

EAUH 2024 - CITIES AT THE BOUNDARIES - OSTRAVA

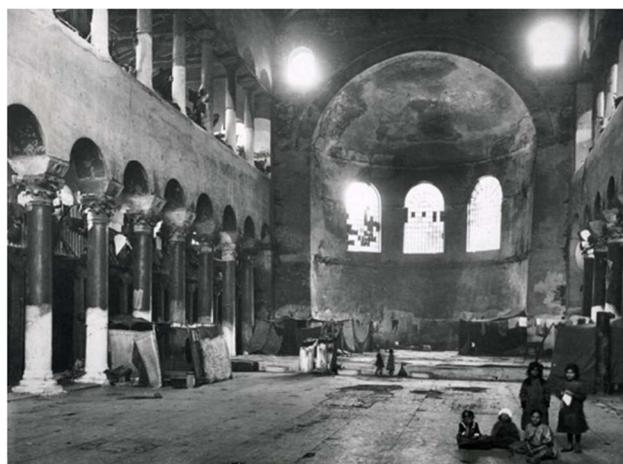
M36 Housing policies and urban transformations in Europe and beyond as a result of refugee flows in the first half of the 20th century

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SHORT ABSTRACT

The main goal of this panel is to present and compare housing policies launched to accommodate large waves of refugees generated from the turbulent conditions in the first half of the 20th century in Europe, as well as the resulting significant socio-spatial transformations within or in the fringe of the towns and cities.

SESSION CONTENT

The successive military conflicts (Balkan wars 1912-1913, Great War 1914-1918, Greek-Turkish war 1919-1922, Spanish War 1936-1939), the policy of denationalization of authoritarian regimes (USSR, Fascist Italy) and the resulted geopolitical transformations, as well as ethnic cleansing and national identity construction policies launched on grounds of 'national security', generated large voluntary and involuntary displacement waves of population in most of European countries as well as in the Ottoman Empire/Turkey (for example, the compulsory exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey in 1923).

From the political exile of the 19th century to the communities or ethnic minorities persecuted for who they are and not for what they think, as Hannah Arendt would say (*We refugees*, 1943), the meaning as well as the status of the term "refugee" has changed over time along with relevant public policies.

A part of these refugees returned to their homelands, but many of them remained in the countries to which they fled. It is often the border towns that received the most refugees. At the beginning, emergency and temporary accommodation was usually used to shelter the refugees in refugee camps, army barracks, public buildings or abandoned premises. A common phenomenon was also arbitrary settlements with improvised accommodation, many of which evolved into permanent ones. Later, small- or large-scale housing programmes (self-help housing, organized construction, etc.) were initiated by local or central authorities, national bodies and/or international organisations for the rehabilitation of the refugees, resulting to significant sociospatial transformations within or in the fringe of the towns and cities.

Within this context, this panel welcomes papers that question the emergence of refugee housing category, and present different case studies and comparative research concerning refugee housing policies, temporary and permanent forms/types of refugee houses and settlements, the role of local authorities or national bodies in the refugees' rehabilitation programmes, as well as of international organizations in the transfer of housing and living models and urban development patterns, during the first half of the 20th century until the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Keywords

Refugee housing policies | Urban transformations | War | first half of 20th century

ABSTRACTS

David Templin: Living in “rat holes” and “pigsties”? German refugees, urban arrival spaces, and the housing question in the metropolitan region of Hamburg after the First World War

The First World War and the subsequent conflicts over territories and shifting state borders in Central Europe led to refugee movements, which included the flight of several hundred thousand people who had lived in formerly German areas that now became part of other states such as Poland. In 1925, the number of Germans who had lived in these territories before 1914 was estimated at 850,000 people. The history of this migrant group, their flight and following arrival processes have hardly been researched so far. An exception is the history of the “returnees’ camps” that were set up by the German state and managed by the German Red Cross, studied by Oltmer. But how did cities and municipalities deal with the influx and accommodation of refugees who left these camps or came directly to urban areas?

