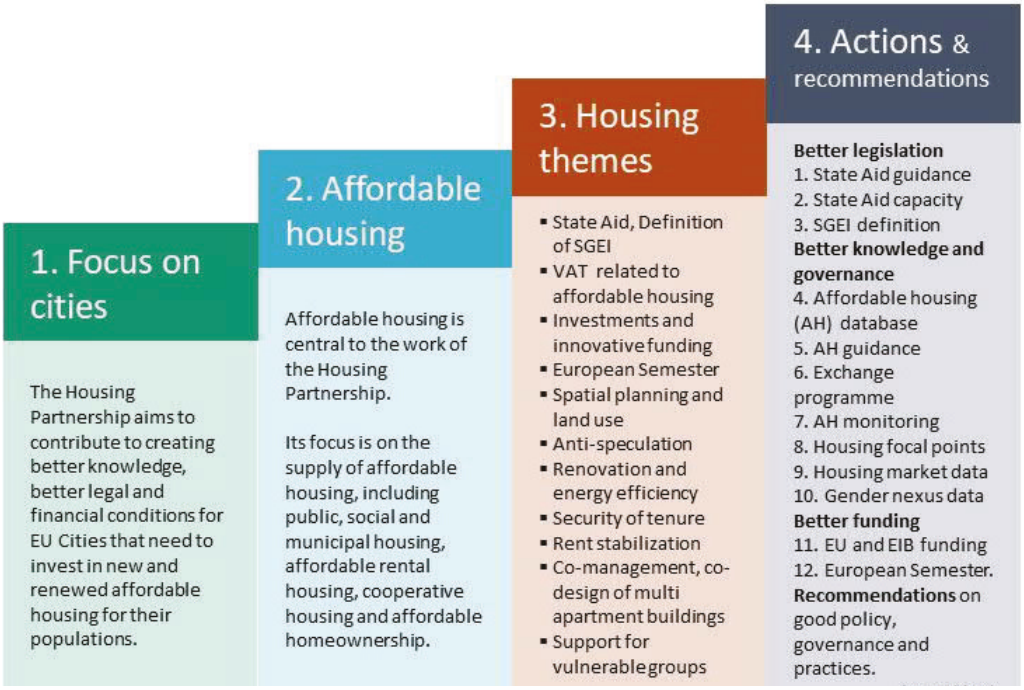


Fig. 19: Focus and results of the EU Urban Agenda Housing Partnership

Source: adapted from Housing Partnership Action Plan (2018)

How could REACT inform future European housing agenda?

