

Transient Spaces: Building Community in Crisis Contexts Project

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Transiency no longer appears as a condition of exception, but rather as the predominant mode of existence. The increased tension across and beyond national borders and territorial divisions has drawn the attention of designers across the globe and densified our reflections on questions of identity, equality, politics and economic exchange, expanding the reach of design from the realm of physical forms, into modes of interaction in social spaces.

The project presents design outcomes from the research conducted and methods employed during the advanced architectural design studio I developed and taught at the CCNY during 2017. The studio triggered an international call for contributions and it is currently under development for a book publication that explores the concept of impermanence in global contemporary society and aims to stimulate conversations about the potential of a new public realm.

The studio developed strategies for disaster response that show economic and social sustainability through community integration strategies. It concerned the design of community driven, systems approach and provided alternative ways for addressing everyday, context-based issues that are less dependent on the global relief industry. How can design disrupt power structures in relief response?

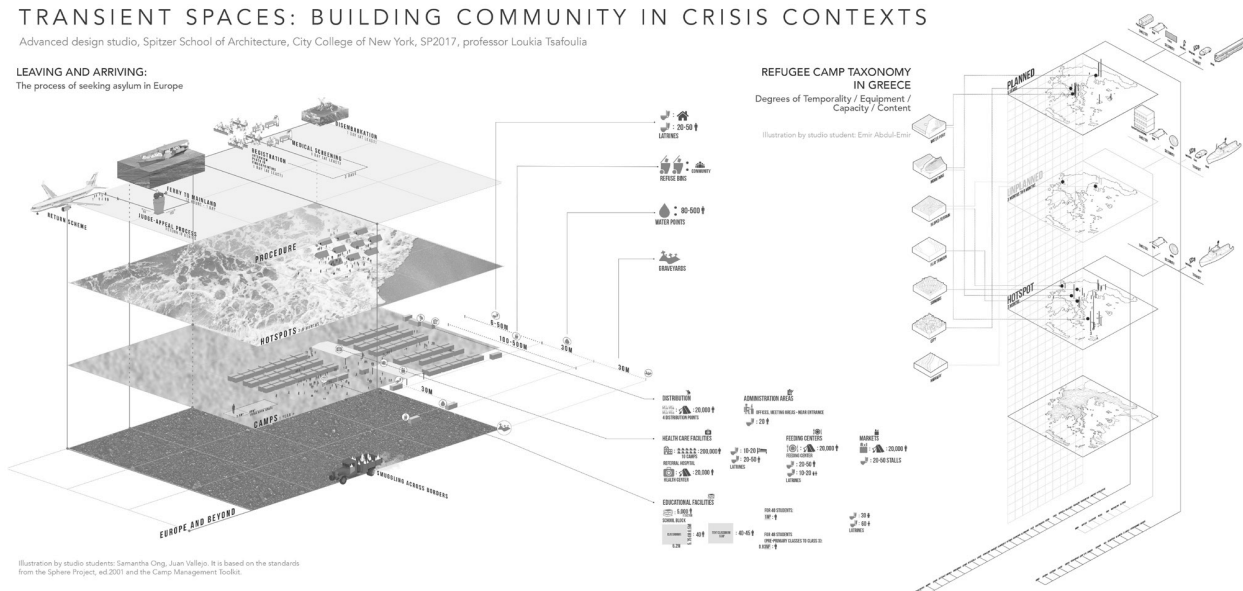
Could our methods adopt to the ever-increasing need for sheltering amidst ongoing crisis? How can architects optimize the capacity of people in acute need of protection while ensuring a high degree of livability and a sense of community and equality? These are some of the questions the studio addressed. Issues of temporality and space adaptation were investigated. The tactics of appropriation, severance, fragmentation and cultural identification of urban space were examined as, simultaneously, forces and reactions in the physical space in order to construct an ideological position.

The research and design investigations used as case studies four distinct sites in Athens, Greece. The selection was based on various degrees of temporality ranging from hyper-temporal hotspots to spontaneous or planned refugee camps and outside of camp contexts such as dense urban settings. In the outskirts of Athens, “Schisto” a former military camp, and “Skaramagkas” a former shipyard facility, are newly developed camps in the size of small towns hosting people for unknown amount of time. In the center of Athens, the studio engaged with the “Eleonas” Camp, a former industrial neighborhood and the “Prosfigika Alexandras” complex, built to host the 1922 Asia Minor disaster refugees and currently partially abandoned and appropriated by squats.

TRANSIENT SPACES: BUILDING COMMUNITY IN CRISIS CONTEXTS

Advanced design studio, Spitzer School of Architecture, City College of New York, SP2017, professor Loukia Tsafoulia

LEAVING AND ARRIVING:
The process of seeking asylum in Europe



In an effort to establish bridges between academic research and the various professionals involved in the humanitarian support mechanisms, the studio connected with members from the Danish Refugee Council, the Greek Ministry of Immigration Policy and the UNHCR. This interdisciplinary inquiry inspired the book publication, as a way to rethink disciplinary boundaries, to identify radical tools and to

construct ideological positions that do not contempt, but rather acknowledge and respond to contemporary tropes of instabilities, precarity and transience. As a curated collection of academic and creative probes the publication surfaces possibilities of operations, tactics, media and methods as a way of research and creates a dialog, generates knowledge and awareness.