The paper examines this question with a view at the city state of Hamburg and surrounding municipalities such as Altona and Wilhelmsburg. First, it analyses guidelines, strategies, and accommodation practices of local governments in the interplay with welfare organizations. As in other German cities, a severe housing shortage limited the scope for accommodating refugees, which led to debates about a ban for further immigration into the city. In a second step, the paper looks at the urban arrival spaces where refugees found housing and a new neighbourhood. Of special interest is the case of the industrial suburb Wilhelmsburg where over 1,800 German refugees were confronted with the presence of more than 6,000 Polish residents, but also German ones, who had moved there as labour migrants since the late 19th century. In this case, protests over housing conditions erupted that were accompanied by anti-Polish sentiment. Emergency shelters were considered as damp and inhumane “pigsties”. At the same time, contacts to acquaintances and family members who came from the Eastern provinces of Prussia and had moved to Hamburg before 1914 proved to be important for finding accommodation.

Kalliopi Amygdalou: Architectures of displacement and the 1923 Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey

Following the 1919-1922 Greco-Turkish war and the 1923 mutual and compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey, millions left their towns and villages behind, and their homes, schools and religious buildings were re-used by incoming refugees of the other side or were left in ruin. Meanwhile new housing was constructed both in urban and rural areas, in order to house hundreds of thousands who had nowhere to stay. Ranging from tents to makeshift huts, from state-provisioned prefabricated wooden structures to mudbrick and

stone housing, from mass housing complexes in Greece to model villages (*numune köyler*) in Turkey, these typologies reveal decades-long experimentations with emergency and resettlement architecture, influences from other geographies (especially interwar Europe and Israel) and fermentations of modernist architectural ideas. The post-1922 settlement process permanently transformed the rural and urban landscapes of Greece and Turkey, and its study therefore allows us to deeper understand the making of cities in the urban fringes and the drastic remaking of rural landscapes. Based on extensive archival research, survey and digital mapping in the provinces of Attica and Izmir, this presentation offers a critical overview of the refugee settlement process on both sides over a couple of decades and brings the two refugee settlement processes into dialogue. It brings forward important similarities and differences between the housing policies followed by the two states at the time and, finally, addresses the history of the welfare state in response to housing crises

Alexandros Kalemis: Spatialities of immigration: The settlement of Minor-Asian refugees in the western areas of Athens

The Refugees' Issue in the state of Greece after the events of the Greek-Turkish war (1919-1922) had a significant impact on the native demographic and cultural landscape, as the defeat of the Greek forces by the troops of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's Turkish National Movement launched massive expulsions of populations off Asia Minor. Approximately 1.5 million of them arrived in Greece. A considerable part settled in the periphery, the largest percentage, though, was hosted in the large urban centers (Athens, Thessaloniki). The aim of the project is the comprehensive presentation of the refugee settlements in the western suburbs of Athens, more specifically in the areas of Peristeri, Aigaleo, Nikaia and Korydallos, through bibliographic sources, architectural and topographic charts, as well as photographic evidence, recounting the living conditions of the tenants and the challenges they had to cope with. The focus on the specific areas is justified by a number of distinctive geospatial data, such as their vicinity to the commercial and historical center of the city and the proximity to the port of Piraeus, the main point of arrival for refugee fluxes. The aforementioned, in coincidence to the emerging industrial development of Eleonas district, once an agricultural territory, favored the construction of labor residencies by the Greek government, in replacement of the original hosting camps. During the course of decades, the Minor-Asian refugees managed to integrate with the native population, resulting in a substantial re-shaping of the cultural, economic and social identity of the regions they settled in. Currently, their descendants, while preserving the historic memory, continue to be an essential part of the diverse and vibrant nature of the city.

Sofia Mikropoulou - The settlement of exchangeable refugees as a factor of transformation and development of the eastern districts of Athens in the interwar period

The settlement of Asia Minor refugees in the eastern periphery of the city of Athens, around existing sparse residential cores, was a guiding factor that led to the transformation and development of the city during the interwar period. The refugees enumerated at that time touched one third of the inhabitants within the pre-existing settlement and more than two thirds in the surrounding area. The handling of the issue of housing by governmental, international and business actors evolved alongside the mandated policy of compensating exchangeable refugees. The announcement is based on a survey of record evidence relating to the procedures and institutional means of implementing the compensation policy. Quantitative and qualitative characteristics are inferred for groups of beneficiaries who, fighting for survival, played a catalytic role in the urbanization of the study area.