Theme	Indicator	Potential	Comments
1.	Better knowledge	Yes	Through the establishment of REACT, Housing issues were transferred to the local level. Partners shared knowledge intensively.
	Better legal & financial conditions	Partly	The programme is currently financed only through temporary programs and indirectly via the EU structural funds, needs more security in the future.
2.	Public housing	No	As of 2019, the structural conditions of the Greek housing market suggest there will be no shift towards public housing in the near future.
	Social housing	Partly	If municipal efforts of housing productions are considered social housing, the programme could inform future policies.
	Municipal housing	Yes	High potential due to the non-existent municipal level concerning housing policy in the past, REACT as an innovation.
	Rental housing	Yes	A secondary rental market has been established. Under the right circumstances this could be the basis for future models of a differentiated social housing policy of member states.
	Cooperative housing	Partly	REACT works within the private rental market of Thessaloniki and its surrounding municipalities, but a number of co-housing projects have been tested during emergency phase
	Homeownership	Partly	Homeownership redefined, with municipalities acting as partner authority for homeowners to create a secondary market.
3,	State Aid, Definiton SGEI	Yes	State aid definitions should be reformed for a better understanding of housing as a central field of state aid, thus informing competition law. Shift from market-led paradigm to rights-based approach.
	VAT related to housing	Partly	European taxation policy should see housing from a rights-based perspective. Though de-regulation for private profit should be considered ill-informed for future changes.
	Investment and funding	Yes	More funding for rights-based housing programmes and projects. Shift from energy-led production to a more holistic approach.
	European semester	Yes	Important for any housing-policy shifts on the European leve. Shift from energy-led production to a more holistic approach.
	Spatial planning, land use	Yes	High-density inner-city housing and network production supports inclusion and protects vulnerable groups from location induced harms such as reduced access to education.
	Anti-speculation	Partly	Indirectly yes, because the Greek housing marked is currently recovering, thus housing is becoming a object of speculation.
	Renovation, energy use	Yes	If covered, secondary-market policies such as REACT could help renovation of the existing building stock, especially if word down though non-investment during years of crises.
	Security of tenure	Yes	Financial frameworks should allow longer rental contracts than one year.
	Rent stabilization	Partly	Laws concerning rent stabilization are situated at the level of the Greek national state. REACT has potential effect if a significant number of apartments would be covered by the programme.
	Co-management, design	Yes	The programme has a regional function, as municipalities in the Thessaloniki region work together closely and even share their staff.
	Vulnerable group support	Yes	Better housing situation for newcomers. Access to networks through housing. Higher potential for inclusion. Though programme should also cover other groups in the long run.
4.	Better legislation	Yes	see 3.
	Better funding	Yes	Exchange programs had significant impact on Agenda setting and policy formulation, especially through capacity building processes. Better data availability and quality could enhance the programms efforts.
	Better knowledge	Yes	see. 3.
	Good policy, governance	Yes	Regional aspect not only covers the programms operations, but also functions as a facilitator for better regional and spatial policy in the context of housing. Housing should always be seen as a core function of urban development and spatial configuration of built environment.

Tab. 03: How could REACT inform future housing agenda?

Source: Author (2019)

5.5 Conclusions: REACT from a multi-level perspective

In order to ensure a conclusive derivation of the final conclusions, this part of the Master's thesis builds on the intermediate conclusions of Chapters 1-4. In order to increase the clarity, the intermediate and final results were presented with the scheme of housing production and use drawn up by Dagkouli (n.d.). What was interesting about this scheme was that it defines basic categories such as production and use, but does not leave them in the narrow conceptual corset of the market language. The production and use of housing is not regarded as a pure question of supply and demand. Instead, both concepts are differentiated and linked.

Production means on the one hand structural production, on the other hand the production of housing networks (social networks, political networks, neighbourhood networks, regional networks, solidarity networks, family networks, etc.). The term use, in turn, considers the economic and legal condition of the Greek housing market from the user's perspective. It is broken down into 'primary market use' and 'secondary market use'. What are the decisive differences between the use of owner-occupied homes and rented flats in the secondary market? How easily accessible are both? The scheme has also been extended to include multi-level aspects, such as the influence of financing mechanisms on an international and European level.

1. In general it can be stated that the Greek housing system, housing for newcomers via the REACT programme and any past or future policy adaptions are, in the case of Thessaloniki in particular, informed by a process of agenda setting and policy cycle adaptions. The municipalities approach was put on the agenda by an emergency in 2015. Thessaloniki's political decicion makers were keen to quickly produce an local action plan, in combination with help and money from the international and european initiatives, funds and organisations.
2. Multi-level aspects of housing production were the framework for housing production in the years since the financial crisis 2008. Before these years, production by the private economy as well as social housing was still existant. Afterwards, the situation shifted dramatically. Housing production of new buildings almost completely halted.
3. European and international funding and supranational capacity-building had direct influence on the creation of REACT. In parallel efforts, capacity was built bottom-up, on the local and neighborhood level in order to establish urban housing opportunities for newcomers. These initiatives partly worked together with the municipality, and some exist today. Overall though, a lack of governance structures was apparent after 2008 until today. Here, the EC should consider widening the criteria for their structural funds in the future, in order to strenghten housing production that does not fit in the current framework(s) of energy dominant investments (though EU has no clear mandate here).