PROPOSAL FOR THE "SCHISTO" EXISTING REFUGEE CAMP IN ATHENS, GREECE

STUDENT TEAM:
Juan Valdez, Samantha Ong, Emir Abdul-Emir, Daniela Vega-Ortiz

WEAVING COMMUNITIES TRANSITIONING AN EXISTING REFUGEE CAMP INTO AN INTEGRATED COMMUNITY

In terms of fostering communal growth as well as empowering the individual, how can the provision of tools and skills contribute towards a greater stability? By contributing to an existing economy, can the refugees provide a new essential service to create a mutually beneficial relationship with the neighboring area? Can a series of apprenticeships empower the refugees to take on more of a role in managing the camp, building cooperative efforts, and ultimately transitioning the camp to a settlement?

Students' work won in the Urban Design category of the International Competition "Rebuilding The Future Sustainability Awards 2017" and was awarded First Prize in the Cities of Tomorrow Competition sponsored by Project Earth 2.

TRANSITIONING THE CAMP IN PHASES

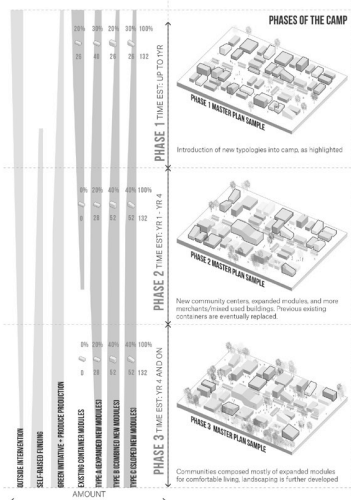
To turn the current refugee camp into a long term settlement, the transition occurs in phases. We are taking advantage of the existing weekend fair on the periphery and creating our own marketplace in response, refugees are already implementing their own interventions on their modules to sell things. With our marketplace, we are providing answers to where they can sell and with our hydroponic factor, what they can sell. Refugees are placed in homes which they can expand or relocate from. It is important these people have an opportunity to have some degree of responsibility in their own livelihood - such as control over the creation of their community or their home.

KEY

- ORGANIZATIONAL BUILDINGS
- RESIDENTIAL
- MIXED-USE
- MARKET / MERCHANTS
- HYDROPONIC / GREEN RELATED

PHASE 0
EXISTING CONDITIONS TODAY
SCHISTO REFUGEE CAMP
ATTICA, GREECE
190 Container Homes on Site
320 People
95% Afghan Population

0. EXAMINE EXISTING CONDITIONS



1. COMMUNITY BUILDING

ARRIVAL INTO CAMPS

There are several challenges for refugees arriving into camps. They are often separated from their families and friends, and they have to learn the local language and customs. They are also often in a state of trauma and need psychological support.

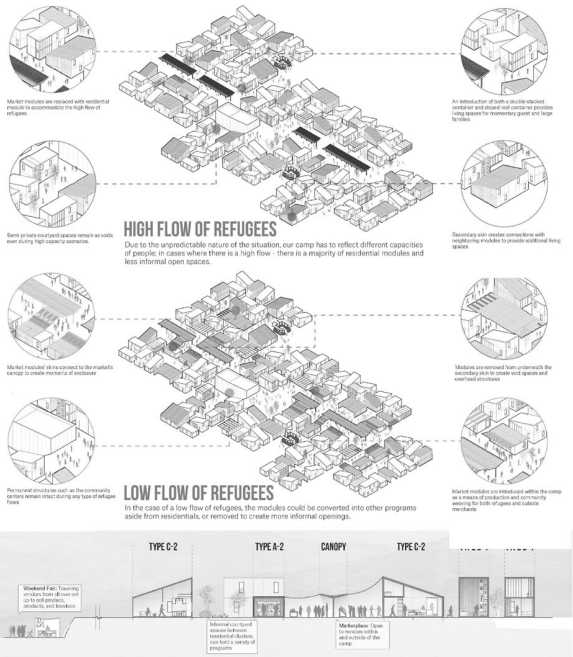
2. CREATING LIVELIHOOD

Part of the transition is to help the community as a whole and the individual. This involves creating opportunities for refugees to earn a living and to contribute to the local economy.

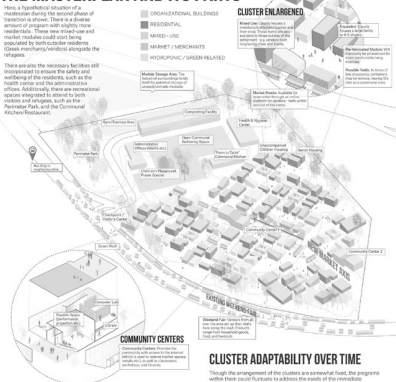
3. SUSTAINING INDEPENDENCE

Refugees need to be able to sustain themselves and their families. This involves providing them with the skills and resources they need to do so.

NEIGHBORHOOD FLEXIBILITY



THE MASTERPLAN AND ITS PARTS



HYDROPONIC AND COMPOSTING SUSTAINABILITY