Maria Dousi – Sofoklis Kotsopoulos – Michalis Nomikos – Athina Vitopoulou: From Asia Minor to Thessaloniki. The impact of the refugees settlement on the housing production and the urban morphology in the interwar period

Following the 1922 Asia Minor Catastrophe and the 1923 population exchange agreement between Greece and Turkey, Thessaloniki was one of the main urban centres that received refugees. Just a decade after its integration into Greek territory and five years after the 1917 fire that destroyed most of its historic centre, having already received successive refugee flows because of the wars and geopolitical upheavals of the previous decade, the city faced a new tragic and urgent situation, which radically changed the composition of its population and created enormous pressures for immediate care and housing.

The recent tracing of the Refugee Register of the Municipality of Thessaloniki 1922-1927 by the Thessaloniki History Centre, consisting of 12 volumes and 2500 pages, triggered the new systematic research on the settlement of the refugees and its socio-spatial impacts, which was conducted by a group of professors and students of the School of Architecture of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The research was based on the valuable archival data of the Refugee Register on the origin, demographic and social characteristics, and the temporary establishment of the refugees, as well as on bibliographic material, and resulted to an exhibition focusing on the visualization of the gathered data and information. The paper will present the part of the research results which concern: a) the demographic and social profile of the refugees; b) the premises and areas of temporary settlement, which in many cases evolved to permanent ones; and c) the permanent settlement through four different mechanisms of access to shelter and refugee housing production, both in proximity to the existing city and the then peri-urban zone, which decisively influenced the structure and form of the existing city and created new socio-economic and spatial segregations. The aim is to

highlight the important socio-spatial transformations that took place during the interwar period, setting the basis for the urban and social development of the modern city.

Melina Katsimpiri – Kalliopi Tseroni: The refugee settlement of Patras. Resilience and peculiarities

One hundred years after the Asia Minor catastrophe and the massive influx of refugees in 1922 in Greece, the initial structure and evolution of the housing complexes, constructed for the rehabilitation of the refugee population, is an interesting field of research. The present research focuses on the city of Patras, an important urban centre with a neoclassical city plan that has one of the largest ports in Greece facing the Ionian Sea, significant both from a transport and commercial point of view. More specifically, four neighborhoods in the northern part of the city are being studied, which were used to settle the refugee population and have remained in the memory of the residents as the "Refugee settlement", as they were constructed in a common area, creating a larger whole of unified character. The original structure of the refugee settlements and their evolution is studied, followed by an analysis of their contemporary appearance, with parallel references to intermediate phases of the given study period. The aim of the paper is to explore the resilience of the settlements and the variations it may present, while interpreting its effects both at an architectural and social level. Further key research questions are: - How did the settlement of refugees affect the urban fabric of the city? Is there a spatial and urban difference from the existing urban fabric of Patras and how can this be interpreted? - Are there observed changes in the original structure of the refugee settlements over the period of one hundred years? How are they expressed? - How are the refugee settlements affected by their reinhabitation by different groups of contemporary residents?

Aikaterini Karadima: Chania's urban metamorphosis: Exploring the consequences of the 1923 Population Exchange

The late 19th and early 20th centuries marked a period of profound global societal and geographical changes, and Greece was no exception. The Asia Minor Catastrophe and the compulsory exchange of Christian and Muslim populations between Greece and Turkey following the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 had far-reaching impacts on culture, society, and urban space in both countries. The resettlement of refugees arriving in Greece became one of the most critical political and social issues, leading to rapid urbanization and uncontrolled urban expansion, fundamentally shaping the Greek urban and social structure. Chania, in Greece, holds a pivotal role as a refugee destination, owing to its significant Muslim community presence until 1923. In the aftermath of the population exchange, refugees

initially occupied vacant homes or makeshift accommodations while awaiting the finalization of housing initiatives. Subsequently, they adapted and transformed these spaces, leaving a lasting impact on both the urban and rural environment of Chania.

The paper aims to shed light on the intricate and multifaceted process of forced displacement in 1923 and its consequences for the urban and rural landscape of Chania. It places specific emphasis on the housing policies implemented by local, national and international authorities to address refugee resettlement in the region, assessing the long-term implications of these policies on the urban fabric and societal dynamics.

The research employs a multidisciplinary approach, drawing from spatial data, architectural history, politics, economics, and social phenomena, to comprehensively analyze the socio-spatial changes that occurred in Chania's broader region, highlighting the complex interplay between government policies, urban development, and social integration. Unlike existing research focusing on politics and history, this paper addresses architecture and urbanism aspects. It fills a research gap by offering new insights into the evolution of the modern Greek city and Hellenization of urban space