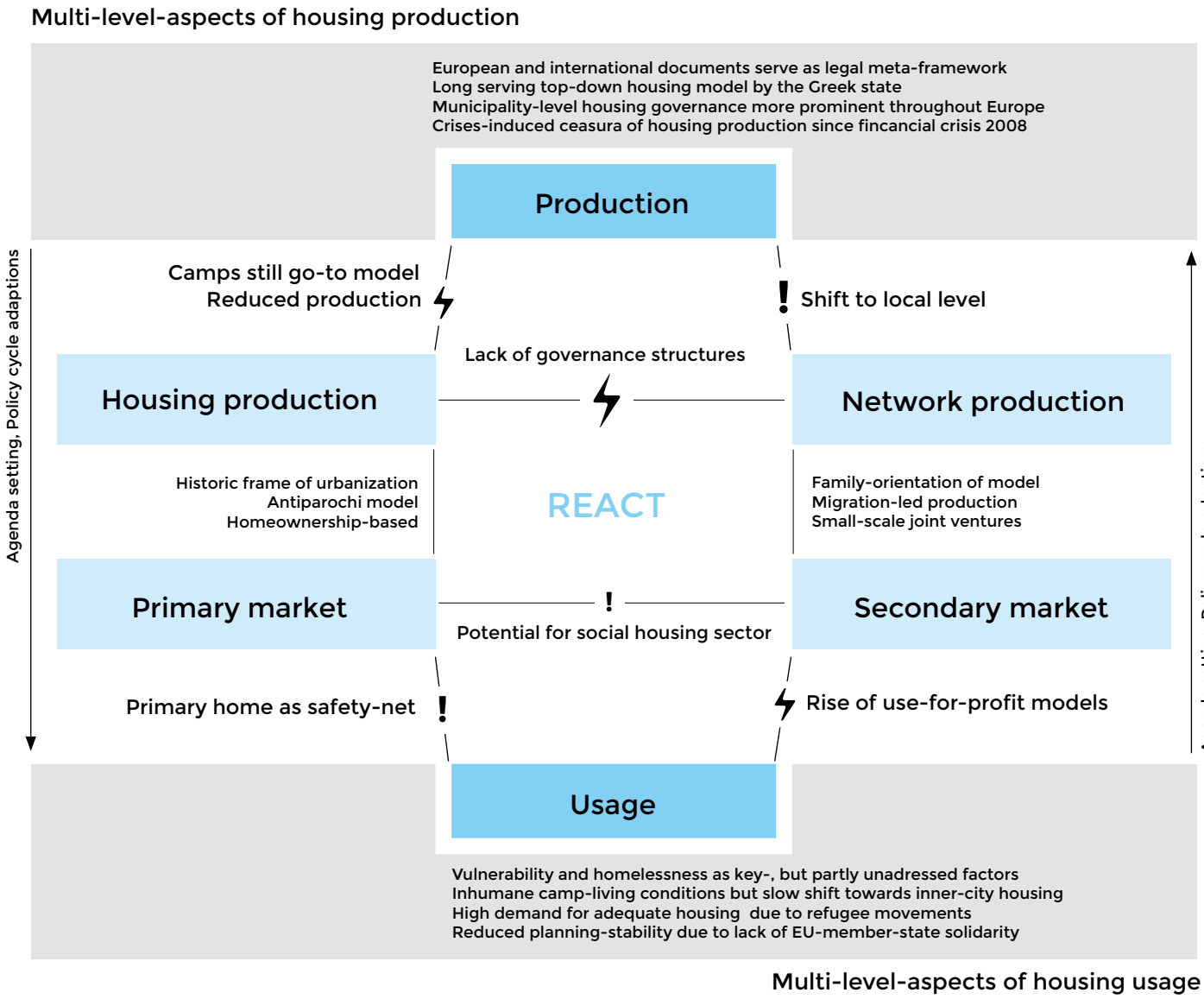


Fig. 20: Multi-level perspective on housing usage and production
Source: Author; adapted from Dagkouli (n.d.)

Implementation barriers or barriers to establish a right to housing for all, including newcomers

Implementation potentials or potentials for establishing a right to housing, including newcomers

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7 List of figures

8 List of tables and maps

9 List of acronyms

AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute
ARSIS	Association for Social Support of the Youth
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
CON	Thessaloniki Conurbation
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid
EC	European Commission
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EFSI	European Fund for Strategic Investment
EKKE	National Centre for Social Research
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESIF	European Structural Investment Fund
ESM	European Stability Mechanism
EU	European Union
EURODAC	European Dactyloscopy
FUA	Functional Urban Area
GTA	Greater Thessaloniki Area
IDP's	Internally Displaces People
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO's	Non Governmental Organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NSSG	National Statistic Service of Greece
NUA	New Urban Agenda
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEK (OYK)	Organisation for Social Housing for Workers
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PRAKSIS	Health Care for Vulnerable Groups
POCs	People of Concern
PPA	Project Partnership Agreement
PUZ	Peri Urban Zone
REACT	Refugee Assistance Collaboration Thessaloniki
RIS	Reception and Identification Service
SDG's	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

10 Appendix

Interview invitation mail (Greek language)

Αξιότιμε/η κα./κε. ……,

Είμαστε δυο φοιτητές του τμήματος Αρχιτεκτόνων Μηχανικών του Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου της Θεσσαλονίκης, ο Bernhard Gugg και η Γαλήνη Ειρήνη Παρχαρίδου, και στα πλαίσια της Ερευνητικής εργασίας του Διπλώματός μας μελετάμε το ζήτημα της στέγασης των προσφύγων, και πιο συγκεκριμένα των Σύριων προσφύγων στην Ελλάδα. Στα πλαίσια της έρευνας μας θα θέλαμε να διεξάγουμε μια σειρά από συνεντεύξεις ειδικών.

Οι ερωτήσεις μας αφορούν στις στρατηγικές για την κατάλληλη στέγαση και οργάνωση των δομών φιλοξενίας, αλλά και στις στρατηγικές στέγασης στο υπάρχον κτιριακό απόθεμα των ελληνικών πόλεων.

Λόγω της ειδικότητας σας και της εμπειρίας σας σε θέματα ……., θα θέλαμε να σας ρωτήσουμε αν θα μπορούσατε να μας παραχωρήσετε μια συνέντευξη. Οι συνεντεύξεις θα διεξαχθούν 12-23 Ιούνη 2017. Σε περίπτωση που οι ημερομηνίες δεν σας βολεύουν θα μπορούσαμε να κανονίσουμε κάτι διαφορετικό πριν ή μετά από αυτές τις ημερομηνίες. Η συνέντευξη θα διαρκέσει το περίπου 40 λεπτά διατηρώντας την ανωνυμία σας.

Σε περίπτωση που σας ενδιαφέρει, ενημερώστε μας σχετικά με τις ημερομηνίες και ώρες που θα σας βόλευαν. Ακόμα θα θέλαμε να διεξάγουμε την συνέντευξη στα αγγλικά, καθώς ο ένας από εμάς δεν μιλάει ελληνικά. Αν δεν υπάρχει αυτή η δυνατότητα θα θέλαμε να μας ενημερώσετε σχετικά.

Σας ευχαριστούμε εκ των προτέρων για το χρόνο σας.

Φιλικά,

Bernhard Gugg
Γαλήνη Ειρήνη Παρχαρίδου

Interview invitation mail (English language)

Dear Mr/ Ms----------,

we are two students of Architecture and Urban Planning at Aristotle University Thessaloniki, Bernhard Gugg and Galini Parcharidou, who are currently working on our thesis on housing issues, especially concerning refugee accommodation in Greece. In a joint empirical endeavor, we will interview experts involved.

Our topic refers to strategies for adequate housing within a refugee camp situation and accommodation strategies within the existing housing stock of Greek cities.

Because of your expertise in ----------, we want to ask if you could participate in our research with an interview. We will run the interviews between 12th and 23th of June, but depending on your availability, we can also manage to do it one week before or after. The interviews will last maximum 40 minutes and you can choose if you want to keep your anonymity or not.

In case you are interested, please let us know your available date(s), as well as your preferred place to meet up. It would be helpful to be able to conduct the interview in English, since one of us does not speak Greek.

At our meeting, we will present you the letter of Professor Charis Christodoulou, Assistant Professor in the School of Architecture which certifies our status of work.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Kind Regards,

Bernhard Gugg
Galini Eirini Parcharidou

Letter of consent to participate (Greek language)

Επιστολή συναίνεσης

Εγώ, ο υπογράφων, δηλώνω ότι είμαι πλήρως ενημερωμένος για το σκοπό της συνέντευξης, στην οποία συμμετέχω οικειοθελώς και είμαι σε θέση να διακόψω τη συνέντευξη οποιαδήποτε στιγμή επιθυμώ.

Συμφωνώ απόλυτα με τη Γαληνή Ειρήνη Περκαρίδου και τον Μπερνάρντ Γκουγκγκ, μαθητές του Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης, να χρησιμοποιήσουν πλήρως το υλικό της συνέντευξης στο ερευνητικό τους δελτίο.

Οι πληροφορίες που παρέχω θα χρησιμοποιηθούν ανώνυμα και επιθυμώ ή δεν επιθυμώ να συμπεριλάβω το όνομά μου στον κατάλογο συμμετοχής. Ταυτόχρονα, επιτρέπω / δεν επιτρέπω την καταγραφή της συνέντευξης.

Υπογραφή

Πλήρες όνομα

Ημερομηνία

Letter of consent to participate (English language)

Letter of consent

I, the signer, hereby declare that I have been fully informed about the purpose of the interview, in which I participate voluntarily and have the power to interrupt the interview in anytime I wish.

I fully give my consent to Galini Eirini Parcharidou and Bernard Gugg, students of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, to fully use the interview material in their research paper.

The information that I have provide will be used anonymously and I wish / do not wish to include my name in the participation list. At the same time I allow/ do not allow the recording of the interview.

Signature

Full name

Date

Date Expert name Interviewer name Note reporter name

General questions for both topics

First circle - General questions for both topics

	What is your name? (in case of anonymous interview just for researchers records) M* F*
	What is your age? 18 - 25 25-40 40-55 55-65 65+
	Where are you from? / What is your country of origin? Gre Other ...
	What is / are your profession(s)?
	Which is your background in studies / educational background? Law Architecture, planning Economics Political science Other ...
	Have you been a specialist trained to deal with refugees? Yes No Other …
	Are you a volunteer or an employee? Who funds the whole project in which you take part? Yes No Other …
	In which organization do you work / provide volunteer work? Employed for 0-3 3-6 6-9 9-12 12-15 15-18 18-21 21+ (years)
	Why did you choose to work with refugees / in refugee programs?
	What languages do you speak? Gre Eng Fra Ger Arabic Farsi/Dari Other …

Date | Expert name | Interviewer name | Note reporter name

Questions Bernhard (1) - Housing provision in general

	What is your perception of the current housing situation for refugees and other vulnerable groups in Thessaloniki?
	How has the situation changed since the start of the financial crisis in 2008 (in terms of groups, numbers, conditions, programs…)?
	What were the effects on the housing situation for refugee individuals and families since 2015, the height of the so-called 'refugee crisis'?
	What are the main actors and processes involved in current housing allocation? For vulnerable groups In general / for refugees?
	Do you think short-term and medium-term housing response to both crisis have been quantitatively and qualitatively been sufficient?
	How do you assess the possibility of a cancellation of the EU-Turkey refugee deal? What effects will it have on housing refugees?

First circle - Specific questions (a)

Date | Expert name | Interviewer name | Note reporter name

Questions Bernhard (2) - Refugee housing within the existing building stock

	How do you assess refugee accommodation strategies within the existing housing stock of Greek cities? e.g. REACT
	In general, what are the benefits and/or pitfalls of such strategies?
	Compared to refugee camp accommodation, what are the main organizational differences of accommodation strategies within the existing stock?
	From the beneficiarie's perspective, do you think such strategies are improving their situation or not? Why / Why not?
	How do you comment the recent announcement of minister Mouzala (of the Greek government) to close about half of the refugee camps and extend other accomodation programs?

First circle - Specific questions (b)

Date | Expert name | Interviewer name | Note reporter name

Questions Bernhard (3) - Policy and programs for accomodation within existing stock

	On a policy level, what are barriers and challenges to a good implementation of such housing models? e.g. REACT
	Based on the implementation of REACT so far, what do you think are the pros and cons, the potentials and problems?
	What ist the role of municipalities in ensuring a certain quantity and quality of offered appartments?
	In your opinion, how can enough owners be convinced to rent their unit(s)?
	Who should be involved / should not be involved in the mid-term to long-term management of apartment housing?
	What is your opinion on the planned shortcutting of NGO's in the future allocation processes and accompanying service efforts?

First circle - Specific questions (c)

Date | Expert name | Interviewer name | Note reporter name

Questions Bernhard (4) - Spatial aspect in Greece / Spatial aspect in Thessaloniki

	How does the spatial profile of Greece as a whole, and that of Thessaloniki in specific, relate to in-stock housing strategies for refugees?
	Where and how to search for flats in Thessaloniki's urban tissue and building stock?
	How do you assess the importance of close proximity and access to services, (public) transport, schools, cultural institutions etc.?
	Should suitable apartments be close to other program units within a house, a neighborhood, a district etc.? Or should they be distributed more evenly within the city?
	What role does the increasing vacancy rate of apartments since the start of the crisis play? Could it be seen as an opportunity?
	Do compact, polykatoikia-style building-structures (multi storey apartment buildings) help the case of refugee (re-)accommodation and (re-)integration within the existing stock? If yes, how?
	How high / low should standards be set, in order to guarantee adequate living conditions? Are lower standards an option to find more units?

First circle - Specific questions (d)

Date | Expert name | Interviewer name | Note reporter name

Questions Bernhard (5) - Solidarity, aid and bottom-up housing initiatives

	Which institutional and direct forms of solidarity and aid are necessary to go along with mentioned housing efforts?
	Is the distribution of apartment based on free marked principles robust enough, to adequately house refugees in the current stock?
	What should be done to ensure that refugee voices and their experiences are being heard in the organization of current and future programs?
	Should the cooperation with NGO's with experience in the field be mandatory for municipalities?
	How can knowledge of bottom-up initiatives providing efforts of solidarity be part of the housing programs, without exploiting them?
	Where do you see practical problems in ensuring physical and psychological safety for refugees, as well as protection from violence and exploitation?

First circle - Specific questions (e)

Date Expert name Interviewer name

Questions (1) - Policy design, Agenda Setting

	Does the Resilient Thessaloniki Strategy directly tackle housing issues and in what way? / in general / for displaced newcomers
	What parts of the strategy have a connection / influence on the state of housing in Thessaloniki?
	Did approach, design and / or implementation of the strategy change in Autumn 2015? If yes, how
	Has the strategy interacted with stakeholders dealing with housing issues? With REACT?
	Which Municipal bodies and departments have had influence on RC design concerning housing? Other stakeholders?
	Which new developments and changes have had influence on RC design since one year ago?
	Within the policy cycle model, where do you currently see housing policy? In general? Within RC
	What are barriers and challenges to a good implementation of integrated housing policy? e.g. REACT
	Do you see integrated housing policy set on the current agenda of decicion makers? / Stakeholders?

Second cycle - Specific questions (f)

Date Expert name Interviewer name

Questions (2) - Changes 2017-2018

	What general changes in the programming of REACT program have occurred since last year?
	Has the cooperation structure with Municipality of Thessaloniki changed? How? Has the PPA changed?
	Has your personnel changed / been reduced / expanded? Which professions, tasks work within REACT / within your municipality?
	Do you establish contact and talk to newcomers during the process of assigning an apartment? Have newcomers established their own platforms to communicate their opinions, needs etc.?
	Has the funding and financial schemes changed since the last PPA? If yes, which and how?
	Is there an ongoing shift from short-term to long-term? How long have newcomers been able to stay? How long are the contracts?What happens after a contract runs out?
	Which newcomers can enter REACT? Asylum Seekers, Refugees, Relocation Candidates, others? How has the referral / matching process changed? How does your Municipality do matching newcomers with apartments?
	Have the target /actual numbers of apartments changed since last year? If yes, how?
	Has REACT expanded in other ways? Job counseling? Host families or other changes since 2017? Does a dissemination plan still exist? What types of communication?

Second cycle - Specific questions (g)

Date Expert name Interviewer name

Questions (3) - Apartment search and housing provision

	How do you identify and find apartments in 2018? Has is changed? How?
	Has the application process for homeowners changed since last year? How? Is it easier? In terms of supporting documents, energy certificate etc.
	REACT officer mentioned “Fast-Track” application?! Does your Municipality offer this?
	Does the REACT-office in your municipality cooperate with Real Estate Agencies? Small-sized or larger companies? How does it work? Commissions to be paid?
	What department in your Municipality is responsible for finding apartments? Does your Municipality have an organizational structure to view?
	In which parts of the Municipality do you search / have already established apartments? Where more, where less? Why?
	Do you look for areas with a higher density of services (transport, schools, others)? How will be decided?
	How many apartments will you rent within one building? How do you decide? What variables?
	Does your municipality connect the search for apartments with their development strategy and / or their housing strategy? Which department? How?

Second cycle - Specific questions (h)

Second cycle – Specific questions (i)

a) Have you heard about the REACT Program run by the Municipality of Thessaloniki together with partner institutions and neighboring municipalities?
   a. When have you first heard of it?
   b. Have you been contacted by the program or by an agency your apartment(s) have been registered at

b) Have you seen ads on TV or in the streets about the program and its purpose?
   a. Where and how often have you seen it?

c) Have you considered participating in the program and offering your apartment to REACT?
   a. If yes, what has kept you from going forward (in general terms)?
   b. If no, what would raise your interest in participating (in general terms)?

d) Are you currently an owner of one apartment or multiple apartments within Thessaloniki, Napoli and Kalamaria?
   a. Where are the apartments located (only approximately within 1-2 kilometers)?
   b. What is the size of the living space of the apartments?
      i. 0-40
      ii. 40-80
      iii. 80-120

e) Do you currently live in the apartment(s) and / or do you rent them and / or are they currently empty?

f) In general terms, do you think the housing market in Thessaloniki has changed since 2008 and how? Has your ability to rent been affected by it?
   a. How easy / hard is it to get a permanent tenant for your apartment?
   b. Have you considered other options than permanent tenancy (like short term contracts or Airbnb)
   c. What is more important for you as a private owner: stability of tenancy or flexibility?
   d. Financially, is long term tenancy or short term tenancy (including Airbnb) more profitable (under current circumstances of the housing market)?

g) Would you consider renting to the REACT program in the future?
   a. What potential advantages would matter the most?
      i. Municipality offers extra contract stability
      ii. Municipality offers help for certifications etc
      iii. Regular visits of services, social workers
      iv. Opportunity to participate in social program
      v. Stable rent income for one year contract
   b. What potential disadvantages would matter the most?
      i. Short time of rent compared to regular contract
      ii. Out of the norm legal setup and contract
      iii. Potential language, cultural barriers w/ tenants
      iv. Apartment accessed regularly by municipality staff, social workers etc
   c. Can you name other advantages, disadvantages?

h) What is your option on the design and implementation of the program?
   a. What governmental level would you prefer to get in contact for a